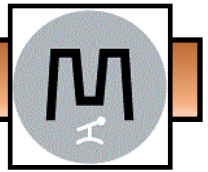


## City Council Message



April 2020



**Brett Hales**

You don't know what you don't know! Over and over again this statement has proven to be true.

Nine years ago, friends encouraged me to run for the Murray City Council. I use the word 'friends' loosely, ha ha! However, I thought, well, yes, I have a financial background – great for municipal budgeting; and I have worked with the public my entire career. These two areas provide a fitting backdrop for public service.

Now serving in my ninth year representing District 5, I can unquestionably testify to the fact that "I didn't know what I didn't know". Public service has been incredible, and I became immediately immersed, however, education and training opportunities have become the reality of my survival as a Council Member.

Following new council training events and open meeting act instruction I was ready to carry out the responsibilities of my position. NOT! That was optimistic! There are many departments and hundreds of issues to learn about in a city such as Murray. Our fiercely independent community provides recreation, services, public safety and utilities beyond the average municipality. The expertise of Murray staff members is enviable, and I was thrilled to learn that the City's extremely competent department directors provide extensive explanation, data and studies to assist in wise decision-making. Requiring hours of reading and deliberation, our city council meeting packets often exceed a couple hundred pages for review. Meeting preparation is a key to success.

The Utah League of Cities and Towns provides another level of opportunity to learn about common statewide issues and be on the cutting edge of future trends and challenges. The League conferences offer workshops on everything from budgeting and cyber security to development and planning.

Providing legislative expertise, the ULCT lobbies to promote the interests of cities, with their characteristic legislative savvy and negotiating proficiency. They are highly respected on Capitol Hill, successful in minimizing state mandates on local authority, and provide legislative direction for local elected officials.

The premier stage for an outstanding municipal learning environment is the National League of Cities. In March, I was privileged to attend the NLC Congressional City Conference with a program designed to afford elected officials the unique opportunity to study and discuss issues with our counterparts from across the nation. From urban development to leading through disruption (like COVID-19) NLC courses are designed to give city leaders hands-on training to fuel cities forward and build the skills necessary to better govern, serve, and advocate for our communities.

Nationwide, infrastructure, ending housing instability, and reducing gun violence are the top priorities for NLC communities. Sustainable practices, promoting a greener lifestyle, and improving air quality are great reasons for investment in pedestrian infrastructure and trails. One workshop series is titled 'From Policy Priorities to Practice' putting us on a path to reach our goals. Who would have guessed eight years ago that Utah would approve medical marijuana legislation, and yet, I learned from elected officials in neighboring states the pros and cons of such action just two years ago?

All these resources provide the education I need to put you first in our changing world, preserve our assets, prepare for reliability of services, enhance the quality of life in Murray and create a community our children want to come back to as adults. It is my distinct privilege to serve as your City Council member and continue to make informed choices for Murray City.

Brett Hales

District 5