

KAYSVILLE CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
MAY 20, 2025

Minutes of a special Kaysville City Council work session held on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in Kaysville City Hall at 23 East Center Street, Kaysville, Utah.

Council Members present: Mayor Tamara Tran, Council Member John Swan Adams, Council Member Mike Blackham, Council Member Abbigayle Hunt, Council Member Nate Jackson, Council Member Perry Oaks

Staff Present: City Manager Jaysen Christensen, Finance Director Dean Storey, Deputy Finance Director Maryn Nelson, City Recorder Annemarie Plaizier, Parks and Recreation Director Cole Stephens, Deputy Finance Director Parker Godwin

OPENING

Mayor Tran opened the work session and welcomed those in attendance.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE TENTATIVE FY 2026 BUDGET

City Manager Jaysen Christensen opened the meeting by outlining two key agenda items: a proposed gymnasium partnership with the Davis School District and personnel-related budget considerations. He provided background on a similar partnership opportunity that was withdrawn by the City Council in 2010. That earlier project was estimated at \$2 million, whereas the current proposal is estimated at \$10.5 million, with a 10% potential variance. The estimate, prepared by the school district's architects, is considered conservative and may decrease as design progresses and a construction manager/general contractor (CM/GC) is engaged.

Parks and Recreation Director Cole Stephens presented findings from a statistically valid 2021 community survey conducted by Y2 Analytics as part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The results showed broad resident support for recreation facilities and the Recreation, Arts, Museum, and Parks (RAMP) tax, which passed with 71% approval. While the survey referenced a "recreation center"—which some interpreted as including a pool—many desired amenities such as basketball courts, walking tracks, and fitness rooms, aligning with the proposed gymnasium.

Mr. Stephens shared design images from a newly completed gym at Horizon Junior High in West Point, which closely resembles the proposed 26,000-square-foot "Kaysville Gym" to be built adjacent to Kaysville Junior High. The school district is not requesting final funding details yet but needs a formal commitment from the city to move forward with planning. This request stems from the city's 2010 withdrawal from a similar project, which caused delays and redesign costs.

Mr. Stephens explained how the proposed facility costs would be divided as outlined in draft building plans. The proposed cost-sharing model includes elements fully funded by the city (green), fully funded by the district (yellow), and shared items (gray), such as mechanical systems. If the city opts out, the district will not build any of the city-funded components. Timely

commitment is needed to proceed with architectural and engineering work.

Council Member Jackson inquired about public access. Mr. Stephens explained the city would have full access during evenings and weekends, excluding the locker rooms, which would remain locked. During school hours, the gym would be used exclusively by the school due to safety protocols.

Council Member Adams asked about facility supervision. Mr. Stephens noted that part-time staff would manage operations during recreational programs, with registration fees covering costs. For public access outside of scheduled programs, a site supervisor would still be needed. Mayor Tran raised the idea of key code entry, but Mr. Stephens cautioned against it due to potential vandalism, noting that Kaysville typically staffs all open facilities.

Council Member Hunt suggested exploring a conditional commitment while pursuing a general obligation bond. Mr. Stephens advised against this approach due to the high upfront design cost—estimated at around 10% of the cost of the facility—without a firm commitment.

Mr. Stephens estimated a 60/40 funding split, with the school district covering the larger share. Council members questioned the equity of this arrangement, though Mr. Stephens explained that the district has used consistent models across other cities and had not deviated from their standard cost-share models.

Council Member Jackson asked about facility amenities and advocated for enhancements such as cardio equipment to broaden the facility's appeal to justify the cost. Mr. Stephens noted that the design includes a second-floor walking track and a 2,800-square-foot multi-purpose room that could host yoga, fitness classes, or cardio machines.

Council Member Blackham expressed concern that such a facility might primarily serve a small segment of residents. He raised concerns about investing citywide tax dollars into a facility that might only benefit those with the time or interest to use it regularly. In contrast, Council Member Adams argued the facility would be heavily used, especially by youth involved in sports. Mr. Stephens added that adult recreation programs are currently limited or nonexistent due to space constraints. The city has had to cancel leagues like adult men's basketball due to restricted access to school facilities. He highlighted growing interest in new sports such as field hockey and noted large waitlists for youth programs like Junior Jazz basketball. Mr. Stephens emphasized that the gymnasium would enable the city to reach more residents, particularly underserved adult populations who currently have few options.

When asked about similar partnerships, Mr. Stephens reported that Layton City has three joint-use gyms with the school district, West Point is currently building one, and Farmington opted to build a standalone 49,000-square-foot facility, now valued at over \$20 million. He noted that Layton keeps its facilities busy during evenings and weekends and could expand its programming with more staff.

Mr. Stephens clarified that part-time staff are funded through program fees, with no impact on the general fund. Only full-time staff and benefits require general fund support.

The conversation shifted to financing options. Council members asked about general obligation

bonds (which require voter approval), Municipal Building Authority bonds, and sales tax revenue bonds (which do not). Mr. Stephens emphasized that partnering with the school district would be significantly more cost-effective than building a standalone facility.

Cole Stephens noted that although the proposed gymnasium would not be located directly within Kaysville's downtown core, it would still serve as a key community feature and draw residents toward the city center.

The facility would be constructed as a standalone structure adjacent to Kaysville Junior High, separate from any future remodel plans of the school. Mayor Tran confirmed that the district does not plan to build a new junior high but may remodel the existing one in the future. The gym would be completed in advance of that and remain independent.

Council Member Hunt asked about adding a pool to the facility. Mr. Stephens responded that such an expansion would require agreement from the school district. Mayor Tran explained that previous discussions with the school district placed the cost of even a basic lap pool at \$30 million, with full facilities closer to \$75 million.

Council Member Jackson inquired about constructing a standalone recreation center. Mr. Stephens stated that without a pool, a 50,000-square-foot facility would still cost roughly \$20 million. He cited Layton and West Point as examples where partnerships with the school district to build a shared gymnasium have lowered costs. Council Member Blackham asked about funding sources used by other cities. Mr. Stephens noted that both Layton and Farmington utilized their RAMP tax revenue to fund their projects, however those cities' RAMP taxes generate far more revenue than Kaysville's.

Mr. Stephens explained that West Point is funding its gym through a 30-year bond. Council Member Adams stressed the importance of branding the gymnasium clearly to reflect it as a Kaysville City facility. Mr. Stephens and Mayor Tran affirmed this, noting that signage and naming plans as "The Kaysville Gymnasium" were already in development. The building would also include a dedicated drop-off loop for the gym and about 100 parking spaces.

Mr. Stephens reviewed the school district's construction timeline, with formal design work beginning soon, targeting bid openings in January, and building occupancy by fall 2027. Dean Storey confirmed that city bond payments would not begin until fiscal year 2028. He noted that the city could issue bonds early or wait to take advantage of better interest rates, and that the cost difference between general obligation (GO) bonds and sales tax revenue bonds was minimal.

Maryn Nelson reviewed updated funding scenarios. The tentative budget had previously assumed a \$7 million gymnasium with annual debt service of \$630,000. The new \$10 million estimate would raise that figure, although a \$500,000 one-time RAMP contribution would offset the cost. Ongoing support from RAMP would be around \$315,000 annually.

Council Member Adams asked whether RAMP funds would be used annually or only for the down payment. Ms. Nelson clarified that the ongoing portion was built into the model but could be adjusted. Council Member Adams expressed concern about overcommitting RAMP revenue, suggesting a base contribution with flexibility depending on annual funding needs. Council

Members Oaks and Mr. Stephens supported this approach, noting that it would still leave \$150,000 to \$200,000 available annually for other projects.

Council Member Blackham raised concerns about losing support from the arts and museum communities but cutting back on RAMP funding for their proposals. Mr. Stephens stated that these sectors typically request \$30,000 to \$50,000 annually and would remain fully funded. He emphasized the broader impact of RAMP investments on parks, trails, and recreation.

Mr. Storey noted that RAMP taxes are broadly supported by the public and are unlikely to be repealed. He confirmed that if construction costs come in lower than expected, the city could reduce the bond amount or supplement with reserves. Council Member Oaks calculated that under a 25-year bond and \$320,000 annual RAMP contribution, the average cost per household would be about \$31 per year. Council Member Adams noted that increasing the RAMP share to \$350,000 would reduce this to \$28.

Mr. Storey reminded the Council that interest rates remain volatile and suggested a bond could be issued in stages to capitalize on favorable rates. Discussion briefly returned to long-term recreation plans, including a possible amphitheater in Barnes Park, though this remains a separate and conceptual project.

Council Member Hunt asked whether the gymnasium bond would affect future bonding capacity for a west-side fire station. Mr. Storey responded that the city currently holds very little debt, with existing bonds limited to the police station and city hall and thus retains significant bonding capacity. However, public willingness to approve new property tax-supported bonds could be a limiting factor.

Council Member Blackham expressed concern about residents who may oppose the project if they feel it is being forced upon them through taxes, specifically if they are unlikely to utilize the facility. Mr. Stephens emphasized the gymnasium's diverse programming potential, including academic, arts, and community uses. Council Member Jackson recommended adding cardio equipment to serve seniors and expand accessibility. Mr. Stephens emphasized the gym's flexibility, including potential for pickleball, adaptive sports, and evolving community needs. He highlighted that the city has been constrained by limited facilities and has done well with what it has, but expanding space would unlock greater programming potential.

Mayor Tran supported the project's community value, stating it would enhance Kaysville even for residents who do not use it. Council members discussed ensuring the facility feels like a city center and not a school gym, and considered engaging additional funding partners, though no decisions were made.

Council Member Adams raised concerns about shared ownership and potential operational conflicts with the school district. Mr. Stephens acknowledged that while such coordination would be ongoing, the city and Davis School District have historically maintained a strong working relationship through well-functioning interlocal agreements. He expressed confidence that these frameworks could continue to support effective facility management under a shared-use model.

Council Member Adams also suggested exploring a partnership with Davis Tech, potentially offering student access in exchange for financial support, though Mr. Stephens expressed caution about involving additional entities in the project.

Dean Storey recommended Scenario 2—a 20-year bond with moderate payments—as the most financially prudent option, noting it would save the city several hundred thousand dollars in interest. Council Member Blackham proposed an alternative version of Scenario 3, which would use higher annual contributions from RAMP funds to accelerate bond repayment while still benefiting from favorable interest rates.

Council Member Jackson raised the possibility of repurposing the existing city-owned recreation building, formerly part of a fire station, if the new facility moves forward. Mr. Stephens confirmed that the building would continue to serve the community by hosting batting cages, facility rentals, and programming such as community theater rehearsals.

Council Members Adams, Jackson, and Hunt noted that their views had evolved over the course of the meeting. While the \$10.5 million cost initially caused hesitation, the detailed presentation helped clarify financial and community impacts.

Council Member Blackham expressed concern about the potential perception of “forced membership,” particularly from residents who already pay for private gym access. Mr. Stephens responded that recreation is a core municipal service, like parks, trails, and public safety. Mayor Tran added that Kaysville is unique among neighboring cities—such as Layton, Syracuse, and Farmington—in not having a public recreation facility.

Questions were raised about early morning use of the facility. Mr. Stephens indicated that although school use would begin at 7:00 a.m., there may be an opportunity to open the gym briefly beforehand for activities like indoor walking, provided part-time staff were available. Council Member Oaks suggested that offering a short early-morning access window could help serve a broader population.

Mr. Christensen noted that although the school district had requested a prompt decision, it would be reasonable to wait until after the scheduled May 30 tour of comparable facilities before finalizing any commitment. He recommended aligning the decision with upcoming public budget hearings to ensure transparency and to allow for community input. Council Members agreed that taking additional time was appropriate, especially considering the recent cost estimate increase.

The conversation concluded with members reflecting on the project’s significance, financial structure, and potential community impact. While opinions varied, there was a consensus on continuing to explore the project ahead of the May 30 tour and upcoming public hearing.

Mr. Stephens was excused from the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Following the gymnasium discussion, Mr. Christensen shifted the focus to personnel matters, summarizing the progression of staffing proposals discussed in prior work sessions. Initially, city leadership considered approving three new positions: an assistant city attorney, a deputy fire chief, and a police sergeant. Due to early revenue concerns, the proposal was narrowed to only the assistant city attorney. As the financial outlook evolved, the recommendation was revised to

prioritize both the assistant city attorney and the sergeant, with the deputy fire chief deferred. At the most recent meeting, a broader recommendation emerged to include all three positions, prompting concern that the proposal had expanded too far.

Council Member Blackham expressed frustration, stating he was caught off guard by the inclusion of additional positions. He felt that there was an understanding that the assistant city attorney was the sole priority hire for the year and was surprised when additional positions were being considered for inclusion in the budget. Mr. Christensen clarified that the positions had been ranked by staff in order of priority—assistant city attorney first, deputy fire chief second, and sergeant third. However, the recent Farmington police shooting prompted a reevaluation, leading him to recommend prioritizing the sergeant to address growing safety concerns and the lack of night-time supervision.

Mayor Tran noted that police personnel had expressed concerns about inexperienced officers handling high-risk calls without supervisory support. She highlighted the increasing severity of calls, particularly those involving mental health and domestic violence. Council Member Blackham countered that the city already had six sergeants and questioned the need for another, given shift staffing levels. He also compared Kaysville to rural counties with fewer law enforcement resources serving larger populations, suggesting the position may be unnecessary.

Mr. Christensen responded that while the city has not seen significant population growth in recent years, patrol coverage has remained deficient for several years while other areas—such as school resource officers and detectives—have expanded. Mayor Tran noted that Kaysville’s population may be underrepresented in data due to the growth of multi-generational households. She acknowledged the financial burden but emphasized the increasing complexity of service demands, requiring a stronger police presence.

Council Member Blackham raised concerns about the overall growth of public safety budgets, citing a \$3 million increase since 2022. He emphasized that personnel additions should be tied to measurable growth. He cautioned against long-term personnel commitments without sustainable funding and criticized the current budget for exceeding projected revenues by over \$2 million.

Council Member Adams acknowledged the concern but stated that the staff rankings had been consistently presented. He emphasized that the shifting recommendations reflected changing conditions, not misrepresentation. Council Member Blackham maintained that he felt blindsided and reiterated the need to protect taxpayers, warning that the current staffing proposals could result in a tax increase of up to 35%.

Mayor Tran responded that previous councils had delayed necessary tax increases and fee adjustments, which contributed to the current financial pressure. She argued that the city was now trying to catch up to maintain competitive staffing levels, while trying to maintain quality service for residents. Council Member Blackham reiterated his concerns about affordability for residents and feels that new hires are a risk of unsustainable commitments.

Mr. Christensen stated that the need for another police sergeant had been identified years ago but was previously deprioritized in favor of compensation increases for existing officers. He described current night shift staffing—typically two officers—as inadequate and high risk, especially during simultaneous incidents.

Council Member Oaks supported the staffing proposals, stating that additional leadership would improve coverage and act as a preventative investment. He referred to the proposed positions as an "insurance policy" to ensure preparedness in high-risk or complex situations. Council Member Blackham argued that more incremental solutions should be pursued and suggested contracting legal services rather than hiring a full-time assistant city attorney.

Mayor Tran noted that the city had previously contracted legal services, but current demands and internal capacity have shifted those needs. Council Member Jackson expressed support for hiring an assistant city attorney but urged a slower approach to additional staffing after a multi-year hiring freeze.

Council Member Blackham reiterated that he had expected only one position to be approved this year and viewed the expanded proposal as inconsistent. Council Member Adams sought input from other council members. Council Member Hunt supported the sergeant position, citing years of unmet requests and steady population growth. She referenced specific data and scenarios provided by Chief Oberg, including an incident in which a lack of supervisory presence complicated a high-risk call.

Council Member Hunt stressed the importance of not putting cost savings ahead of public safety and asserted that the sergeant position was essential for risk mitigation and effective service delivery. She stated she would not support a budget that excluded the sergeant position. When asked by Council Member Blackham whether she still supported hiring the assistant attorney, she affirmed that both positions were essential.

Council Member Adams emphasized the importance of trusting the recommendations of professional staff—such as the city manager and department heads—to make informed operational recommendations. Mr. Christensen responded with appreciation for the council's deliberation and reiterated that the recommendations were based on data and a careful evaluation of risk.

Council Member Blackham challenged the premise that a new hire was the only solution, suggesting that night coverage could be addressed by rescheduling existing sergeants. He questioned why Police Officer III personnel couldn't serve in a supervisory role. Council Member Hunt responded that existing leadership was already tasked with other duties and that the new sergeant would add needed capacity.

Council Member Blackham cited Rich County as an example of limited staffing coverage, noting that a sheriff and four deputies managed large seasonal crowds during summer months. Council Members Hunt and Adams questioned the relevance of that model, comparing vacation towns to Kaysville, with a steady population. Mr. Christensen noted the differences in population, structure, and public safety needs.

Council Member Adams reiterated the question of whether the council trusted the professional judgement of staff recommendations. Council Member Oaks referenced comparative data showing that Kaysville has lower staffing ratios than peer cities. Mr. Christensen confirmed the recommendations were based on data, discussion, and a desire to improve public safety responsibly.

Council Member Jackson supported adding a police sergeant, citing concerns about officer safety and increased nighttime activity. He echoed earlier questions about reallocating existing staff to enhance night coverage and wanted to follow up with the police chief.

Mayor Tran noted that not all full-time staff are consistently available and that the recommendations were fiscally conservative. She emphasized that the identified positions were considered true needs. The potential consequences of underfunding public safety, especially in emergency scenarios, could be devastating.

Council Member Adams expressed hope for consensus and disappointment at talk of a divided vote. Council Member Blackham continued to express concern about utility rate increases and the overall burden on residents. He argued that past communication had promised residents a 5% power rate increase with a possible future adjustment, and that following through with a 10% increase now would be breaking trust. Mayor Tran responded that the issue was not dishonesty but a lack of full cost disclosure in previous rate discussions.

Council Member Oaks added that the city had been subsidizing some utility services for years and that continued subsidizing of utilities was unsustainable. He encouraged transparency in illustrating what the true costs have been and why adjustments are now necessary and praised previous efforts to present utility data clearly. Mr. Christensen used a vehicle maintenance analogy to highlight the risks of deferring necessary investments, which could lead to higher costs or service failures later. He stated that while the city cannot afford everything, the few staff positions being requested now—particularly the police sergeant—represent foundational needs that cannot be pushed off further without risk. He noted that 15 initial requested positions had been narrowed to two, with other position reclassifications funded through internal adjustments.

Council Member Adams asked whether any updated revenue figures were available since the last meeting. Mr. Storey reported no updates on property or sales tax data. Council Member Jackson asked about the projected tax impact of the gymnasium and sergeant. Ms. Nelson estimated a 34.96% increase.

The Council discussed how tax increases are calculated and the difference between market and taxable values. It was clarified that assessed taxable value is used, and communication should reflect that to avoid confusion.

Council Member Blackham expressed concern about the broader financial burden facing residents, referencing recent surges in property insurance rates and inflation. Mayor Tran acknowledged these challenges and emphasized the city's efforts to maintain quality of life and community services, which the city has consistently worked to protect and maintain.

Council Members discussed the cost of the sergeant position—estimated at \$15 annually per household. They reviewed the tentative budget, which included the three new positions and a \$7 million gym proposal. However, they agreed that the tentative budget should be amended to defer the deputy fire chief position. Council Member Oaks noted that interest rates could affect final gym financing. Mayor Tran indicated that if no new major increases were proposed, the council remained on track with the tentative figures—and might even be trending toward a reduction.

Council Member Adams reflected on the value of the discussion and the opportunity for all

members to be heard.

Council Member Oaks raised concerns about long-term fire service planning, particularly delays in constructing a west-side station, and noted that when it is eventually built, it will require full staffing and equipment, making it a costly undertaking. He questioned whether regional collaboration could reduce costs.

Mayor Tran said discussions had begun with other cities about fire districting. Mr. Christensen shared past experience evaluating a fire district model in a previous role, noting limited savings due to unchanged infrastructure needs and potential for increased costs and reduced oversight. In his experience, most fire districts do not significantly reduce costs because stations, equipment, and staffing needs are based on population and geography, which do not change with districting. He noted that in some areas, district tax rates were significantly higher than municipal rates, and spending was harder to control.

Mr. Christensen recommended analyzing the cost efficiency of existing districts before committing to a new station. He emphasized that such an analysis should be undertaken before the city moves forward with constructing a west-side station and noted that while the facility is not urgently required today, the increasing call volume means the need is growing. Council Member Hunt asked about interim safety coverage. Mr. Christensen advised waiting until some of the city's existing bond obligations are paid off to free up capacity for a new station and its associated staffing costs.

Council Member Adams asked how staffing for the new station would be funded. Mr. Christensen suggested a general obligation bond for construction and a separate tax increase for operations. He noted operational costs cannot be included in the bond ballot language.

Mayor Tran stated she would like to see comparative cost data before considering districting. Council Members discussed hypothetical efficiencies from regional consolidation. Council Member Jackson expressed concern about overlapping services near city borders.

Returning to the current budget, Council Member Oaks summarized that the deputy fire chief position was no longer under consideration, while the sergeant and gym partnership remained under review. Mayor Tran confirmed.

Mr. Christensen noted the public hearing notice for the budgets would include gym project details to facilitate public feedback. The Council briefly reviewed logistics for the May 30 site visit to Shoreline Junior High and Horizon Junior High.

Council Member Hunt proposed allocating \$100,000 from the general fund balance for sidewalk hazard repairs. Council Members Adams and Jackson supported the idea. Ms. Nelson stated the proposal could be added during the post-hearing budget amendment process.

Mayor Tran informally adjourned the meeting at 8:39 p.m.