

MINUTES
ALTA TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday, April 8, 2020, 4:00 PM
Remote Zoom Meeting

PRESENT: Mayor Harris Sondak
Council Member Margaret Bourke
Council Member Cliff Curry
Council Member Elise Morgan
Council Member Sheridan Davis

STAFF PRESENT: John Guldner, Town Administrator
Chris Cawley, Assistant Town Administrator
Piper Lever, Town Clerk
Mike Morey, Town Marshal
Polly McLean, Town Attorney

OTHERS: Jay Torgersen, UFA
Mike Maughan

WORK SESSION

• **DISCUSSION REGARDING UFA/UFSA**

00:08:05

Mayor Sondak called the work session to order at 4:14 PM and noted that the majority of the Council and staff were present electronically.

Mayor Sondak stated that the first item on the work session agenda was a discussion regarding UFA and UFSA. Based on the information he had researched and provided to the Council, and the discussions the Council had previously, they would feel comfortable voting on the resolution that had been drafted. He invited the Council to ask questions of make comments on the proposed resolution.

00:09:38

Council Member Bourke appreciated all of the work Mayor Sondak had done in gathering information regarding UFA and UFSA. As she looked at the total assessed value of property in the Town of Alta, she found that it was about \$315 million, which was based upon their revenue divided by the certified tax rate. The property owners collectively paid roughly \$37 million in property taxes last year. Nearly half of that goes to the school district. Only 1% of the property tax supports the Town government, and that provides approximately one-fourth of the Town's total revenue. Out of that total revenue, the Town was currently funding fire protection and emergency medical services (EMS) at \$152,000 annually. She had received statistical data from Jay Torgerson regarding where and when emergency calls came from, and she requested that those documents be added to the Town Council file for this meeting or the March meeting. Over the

last five years, there had been seven fires in Alta and 255 calls for EMS services. Nearly all of the EMS calls were from visitors to the resort and not property taxpayers. The community was now being asked to pay for fire and EMS at a huge increase. In a fair and equitable world, the consumer of the services would be the ones to pay for the service. There was no social justice for the property owners to be subsidizing this use. Council Member Bourke suggested that they consider finding a way to have the consumer pay for the service, such as charging a ticket tax or ticket insurance for every skier. That tax would only need to be \$1 per ticket per day, and it would cover about 60% of the cost for fire and EMS. While they all understood the importance of having fire and EMS services, she questioned whether it was appropriate for that cost to fall entirely on a portion of the population that uses so little of it. She wanted to discuss extending the time period for evaluating UFSA before entering in. She asked why UFA costs were based on call volume, whereas UFSA costs were based on a property tax rate. There was an approximate difference of \$200,000 between the costs, though services provided were the same.

00:18:35

Mayor Sondak explained that UFA offered two options for membership: as a direct contracting municipality, or by joining the UFSA. UFSA is a taxing district, and they followed a quasi-socialist model. The costs were shared through the whole district. UFA charges based on actual usage.

00:22:26

Council Member Bourke asked about the opportunity to extend their timeframe. No matter which option they chose, it would be a huge increase to the Town.

00:24:17

Mayor Sondak said that there were statutory requirements for when budgets need to be filed. He received an email yesterday from either the County or the State which stated that there had been some discussion about the budget deadlines being extended because of the COVID-19 situation, but that had not happened yet. UFA was dealing with a budget cycle just like the Town was. They could not unilaterally change their budget cycle. Even if they offered the Town more time to make a decision, someone would have to pay the difference between what the Town has been paying and what UFA believes they owe. Mayor Sondak became aware of the situation in November and immediately began researching the matter. It's been five months, which UFA may see as a reasonable timeframe. He believed that UFSA may grant the Town additional time to get their finances in order, if they joined UFSA. Regarding the potential of having a four-person crew at Station 113, Mayor Sondak said that this had been discussed many times. He spoke with Chief Peterson about this, and he was told that it would be a marginal cost of about \$400,000 for an additional crew member. If Alta were a direct contracting member of UFA, that cost would be added to the cost of the station. If they were a member of UFSA, the Board would consider whether that fourth individual was necessary. It was really a question of resource allocation and cost. UFA was currently understaffed, and they had been paying more than they had budgeted for overtime. Mayor Sondak said that he would make the request for a four-person crew if they joined UFSA.

00:30:33

Council Member Bourke said that she had received an email from Dr. Ken about their calls, and she had compared that information to the data she received from Jay Torgerson. For the 2018-

2019 ski season, Dr. Ken said that they used Station 113, Station 116, and Station 110. This suggested that Station 113 was busy during the winter months and they had to draw on two other stations to meet EMS needs. Mayor Sondak commented that they wouldn't put two ambulances at Station 113, even if they got a four-person crew.

00:33:20

Council Member Davis was astonished that UFA was ignoring the history of the Town of Alta's involvement in its creation, and that they somehow felt that the costs being presented now were reasonable. Mayor Sondak said that he had made it clear that the Town of Alta didn't have an extra \$700,000 available to pay this bill, but the response was that Alta should be paying for fire protection just like other communities. Council Member Davis said that for years, no one seemed to question what they were paying, and now suddenly it wasn't okay anymore. Mayor Sondak said that no one was insinuating that the Town did anything wrong. The County was simply saying that they weren't going to pay a portion of Alta's bill anymore. The UFA members acknowledge that this money could no longer be applied to their invoice.

00:37:05

Council Member Bourke asked if the Council had any thoughts about possibly implementing a ticket tax or ticket insurance to pass the cost to the users. Mayor Sondak thought that they had maxed out their tax revenue, aside from the transient room tax. However, the Town Attorney recently found that the Town could raise their sales tax by 0.1%. He wasn't sure if they would legally be able to tax lift tickets. Town Attorney Polly McLean said that they wouldn't be able to impose additional taxes on tickets, but a fee may be possible. She could research this option. Council Member Curry didn't support the idea of singling out the Ski Area and taxing their sales for this use. That approach would overlook the fact that none of the residents would live in Alta if it weren't for the Ski Area. Everyone in the Town benefits from ski operations. Everyone needs to share public safety costs.

- **EXTENSION OF EMERGENCY PROCLAMATION #1**

00:41:55

Mayor Sondak said that Emergency Proclamation #1, issued last month, was set to expire on April 13th. The Council had the opportunity to extend the proclamation by 30 days. He wasn't sure if they could or wanted to extend it beyond those 30 days, but this should be adequate for now. If they found that the proclamation needed to be extended again, they would have another opportunity to extend at the next Town Council meeting.

The Council was in favor of extending the proclamation by 30 days.

Attorney McLean said that she has suggested 30 days because it was a definable period of time. They would have another Town Council meeting before the extension expired.

The work session was adjourned at 4:56 PM.

REGULAR SESSION

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

00:55:02

Mayor Sondak called the meeting to order 5:01 PM and expressed appreciation for those in attendance.

2. CITIZEN INPUT (Comments could be submitted in writing to plever@townofalta.com before 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 7, 2020.)

00:57:35

Town Clerk Piper Lever read comments from Mark Haik and Dan Colangelo into the record. See attached.

3. COVID-19 UPDATE – *Chris Cawley*

01:02:30

Assistant Town Administrator Chris Cawley read from the memo he sent to the Town Council describing how staff was responding to COVID-19. See attached.

01:13:47

Mayor Sondak noted that there was limited access to the Town offices right now. He thanked Mr. Cawley for his dedicated work.

01:14:54

Council Member Bourke asked if he had the most current testing numbers. She appreciated the fact that the parking area for Grizzly Gulch was closed for residents only. This was helping to spread people out on the trail. Mayor Sondak added that there was some concern about the number of people at that trailhead. He encouraged anyone who saw large groups gathering there to notify the Marshal's office. Mr. Cawley said that as of that day, there had been 36,000 tests administered. Council Member Davis asked about the projections for intensive care beds, and Mr. Cawley said that as far as he knew, they would have enough beds and ventilators in Utah.

4. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON 2020-R-5; A RESOLUTION EXTENDING 30 DAY PERIOD OF EMERGENCY PROCLAMATION #1

01:20:05

Mayor Sondak introduced the item, which was a Resolution to extend Emergency Proclamation #1 by 30 days. This would extend the proclamation to May 14, 2020.

MOTION: Council Member Davis moved to ADOPT Resolution 2020-R-5 to extend Emergency Proclamation #1 for an additional 30 days. Council Member Morgan seconded the motion.

Mayor Sondak presented the resolution on the screen and invited any questions. Council Member Bourke asked about the Mayor's authority regarding the Emergency Proclamation, and Attorney McLean explained that the resolution and proclamation were written in accordance with State Law. The Mayor has authority to make the proclamation, and the Council has the authority to consent to an extension. There was a brief discussion regarding the line of succession.

Mayor Sondak called the question. The motion passed with unanimous consent of the Council.

5. **ALTA SKI AREA UPDATE** – *Mike Maughan*

01:28:28

Mike Maughan thanked the Town for handling the COVID-19 situation professionally. The Alta Ski Area went from 541 employees to about 90 employees in just a few weeks. All seasonal employees have been furloughed, and they were down to essential summer staff only. Many employees have chosen to take time off, and others are working from home. They expanded their four-day work week to a seven-day work week to spread people out. Mr. Maughan reported on a few projects that were ongoing, including the Albion parking lot. Regarding the UFA situation, he said that most of the Town's revenue comes from the visitors to the Ski Area. He encouraged the Council to look at what other resort communities did to pay for public safety services.

6. **APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

- Treasurers Report for March 2020, including budget highlights
- Town Council Meeting minutes for March 11, 2020
- Staff Report

01:45:00

MOTION: Council Member Curry moved that the Town Council APPROVE the Consent Agenda. Council Member Morgan seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous consent of the Council.

7. **UFA REPORT**

01:49:10

Jay Torgerson reported that he had sent in a report for the first quarter of this year based on call volume. They had seen a decrease in calls compared to this month last year. The crew at Station 113 was ready to respond to emergencies and was following safety procedures. So far, they had only one crew member test positive for COVID-19, and they had been symptom free for several weeks now. They were working closely with Salt Lake County Emergency Management.

8. **QUESTIONS REGARDING DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

02:03:00

Mayor Sondak asked Town Marshal Mike Morey had anything to add to his written report. Marshal Morey commended the ski area for working with the Town Marshals every day. He

described the efforts they were taking to keeping employees safe so that they could protect the residents.

9. MAYOR'S REPORT

02:10:05

Mayor Sondak reported that COVID-19 had had an effect on all of his monthly meetings. There was a UFA Board meeting on March 17th, and a CWC meeting on March 20th. They experienced an earthquake on March 18th. Temporary dog licenses granted since the last meeting included: Don Colangelo for ten days; Richard Abelson for seven days; Jeff Sommercoff for 30 days; Paxton Mater; Patrick Hogle for 30 days; Brooke McMaster for 13 days. Upcoming public meetings included: a CWC Budget Committee meeting, a UFA Finance Committee meeting, and a hearing with Salt Lake County for the CDBG and other grants.

Council Member Bourke asked if there were any public meetings that the public would be interested in. Mayor Sondak said that the next Town Council meeting would be held on May 6th at 5:00 PM. He wasn't sure if the Planning Commission would hold a meeting in April. Town Administrator John Guldner said that the Planning Commission was on hold during this COVID-19 situation, since they didn't have any pressing business.

10. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING RESOLUTION 2020-R-6 REGARDING TOA'S INTENT TO ADJUST UFSA BOUNDARY

02:24:17

Mayor Sondak introduced the item and noted that the Council had discussed the resolution during the work session.

MOTION: Council Member Curry moved that the Town Council ADOPT Resolution 2020-R-6 regarding the Town of Alta's intent to adjust UFSA boundaries. Council Member Morgan seconded the motion.

Mayor Sondak asked Jay Torgerson if he had anything to add to the discussion, particularly regarding a four-member crew at Station 113.

Jay Torgerson explained how a three-member crew and a four-member crew would operate. They would be able to accomplish more with a four-member crew, but it wouldn't have a significant change on what they would do in a rescue situation.

Mayor Sondak commented whether they move to UFSA or stay as a direct contractor with UFA, their rate was going up. He felt there were other advantages to being in the UFSA beyond the cost.

02:36:25

Council Member Curry said that he would vote in favor of the resolution, and he felt it was the only way forward. He encouraged the Council to make this a unanimous vote. He requested that Mayor Sondak advocate for Station 113 to have a four-member crew, on behalf of the Town of Alta. Mayor Sondak agreed to be their advocate.

02:39:35

Council Member Davis had grave concerns about going forward with either UFA or UFSA. She was particularly worried about taxing the residents without researching how this would affect business in Town. Taxes would go up for the ski lift companies as well as residents. There was such a wide variance in the figures presented, and she was feeling pressured into making this decision so quickly. There was a brief discussion about fairness, and Mayor Sondak commented that neighboring communities had been paying full price for fire protection and EMS, while the Town of Alta had not. Council Member Bourke wanted additional information before making a decision. If they went forward with the resolution as it was presented, the Town of Alta would not have the opportunity to pursue a different approach. She wanted to be as informed as possible before making a decision.

Marshal Morey cautioned the Council against basing decisions on who uses public safety the most.

02:54:04

Mayor Sondak called the question. Council Member Bourke requested that the documents provided to her by Jay Torgerson be included in the record. The Council agreed. A roll call vote was taken, with Mayor Sondak, and Council Members Curry and Morgan voting “aye”; and Council Members Davis and Bourke voting “nay”. The motion passed, 3 to 2.

11. WFRC PRESENTATION REGARDING TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROJECTS

02:56:30

Mayor Sondak noted that Alex and Christie (no last names given), from the Wasatch Front Regional Council, were present to give a brief presentation about transportation planning projects.

Alex said that they had been working with Mr. Cawley on prioritizing some of the transportation projects that were important to the Town of Alta. He presented a document highlighting some of the projects they discussed most frequently. A survey had been created so that the Council could rank the nine projects in order of importance. Once they had those results, they would begin planning next steps. He requested that the Council take the survey by May 1st, so that they would have something to discuss at the next Town Council meeting.

12. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON RESOLUTION 2020-R-7 AMENDING RESOLUTION 2020-R-4 REGARDING NUMBER OF DOG LICENSES

03:05:12

Mayor Sondak introduced the item and said that the amendment was simply correcting some incorrect numbers. Deputy Town Clerk Jen Clancy said that the total number of licenses would still be 95. There would be 31 Class A licenses, 42 Class B licenses, 11 Class C licenses, and 2 Class D licenses.

MOTION: Council Member Davis moved that the Town Council ADOPT Resolution 2020-R-7 amending Resolution 2020-R-4 regarding the number of dog licenses. Council Member Morgan seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous consent of the Council.

13. NEW BUSINESS

03:08:34

Mayor Sondak thanked staff for their response to the COVID-19 situation.

14. MOTION TO ADJOURN

03:09:09

MOTION: Council Member Curry moved to ADJOURN at 7:16 PM. Council Member Davis seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous consent of the Council.

APPROVED by Alta Town Council on May 6, 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Piper Lever", written over a horizontal line.

Piper Lever, Town Clerk