

MINUTES
ALTA TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday, May 6, 2020, 4:00 PM
Alta Community Center, 10351 E. Highway 210, Alta, Utah
VIRTUAL 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
Jen Clancy, Deputy Town Clerk
Mike Morey, Town Marshal
Polly McLean, Town Attorney
Jay Torgersen, UFA

WORK SESSION

- **COVID-19 UPDATE** – *Chris Cawley, Dr. Ken Libre and Dr. Carolyn Anctil*

00:00:01

Mayor Sondak called the work session to order at 4:01 PM and introduced the first item on the work session agenda.

00:01:10

Assistant Town Administrator Chris Cawley presented some statistics from the past week regarding COVID-19. The memo he sent to the Council prior to the meeting contained these statistics and defined the status of the Town's emergency orders and community operations. The Governor recently announced that restrictions would be lightened for certain counties and cities next week. The Town of Alta had a number of emergency proclamations that were still in effect until May 13, 2020. One of the items on the agenda today was to discuss the possible extension of the emergency proclamations.

00:06:07

Mayor Sondak thanked Dr. Ken Libre and Dr. Carolyn Anctil for coming to the meeting and invited them to make comments.

00:07:55

Dr. Libre felt that the Town of Alta was on top of things because of their quick response to close everything down. He commended staff for keeping the Town running while still maintaining social distancing practices at the Town facilities.

00:10:58

Dr. Anctil commented that Alta had been a saving grace for so many of her coworkers. They've enjoyed coming to the area to enjoy the sunshine away from other people. This had contributed to the mental health and peace of many individuals. She reported that the quick responses to the COVID pandemic have resulted in a flattening of the curve. However, they anticipate it staying at that level for another 10 to 12 weeks. At that point, it would be acceptable to start opening things back up.

00:13:22

Mayor Sondak reported on a conversation he had with the Director of the Salt Lake County Health Department, and he clarified the difference between a decrease and a decrease in the rate of increase. Dr. Anctil agreed that this was an important distinction. The county was experiencing 150 new cases per day, and that number had been steady for some time. Dr. Libre made the comment that they were in a complicated situation that required balancing the risk and reward ratio. The Town needed to align somewhat to the adjoining communities and the County. If individuals understand their personal responsibilities, they should be able to open up in a manner that was consistent with the Health Department guidelines. Mayor Sondak noted that he was looking closely at how other resort communities were responding to the pandemic, and there were a few things that they may choose to do that are different than the Health Department guidelines. It was insinuated that the Governor's decision to change to yellow was political rather than medical.

00:21:48

In response to a question from Council Member Davis, Dr. Anctil explained that the curve was flattening and there were fewer people being infected by one person, which was significant. All models predict that the healthcare system in Utah will fare just fine. Mayor Sondak anticipated that if the Town of Alta gets too out of step with the State, they would be ordered to get in step.

00:24:55

Council Member Morgan said that they had received several communications from citizens that expressed concerns with Proclamation #4, which required individuals to quarantine themselves for 14 days after traveling. However, this wasn't required of individuals living in Salt Lake County and traveling into Alta for work. She felt there needed to be a discussion of how the Town's proclamations were aligning with the State. The Proclamations may need to be amended, but she felt that they should continue for at least another 30 days.

Mayor Sondak clarified that the Governor's order required individuals to quarantine for 14 days if they travel to a high-risk location, irrespective of where they live. The order does not define what areas are considered "high-risk". Dr. Anctil suggested requiring individuals to be tested after traveling. This might help relieve stress on the citizens.

00:30:24

Council Member Bourke wanted there to be more involvement from the public concerning the proclamations. She suggested that the Mayor involved community members in his discussions to get a better feel for the public's attitude on the issue. Dr. Libre commented that Proclamation #4 seemed to be the biggest concern, and he believed that some modification of the proclamation was warranted. He would look into getting the nasal swab test up to the Town, although it would be an additional cost. Dr. Anctil said that the Alta Ski Area should look into the antigen test that was being developed.

- **TENTATIVE BUDGET QUESTIONS**

00:35:12

Mayor Sondak introduced the discussion item regarding the tentative budget, which was emailed to the Council earlier this week. Staff had received feedback from some of the Council Members already, and staff tried to incorporate those suggestions. The Town was required to adopt a budget that shows a balanced budget. They were also required to adopt a tentative budget at the first Council meeting in May, and a final budget by a certain date in June. Town Attorney Polly McLean clarified that the tentative budget must be adopted at least one week prior to the public hearing for the budget. If the Council could not come to an agreement on the budget today, they could hold a special meeting between now and the June meeting to adopt the tentative budget. Mayor Sondak stated that the Town Council was not bound to enact all of the provisions of the tentative budget, and changes could be made before final adoption. They also had the ability to amend the budget after final adoption. Mayor Sondak and staff anticipated making amendments to the budget, as there were so many uncertainties this year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent shutdown. The tentative budget proposed using \$14,000 of the reserve fund, and a resort sales tax increase of 0.1% to help balance the necessary expenditures. Mayor Sondak had staff prepare projections reflecting different sales tax revenues to determine how much they would need to bring from other sources to balance the budget. If the Ski Area was not allowed to open next season, the Town would be relying primarily on property tax, and they would not make it through the budget year solvent.

00:43:00

Council Member Curry stated that the current draft budget did not come from the Budget Committee. There were a lot of new ideas in this draft that did not come from nor reviewed by the Budget Committee. He felt that the sales tax increase was a poor idea, and he would rather have that money pulled from the reserve fund. Because there were so many unknowns this year, it would be wise to hold off doing a tax increase until there was more solid information. An analysis was done by the Utah League of Cities and Towns which had a lot of information about the economic impact of the shutdown, and he encouraged the Mayor and Council to look at that study. They should pursue other funding options. Council Member Curry also encouraged the Mayor not to pay bonuses for the 2019-20 fiscal year. The bonuses were well-deserved, but they needed to consider the current environment. However, they should include some funding going toward CPI increase.

00:53:08

Council Member Davis shared many of the same concerns expressed by Council Member Curry, particularly about the proposed sales tax increase. She wondered if they might consider not

accelerating payments toward infrastructure debt. Mayor Sondak explained that the water and sewer funds owed money to the General Fund. Those debts were inherited from a previous Council.

00:55:40

Council Member Bourke said that she had spoken with staff about possibly delaying the feasibility studies and a few other items, which would free up about \$77,000. There was also a question about Legal/Professional Services within the Planning and Zoning budget, which was for work related to Patsy Marley. She questions what still needed to be done in that case. Council Member Bourke also suggested that they look at ACVB. She was concerned that businesses would be supported by the property owners.

Mayor Sondak noted that the funds in the impact budget were restricted to specific uses. The proposed budget for ACVB is cut in half from last year's budget.

- **DISCUSSION REGARDING WERC SURVEY RESULTS**

The work session was adjourned at 5:01 PM.

REGULAR SESSION

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

01:00:35

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, May 5, 2020.)

01:01:00

Town Clerk Piper Lever said that there were three communications received from the public, and they would be attached to the minutes. Communications were received from Adrienne Ruderman and Dan Ketner, Frank Perkins, and John Byrne. Mayor Sondak paraphrased each communication.

3. SKI AREA UPDATE – *Mike Maughan*

01:06:35

Mike Maughan, Alta Ski Area, thanked the Town of Alta for their cooperation since the shutdown. They had been able to work together to provide the option for people come to the area to recreate. The Ski Area had received hundreds of letters and emails from people thanking them for being open for uphill traffic. In general, people have been practicing social distancing and being respectful of each other. As of last week, the Ski Area started moving into summer operations, and they were down to just summer operating staff. Based on the abrupt end of the season, their preliminary projections for revenue was down 15-20%. They had received approval from the

Forest Service to move forward with the project in the Albion parking lot, and the contractor was scheduled to begin work on June 1st. The campground would be open, and possibly a small campground store, but the restaurant and other facilities at the base would be closed. There were still discussions about restrooms. Mr. Maughan was in contact with other ski areas across the nation and they've been discussing tentative plans for next ski season. Alta Ski Area elected not to put tickets on sale now, because those ski areas that have, are seeing very low sales. It's uncertain that they will even open next year, depending on the status of the pandemic.

01:17:45

Council Member Bourke asked what they anticipated to see this summer, and Mr. Maughan said they would either be overrun with visitors or they would see very few visitors because of social distancing concerns. They were currently focusing on how they continue to restrict and manage visitation in Albion Basin in a way that is safe, and they would be relying on the Forest Service for a lot of that.

01:22:30

Mayor Sondak asked Mr. Maughan, as a property owner in Alta, to comment on the change to UFSA. Mr. Maughan said that it seemed to be the least painful option.

4. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

- Treasurers Report for April 2020, including budget highlights
- Town Council Meeting minutes for April 8, 2020
- Staff Report

01:24:13

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

5. UFA REPORT – Jay Torgersen

01:25:07

Jay Torgerson, UFA, reported that they had been busy with responding to COVID cases, as well as their normal calls. They had changed from a 48-hour planning and operation period to a seven-day period. Only one employee had tested positive for COVID-19, and that was early on in the pandemic. Even with the UFA transporting hundreds of COVID patients, they were able to remain unaffected. Employees were keeping themselves safe and following guidelines. They were hoping not to see a significant surge as things start to open up, but they were prepared if it did happen. UFA was in the middle of the budget approval process, and there would be a meeting with the UFA Finance Committee the following day. Dominique Burchett was promoted to Assistant Chief. He encouraged everyone to be extra cautious around waterways and snow bridges at this time of year.

6. QUESTIONS REGARDING DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

01:43:20

There were no questions.

7. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON 2020-R-8, A RESOLUTION EXTENDING 30 DAY PERIOD OF THE EMERGENCY PROCLAMATION #1 (COVID-19)**

01:43:32

Mayor Sondak introduced the item and stated that the proposed resolution would extend the existing emergency proclamation to June 18th, which was a day after the next Town Council meeting. The Governor released his order at the end of last week, and the County followed suit. Mayor Sondak and staff had discussed this new order, but he had not had adequate time to fully research the potential effects. Addressing the concerns raised by the citizens, Mayor Sondak said that they could probably open up short term rentals for homes with separate entrances. It would be riskier with lodges where entrances were near each other. He had been told that the lodges didn't expect to open at this time. Regarding quarantine, he like the suggestion from Dr. Anctil to require individuals to be tested after traveling to high-risk areas. He had reached out to the governor's office asking about the definition of "high-risk location," but he had not received an answer. Mayor Sondak suggested that they extend the current proclamation and allow him more time to do some in-depth research on the situation.

01:51:00

MOTION: Council Member Curry moved that the Town Council ADOPT 2020-R-8, a Resolution extending the Emergency Proclamation #1 by a 30-day period. Mayor Sondak seconded the motion.

Mayor Sondak opened the floor for Council discussion. Council Member Davis felt that The Governor and County were moving too quickly. From a public health perspective, it wasn't certain what utility there was in keeping Salt Lake City at a red level when all of the surrounding communities were at an orange level. In Alta, it would be a pretty low risk with people coming to their second homes here, and a higher risk for opening homes to rentals. She was more inclined to loosen the restrictions regarding homeowners but keep the restrictions on both rental properties and hotels. Mayor Sondak clarified that there was no restriction that applied to property owners coming to their properties. That was a misunderstanding in one of the citizen comments.

There was a discussion regarding self-quarantine, and how they could define "high-risk locations."

02:03:35

Council Member Bourke reiterated her suggestions of involving some community members in the decisions regarding emergency proclamations. This would help citizens understand the complexity of the issue before us, and help the Mayor and Council have a better understanding of the citizen's attitude toward the restrictions. Mayor Sondak expressed the concern that they didn't have much time to schedule and meet with a group on individuals. He would like to have input from the public, but it was a time-sensitive issue. He suggested soliciting written comments. Whatever they decided to do, Mayor Sondak was sure that it wouldn't be universally liked by all of the citizens. This was a very polarized issue.

02:14:00

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

8. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING 2020-R-9, A RESOLUTION REGARDING CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT CHANGE

02:15:19

Mayor Sondak explained that the proposed changes to the interlocal agreement would admit Brighton as a member, and there were some changes regarding ex officio members. All entities of the Central Wasatch Commission were asked to approve this agreement.

02:16:35

MOTION: Council Member Curry moved that the Town Council ADOPT 2020-R-9, a Resolution regarding changes to the Central Wasatch Commission Interlocal Agreement. Council Member Morgan seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous consent of the Council.

9. MAYOR'S REPORT

02:17:45

Mayor Sondak provided reports regarding the Salt Lake County Mayors meeting, Economic Impact Work Group meetings hosted by the County, the CWC Finance Committee meeting, and the UFA Finance Committee Meeting. He succeeded in having the buy-in as discussed. Alta would be charged the status quo amount, plus inflation, through the end of 2020. At that point, the UFSA price would begin in January. Property owners in Alta would not be billed for that until November 2021. The Finance Committee agreed to move forward with that recommendation to the Board, although that hasn't been finalized by the Board yet. Mayor Sondak then reported on the dog licenses granted since the last meeting: Paxton Maeder and Jeff Sellecof both had temporary licenses renewed.

10. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING RESOLUTION 2020-R-10, A RESOLUTION TO RAISE RESORT COMMUNITY TAX BY 0.1%, FROM 1.0% TO 1.1%

02:26:50

Mayor Sondak introduced the item and said that they needed to discuss the proposed tax increase before they adopt the tentative budget. This increase was built into the proposed budget.

02:27:47

MOTION: Council Member Davis moved that the Town Council ADOPT Resolution 2020-R-10 to raise Community Tax by 0.1%, from 1.0% to 1.1%. Council Member Bourke seconded the motion.

Mayor Sondak said that Council Member Curry made some valid comments during the work session regarding this potential increase. He restated that the increase was put into the budget so

that they wouldn't have to dip into the General Fund reserves as much. If the Council was comfortable with \$75,000 coming out of the General Fund, they could make that change. He reminded the Council that the draft budget would have to be changed to reflect that, but he hoped that the Council would still adopt the tentative budget tonight.

Council Member Curry was in favor of tightening up the budget in any way that they could and avoid raising taxes. Council Member Morgan agreed that the budget could be tightened in other areas. Council Member Bourke had previously suggested areas where they could free up \$75,000, and she asked why that was not being considered. Mayor Sondak explained that many of those funds could only be used for specific purposes. They could, however, take another look at AVCB, CWC, and the stipend for the Mayor and Council Members. This could free up a few thousand dollars. There was a discussion regarding bonuses.

02:50:00

Mayor Sondak called the question. Vote on motion: Council Member Bourke voting "aye"; Council Members Curry and Davis voting "nay"; and Council Member Morgan and Mayor Sondak abstaining. The motion failed.

11. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO REVIEW, CONSIDER AND ADOPT TENTATIVE FY 2020-21 BUDGETS

02:51:23

Mayor Sondak introduced the item and said that they needed to adjust the proposed budget to reflect that the tax increase would not take place. The Council and staff discussed and agreed to remove the tax increase and pull the extra \$63,589 from the General Fund reserves. Staff noted a few other lines that would be adjusted to reflect the change.

02:52:58

MOTION: Council Member Morgan moved that the Town Council ADOPT the tentative budget for the 2020-21 Fiscal Year. Council Member Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed with all members voting "aye," and Council Member Bourke abstaining.

12. NEW BUSINESS

02:56:41

Council Member Davis asked staff if they had been able to vet the individuals that were pulled for Class A dog licenses. Deputy Town Clerk Jen Clancy said that she had been able to confirm that all of the individuals were registered voters in the Town of Alta.

13. MOTION TO ADJOURN

02:57:55

MOTION: Council Member Curry moved to ADJOURN at 6:59 PM. Council Member Morgan seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous consent of the Council.

APPROVED by Alta Town Council on June 17, 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Piper Lever". The signature is stylized with a large initial "P" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Piper Lever, Town Clerk