**WOODLAND HILLS CITY COUNCIL**

**Work Session**

**Woodland Hills City Center, 690 South Woodland Hills Dr.**

**Tuesday, April 22, 2025**

CONDUCTING Brent T. Winder, Mayor

ELECTED OFFICIALS Council Member Ben Hillyard

Council Member Brian Hutchings

Council Member Janet Lunt

Council Member Kari Malkovich

Council Member Dorel Kynaston

STAFF PRESENT Ted Mickelsen, Public Works Dir./Fire Chief

Chris Helvey, Finance Director

Jody Stones, City Recorder

Wayne Frandsen, Code Enforcement and Planning Commission

Mayor Winder opened the work session at 6:01 p.m.

1. **Proposed Ordinance 2025-20 Amending City Development and Construction Standards 2.3.16 Parking Lots and Driveways**

Chairman Frandsen addressed the proposed modifications to the required width of pavement for a driveway in the city. The current ordinance requires a driveway to have a minimum width of 10 feet. The suggested change would increase this to 12 feet. This adjustment would ensure the city complies with the requirements outlined in the Wildland Urban Interface Ordinance.

1. **Proposed Ordinance 2025-21 Amending City Code 5.4.2C, 10.16.9, and 10.11.8A3**

Chairman Frandsen indicated that the modification to the city code would incorporate the suggested revisions from 2.3.16 of the City Development and Construction Standards. This adjustment pertains to the minimum driveway width, which is rising from 10 feet to 12 feet.

1. **Update from Chairman Frandsen on Upcoming Planning Commission Public Hearing Topics**

Chairman Frandsen mentioned that the planning commission will hold a public hearing during its May meeting to consider a proposed ordinance that would permit the construction of a gate across driveways.

1. **Resolution 2025-09 Adopting an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between Utah County and Woodland Hills for the Administration of the 2025 Municipal Election**

City Recorder Jody Stones remarked that the council, during a previous city council meeting, authorized the Mayor to enter into an agreement between Woodland Hills City and Utah County for the administration of the 2025 Municipal Election. The county is now seeking a formal resolution from the city to approve this agreement.

1. **Discussion of Large Purchase Requests**

Public Works Director Ted Mickelsen presented a status report on the street sweeper, which the council had previously approved. The aim is to have the street sweeper ready mid-May.

1. **Update on the Sale of Surplus Equipment**

Council Member Hutchings plans to list the Kubota and skid steer on the state auction site in the next week or two.

1. **Presentation of the Preliminary 2026 Fiscal Year Budget**

Financial Director Chris Helvey mentioned that the council should have received a copy of the tentative budget via email. He noted that the Mayor is not proposing a tax increase this year, but is suggesting that the city accept the tax rate set by the county.

Council Member Ben Hillyard noted that, during the previous discussion on taxation, several residents had requested options regarding funding. He stated that the Council could either accept the current proposal and maintain the status quo or consider increasing taxes to expedite the completion of a specified number of road projects. He emphasized the importance of offering residents a choice rather than issuing a directive.

Council Member Brian Hutchings expressed skepticism about the feasibility of continuing with the current road plan without a tax increase or additional revenue. He recalled the previous presentation on the matter and noted that, in his view, the plan did not appear viable without raising taxes. He added that he would prefer to see any necessary increase implemented incrementally.

Mayor Winder commented that one notable difference this year is the significant improvement in operational efficiency. He acknowledged the points raised by Council members but emphasized that, while spending has increased, funds are being used effectively, resulting in more completed projects. He noted that this improved efficiency should be factored into the overall revenue assessment. Although the City may be operating with a leaner budget, more is being accomplished. He stated his willingness to defer to Ted Mickelsen's recommendations as long as they are feasible and encouraged the Council to consider that past spending by the previous public works director included a considerable amount of waste, which has since been reduced.

The council continued discussions about whether to accept the proposed tax rate or possibly hold a Truth and Taxation session, with all members agreeing that gradual, small increases are better than a large tax hike all at once.

Chris Helvey then reviewed the preliminary budget with the council, highlighting ongoing efforts to preserve the city roads.

Public Works Director Ted Mickelsen provided an overview of the City’s Pavement Management Plan, which was initiated in 2024 and includes projections through 2027. He explained that while the plan outlines specific projects through 2027, work beyond that year will depend on available annual funding.

The first project under the plan is scheduled for the current year and has a budget of approximately $570,000. This project, funded from the current budget allocation, includes pavement treatments originally scheduled for 2025 and 2026. Because both years involve similar micro seal treatments, the decision was made to complete them together in 2024 to maximize efficiency.

The next planned project was initially scheduled for 2027, but given the early completion of prior years’ work, it has been moved up to 2026. The proposed budget for general street maintenance is $697,000, which will cover the estimated $560,000 cost of the 2027 project, with the remaining funds allocated for ongoing maintenance such as pothole repairs.

Ted Mickelsen further noted that beyond 2027, approximately $2.8 million in road reconstruction work is needed, primarily consisting of full road rebuilds. However, many of these roads coincide with future water line replacements, estimated at $5 million. He emphasized the potential for cost savings by aligning road reconstruction with water projects.

When it comes to funding larger projects, Mr. Mickelsen recommended pursuing grants and low-interest loans for water projects rather than relying solely on City funds. He explained that attempting to fund a $4 million water project through the City’s water budget would likely take 5 to 7 years, during which inflation would increase construction costs. In contrast, securing a low-interest loan and repaying it over 30 years—with annual payments around $50,000—would allow the project to be completed sooner and at a lower overall cost. He advised setting aside funds for a strong matching contribution, often referred to as a "down payment," to increase the likelihood of obtaining external funding. Citing the City’s previous water project—where a $300,000 to $400,000 match was used—he suggested saving approximately $1 million for the upcoming $4 million in needed water infrastructure work. He also noted that current water rates may be sufficient to support a portion of the project costs, indicating the City is in a strong position to leverage its resources effectively.

Council Member Hutchings expressed concern about the potential need for a significant tax increase in the future if infrastructure needs are not addressed proactively.

Council Member Malkovich inquired about current revenue sources for roads, noting that aside from property taxes, the City receives just over $100,000 annually in Class C road funds from the State—only a fraction of the amount needed for the annual pavement budget. She emphasized the importance of coordinating the Pavement Management Plan with the phased Water Plan to ensure efficient use of resources. She also pointed out that while some roads were improved during the first phase of the Water Plan, the repairs may not have aligned with the Pavement Plan.

Public Works Director Ted Mickelsen confirmed that the roads improved during the earlier water project are scheduled for micro seal treatment this year, which will extend their lifespan by at least 10 years. He also clarified that while there are not sufficient savings to cover all costs, the annual street maintenance budget of approximately $700,000 includes about $500,000 that can be allocated to pavement management projects without needing to draw from reserves.

Council Member Hutchings expressed skepticism about relying on grants, citing recent reductions in funding and broader budget constraints. However, he indicated more confidence in pursuing loans, provided they can be repaid through existing water revenues.

Ted Mickelsen emphasized that loan repayments must be supported by the water fund, and noted that the City historically receives limited grant funding due to its demographics. He added that the State closely reviews a city's water rates when evaluating loan applications to ensure repayment capacity, offering a measure of financial oversight and security for both parties.

Chris Helvey noted that, in addition to Class C road funds, the City receives three additional sources of revenue for road maintenance. These include approximately $31,000 from a transportation tax shared through Utah County, revenue from a franchise tax established during Mayor Harding’s administration—originally intended to address road impacts caused by utility companies performing work on roadways—and a smaller amount generated from taxes on landline and cellular phone services.

Council Member Malkovich inquired if any other cities self-finance large water projects.

Ted Mickelsen explained that water infrastructure projects typically require funding in the millions, whereas the City’s capacity to fund such projects internally is limited to hundreds of thousands annually. He noted that attempting to self-fund these projects results in a constant cycle of playing catch-up, which ultimately leads to significantly higher maintenance costs over time. While larger cities with substantial commercial and industrial bases may be able to self-fund these projects, smaller cities like Woodland Hills face greater challenges, and self-funding often proves more costly in the long run.

Chris Helvey explained that the proposed salary increases for this year include a 3% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) and a 1% merit pay increase, totaling 4% across the board. This aligns closely with the State of Utah’s adjustments for state employees and is comparable to other local cities, some of which offer slightly higher merit increases or lower COLA. The 4% increase accounts for retirement, FICA, and health insurance costs.

He also noted that since the City switched to PEHP for health insurance, City Council members may now be eligible for health benefits through PEHP, although the costs and details have not yet been explored.

Regarding the City audit, costs have remained stable in recent years, but an increase is anticipated, especially if the audit goes out for Request for Proposal (RFP), which may exceed the current $14,000 expense. A detailed review of the RFP will be conducted.

Legal expenses to date total approximately $27,000. Due to diminishing insurance coverage for legal costs, an increase in the legal budget is proposed to cover ongoing and potential future expenses.

Election costs are estimated to be around $6,600 next year, depending on the need for a primary election.

Insurance expenses are currently lower due to a recent change in billing cycles—from March to July 1 through June 30—which should better align with budgeting. The overall insurance budget remains near $60,000 and covers property, casualty, and workers’ compensation policies.

The City has contracted with Alakazam for computer network security, which entails additional costs. This partnership has allowed the City to comply with recent reporting requirements confirming the use of external IT security services. Consequently, the budget for this service will need to be increased slightly. These costs are shared between the water and general road accounts and include expenses for the Polaris accounting software.

It was noted that Public Works Director Ted Mickelsen’s salary is now charged primarily to the general fund, with less allocated to inspection and site plan review fees, resulting in about a $6,000 budgetary difference.

Council Member Kynaston indicated a need to raise the dispatch fees by $2000.00.

Chris Helvey advised that prior to discussing the fire department budget, he had reduced the salary line items due to changes in the fire department’s structure and personnel. He noted that annual spending on Christmas bonuses has decreased from $35,000 to approximately $20,000, which now includes regular monthly salaries plus the year-end bonus for firefighters.

Ted Mickelsen noted that the primary expense for the building would be the replacement of the rock wall. He also recommended considering saving for a backup generator.

Mayor Winder would like some consideration given to saving for routine building expense.

Ted Mickelsen reported that the primary change in the fire department budget is an increase in the fire equipment and supplies line item, which was raised by $10,000—from $45,000 to $55,000. This adjustment was made by reducing wages and reallocating those funds to equipment supplies. He explained that, similar to other infrastructure, the replacement of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other fire equipment has sometimes been delayed, and the increase aims to address this issue proactively. Overall, the fire budget remains essentially unchanged, or slightly lower, despite the increased equipment spending. Other expenses, such as truck payments, remain consistent, and there were no changes to the EMS budget. Ted also discussed plans to pursue licensing as a Quick Response Unit to enable volunteer insurance coverage. The licensing costs are minimal, but equipment upgrades, such as installing a self-lift system in the aging ambulance, may cost around $15,000. As a Quick Response Unit, the department would still respond to emergencies, with Salem handling transports. The department would need to have one person available 24/7, and higher licensing and staffing requirements would need to be met.

Council Member Hillyard inquired whether any trucks in the EMS and fire departments have been unused recently or if all are actively being utilized.

Ted Mickelsen mentioned that nearly all trucks are frequently used. He pointed out that the Brush Truck is aging and facing mechanical challenges, especially if the full-time wildland crew continues its operations. He expressed a desire to maintain year-round wildland operations because of its potential to generate revenue. However, he recognized the need to assess whether it justifies having personnel on standby all year. He also noted the possible need to recruit a new engine boss and emphasized the importance of succession planning. This year, he is looking to hire three wildland firefighters in addition to the engine boss. Chris Helvey indicated that the city has collected approximately $40,000 so far this year, although some payments are still outstanding. Given the positive financial trend, he proposed including a $100,000 placeholder in the budget. This figure reflects current revenue estimates and will serve as a starting point from July 1 until the budget is reopened and actual figures can be assessed more accurately.

Council discussed the need to look at replacing some of the old sirens that are used in the event of an emergency.

Council Member Hillyard mentioned he is working on acquiring a set of radios for the City Center to support emergency operations, with estimated pricing around $2,000. He inquired whether, if the cost exceeds that amount, it could be split between two fiscal years.

Chris Helvey recommended adjusting next year's budget to $4,000 to accommodate the expense, as the amount is relatively minor.

On sanitation, Chris Helvey noted projected revenues of $199,000 with expenditures around $178,000, resulting in a modest surplus to help cover billing and related costs.

Ted Mickelsen explained that the wage line for snowplowing was increased slightly to account for a possible wage adjustment and to reflect the time our public works employee spends on snow removal. The road salt budget was reduced. The equipment supplies line includes funding to replace worn wear blades. New, modular-style blades have been ordered, along with additional parts for the service truck. Delivery timelines are still uncertain.

The council discussed leasing vehicles versus buying and how the costs for each lease are spread out among three different budgets.

Council went on to discuss the water enterprise fund. Discussions included upgrades at the Broadhollow Well, repairs to the Maple Canyon Well, and repairing/replacing some of the PRV’s. Chris Helvey did mention the city will be dipping into savings to help pay for the repairs and upgrades.

A public hearing is scheduled for May 27th in which the residents will be able to comment on the tentative budget.

1. **Department Updates**
   1. **Public Works:** Ted Mickelsen reported a water leak on Skylake that has been addressed, along with some pressure issues on Summit Creek. He plans to begin the reconstruction of some PRVs and evaluate what work can be funded. Additionally, the fire hydrant at the intersection of Woodland Hills Drive and Lakeview Way will need replacement. Comcast is currently installing fiber in the city's right of way, and numerous complaints have been received by the city regarding this. The hope to complete their work by fall.
   2. **Fire Department:** Chief Mickelsen had nothing new to report.
   3. **Code/Zoning Enforcement:** Wayne Frandsen indicated that Bellview Subdivision Phase B is moving forward.
2. **Mayor and City Council Reports:** 
   1. **Mayor Winder:** Mayor Winder had no personnel updates to report.
   2. **Council Member Hillyard:** Council Member Hillyard is looking to have some EOC at the city center in the event of an emergency.
   3. **Council Member Hutchings:** Council Member Hutchings mentioned that the Parks, Trails, and Recreation Committee would like to present a Dark Skies Presentation to the council during the May 13th City Council meeting.
   4. **Council Member Kynaston:** Council Member Kynaston had nothing to report.
   5. **Council Member Lunt:** Council Member Lunt mentioned the finance committee met and discussed the budget. She reminded everyone to please send their articles in for the newsletter. The Maple Festival had a good turnout. Aaron and Angie Lowe have agreed to serve as chairs for Woodland Hills Days. The city history project is going very well.
   6. **Council Member Malkovich:** Council Member Malkovich wished to publicly thank Rasband for his donation to the 911 Dispatch Center.

**The work session was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.**

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Chris Helvey, Finance Director

Jody Stones, City Recorder

Wayne Frandsen, Code Enforcement and Planning Commission

**CALL TO ORDER**

**11. Call to Order**: Mayor Winder called the meeting to order at 8:38 p.m..

**12. Invocation**: Council Member Hilyard offered an invocation.

**13. Pledge of Allegiance**: Council Member Kynaston recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**14. Public Comment**: No public comment was heard

**BUSINESS AND DISCUSSION**

**15. Ordinance 2025-20 Amending the City Development and Construction Standards 2.3.16**

**MOTION:** Council Member Malkovich moved to adopt Ordinance 2025-20.

**SECOND**: The motion was seconded by Council Member Hutchings.

**VOTE**: The motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

1. **Ordinance 2025-21 Amending City Code 5.4.2C, 10.16.9, and 10.11.8A.3-**

**MOTION:** Council Member Kynaston moved to adopt Ordinance 2025-21.

**SECOND**: The motion was seconded by Council Member Hutchings.

**VOTE**: The motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

1. **Resolution 2025-09 Adopting an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between Utah County and Woodland Hills for the Administration of the 2025 Municipal Election**

**MOTION:** Council Member Lunt moved to approve Resolution 2025-09

**SECOND**: The motion was seconded by Council Member Malkovich.

**VOTE**: The motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

1. **Authorization of Large Purchase Requests**

Mayor Winder indicated that there was nothing to approve.

1. **Authorization of Sale of Surplus Equipment**

Mayor Winder indicated that there was nothing to approve.

1. **Budget Calendar**

A public hearing on the tentative 2026 fiscal year budget will be held on May 27th, along with a budget retreat. The council will additionally need to look at adopting a tentative budget,

On June 24th, a public hearing will be held to adopt the final 2026 fiscal year budget and the amended 2025 fiscal year budget.

**ADJOURN**

**MOTION:** Council Member Hillyard moved to adjourn the meeting.

**SECOND**: The motion was seconded by Council Member Hutchings.

**VOTE**: The motion passed unanimously.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

/s/

Jody Stones, City Recorder