

SOUTH JORDAN CITY
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

October 26, 2021

Present: Mayor Dawn R. Ramsey, Council Member Brad Marlor, Council Member Don Shelton, Council Member Jason McGuire, Council Member Tamara Zander, Council Member Patrick Harris, City Manager Gary Whatcott, Assistant City Manager Dustin Lewis, Director of Administrative Services Spencer Kyle, Associate Director of Parks Colby Hill, Associate Director of Recreation Janell Payne, Special Events Coordinator Natalie Domino, City Recorder Anna Crookston

Others: Jeanne, Mark Hendrickson, 801-558-0553

6:09 P.M.
SPECIAL MEETING

A. Welcome, Roll Call, and Introduction to Electronic Meeting - By Mayor Dawn R. Ramsey

Mayor Ramsey welcomed everyone present and introduced the meeting.

B. Invocation – By Council Member Brad Marlor

Council Member Marlor offered the invocation.

C. Discussion Item – Summerfest future date discussion.

Mayor Dawn R. Ramsey likes the idea that was previously discussed of picking a date and sticking with that, part of creating a successful ritual or tradition is continuity.

Associate Director of Recreation Janell Payne said the three options are the first weekend in June, the second weekend in August, or the second weekend in September.

Director of Administrative Services Spencer Kyle said these dates are based on when the carnival is available. There was one other date but it overlapped with the Pioneer Day weekend. We are currently under contract for the first weekend of June, but the other dates are open and we could switch if the council decides to.

Council Member Marlor asked if there were two carnival options.

Director Kyle said there are generally two carnivals that do most of the city events. The one we have the contract with has a much better reputation. In his previous city they used both and they switched to the City of Fun which is the one we have the contract with now.

Council Member Marlor asked if the other company has other weekends available.

Director Kyle said we do have a contract with City of Fun right now, with a few years still left.

Associate Director Payne said it is a five year contract that was just signed this year.

Council Member Zander asked if that means we have to use them, or if there is a way out of the contract.

Director Kyle said there is a way out of it, it involves giving them notice. They can look at the other company. He spoke with a representative from Orem, they have a contract with the other company and they decided to stop being affiliated with them for the reputation of their own city. Orem did find a company out of California that does state fairs to come in and do theirs, so we can look at out of state options.

Council Member Patrick Harris asked if some of the concerns with the other company were safety related.

City Manager Gary Whatcott said the concerns were around human safety and left it at that.

Council Member Harris responded that we don't want anything to do with that.

Director Kyle said he has used the other company in the past and there were issues related to how they treated their staff, as well as city staff, along with some other serious accusations.

The whole council agreed they don't want anything to do with that company and it is not an option.

Council Member Tamara Zander asked about the company that Orem found.

Director Kyle said the company is based out of California and they will travel to other states. They can look into them if the council wishes.

Manager Whatcott said the nice thing about our current company is that they are scalable. Other companies might be available, but they need a certain amount of space, and we don't always have that much space.

Council Member Zander said we've always had it here on Redwood Road, this is the first year we did it at the Equestrian Center. Moving forward, are we talking about staying in the same space or moving it to somewhere different.

Director Kyle said the dates the carnival is available are already booked at the Equestrian Center. They had originally planned to discuss dates and location, however they heard back from the county that those dates are booked. The date in August the field was available, but there are other events already booked on the indoor arenas; we can't do Summerfest with other events happening at the same time.

Mayor Ramsey said both Herriman and Bingham High made it clear they want their schools involved in the parade and as part of Summerfest, they were very passionate about that. She spoke with the principal at Bingham and shared the options for the three possible dates. She asked if we went back to the first weekend in June, would the school still be able to participate; if we worked to make the event part of graduation weekend rather than competing with it, would they still be able to participate. He responded to her with “Hi Mayor, I think we would still be able to participate and I will always push it as it should involve the school. With that, however, I don’t see how the band could be involved as that is right when the season is starting and Band Director Darin Graber will not have met with the new band to have anything together. Remember, the band ends the last day of school; it is the last day of school that weekend then there is a new band that gets put together with the incoming freshman, the seniors are out, and they start doing their thing to get ready for July. Also, with it being graduation weekend and people going out of town, some of our teams may be limited. I will do everything I can to make sure Bingham is still there, the second weekend in August would be best I think.” She spoke with the band director at Herriman, he was upset they could not be here this year because of the competition they were hosting. He said if it was any other week they want to be in it. The first weekend of June has always been hard, but they want to be part of this. She feels that we will get more community engagement if their kids are participating in it, but if we don’t care if it stays small and the numbers for the parade are small and it’s just a small event in terms of the parade participation, then the first weekend in June is fine. If we want the school participation, and that’s what she feels it should be, then a different weekend is better.

Council Member Harris said at the last meeting, staff felt the June week would be the one with the highest attendance.

Associate Director Payne said it definitely has a following, people plan on it. In 2019 we had almost 100 parade entries, and this last one we only had about 60. Having a smaller parade was mentioned in terms of school participation and it was smaller on that graduation weekend, but we still had high numbers of parade entries and that’s honestly about where they would cap it in the future.

Mayor Ramsey asked what kind of entries they did not have. There has been a push by this body to get the high schools participating, and we did. A few years ago we had a bunch of candidates, that hasn’t been the case recently. We had a few city floats, but who did we have in June that we wouldn’t have in August.

Council Member Zander said she doesn’t believe it’s fair to compare other years to this year, this was an anomaly. Of course we had low participation because we switched the date and it was post pandemic. She doesn’t think the staff, or anyone else, was that committed to the September date because it was just filling in a gap. During the last meeting we were told that it’s harder for staff to do it during September, so she feels like maybe the full effort wasn’t there.

Associate Director Payne said they definitely gave the event their full effort. There were challenges for sure, and whatever we land on we’ll put our best effort in to.

Director Kyle said the challenge for staff, for September specifically, were that we have quite a few seasonal employees that are done and no longer working for the city at that point. He agrees with

Associate Director Payne, there was no less of an effort by the staff this September than there was for other June dates.

Associate Director Payne said, if anything, it was more difficult because of the lower staff numbers we had available for actually working the event. Also, all the prep work that Special Events Coordinator Natalie Domino's team was doing was in the middle of summer, which was busy season anyways for us.

Council Member Jason McGuire said his concern with August is that he feels like it's coming towards the end of summer, people are getting ready to go back to school and getting in last minute family vacations. He feels like things get lost at that time. In June we lose the high school participation, but because it's at the beginning of the season more people are ready to be involved and start their summer off with a parade.

Council Member Marlor said his concern is about jumping around, which was discussed at the last meeting. We need to land somewhere, and if August doesn't work out well and we have to move back to June we are just jumping again. He thinks we will lose some people, regardless of the date. We lost people because of football games and other distractions that were going on in September, we are going to lose people no matter what.

Mayor Ramsey said it's unfortunate that we are at the mercy of only when this carnival is available and can't choose a good week. There are a lot of other weeks in the summer that are better than these options, and that's why other people have taken them and why they have such huge turnouts.

Manager Whatcott said if they want another date, and don't care if there's a carnival, they can pick whatever date they want. We can always try to fill that space with something else, it just might not be a carnival.

Council Member Zander said it feels like this carnival piece is a big deal. Of course it's available the first weekend of June because that's a bad weekend, the high school kids can't come, we can't get the bands, and it's a lousy weekend. We've done it consistently and she's attended it for six years; before she was on the city council she never came because it always broadsided her with kids still in school and everything else going on. We have this weekend we've been using for who knows how long, because the carnival was available or whatever the reason was, but it's not an ideal weekend because we can't get our high school kids there. If we look at September, again not the best weekend, but it's when the carnival is available. Are we making this important decision just to get the available carnival? If that's what we decide, great, everyone will get behind it, but it feels a little unfortunate instead of looking at the calendar and saying "yeah, let's make that our weekend."

Council Member Marlor said other cities would do the same thing, they would say no the first week in June because South Jordan has the carnival. We've jumped around enough over the past few years that we kind of got pushed to the available date.

Council Member Zander asked how long it has been the first weekend of June.

Manager Whatcott said we've had it in August, July.

Council Member Don Shelton said the last seven or eight years it has been that first week of June.

Mayor Ramsey asked why it was changed from later in June and July.

Manager Whatcott said it was because of competition for floats.

Associate Director of Parks Colby Hill said there were a few other city events we were competing with at the time. He believes the change was made when Don Tingey was the director.

Manager Whatcott said they moved it to the Fourth of July at one point to try and make it a patriotic thing, and it didn't work as there were too many other parades at the same time. They couldn't even do the parade the night before because Riverton had that, and Murray has been on the Fourth of July forever.

Mayor Ramsey said people across the valley go to the same events every year.

Manager Whatcott said when they moved it to the first week of June, they weren't worried about the high schools, it was to stay away from everyone else and it ended up being that we kicked off summer with it.

Council Member Harris said the idea was thrown around that maybe we close the carnival down to the general public and have it just for high school kids as part of their celebration, he asked if that was discussed with the high schools.

Mayor Ramsey said she didn't offer that to the schools yet since it wasn't something they had decided on, but she did ask how they felt about finding a way to work with graduation weekend rather than competing with it.

Council Member Zander said that doesn't bring them to our parade though. She really wants the high school kids in the parade, without them it's just so empty. When they were here this last parade she loved it and felt this was what they were missing, that energy and fun.

Mayor Ramsey said that's what the Herriman parade is made of, and it's packed.

Council Member Marlor said the solution might be to have it in June, but we actually give them a stipend and encourage certain groups.

Assistant City Manager Dustin Lewis said they've done that before.

Council Member McGuire said he doesn't think that would matter to the bands because it's the end of the year and they don't have a band yet.

Special Events Coordinator Natalie Domino suggested encouraging individuals to come, like the seniors. Possibly getting custom hats or shirts made that they would receive for coming to the parade, or a wristband for the carnival that night.

Mayor Ramsey said to keep in mind that since Covid, graduation has changed. They did a graduation parade instead of a regular graduation two years ago, they loved it so much this last year they had a regular graduation and still did the parade.

Coordinator Domino asked if we could combine that graduation parade with ours.

Mayor Ramsey said we would have way more than 100 entries with each of the seniors in their decorated cars.

Council Member Marlor said let's celebrate them and with them.

Council Member Zander said we need something, our parades are seriously lacking. Many people don't even know there is a parade, or they just don't show up. We got the most involvement when the high school kids showed up because their parents and everyone else wanted to see them walk past in a parade. She thinks the high school piece is critical.

Mayor Ramsey said the schools might actually like that proposal, along with our staff and public safety employees, if we offered to have our city parade on Saturday also be open to all the graduates. Have the graduates decorate their cars, wear their cap and gown if they want, give them sunglasses again as they were ridiculously popular last year, and have them be in the city parade. If they do their own parade on Friday and then we do ours on Saturday, she doesn't think that will work.

Council Member Zander loved having Herriman and Bingham in the same parade, it was so unifying.

Mayor Ramsey said this would get residents of Daybreak who never come to city stuff because their kids would be in the South Jordan parade.

Council Member Shelton asked if we didn't have to worry about the carnival, what would be the ideal date.

Coordinator Domino said we would want to take in all the other neighboring cities and coordinate with their parade, because if there is a parade going on at the same time floats have to choose which one they're going to go to. This last year, Taylorsville Days moved theirs to the same time as Herriman and they asked us to come and she had to say she had already committed to Herriman. She thinks a lot of the floats will stay with the parade they have been doing. Right now, the booked dates are the last weekend in June for Herriman and Taylorsville, the first weekend in July around the Fourth there are five cities that do things, there's nothing until the end of July which is usually Draper and Cottonwood Heights, then the first or second Saturday in August is Bluffdale. Murray and West Jordan usually work together on their parade. Murray starts at 9:00 a.m. and puts most of their floats at the beginning, then West Jordan starts at 10:30 a.m. and they put most of their floats at the end. That way, once you get out of the parade you book it to West Jordan and hop in. This last year there were four floats that got there late because of traffic, ours was one of them. Our staff went

and talked to the West Jordan staff and said they wanted to still be in the parade, so they opened the parade route back up for us. She has a good relationship with the Bluffdale event coordinator and she could make that work, but those are the dates we should avoid.

Associate Director Hill said that for him, as a parent, the earlier the better; otherwise he is in the middle of family vacations, camps, etc.

Council Member Zander asked what was happening the second weekend in June.

Coordinator Domino said there is not any other cities doing anything the second weekend in June. That also isn't enough time to get a high school band together.

Council Member Zander said she knows the band director at Bingham, who has been there forever. She wonders if we talked to him, explain that we know he's losing his senior class but if he could spend a few weeks in May with his band class and just prep a song and ask him to come with the kids who are still there. It's not graduation weekend anymore, and if we incentivize them, is it possible.

Coordinator Domino said the problem is they are training those new members how to march, and they need a few weeks to get that. They are out practicing four days a week, every morning for three hours, to get that stuff down. If we did this the last weekend in June we would probably lose the Murray float, Cottonwood Heights; the ones closer to Taylorsville than us.

Council Member Zander asked if we had those cities in the parade in September.

Council Member Marlor said we want people to come to the parade because it's a fun thing for everyone. They come to the parade and then they go to the carnival and everything else, so what is driving what; do they come to the carnival and then figure they might as well go to the parade first, or do they go to the parade and then figure they might as well stay and do the carnival. Do we know what is driving attendance at each event. The parade is only going for a few hours, but the carnival is going for multiple days. The parade is important but we can't do this without the carnival.

Coordinator Domino said she believes the carnival is more important than the parade. The carnival draws more people, and we get more money back from the carnival.

Council Member Harris thinks we can be successful with both, we just need to coordinate with Herriman and Bingham to get that joint parade in there.

Mayor Ramsey said she can propose it. If there are still some clubs that want to be in it, we could have those with the graduated seniors on their own, but that would be a really long parade.

Assistant City Manager Dustin Lewis said if they do that they should be done as a group, otherwise there will be way too many vehicles.

Mayor Ramsey suggested having the seniors as one entry and let them all walk together.

Council Member Marlor suggested putting a fire engine in front of the seniors, let it honk and just make something special out of the fact that they're graduating.

Mayor Ramsey said that's what they do in Richfield, they line up the firetrucks down Main Street and all the seniors are behind them in their cars and it's big and loud. If we have the high school kids, we'll get their families. Her campaign entry was at the end of the parade, and when she came back around there were only one-third of the people there from the start and she asked where everyone went; people said they left once their kids were done.

Director Kyle said a specific problem this year was that they had one entry that was going too slow with a huge gap. People got up and left because they thought the parade was over.

Council Member Marlor asked about the director putting together a modified band of sorts, without the seniors and just the juniors and sophomores, and include a cash incentive.

Council Member Zander said just watching 1,000 seniors in their individual cars is going to be boring; if we have the band, the student body officers, the dance team, that's so much different than a bunch of seniors in their decorated cars.

Coordinator Domino said if we got all the seniors from Bingham and Herriman that would be approximately 1,800 students.

Council Member Zander said that's too many for them to all drive, but if we group them and make it one entry where they walk together, that could work. The energy is the band and the cheerleaders, she would rather incentivize the groups and let the seniors walk.

Mayor Ramsey said it would take a lot of extra effort on the director's part that might not be worth it, it hasn't been worth it in the past. An incentive might help, but she doesn't know.

Council Member Zander would be okay with the June weekend if we could get the high schools involved. As it stands, she doesn't like it, but she will go with what the majority wants.

Coordinator Domino asked if they could get them to do it with the smaller band, she could also reach out to stand alone drum corps and other groups around the valley to hire them throughout the parade to help with that. If we get the seniors and their families, the smaller school bands, and additional smaller bands to keep the energy high that might work.

Council Member McGuire said the reason why they want the school participation is for their families to come and getting the community there.

Mayor Ramsey said Herriman High School covers two cities. She would have to talk to their principal and the city mayor since the kids from Herriman High School would also want to be in the Herriman parade.

Director Kyle said getting Bingham on board will be easier since they have been doing a parade here already. Herriman will be a little more difficult, in that they are doing their parade around their high school in Herriman.

Council Member Zander said once this is dialed in and improved, Herriman will want to be a part of it in terms of their seniors. She likes the idea of giving the seniors that come to the parade something special like a wristband, sunglasses, etc.

Coordinator Domino said they could work with the carnival and see if they would either give us a discount, or we say from 10:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. on Friday night seniors ride for free. She thinks they would come for that, but they have to come to our parade to get it.

Council Member Zander said if they were incentivized with some “senior time” at the carnival, they would feel like a big deal.

Council Member McGuire said just two hours, maybe 10:00 p.m. to midnight, would be plenty.

Council Member Zander asked what time the carnival normally closes down.

Coordinator Domino said in 2019 and prior years they were open until midnight, they usually stayed open until midnight the last day.

Assistant City Manager Lewis said you don’t want to shut the carnival down to the paying customers during the fireworks since that is one of our highest revenue generating times.

Coordinator Domino said if we let them have a wristband good throughout the day, that’s \$30.00 each. Just closing it down and giving them a time slot would be cheaper. The carnival opens at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday after the parade is done.

Council Member Harris said the carnival makes more money at night, so they might give us a better deal on the wristband if we gave the seniors a time during the day when it’s slower.

Mayor Ramsey said it sounds to her like we are landing around the first weekend in June and asked if that was the consensus.

Council Member McGuire said that’s his preference.

Council Member Marlor said that’s his preference, and wants to see some marketing and incentives to get people out.

Council Member Zander said that’s where we’re missing the boat is not having our high school kids there. If we can get those kids there she will back up the first weekend in June. She likes that we are thinking about how we can change and improve because she would like to see it be more unifying.

Council Member Shelton appreciates the discussion, he’s honestly thinking maybe we should look at possibly the third weekend in June and see about another source for a carnival. He understands about

camps and that kind of stuff, and with vacations that takes so much time. His preference would be the second or third week in June, but if they just can't get a carnival at that time then he'd support the first weekend in June; he liked all the ideas for getting the high school kids there. He thinks the music and having it spaced through the parade, maybe even some bagpipers, would be great.

Council Member Harris said the optimal time is the first part of June, but the most important thing we can do is getting momentum with this. He really likes the idea of whoever goes to the parade gets the wristband, but he thinks we could go even further and maybe that night have half price bands or something where they can go back later and really get the kids excited about this and something people look forward to the next year.

Mayor Ramsey said she thinks the continuity is the most important thing, so if this is what they decide she doesn't want it to be changed. If it doesn't work, if they can't get the high school students to participate, then that's just what it is and they will have to be okay with it. She likes the idea of trying to incentivize the schools, she has done everything she can to try and get the school participation along with many others. We are trying to create a new culture at these schools with the new administrations, but this is something that has been a concern the whole four years she has been there. Moving it back to the weekend she knows they can't do it is hard for her, and there's only so far she's willing to push these directors.

Council Member Zander asked the mayor what her first choice is.

Mayor Ramsey said none of the current choices. She understands it's hard when other cities already have their events planned, that's what we're up against; it's more important that whatever we choose we keep and start to create that permanent date that people can plan on and look forward to. She wants to see the high school students involved and she appreciates that the two current principals are on board and want to help in any way they can.

Council Member Shelton said he doesn't necessarily agree with the mayor. He thinks that if this falls flat we need to re-evaluate and maybe end up moving it again. He thinks we should work on getting the ideal time, and he doesn't know what that is, possibly June some time. When he graduated he was out, and he thinks that happens with a lot of kids that are graduating from high school.

Council Member Marlor said that's true with some. He thinks if we establish this celebration with seniors, then the juniors and sophomores are going to see that and plan for it their senior year. We may not have a stellar first time, but establishing that precedence and continuing on with it will make it better and better.

Council Member McGuire said the passes really need to be for the nighttime, the kids won't come during the day.

Council Member Marlor said they could offer either 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. to midnight.

Council Member McGuire asked how much of that cost they could absorb.

Council Member Zander asked if we can have staff go back and check other options for two other weekends in June, can we look at those weekends and see if there is anything we can do that won't compete with another event somewhere else. Would those other two weekends make a difference for the high school kids.

Council Member Marlor thinks there will be a tradeoff there, they'll get some high school students but lose other families that have vacations and youth activities.

Coordinator Domino said the earliest the new bands would be ready would probably be the end of June.

Mayor Ramsey likes that we're kicking off summer, it's a unique niche, and she likes what we do; she just wishes we could get more people to the parade. People come from all over the place to the carnival, and we get that for the parade too, but she wishes we could get more of our residents out to the parade.

Associate Director Hill has been to a lot of parades, ours in particular, and this year did feel different. He thinks some things that might have played into that are that we changed our route, people didn't sit on 2200 West so everyone was condensed in the park so it felt fuller.

Council Member Zander said she was shocked to see people there when she showed up because of the weather, and they came because they had kids in the parade. Once each high school entry went by, a group of parents would get up and leave. She went back and stood about halfway back and watched, the parents were excited to see their kid, and then they left. It's that involvement that gets the people there.

Associate Director Hill said this brings up the question then, if the parents are just going to leave, how do we get them to stay; do we put the kids at the end?

Coordinator Domino said that Bingham had a competition they had to head to that was being hosted by Herriman. Normally on the mornings of competitions they rehearse from 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m., so she asked them if they would come to the parade as their warm-up. She offered to put them at the beginning, and then they could make it back. They agreed but they wanted all the Bingham High School entries with them so they weren't alone. This year, if we do something similar they will be spread out.

Mayor Ramsey said she knows there is so much work put into the parade, she wants people to come. She sees all the people that go to Riverton's parade and wonders why we don't have that many when we have such a good thing to offer.

Council Member Marlor said if we get a few hundred seniors in the parade, we'll get a few hundred families, some of which wouldn't normally come. That's a great incentive to be there, and they'll spend a little more money so we'll get a return on that.

Mayor Ramsey said it sounds like the first weekend in June is what she's hearing.

There were no objections from the council members.

Director Kyle said it's already booked for that week so no additional changes are needed, other than working on how to book the schools.

Mayor Ramsey asked if they were keeping the parade route the same as this year, or if that needed to be discussed. The only way to create the ritual we are looking for is to keep things, like the parade route, the same.

Assistant Director Hill said they may have to adjust a little bit because of the location. Where they de-staged is where the event will be, so they will have to be a little creative with that.

Director Kyle said they like the route through the park and have been brainstorming on how they can keep what's working well.

Council Member McGuire asked if they think they can keep the people on 2200 West, there's no parking for them and they don't want to walk from the baseball fields.

Coordinator Domino said there is a lot of parking, the racetrack parking at the equestrian park has plenty of space.

Mayor Ramsey said she isn't sure if the schools will want to move their senior parade to join ours, but we can offer it and it might be a relief for them; the students might not like it but the administration might consider it one less thing for them to worry about.

Council Member McGuire said he could see both happening, the schools keeping theirs and then us offering an incentive to get them to ours.

Coordinator Domino said she doesn't think we'll get them at two parades, it will be one or the other.

Mayor Ramsey said numbers were down for the school parades this year from the year before when there was no graduation at all. It might be that if they don't do it on Friday we can get some to come on Saturday, there are plenty of people who will go out of town that weekend but it is what it is. We have the support of both principals who really want their schools to be in it, and if they can do it they want to.

Council Member McGuire motioned to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Marlor seconded the motion, the vote was unanimous in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

The October 26, 2021 City Council special meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

This is a true and correct copy of the October 26, 2021 City Council Special Meeting Minutes, which were approved on November 16, 2021.

Anna Crookston

South Jordan City Recorder