

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Tuesday, October 16, 2018 6:00 p.m.
Community Recreation Center
10640 N Clubhouse Drive, Cedar Hills, Utah

Present: Mayor Jenney Rees, Presiding
Councilmembers: Denise Andersen, Ben Ellsworth, Mike Geddes
Absent/Excused: Ben Bailey, Brian Miller
Chandler Goodwin, City Manager
Greg Gordon, Recreation Director
Jeff Maag, Public Works Director
Charl Louw, Finance Director
Joel Wright, City Attorney
Colleen Mulvey, City Recorder
Others: Lt. Gregg Ludlow

This work session of the City Council of the City of Cedar Hills, having been properly noticed, was called to order at 6:07 p.m. by Mayor Rees.

1. Ranked Choice Voting Presentation

Kory Holdaway, former legislator, introduced himself. He said he was interested in this issue because of his involvement with voting rights. He explained if Ranked Choice Voting was adopted then the City would not need to hold a primary election. House Bill 35 created a pilot program which would start January 1st for municipalities that choose to opt-in to the program. This would allow the legislature to evaluate if the program was valuable. He explained the sponsors of the bill varied from liberal to conservative. There was bipartisan support of the bill.

Mr. Holdaway explained there were several benefits of ranked choice voting. He said the voters were more involved in the voting process because they had more choices. The voters were also forced to learn more about all the candidates because of the ranked voting. The campaigns were more civil and issue-based. He noted this should also save a lot of money.

Mr. Holdaway presented the Council Members with example ballots, and explained how the ranked voting worked using the ballots. He explained the County had embraced ranked choice voting. He noted if the City decided to use this type of voting they would need a software patch for the voting equipment. He said there were other cities in Utah County that were interested. This method would also work with vote-by-mail ballots.

He suggested the vote-by-mail voter card have instructions about the new process to save money. He said they should use social media and civic clubs to educate voters. If Cedar Hills was interested, the City needed to pass a resolution before January 1st. The County Clerk would begin the process of getting the software updates for the voting machines. He added that there was a video available explaining ranked choice voting.

C. Ellsworth asked if the patch allowed the voting machines to switch between voting methods. Mr. Holdaway answered in the affirmative, and said they could switch back after the trial period.

C. Ellsworth asked how they would handle write-in candidates. Mr. Holdaway responded they would be handled the same as they currently were; they would just tabulate the write-in candidates. C. Ellsworth asked if there were legal challenges to the voting process. Mr. Holdaway answered in the negative.

C. Geddes asked Mr. Holdaway to explain the four rounds of analyzing the ballots. Mr. Holdaway explained if there was no candidate with 50% of number one votes, the lowest candidate was dropped, and the ballots were recalculated. This was a benefit because there would always be a majority and no ties. He subsequently explained that in a convention delegates would fill out the ballot with the choices ahead of the convention. C. Geddes said that the elections would be unruly with multiple candidates.

Mayor Rees asked if the County had any concern with the cities voting differently. Mr. Holdaway answered in the negative and said they already identified the ballots by City. Mr. Wright asked how they would handle a ballot with only one vote. Mr. Holdaway responded the ballot would only be eliminated if the candidate lost. He noted if someone was written in all the positions, they would be considered only for the top position on the ballot.

Mr. Wright commented that voters had only been exposed to voting by mail in the last five years. He said this would add to the complication of voting. Mr. Holdaway responded they needed to educate the residents and there would be a learning curve, and said the majority would prefer this method. He used the last presidential election as an example. Most people from Utah were afraid to vote for Evan McMullin because they thought they were throwing their vote away. The ranked voting would allow voters more flexibility.

C. Ellsworth asked if this was just for municipal elections. Mr. Holdaway answered in the affirmative. C. Ellsworth asked how this would be handled this November. Mr. Holdaway responded they would have a mixed ballot, and he noted that Maine also had a mixed ballot. He said the bill would be introduced to be statewide if there was enough positive response.

MOTION: C. Ellsworth—To go into closed session pursuant to State Code 52-4-204 and 52-4-205(1) (d) to discuss the purchase, exchange or lease of real property, closed session held in the Community Recreation Center. Seconded by C. Geddes. Vote taken by roll call. (6:37 p.m.)

Yes - C. Andersen
C. Ellsworth
C. Geddes Motion passes.

This meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m. on a motion by C. Ellsworth, seconded by C. Geddes, and unanimously approved.

Approved by Council:
November 20, 2018

/s/ Colleen A. Mulvey, MMC
City Recorder