

State of the City 2022

Presented by Mayor Debbie Winn on February 2, 2022

Tooele City Council, department heads, staff and residents of Tooele City; I am grateful for the opportunity to address you this evening as I present to you the state of our city.

Tooele City was recently named a “Development Ready City” by the Economic Development Corporation of Utah. Economic development efforts have yielded new job creation. Plastic Ingenuity, Carvana, and the Kentuckiana Curb Company are anticipated to create over 1,000 new jobs in the coming years. Creation of local job opportunities will be helpful in reducing traffic on our roads and improving our air quality.

In 2021, Tooele City worked with local business owners to re-establish the Tooele Downtown Alliance which will support historic preservation, buy local campaigns, and the cultural appeal of our Downtown and Broadway areas. This initiative is young, but we expect it to grow into an important community resource. To encourage residents to come see what downtown has to offer, a beautiful mural was painted on a building located on Vine Street across from the Veterans Memorial Park. Additional murals will be completed in the near future.

With grant funding of over \$1.2 Million we have been able to start work on new trails, sidewalks, workforce training programs, and other projects not otherwise in the city’s budget. The creation of the **Economic Development Department**, led by Jared Stewart, will continue these efforts to improve both economic prospects and quality of life for our residents.

Libraries are essential in giving citizens access to knowledge. In times of the internet, everyone can visit a library without leaving home, although it’s much more fun to visit in person. **Tooele City’s library**, under the direction of Jami Carter, received an Exemplary Service award from the Utah State Library in recognition of their innovative service to our residents during the pandemic; receiving the highest score of all the public libraries that received awards this year. More than \$150,000 in grant funding has been awarded to the library in the last 12 months, with more to come. Our librarians are now providing a new personalized service called Digital Me, which is dedicated to helping our adult community members learn how to use new technology including smart phones, iPad’s and other electronic devices. The confidence to use technology improves quality of life and social connection of people living in our community. Last year we saw an increase of 1,262 new library members. Over 211,000 items were borrowed by the community. Free wifi internet provided by the library was used over 12,300 times. Community members used library computers over 6,500 hours and 102,364 people visited the library. I’m sure that you will agree that the library is a vital part of our community.

Staffing challenges during the year termed “the great resignation” impacted Tooele City’s workforce as we saw our highest turnover in almost 20 years rising from 7.08% to 14.51%. The **HR Department**, under the direction of Kami Perkins, processed 66 new hires during the 2021 calendar year. Labor shortages continue to impact Tooele City increasing time to fill jobs. We have implemented “trainee positions” to fill several high demand occupations such as operators and inspectors. We raised our seasonal pay rates at the beginning of the fiscal year as the market moved quickly and put pressure on filling our seasonal work needs. We anticipate that wages will

be one of our top discussion items with this year's budget preparation as inflation and labor shortages continue to put pressure on our labor needs and costs.

Tooele City added several positions with the FY22 budget including one part-time clerk and two building inspectors for community development; one civil inspector and an admin assistant for public works; Directors for the Economic Development and IT Department; two employees at the water reclamation facility to allow staff to work at the plant seven days per week; and a facilities maintenance tech to help fill the increased demand for building maintenance. Two library tech positions were funded through grants. We have added two police officer positions; one in cooperation with a grant from the Tooele County Health Department.

COVID continued to impact our workplace as we asked our staff to adapt to the continual changes in guidelines. Employee safety is our top priority.

I am extremely grateful for the service of our **police officers**, led by Chief Adrian Day. They are well trained men and women who put their lives on the line each time they begin their shift. They respond to difficult situations every day to protect the lives and safety of our citizens.

Our officers were dispatched to 20,663 call; an increase of 6,600 from the previous year. Over 8,600 were non emergency calls such as reports of suspicious circumstances, civil problems, or an anonymous call about a barking dog. This type of call can be reported using our new online reporting system that creates a case number and goes to an officer to investigate if needed. This option allows a citizen to immediately document the report and get a case number for their insurance or other needs and allows the victim to add their statement and attach documents and photos.

Looking at crime statistics for the past year show us that although assaults have declined, aggravated assaults have increased. A disturbing statistic involves domestic violence. This type of call occurs on a daily basis. Numbers increased from 372 in 2020 to 487 in 2021. In the last 15 months; Tooele City police officers were involved in two officer involved shootings; both incidents were results of domestic violence. This is an alarming trend nationwide.

Our ordinance compliance officer is now a supervisory position and is responsible for animal control. These three employees now work together on all code enforcement issues in the City including animal control calls. This change will improve the code enforcement process and provide more expansive and effective service.

The City Council recently approved my recommendation for pay increases of sworn law enforcement officers. This has made us wage competitive with agencies along the Wasatch Front and the department is replacing open positions with quality employees who live locally.

With the continued growth in our city, the demand on our **volunteer fire department** is increasing. The number of fire calls increased from 498 calls in 2020 to 532 this past year. To ensure that we continue to provide our residents with a responsive fire department, we are contracted with the Center for Public Safety Management to conduct a study to help determine placement of future fire stations and to provide the firefighters with up to date equipment and additional training opportunities. We expect the study to be completed within the next few months. I am grateful for the service Chief Colovich and our firefighters provide as volunteers.

On September 11th last year, we recognized the 20th anniversary of the horrific events that happened on that day in 2001. Tooele City joined with local officials to honor our first responders with early morning flag raising ceremonies and a community event held at the Utah Motorsports Park. We appreciate the commitment and dedication of all of our emergency responders.

This past year, the council passed a resolution to form our **IT Department**. Chris Nielson has accepted the responsibility to lead the department whose primary goal is to keep our city network operating and free from cyber-attacks. The department staff continue to provide service to allow employees to work from home if needed. We are currently working to determine placement of high-speed internet fiber to improve quality of service for our buildings.

Tooele City Attorney Roger Baker and his staff, play a significant role in city government. Although most work is done behind the scenes, many decisions made by administration need a legal opinion and direction. During the past year, the city council approved 111 resolutions and 32 ordinances; many were written by the attorney's staff. Our two assistant city attorneys handled more than 1,250 criminal cases during the last 12 months.

Tooele City Recorder Michelle Pitt was recently re-appointed by the council to serve another two year term. The position of Deputy Recorder has been increased to full time to include clerical services to the fire department. This office has been instrumental in providing a live stream of city council meetings on our Facebook page in an effort to encourage more community participation in local government. The Recorders office processed 161 GRAMA requests last year which is about 3 per week; and scanned and filed hundreds of documents including contracts, resolutions, ordinances, deeds, and other important papers so that they are easily accessible for all staff.

Tooele City's Communities That Cares Program continues to provide resources to our residents through the Guiding Good Choices free family workshops program, Suicide Prevention Training, Mayor's Youth Recognition Awards and the Neighborhood Cleanup Trailer available to bring neighbors together. CTC recently partnered with Parent's Empowered to bring an Escape Room opportunity to encourage parents to teach their children about the harmful effects of underage drinking. Tooele City continues to provide opportunities to strengthen families and encourage people to care about and serve one another.

The Community Development Department, directed by Jim Bolser, continues to see strong growth and high activity. In 2021 alone, the Building Division issued permits for more than 450 new homes, which is 146% higher than permits issued in 2020. This added approximately 1,500 new residents to our community. Our inspectors performed more than 7,000 inspections in the last year. Planning efforts for our community are a constant and consistent effort between city staff, the Planning Commission and the City Council who are all working very hard to provide guidance for the future of our community.

The mission of the **Public Works** Department, directed by Jamie Grandpre, is to operate and maintain public infrastructure efficiently and effectively in order to protect public safety and enhance the quality of life for those living and working in Tooele City.

The Water Reclamation Division has completed the first phase of upgrades to the plant, which is over 20 years old. These upgrades included the Rehab of Clarifier 1 which provides a continuous removal of solids, a New Polymer Feed System, Membrane replacement in the oxidation ditch and sludge holding tank. We will be replacing aging sand filters with 2 new disc filters to increase our

capacity at the plant for future growth. We have begun the engineering design of a new Headwork's Facility in order to increase productivity and to replace aging equipment and infrastructure. The recent purchase of a new vactor truck replaces a 24-year-old vehicle that will be used to assist in productivity primarily in wastewater collections but also heavily utilized by other Public Works Divisions.

Water is one of the most important resources we have in our city. Paul Hansen, contract city engineer and the Public Works Dept work tirelessly to protect water resources to ensure drinking water meets the highest standards.

The Berra and Park wells along with a one-million-gallon storage tank, are expected to go out for bid in February. These wells and tank are expected to improve pressure and flow within the northwest and center areas of our city. We will continue our search for viable well sites and expect to begin testing a future sight in the near future. We will continue our efforts to expand the use of secondary water and frequently inform residents of ways to conserve water.

In 2021, our streets division completed storm drain and road improvements on 1000 West and Vine Street as well as applying slurry seal to many other city streets. North 7th Street improvements are in process and expected to be completed this year. Road projects this year will include work on Sunset Avenue, Oakhill Drive and Elk Meadows Loop.

Tooele City implemented the 50/50 sidewalk replacement program last month to work with property owners to replace damaged sidewalks for overall safety and improved neighborhood appearance.

The long-awaited street sweeper was purchased to not only beautify our city streets but is also an important part of storm water pollution prevention. A street sweeping schedule will be published to notify residents of when the sweeper will be in your neighborhood.

Our Fleet Management Division installed the GPS tracking units on all city vehicles to assist with cutting fuel costs, increase productivity, reinforce driver safety, and reduce maintenance costs.

We are continuing to improve our Geographic Information System or GIS to allow for better mapping capabilities in searching, data management, more efficient mapping workflows and shareability.

Shannon Wimmer, Tooele City **Finance** Director and her team implemented a new online software for customers to have full access to real time billing information as well as full account history. They also assisted in the implementation of online business license renewal and payment options that offers ease and convenience for those doing business in our city. The city also received a clean audit for the financial records of the city as well as for the CARES funds which demonstrates our ability to follow all laws and regulations on these funds. In an effort to increase transparency, the FY2022 budget was presented to the public in a new easier to understand format, that is available on our website. It makes a very complex municipal budget easier to read and understand so residents can see for themselves where and how their tax dollars are being spent.

Parks and Recreation Department Director Darwin Cook and his team continue to improve city recreational facilities, parks and the cemetery. We have made a renewed effort to provide

additional use of parks buildings to all members of our community. To accomplish this, we have installed new heating and air conditioning as well as upgraded the electrical system at the Tooele Youth Center, installed a new poured in place sport floor at the Dow James building which includes pickleball, basketball, volleyball and other sporting opportunities. We have also completely remodeled the kitchen in the building in an effort to provide another meeting place for residents.

We have begun construction of pavilions at the Wigwam and England Acres parks. We are currently designing a landscape and trail design for England Acres Trail, and will continue with the improvements at England Acres Park including additional playground equipment and playing fields for soccer and other recreation. We recently received a grant from Rocky Mountain Power to purchase park benches and items needed for the completion of a dog park which will be located at the England Acres location.

The new restrooms have been completed on the back nine and the front nine of the Oquirrh Hills Golf Course.

We received a donation of over 200 trees of which most of them have already been planted throughout the city. With the support of the city council, we are well on our way to receiving the Tree City USA designation.

Communication with our residents is important. This year we doubled the pages in our newsletter to 8 pages, to allow us to share more information with our residents. We've added a section for the City Council to let residents know what issues are being addressed by the legislative arm of our government. We've added additional information about the functions of City Departments. We are always looking at ways to improve and we appreciate feedback so that we know what topics are important to you, our residents, and we will address those topics in our monthly newsletter.

We are also working on building a new City website. We plan to have it completed sometime this summer. With our new site, we hope to offer greater ease in finding information, additional transparency, and a more interactive functionality for our residents. We are excited about this project and are looking forward to the launch day!

Collaboration, partnerships, and working together as a team is the only way to accomplish great things. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with the elected officials in our county, Tooele Technical College, Utah State University Tooele Campus and our military leaders at Dugway Proving Ground and Tooele Army Depot.

While all changes do not lead to improvement, all improvement requires change. The ability to develop and implement change is essential for our city if we want to continuously improve. During the next year, I have made a commitment to work with department heads to review each employees' responsibilities to improve service and cut costs.

The council members and I continue our commitment to being transparent and accountable. We are committed to making our community a place that residents can be proud of.

I am honored and proud to serve as your Mayor. Thank you for your support in my effort to continue serving this city that I am so proud of. I am blessed to work with dedicated employees who understand the importance of public service. May God continue to bless America and our community. Thank you.