

**HEBER CITY CORPORATION  
75 North Main Street  
Heber City, UT 84032  
Heber City Council Meeting  
March 18, 2025**

**APPROVED Minutes**

**4:00 p.m. Work Meeting  
6:00 p.m. Regular Meeting**

**I. WORK MEETING - 4:00 P.M.**

Mayor Franco called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. and welcomed everyone present.

**City Council Present:** Mayor Heidi Franco  
Council Member Yvonne Barney  
Council Member Aaron Cheatwood  
Council Member Mike Johnston  
Council Member Scott Phillips - remotely

**City Council Absent:** Council Member Sid Ostergaard - excused

**Staff Present:** City Manager Matt Brower  
Community Development Director Tony Kohler  
Planning Manager Jamie Baron  
City Engineer Russ Funk  
City Attorney Jeremy Cook  
City Recorder Trina Cooke  
IT Director Anthon Beales  
Chief of Police Parker Sever

**Staff Participating Remotely:** IT Director Anthon Beales, Human Resource Manager Cherie Ashe, Assistant City Manager Mark Smedley, Planning Manager Jamie Baron, Public Works Director Matthew Kennard, Deputy City Recorder Robin Bond, and Accounting Tech Wendy Anderson.

**Also Present:** Rachel Kahler, Shane Eller, Willa Motley, Allison Salisbury, Jill Watson, Lindy Rieoux, Cherie Reed, Patty Sprunt, Mark Sprunt, Cindy Bull, Grace Doerfler, Gaylyn Latimer, Ryan Bunnell, and others who did not sign in or whose handwriting was illegible.

**Also Attending Remotely:** (names are shown as signed-in online) Jami Hewlett, Mike, TMT, Tom DeMars, B, BBK, Catherine, and Clara Hatcher.

1. The Views on Main MDA Term Sheet (Tony Kohler, Community Development Director) - 45 min

City Engineer Russ Funk reviewed the proposed updates to the language as outlined in the email attached to the meeting materials. He explained Staff's reasons for the requested language. Project representative Luke Kennard was present to respond to questions. Council discussion followed regarding the road construction, irrigation installation, phasing timelines, building-height restriction, and a traffic signal installation to be located at the intersection of the proposed road.

2. Main St Traffic Study - Discuss Recommendations for Signalized Intersections (Horrocks Engineers) - 45 min

City Engineer Russ Funk introduced City-contracted Horrocks Engineers Mike Shane and Willa Motley. The two engineering consultants provided a PowerPoint presentation to share the traffic study findings, including median installations and traffic signal recommendations, as included in the attached meeting materials.

## II. BREAK - 10 MIN

## III. REGULAR MEETING - 6:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Franco called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. and welcomed everyone present.

2. Pledge of Allegiance (Yvonne Barney, Council Member)

Council Member Yvonne Barney led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Prayer/Thought by Invitation (Mike Johnston, Council Member)

Tom Reed stepped forward and shared a prayer.

## IV. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE:

There were no conflicts disclosed.

## V. CONSENT AGENDA:

Mayor Franco asked the following corrections be made to the minutes: on page 6 of the February 4 Meeting Minutes, the motion to recess as the Heber City Council and the second were listed as the same person; page 12 of the March 4 Meeting Minutes erroneously cited County Council Member Eric Rowland as Eric Rasband.

**Motion:** Council Member Cheatwood moved to approve the Consent Agenda, with the corrections to the minutes as listed by the Mayor.

**Second:** Council Member Barney made the second.

**Voting Yes:** Council Members Phillips, Cheatwood, Barney, and Johnston.

**Voting No:** None.

Council Member Ostergaard was absent.

The **Motion Passed 4-0.**

1. Approval of February 4, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes and March 4, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes (Trina Cooke, City Recorder)
2. Mayoral Nominations for Tree Subcommittee - Cynthia Bull and Mark Smedley (Heidi Franco, Mayor)

#### VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS: (3 min per person/20 min max)

Allison Salisbury felt that the City's website did not explain Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) very well. She suggested the City provide a clearer explanation of RCV to be distributed with the proposed survey. She stated that the State legislature was phasing out RCV in 2026 and asked why Heber City proposed to continue a system that the State was phasing out. Ms. Salisbury felt RCV benefited some candidates more than others. She wanted to understand who the survey would go to and if it was open to public scrutiny.

Jami Hewlett expressed concern with the park plaza design that was on the agenda for Council acceptance. She did not feel there had been enough discussion or conversations with the public. She suggested delaying until the Council could receive more feedback from the public.

Jill Watson felt the neighborhood did not receive enough information to know what they were voting for. She worked with the national coalition of some of the biggest front-line people in the Country and could tell you, without a fact, that Ranked Choice Voting was just one more reason to move people away from their vote. She stated that, as a Constitutional person, she had moved away from California to get away from what had happened in California, where she was born. She had wanted to be in a god-fearing state and felt that most of the people were good people in Heber but unfortunately, the elected officials were given tools for convenience. Ms. Watson said her vote wasn't convenient and she only got to vote a couple times a year. She hoped the Council would consider having the best forensic people in the country come to show what was literally going on with this. She said she had been to Idaho and claimed they were getting rid of RCV and they were getting rid of it all over the country. She said the problem was when you had an algorithm on software, you could not audit it. When you can't audit everything, it was the big problem in the State. She claimed there was massive work going on in this Country right now that was going to probably bring national attention to the cheating that had been going on in the Country. She said win or lose, when you work hard and it's a rigged system.

Ms. Watson questioned how the Council could look at the community and say it was fair when they couldn't prove it was. She asked to go to a system with the old paper ballot, hand-counted, citizens prove they are doing it, at the County Council meeting where they do elections. She was with the GOP (Grand Old Party) in Salt Lake City, and they had done everything transparently and cast ballots in an open box but used a machine to count the ballots. Ms. Watson said there had been 586 delegates and the machine had counted over 600 ballots just to be faster. She said they wasted hours because of this and there were Senators and U.S. Congressmen present, and it was embarrassing. She said every time they did a County meeting, they had no problem doing a hand count and she was reassured when she went home at night that her vote had been counted. She questioned how the Council would be able to sleep at night, and answer to what-ever god they prayed to, knowing they voted for something that not everyone thought was fair.

Mike Hewlett wanted to know what the procedure was for the oath of behavior and the process to deal with openly hostile or rude Council Members. He accused Council Member Phillips of being openly hostile and rude to the Mayor and wanted to know what would be done about it. Mayor Franco said it was a Council decision and she was not a voting member of the Council. She noted the Code of Ethics in place that had been adopted by the City Council indicating that the Council was not to make personal attacks on other Council Members or the members of the public. Mr. Hewlett proposed establishing a mechanism for violations of the Code of Ethics or it would not mean anything. Council Member Barney felt it was the responsibility of the citizens to rally, to reach out to Staff, or the Council. She knew there were differences among Council Members and felt the Council tried to control the meeting. She hoped the Citizens would take action and share their concerns.

Patty Sprunt stated she was a conservative Republican and said she had done her homework. The Republican National Committee (RNC) opposed Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). She had looked up articles written by prominent Democrats and found the Democrats were against RCV as well. She recognized there were also articles that supported RCV and some people that felt it was great. She said she personally felt that while RCV might be easier for the candidates, it disadvantaged the voters. She referred to Alaska and Florida elections. Ms. Sprunt said the Bush/Gore debacle had essentially begun using RCV and Al Gore would have beat President Bush if RCV had been used throughout the election. One of the strongest revulsions to RCV Ms. Sprunt had was the algorithm used to reallocate her vote. She had used Chat GPT and the AI results had been strongly oppositional of RCV. She felt the public was overwhelming against RCV and asked the Council to consider the wishes of the voters. She said if there was a free and fair election, that was hand counted, the people would be able to say how they hated ethics violations and a fair vote.

Russ Funk said he wished to share his comments as a citizen, not an employee of the City, and stated that he loved RCV. He recognized many of the people present were opposed to RCV but explained the reasons he was supportive of RCV that if his first choice candidate was eliminated, his second choice would be counted and so on. He said the public comments shared had implied that nobody liked RCV but he did and he knew many voters that supported it as well.

## **VII. GENERAL BUSINESS ITEMS:**

1. Monthly Development Report (Jamie Baron, Planning Manager) - *10 min*

Planning Manager Jamie Baron shared the Monthly Development Report as included in the meeting materials.

2. Presentation by Back to the 50's Car Show (JC Hackett) - 10 min

This agenda item was pushed to the next meeting.

3. Public Safety Monthly Report (Branden Russell, Deputy Chief) - *10 min*

Chief of Police Parker Sever shared the number of, and types of, call-outs the Police Department had handled the previous month. He shared that a grant for speed signs had erroneously delivered the wrong equipment. There had been a number of smash-and-grabs and the department was putting out a public service announcement (PSA) to educate the public in order to protect against this type of theft. He warned against the fraud phishing phone calls, noting how sophisticated they had become and how legitimate they appeared. The department had formed a non-profit in order to allow donations given to the public safety department to be tax-deductible. The annual Easter Egg Hunt would be held on April 19 at 10:00 a.m.

## **VIII. ACTION ITEMS: (Council can discuss; table; continue; or approve items)**

1. Public Hearing and Possible Council Action on Resolution 2025-03 to Amend the FY 2025 Budget (Sara Nagel, Finance Manager) -

Finance Director Sara Jane Nagel presented the information for the proposed budget amendment. She provided the list of requested fund amendments as listed in the attached Staff Report as well as each dollar amount. She explained the housekeeping items were to move funds from one itemized budget to another. Mayor Franco observed that the Resolution number for the budget amendment was the same as the RCV Resolution number 2025-03.

Mayor Franco opened the Public Hearing at 7:06 p.m.

Patty Sprunt asked about the Heber Light and Power (HL&P) Administration Building purchase. She asked why the City would need to buy something that she had thought the citizens owned.

Mayor Franco clarified the independent budgeting of the separate entities and the administrative powers of the board members. HL&P owned the building and the City wished to purchase it.

Tom Reed asked about the Cove Park trail bridge. Mayor Franco explained the planned trail connections. Mr. Reed indicated he was pleased with the use of the tax dollars for the roundabout art installations. City Manager Matt Brower credited the TAP (Trails, Arts, and Parks) tax funds that the voters had voted for, and which the City was then able to apply towards art installations.

Jami Hewlett felt \$300k for the bridge in the park's trail bridge was excessive. Council Member Cheatwood referred to the explanation for the cost of the bridge as previously provided by City Engineer Russ Funk. Mayor Franco explained the Central Utah Water Project (CUP) standards the City needed to comply with for the construction of the bridge. The City also needed to construct a new culvert. City Engineer Russ Funk further explained the budgeted money would also construct a portion of the trail in the master trail plan and details involved. Ms. Hewlett said she was speaking for the residents in the area unable to speak for themselves. She said the residents had thought the developer, Ivory Homes, would be responsible for the construction of the park and bridge. Mr. Funk explained the park land had been dedicated to the City by Ivory Homes as part of their Development Agreement. He described the impact fees paid by developers that were deposited into a fund with the City to be designated specifically for the construction of the park. It was not existing tax-payer dollars being used to construct the park. In addition, Ivory Homes had agreed to install the portion of the trail along the canal. Ms. Hewlett asked why the cost of maintaining the park would fall to the City rather than to Ivory Homes. Mayor Franco provided additional background from the development agreement process. Ms. Hewlett asked why the Public Safety Building needed a new HVAC system. Chief Sever responded that the original unit had been troublesome from the beginning and was now out of warranty. The building needed a new heater. Ms. Hewlett then asked what the 300 South trail design entailed. Mayor Franco clarified the trail was from the Main Street Park to 300 West where the Railroad was located. Mr. Funk explained the recommendation had come from the Parks, Open Space, Trails, and Trees (POSTT) committee and clarified details involved in the project. The dollar amount was based on the estimated cost in order to move forward with the project. Ms. Hewlett asked about the Railroad Quiet Zone Study and wondered if the City had anyone in-house that could perform the study. Mr. Funk explained there were specific engineering qualifications needed to do railroad study work. The City did not have anyone in-house with the expertise to perform the study. The purpose would be to study the traffic at railroad crossings to determine whether crossing-arms were warranted, or other traffic mitigating measures, in order to eliminate the need for trains to blow their horns when entering neighborhood intersections.

Mr. Funk further explained that the need for the study had come from the history of complaints from residents, the City Council, developers, and the Railroad. Ms. Hewlett asked why there were two line-items for Historical Markers. Mayor Franco explained there were two separate groups with two separate projects.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:31 p.m.

**Motion:** Council Member Johnston moved to approve Resolution 2025-03 amending the Fiscal Year 2025 budget as presented.

**Second:** Council Member Phillips made the second.

**Voting Yes:** Council Members Phillips, Cheatwood, Barney, and Johnston.

**Voting No:** None.

Council Member Ostergaard was absent.

The **Motion Passed 4-0.**

2. Acceptance of Plaza Design, Programming & Management Plan (Matt Brower, City Manager) - *20 min*

Mr. Brower explained the term "acceptance" implied that the Council was acknowledging the proposed plan and design had been completed, reviewed by Council, Council had been allowed the opportunity to put forth questions, and recognized there would be a lot of discussion along the way as the plan would proceed in phases with the potential to be changed. He explained the intent was for Council to accept a plan, which would initiate the long process of the City guiding the implementation. Mayor Franco felt it was important to discuss the forthcoming steps. She had received public comment questioning why the City was considering acceptance of the plan without in-depth public outreach. Mr. Brower detailed the public outreach previously done as well as more public outreach to come, welcoming public input throughout, as the project progressed. There had been broad public outreach in 2024 as well as numerous Council discussions. He felt it was a very thorough plan, nearly 150 pages long, as attached to the meeting materials, and publicly available on the City website. The plan had been available to the public for five months. Mr. Brower provided a high-level overview of the plan, including the estimated cost, as included in the attached Staff Report and associated meeting materials. He shared the projected date of completion for the bandshell and the plaza street in May 2025.

Community Development Director Tony Kohler informed there was an open house planned for the coming Thursday, March 20, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. that would be followed by a Public Hearing the next week on Tuesday, March 25, 2025, with the Planning Commission. The two events were for proposed zoning updates and not specific to the project discussion at hand.

Mayor Franco opened the discussion for public comment.

Allison Salisbury said she was still confused and asked why the Council had to accept the plan that night. She felt it was not implying the plan would go forward that night with the acceptance by Council. Mr. Brower explained it would allow Staff to move forward with the next steps in the process with significant input from the Council and community. Council Member Barney explained the plan was not set in stone, it was confirming that the City wished to see a plan put into motion. They explained it was a concept plan that would be done in pieces over several years.

Patty Sprunt shared that she had paid off a truck and her taxes had increased in the amount of the truck payment. She was nauseated thinking about how much her taxes would go up again. She proposed a text message alert system to notify about meetings. She noted there were 3,000 voters but only 100 people had shown up for the public meeting and felt there was a big disconnect. She questioned how much public input the City would receive if the public was not aware of what was going on. Mayor Franco explained there was a text alert system in place. Ms. Sprunt proposed the City make the messages colorful to grab attention and felt more public engagement was needed. She wanted more discussion. Mr. Brower reiterated the funding for the proposed park project was not going to be done through a tax increase but rather through grants, Trails, Arts, and Parks (TAP) tax revenues, and impact fees. City consultant and Public Information Officer (PIO) Ryan Bunnell described the process to sign up for text alerts and texting options available.

Phil Jordan, commenting as a citizen, not as a Planning Commissioner, expressed support for the plan. He did not feel a more comprehensive plan could have been provided. He recognized the sales tax revenue that would offer a large financial contribution to the project through the TAP tax.

Jami Hewlett asked why the City was doing this and felt the park was already maxed out at any event, probably violating the fire code. She was confused why the City would spend another twenty million dollars. She noted the park was being converted into a plaza and questioned whether a plaza would be eligible for park funds. She described another Roger Brooks park and plaza that she had visited in South Dakota that was not a positive experience. She felt no one had weighed in at all and did not understand why the City would do this when she felt the park was already maxed out. Matt Brower noted the Main Street Park was empty most of the time, other than Thursday evenings during the summer months when the Heber Market on Main took place. He felt the proposed park improvements would be a draw for the community year-round. He explained the budget amount was an estimate to begin moving forward. The design was intended to create a destination. Ms. Hewlett felt it was a programming issue.

Mr. Brower explained the first steps to move forward and mentioned the positive impact for the downtown businesses. Council Member Barney reiterated the City's ability to cut costs for the proposed project, as it proceeded, if needed. She said a plan was not set in stone but rather was an opportunity for the City to move forward.

Council Member Johnston said that a vision was necessary to make progress. A plan would continue to evolve with future Councils, but this Council's acceptance of this proposed plan would offer a starting point.

Mayor Franco explained that the Parks and Cemetery Administrator, Jody Summers, was concerned about the family reunions that were scheduled for the park each summer. Ms. Summers felt the construction, design, and changes made would be a disruption to the family reunion plans.

Mr. Brower said the current pavilion did not offer great accommodations but the new Main Stage would provide better amenities for the park reservations. Council discussion continued.

**Motion:** Council Member Phillips moved to accept the Plaza Design, Programming, and Management Plan.

**Second:** Council Member Johnston made the second.

**Discussion:** Council Member Cheatwood expressed concern that the Council's acceptance of the plan signaled to the community that Council was approving a finalized plan in its entirety. He said there were many aspects of the plan that he did not care for, but he did like the idea of a plan. He worried the acceptance also signaled to the designers that the City was ready to proceed. Council Member Phillips felt the acceptance of the plan signaled the completion of the design concept submitted by a third-party consultant, but the resulting actuality could potentially be vastly different. Council Member Cheatwood shared that he had taken several suggestions to the consultants that had not been implemented into the design plan as an option. He felt it would be helpful to show design options, reflecting a significantly scaled-down version, with different levels of amenities. City Manager Matt Brower reminded everyone that policy was established by three Council Members. He recalled the columbarium at the cemetery that had metamorphosized throughout the planning and design process. Council Member Barney proposed a preliminary acceptance of the plan. She asked Council Member Phillips to change the language in his motion to include the word concept.

**Amended Motion:** Council Member Phillips amended the original motion to accept the concept Plaza Design, Programming, and Management Plan. The second stood.

**Voting Yes:** Council Members Phillips, Cheatwood, Barney, and Johnston.

**Voting No:** None.

Council Member Ostergaard was absent.

The **Motion Passed 4-0.**

3. Acceptance of Parking Solutions & Downtown Business Mix Plan (Tony Kohler, Community Development Director) - *20 min*

Community Development Director Tony Kohler presented the proposed parking plan solutions as included in the attached meeting materials. He shared a summary of the recommendations as well as ideas for parking opportunities. He indicated it was a long-term plan that would possibly span decades.

Mr. Kohler provided details on sustainable parking cost versus land value, businesses paying a fee-in-lieu when unable to provide on-site parking, event parking, and solution proposals.

Mayor Franco opened the discussion for public comment.

Allison Salisbury asked if the City intended to install angled parking on Main Street. Mr. Kohler informed that Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) would not currently permit angled parking on Main Street.

**Motion:** Council Member Cheatwood moved to accept the Parking Solutions and Downtown Business Mix Plan as presented.

**Second:** Council Member Johnston made the second.

**Discussion:** Council Member Johnston recognized the many elements of the proposed plan but the felt plan offered a vision. Mayor Franco was concerned about the parking fee-in-lieu based on the existing requirement for downtown residential units to provide parking for the residents. Community Development Director Tony Kohler shared that the fee was low and could be increased. He felt the timing for the plan was crucial and the fee -in-lieu was not the first element to focus on. City Manager Matt Brower compared the plan to a tool in a toolbox and said the downtown parking plan was important for a successful downtown.

**Voting Yes:** Council Members Phillips, Cheatwood, Barney, and Johnston.

**Voting No:** None.

Council Member Ostergaard was absent.

The **Motion Passed 4-0.**

#### 4. Survey Options for Ranked Choice Voting (Ryan Bunnell) - 20 min

City PIO Ryan Bunnell presented the information regarding his assignment to create a public outreach survey for citizens to provide feedback regarding the utilization of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in the 2025 Heber City municipal election. He felt the time constraints were prohibitive and there were inherent flaws with social media polls. The State required municipalities to notify the Lt. Governor's office before May 1, 2025, if a municipality decided by resolution to use RCV in the 2025 election. He provided outreach options as included in the attached meeting materials and asked Council for feedback for their preferred public outreach method.

Mayor Franco proposed implementing a survey service through the City website. Council Member Phillips said he had read the existing Utah Valley University (UVU) report and felt it was extremely thorough. He proposed the City and voters refer to UVU's survey results.

Mayor Franco read from the Utah State Election Code UCA 20A-4-603(3), Municipal Alternate Voting Methods Pilot Project - Instant Runoff Voting:

(3) A ranking is valid for a particular ballot-counting phase of a multi-candidate race if:

- (a) the voter indicates the voter's preference for that ballot-counting phase and all previous ballot-counting phases; or
- (b) in the event that the voter skips a number in filling out the rankings on a ballot:
  - (i) the voter clearly indicates an order of preference for the candidates;
  - (ii) the voter does not skip two or more consecutive numbers at any point before the preference ranking that would otherwise be counted for the current ballot-counting phase;
  - (iii) the candidate next preferred by the voter is clearly indicated by a subsequent number that most closely follows the number assigned by the voter for the previously-ranked candidate; and
  - (iv) the voter did not give the same rank to more than one candidate for the applicable ballot-counting phase or a previous ballot-counting phase.

Council discussion continued.

**Motion:** Council Member Phillips made the motion to hear from City Attorney Jeremy Cook and City Recorder and Election's Officer Trina Cooke about the ballot. The **Motion failed** for lack of a second.

City Attorney Jeremy Cook felt that he and Ms. Cooke could speak about Ranked Choice Voting, the ballot instructions, and ballot counting, at the April 15 meeting, but the vote before Council that evening was regarding Council direction for an RCV survey.

Council Member Barney noted the emails she had received against RCV outweighed those in support of RCV. She supported a social-media survey. She did not believe RCV was easy for the voters. Mayor Franco stated that voting was sacred.

Council Member Cheatwood proposed the staff proceed with the education campaign for the community as outlined in options two and three in the presentation:

2. Create an informational campaign through staff resources
3. Run social media polls on Facebook and/or X

Mayor Franco proposed an example ballot be sent out with the utility bill and a poll be done using voter identification numbers. Mr. Cook felt it would be preferable to mail a survey rather than a sample ballot.

Council Member Johnston felt the only way to truly gauge public opinion was to provide a statistically accurate 3rd party survey. The least accurate would be a social media survey. He proposed using surveys previously done by other 3rd party studies. He had actively done his own public outreach by asking people and had received positive feedback for the RCV process.

City Attorney Jeremy Cook reiterated that the Council was not voting on whether to implement Ranked Choice Voting that night. That vote was scheduled to be on the April 15th City Council Meeting agenda. Tonight, Council would be voting on the direction to give Staff to proceed with an RCV survey and/or public outreach.

Mayor Franco opened the discussion for public comment at 9:44 p.m.

Allison Salisbury stated she was insulted that her vote was called trivial. She liked the idea of the survey but felt the RCV process needed to be explained. She said that if the last election had been with a traditional ballot, there would have been somebody else elected to the council. She did not think it was fair and thought that the top three candidates in the first round of Ranked Choice Voting should have won the election.

Council Member Johnston explained that in Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), voters ranked candidates in order of preference. Initially, all first-choice votes were counted; if a candidate received more than 50% of these votes, they won. If no candidate achieved a majority, the candidate with the fewest votes was eliminated, and ballots for the eliminated candidate were redistributed to the voters' next choices. Council Member Johnston explained that this elimination and redistribution process continued in rounds until a candidate secured a majority and was declared the winner.

**Motion:** Council Member Barney moved to extend the meeting to 10:30 p.m.

**Second:** Council Member Cheatwood made the second.

**Voting Yes:** Council Members Phillips, Cheatwood, Barney, and Johnston.

**Voting No:** None.

Council Member Ostergaard was absent.

The **Motion Passed 4-0.**

Jill Watson claimed to be an expert in the field and had worked with some of the best generals, best military people, and some very, very important people in the country. She had moved here from California, because she didn't vote for that. What drove her crazy about Utah was their obsession with machines that they thought would fix everything. She said the Council had spent 45 minutes discussing Ranked Choice Voting and she had the solution: France. Twenty-seven million people held one-day, in-person voting, and got it done. She noted there was not a Secretary of State in the State and Utah had Lt. Governor Diedre Hendrickson. She did not know why Utah had done that back in the '70's, but they did. In her opinion, as the expert she was, because she had been looking at it for a long time, when you have a system where you cannot audit stuff because of algorithms and computers, then you are not going to get anywhere. She felt the simple solution was to go back to where the basics were. She said she went around to almost every single county in the state to watch them hand count their paper ballots. They had double witnesses and pieces of paper. It was so simple because it was done on a small scale. Ms. Watson said we are little here. Maricopa County was so contentious in Arizona. She got 800 people and set up a system to hand count the recount.

Ms. Watson said they were her top expert guys. It was very simple for them and was very inexpensive. They did not have to pay for software updates all the time or purchase millions of dollars in machines. When it was all done, they may not have liked the outcome, but they all agreed they had good custody. They had witnessed and watched. She said there was good reason the legislature got so much pressure to do away with the system. The Ranked Choice Voting was a pilot program in certain counties. She knew about it because she knew a lot of people working in the counties. When they passed the legislation to phase out RCV, they left it up to the counties to decide if they were going to keep it or not. She loved some of the Council's ideas, and she was going to come to the open house the coming Thursday. She wanted to help do something for the Valley because she loved it and it was beautiful. She had lived here many years ago and returned because she loved it. She felt they were wasting a lot of time arguing. Ms. Watson felt it was simple and the Council had the power, legislation just gave it to them, to just say "let's get rid of it, let's go back to regular voting, and hand-count paper ballots." She offered to raise an army and said she could reach hundreds of people, in hours, in this town. She could reach thousands in this town if she had to. She had talked to the County Clerk who had told her the County was allowed to hand-count ballots and make it simple for all elections but they could not get people to help them. Ms. Watson had told the County Clerk that she hadn't asked them and said to give her a chance and she would raise her an army and get plenty of volunteers. She observed that the Mayor did not get to vote. She said she did not trust the university's study results because the systems were designed to keep people in power. She asked who the person was that ran the software when they ran the elections and how they were able to perform an audit. Mayor Franco said she would like to learn more about Ms. Watson's expertise and the organizations she had worked with and get more information on this because she found it all very interesting. Ms. Watson asked Council to consider the simple solution where everybody would be happy, not that it was okay to do it, and your stats say some people like it, some people don't. She said if you go back to basics, where we all have control, win or lose, then there is no contention, and the Council is not on the line. She claimed to know a lot of people that were not going to tolerate Ranked Choice Voting in the Valley.

Tom Reed asked the City to do whatever survey they could, do the best they could, and for the Council to choose what the majority wanted. Then move on.

Tom DeMars said he was first-time attendee, retired, had spent 25 years in the Marine Corps and 20 years in the tech industry, had served as HOA president in a couple places, and been a homeowner in many places. He had found the meeting very interesting and felt Council was doing a great job. He was against Ranked Choice Voting. He said there were some things discussed that evening that he had never heard about and wanted the City to do better with their methods for communications. Mr. DeMars had spent part of his career doing high-tech development that changed the lives of people in the military across the board. He said that one of the things he had discovered was that there needed to be an evolutionary development and methodology that engaged the citizens to obtain the best design results and the best acceptance as they moved forward.

Tracy Taylor said she had sat through many state legislative sessions about Ranked Choice Voting and one thing that continued to be referenced regarding the surveys was that none of them had asked whether their ballot had been counted or discarded. She said nobody knew whether their vote had counted. She felt a question on the proposed survey should ask if the person was aware if their ballot was counted or not. She claimed that most people in the university-run surveys did not know whether their vote had counted.

Mike Hewlett listed states that he said had banned Ranked Choice Voting. He said Alaska was the only state that kept RCV and they had the worst senator in the entire US Government. He said that was what you got with Ranked Choice Voting, someone that nobody wanted. Mr. Hewlett said nobody ever addressed how down-ballot voting was counted and Mike Johnston had reached the 50% threshold on the tenth round of vote counting, which meant that the people that ranked Mike Johnston ten out of eleven was the reason he was elected. He felt that RCV was a disaster and wanted to get RCV out of their City. Council Member Johnston clarified that it was second-choice votes that were redistributed to him that had gotten him elected. It was not the tenth ranking. Mayor Franco felt it was complicated with so many opinions that people thought were correct.

**Motion:** Council Member Cheatwood moved to create an educational public outreach campaign, coupled with a social media campaign, directing residents to the public comment email address that went to Council. He felt email was a low-enough bar for people to respond. He felt it was a low enough cost, other than staff time, but that it was important to hear from the people.

**Second:** Council Member Phillips made the second.

**Discussion:** Mayor Franco asked to clarify that the motion was directing the public to email the Council, whether they like RCV or not, to the public comment email. Council Member Cheatwood clarified he wanted to direct staff to create a public outreach campaign to help the public understand RCV and provide information. He felt that asking the public to send their preferences to the public comment email at [ccpublic@heberut.gov](mailto:ccpublic@heberut.gov) would be the best opportunity to get public input based on the time constraint. Mayor Franco asked to establish a deadline. Council Member Cheatwood did not want to set a deadline. Ryan Bunnell proposed a postcard mailer, pushing the information out on social media, and by text notification, asking the public to email the Council.

**Voting Yes:** Council Members Phillips, Cheatwood, Barney, and Johnston.

**Voting No:** Council Member Johnston.

Council Member Ostergaard was absent.

**The Motion Passed 3-1.**

5. Potential Cancellation of April 1, 2025, City Council Meeting (Scott Phillips, Council Member) - *5 min*

**Motion:** Council Member Phillips moved to cancel the April 1, 2025, City Council Meeting as he did not believe there would be a quorum.

**Second:** Council Member Cheatwood made the second.  
**Discussion:** Council discussion discovered there would be a quorum present.  
**Voting Yes:** Council Members Phillips and Cheatwood.  
**Voting No:** Council Members Barney, Johnston, and Mayor Franco.  
Council Member Ostergaard was absent.  
The **Motion Failed 2-3.**

**Second Motion:** Council Member Johnston moved to cancel the first meeting in April to allow Staff to be with their families for spring break.  
**Second:** Council Member Cheatwood made the second.  
**Voting Yes:** Council Members Phillips, Cheatwood, Barney, and Johnston.  
**Voting No:** None.  
Council Member Ostergaard was absent.  
The **Motion Passed 4-0.**

6. Establish Dates for FY '26 Budget Workshops (Matt Brower, City Manager) -  
*10 min*

**Motion:** Council Member Johnston moved to have the Budget Workshop meeting on Tuesday, April 29th, 2025, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with dinner, and Tuesday, May 6th, 2025, beginning at 4:00 p.m., during the regularly scheduled City Council Work Meeting, with cheesecake.  
**Second:** Council Member Cheatwood made the second.  
**Voting Yes:** Council Members Phillips, Cheatwood, Barney, and Johnston.  
**Voting No:** None.  
Council Member Ostergaard was absent.  
The **Motion Passed 4-0.**

**IX. COMMUNICATION:**

There were no communication items discussed.

**X. CLOSED MEETING:**

1. As Needed (Heber City Council)

**Motion:** Council Member Johnston made the motion to enter a Closed Meeting for the purpose of discussing personnel and the purchase, exchange, or lease of real property.  
**Second:** Council Member Barney made the second.  
**Voting Yes:** Council Members Phillips, Barney, and Johnston.  
**Voting No:** None.  
Council Member Cheatwood had stepped out of the room.  
Council Member Ostergaard was absent.  
The **Motion Passed 3-0.**  
The Heber City Council entered a Closed Meeting at 10:30 p.m.

**Motion:** Council Member Phillips moved to exit the Closed Meeting and adjourn.

**Second:** Council Member Cheatwood made the second.

**Voting Yes:** Council Members Phillips, Cheatwood, Barney, and Johnston.

**Voting No:** None.

Council Member Ostergaard was absent.

The **Motion Passed 4-0.**

**XI. ADJOURNMENT:**

The Heber City Council Meeting adjourned at 11:47 p.m.



  
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Trina Cooke, City Recorder