



CITY OF NORTH SALT LAKE

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December 15, 2016

Dear Residents, Friends and Neighbors,

I have decided to retire from the City of North Salt Lake in January. I have had the honor and privilege of serving as City Manager since February of 2010. In the larger context, I have been a city manager since July of 1979. It is fitting that I end my city management career in Davis County as that is where I started city management. Clinton City was the first city that I managed as a young 27 year old, recently graduated MPA from BYU. I left Utah and went to California for 15 years, worked for three different cities then returned to Utah where, after a few months in the private sector, I became the city manager of Highland, Utah.

In the past 38 years, I have attended nearly 1000 city council meetings, worked for nearly 100 mayors and city councilmembers, and hired and worked with hundreds of employees. As I reflect back on what I have seen accomplished, the mistakes that I have made, and the stress that I have endured, I am very grateful that I have been able to end my career in North Salt Lake. In order to summarize my career, I went on Google Earth and looked at some of the projects that carried my fingerprints and soon realized that projects and programs put in place in North Salt Lake were by far my finest work.

In city government, like most organizations, it takes a good team to accomplish great achievements. North Salt Lake is one of the best examples of a great team. Our team consists of great residents who understand sacrificing for the greater good, the value of listening to all sides and of being involved. Our residents have elected mayors and city councilmembers who are bright, caring and courageous who know when it is right to vote for the individual and when a vote is in the best interest of the city. It takes courage to vote for proposals that may be unpopular but in the long run the better option. The city council has allowed me to hire the best individuals I can find and to offer them fair and competitive compensation. City staff, from our department heads to our crossing guards, are great talented people who are creative, dedicated, experienced and service-driven. As a result of the choices made by our electorate, I have been given the tools that I needed to achieve many great things in my short seven years as city manager of North Salt Lake.

As mentioned previously, I am amazed at what has been accomplished. I take great pride in what we as a community have been able to do, and I would like to take a moment to describe some of the most notable.

When I arrived in North Salt Lake, I had no idea that there was a Springhill Landslide nor did I have any idea how it could be fixed. But through the efforts of Mayor Arave, connecting some dots on my part, the grant writing talent of our staff and a financial commitment by the city

council of \$600,000, the city was successful in getting a FEMA grant of \$2.3 million to remove the houses, purchase the property and build a park. As it turned out, the State of Utah later contributed \$300,000 which made the deal all that much better. Many of the residents in that area had little hope that a fix would ever be found, but in the end most of them were pleased with the results and happy to out of their “mobile” homes. It would not be appropriate if I did not mention the key role our state and federal legislative delegation played in this effort.

Most people don't pay attention to local roads unless there is a pothole. But I would like to reminisce about a road project that affects nearly half of our residents. On occasion the city hires consultants to help us in different aspects of city operations. North Salt Lake like many Utah cities hires legislative consultants that help with the state and federal process. They can alert us to opportunities and open doors that generally would be pretty sticky without some help. It was through the help of our legislative consultants that the city was able to influence the timing of the rebuild of the I-15 freeway interchange at 1100 North and the reconstruction of 1100 North from there to Redwood Rd. Because of federal regulations, the grant the city received would require the city to pay nearly \$5.0 million for the road rebuild. But by connecting the dots once again, the city was able to take advantage of a little known state transportation funding mechanism known as a State Funds Transfer. In this process, federal funds are exchanged for state funds, the federal red tape is removed, and the cost of construction declines dramatically. Through our city engineer's experience and creativity, help from our legislative consultants, City Council's faith in the staff and its perseverance, cooperation and help from Wasatch Front Regional Council, UDOT Region 1, Woods Cross City and a quick trip to Vernal to meet with an understanding State Transportation Committee (facilitated by our legislative consultants), the city was able to save \$1.5 million on that project while being one of the first to blaze this trail and use this funds transfer program. There are still a few sections that need to be rebuilt but overall with the realignment of Overland Road, I feel the project was a great success.

North Salt Lake has tried to use a collaborative design process involving the public works construction process. It has been most successful in the design of our new parks. Parks are a very important part of any city and add tremendously to the quality of life. Since 2010, the city has developed or redeveloped a number of parks. Each one has a unique story that demonstrates our city's team effort. Legacy Park in Foxboro, Tunnel Springs Park, Foxboro South Park, Stone Park, Veterans Memorial Amphitheater and Deer Hollow Park are all examples of parks whose design, construction and community value was enhanced by this collaborative effort. All of these recreation facilities are amazing facilities for which I am proud to have had a part in making them a reality. I would like to highlight a couple of these projects that stand out in my mind.

Deer Hollow Park has been a neighborhood park for some years. As a result of the construction of the secondary water facility on part of that property, it became necessary to dismantle the existing park. The city had plans to reinstall the playground equipment that was removed. The neighbors came to the city and were a bit animated about the secondary water/storm drain structure. The city council directed the staff to work with the residents, find out their concerns and return with ideas that would meet their needs. Through a series of meetings the mayor, city staff and residents were able to come up with design ideas that would enhance the park and stay relatively within the budget that was set. In the end, a stream that was

removed years ago was reinstalled, new playground equipment was purchased and installed, active play features including a zip line, swings, a tree trunk and a slide imbedded in the hillside became part of the park.

Most of the work on the park was done by our own city Parks Department and landscaping help was provided by the area residents. It is a very unique park that is one of the most creative that I have seen. The park in the past was isolated and had been an area of prohibited nighttime activities. The final touch on the park was to install cameras that surveil the park 24/7. I can see the activity in the park from my office and can attest that its get used each and every day.

Stone Park was another park that was enhanced by a community effort. Stone Park was a park built on land dedicated by the developer and substantially paid for by them. The city asked that community what they wanted to see in that park before any concepts had been developed. City staff then directed the architect to come up with a design that incorporated the community's ideas. The result was a small neighborhood park that reflects the desires of the residents who live in that area. In order to meet the needs of the residents, the city contributed additional funds to build the amenities which the residents felt would be used. It is a small park but reflects the collaborative approach that allows us to build a great community and be successful. I mention these two parks but all of our parks are designed with community input. Sometimes my staff and I misread the community and are asked to rethink what we have planned. In those instances, we take a step back and alter our course when in the best interest of the city as a whole and make changes. It is a process that works well and has given us a number of great parks that create neighborhood value and places for family recreation. I am excited to announce that after a number of years of effort, our residents will have a safe way to enter and enjoy the Jordan River, via Porter's Landing. This will be a new recreation amenity allowing canoes, kayaks and rafts to enjoy the river. It is named in honor of our own Councilmember Stan Porter whose dedication and vision made this possible. The expansion of our parks system while I have been here is one of my most satisfying accomplishments.

A common complaint I heard when I first assumed this position was that North Salt Lake needed more retail. Residents wanted expanding shopping opportunities. The policy makers could see the need for financial benefit to the city. In my initial assessment, I could see that the city did not have many economic development tools in its quiver. With the encouragement of the mayor and city council, I embarked on a process that ended up creating four economic development areas. As it turns out a couple of years later, the economic development area created around Redwood Road was vital to locating Lee's Marketplace in the Foxboro area. It is my belief that once open Lee's will become a gathering place for that neighborhood and a significant source of community building. Kudos need to be given to my assistant, and new City Manager, Ken Leetham, who made the initial contact with the Lee's developer. In my career, I have been successful in bringing many commercial entities ranging from the likes of Walmart to Mervyn's, but none took more preparation, patience and persistence than getting commercial development west of Redwood Road.

Another project that demonstrates the range of accomplishment has been the development of a Wi-Fi network in North Salt Lake – once again a team effort. In 2010, the city had a bandwidth capacity of 2.5 megabits and no Wi-Fi. Our IT consultant, ETS, connected the city with First Digital who was looking for a roof top that could connect downtown Salt Lake with Weber County. As luck would have it, our new city hall was in the exact location to

provide the line of sight needed to connect these two points. It was also fortuitous that right across the street at the Utah Local Governments Trust building, First Digital had fiber optic service. We were able to make a deal where First Digital was given a microwave antennae site on the roof of city hall in exchange for 500 megabits of bandwidth. The city, with the help of ETS and our public works crew, have installed microwave towers throughout the city that now give us the ability to reach any spot in the city. We are using this network to connect security cameras in Legacy and Deer Hollow Parks, all of the city buildings with data links, and provide Wi-Fi connections to parks. In the future it will be utilized to connect all our irrigation controllers in our parks, our culinary water pumps, and other security cameras at other parks. This has been a great low-cost, high-tech advancement for North Salt Lake. It is not inconceivable in the next few years to use this asset to provide Wi-Fi hot spots at many locations throughout the city.

During my time here, another long held city dream became a reality – to somehow find a way to water the golf course with secondary water. As you can imagine there were significant challenges to making this happen. First, the city did not have any secondary water that could be used at the golf course and second, the elevation of the golf course was a challenge. The golf course is nearly 1500 feet higher than all of the available water sources at the time. As secondary water and culinary water cannot be mixed, it would require the construction of a completely separate but parallel water conveyance system. Even if secondary irrigation water were available the capital cost of the delivery system to the golf course would be prohibitive. However, where there is determination and the ability to recognize an opportunity when it appears, the seeming impossible can be achieved. When I was approached by a South Davis Water District inquiring if we had a need for more water, I immediately thought of the golf course. It took nearly two years of negotiations and discussions with South Davis and Weber Basin Water to come to an agreement plus a couple of iterations of engineering designs to finally arrive at a project that would deliver water to the golf course. There were many hurdles to get over like getting the US Department of the Interior approval to use the Davis Canal pipeline to deliver the water half way up the hill and only a few hundred feet from the golf course. Not everyone initially liked the look of the reservoir, but after working with the neighbors, I believe we overcame old obstacles and were able to provide the city with a new water source at a price substantially lower than the then current market rate. In the next season or two, the city will be providing secondary irrigation to additional homes on the bench. This is important as it saves our precious culinary water for indoor use which is vital to drinking, cooking, cleaning and bathing. It was a challenge, but a quality solution was found and implemented.

There have been other creative engineering projects that have been designed and built such as the realignment of Overland Drive which improved the operation of the 2600 South interchange and created a more viable commercial parcel. The reconstruction and utility undergrounding project on Center Street, for which the city was given a national award, and the rebuilding of Center Street west of Redwood Road were two more such projects.

As many know not everything has been perfect in North Salt Lake in the past few years, the Eaglepointe Landslide was a huge event that taxed our abilities and resources. Fortunately, there were no injuries. The property damage still remains a problem and the litigation appears to be ongoing for yet a significant period of time. The partial remediation plan that was put into place has eliminated most of the dangers and made the area safer. The area will not be totally

safe until the lower part of the landslide is remediated. The process to complete what was fixed exhausted and consumed many hours of all involved stakeholders. It my hope that in the near future the parties will be able to get together and agree on how to fund the remaining work required to ensure a minimal level of safety.

One might read this and think that all I have done is facilitate construction projects. While they tend to be the most visible and expensive, none of these projects would be possible without adequate finances and personnel to manage these projects and all the other affairs of the city.

One of the thorniest problems I faced from day one was completing the Fire Department transition from an annual assessment formula to a taxing agency. South Davis Metro Fire Agency is one of the finest organizations in the state. It is filled with dedicated professionals who put their lives on the line each and every day to keep us safe. The needs to the Fire Department change dramatically as the science and practice of providing emergency medical response improves. Consequently, their needs for financial support also increases. The Fire Department as an assessment agency did not have certain financial tools available. For example, it could not refinance the bonds used to build the fire stations when interest rates were at historical lows because it depends on annual assessments from the participating cities and county. It also could not borrow funds to build and repair new and existing fire stations. But through the perseverance of our Fire Chief Jeff Bassett, the cities and county were finally brought together and created a taxing agency that can now levy its own taxes. The Fire Department now has a revenue stream that the rating agencies will recognize allowing the department to issue low interest bonds to meet its capital construction needs. Congratulations to Chief Bassett and his team for never taking their eye off of the ball and completing a process that was stalled for almost ten years.

Very soon after accepting this position, I was immediately faced with a number of financial and personnel dilemmas. While they were stressful and created serious hardships in the lives of the affected employees, the city was left with the opportunity to re-staff with other professionals that were more capable of moving the city forward. I cannot say enough about our elected officials who allowed me to attract the very best to fill the vacancies. Our Police Chief Craig Black has been a rock in developing police policies and practices that have significantly elevated the level of public safety in our city. During the past few years, we have been able to add seven police officer positions which have been vital in maintaining pace with our growth and police calls for service. It isn't enough to add positions if you can't recruit good personnel. While the demand for police officers is high, North Salt Lake has continually been able to hire qualified personnel who have had a positive impact on our city. Our police officers have a dangerous job and need our continued support through proper training, equipment and community respect.

I have been able to fill other critical leadership positions in the city that have been instrumental in improving the level of service and bringing creativity to our core municipal responsibilities. A most critical position in any city is the Finance Director. When I arrived the city was in the middle of the economic downturn, revenues were declining, cash balances were low, our bond rating was downgraded, positions were being eliminated and efficiencies had to be found. Due to a resignation, I was allowed to hire Janice Larsen as the new Finance Director.

As a result of her expertise and experience, she has been able to guide the city through the financial minefields we faced, such that today our cash balances are high, revenues have significantly increased, financial accountability is transparent and where it needs to be, our bond rating has increased and numerous efficiencies have been put into place which have eliminated the need to rehire some of our lost positions. The city has been able, through her direction, to embrace the internet as a way to eliminate costs and make city hall more user friendly. It has not been easy or fun to adjust utility rates in order to build cash balances and fund deferred maintenance, but Janice has been able to make sure that our books are accurate and created an atmosphere of trust between the staff and the city council in our fiscal concerns.

It is not practical for me to extoll the virtues of all of our employees in a piece such as this but I do at least need to express my appreciation and the contribution that has been made by the city's management team. Our City Engineer, Paul Ottoson, has been brilliant in finding practical engineering solutions to complex public works problems. His engineering staff has saved this city hundreds of thousands of dollars in design and construction costs. His is a city treasure. While relatively new to his position, David Frandsen, our new Public Works Director, has brought with him a combination of practical experience combined with a heavy dose of technological expertise. Our largest single city owned asset is the Eaglewood Golf course. Our Golf Course Director, Brent Moyes, though quiet and unassuming, has been very effective at keeping that asset in quality shape and providing an outstanding golf experience. I am pleased to remind our citizens that this is the last year of the bond payments. There probably should be a day of jubilee golf commemorating the burning of the "bonds." And finally, I need to pay homage to Linda Horrocks who as my executive assistant has kept me on task and has an unwavering dedication to communicating and keeping the public informed through Tweets, Posts, signs, and the *Insider* newsletter. She has been a friend and a dedicated part of our team.

As my career comes to an end, there has been one person who has never faltered in her support and belief in me and whose sacrifice for my job is inexplicable. Even when I was feeling overwhelmed by the vicious dogs biting at my heels creating doubt in my mind that this was the right profession for me, my wife, Rolayne Sims Edwards, never lost faith in me and never complained when I uprooted the family and moved to a strange place. Over the years when it seemed I never came home from work, she held the family together and unfortunately sometimes had to be both mom and dad. My gratitude to her and my five children Barrett, Quinn, Griffin, Ainsley and Tanner is impossible to express – a heartfelt thank you will have to suffice.

North Salt Lake is a great city comprised of a great mayor and city council, city staff and residents. I thank you all for allowing me to use my abilities to manage your city. I wish you fair winds and following seas.



Damon B. "Barry" Edwards