



Wasatch Taxpayers Association

The Wasatch Taxpayers Association exists to promote fair, transparent and impartial economic policies for all taxing units of the Heber Valley. WTPA will defend the rights of all citizens to participate in local decisions, to know the impacts of taxing and fees upon their quality of life, and to provide an avenue for citizens to be involved in the solutions that will protect their quality of life, liberty, and economic independence.

We are here today to offer our assistance in increasing public input, communication and transparency. We look forward to working together to create a community vision for all citizens.

Wasatch School District Study Session- 5pm August 15, 2019

WTPA Board



- Merry Duggin, Treasurer - Daniel
- Chuck Zuercher - Wasatch County
- Robert Ford - Jordanelle
- Anissa Wardell - Heber City
- Tracy Taylor, Chair - Heber City

WasatchTaxpayersAssociation.com

School Board's Duty To Residents

UTAH STATE CODE- *Effective 1/24/2018*

- **53G-4-401. Boards of education are bodies corporate -- Seal -- Authority to sue -- Conveyance of property -- Duty to residents of the local school board member's district -- Establishment of public education foundation.**
- **(5)Notwithstanding a local school board's status as a body corporate, an elected member of a local school board serves and represents the residents of the local school board member's district, and that service and representation may not be restricted or impaired by the local school board member's membership on, or obligations to, the local school board.**

WSD BOARD BYLAWS

- **State laws provide for a local Board of Education to represent the people in operating the schools. The Board of Education is responsible to the people and there-fore should attempt to reflect the opinion of the people.**
- **School Boards should adopt clearly defined written policies, based on a thorough understanding of the educational process. In formulating the policies, they should consult individuals and groups affected by the policies, and, since changing conditions bring changing needs, should periodically review policies**
- **Section D, #8- To welcome and encourage active cooperation by citizens, organizations and the media- of communication in the district with respect to establish policy on current school operation and proposed future developments**

Other School Districts Include Public Input

-- Recently in the PARK RECORD

- **Park City School District focuses on educational vision for new master plan- 10- 24-18**
“The district recently laid out a nine-month timeline and goals for a fresh master planning process, which include seeking recommendations from the Park City community to determine the direction of the district. By the end of spring, the district intends to have a master plan in place.”
- **KAMAS- So. Summit Board of Ed removes elementary school from bond plans- 4- 3-19**
“After some pushback from community members living in the South Summit School District boundaries, the district announced its intention to remove an elementary school from its plans for a bond. Shad Sorenson, superintendent of the district, said many community members were concerned that a \$90.74 million bond was too high and it would not pass.”
- **Also- Davis School District- Board gathers public input in "What Counts" effort.**
The Board of Education continues to move forward with its “What Counts” effort. Beginning April 27, 2017, board members hosted a community feedback event in which 75 invited guests – representing a variety of community members — convened in the district’s Kendell Building. Board member Julie Tanner explained, ‘The priorities will have a strong influence as the school board decides upon our vision and goals for the school district.’ “
- **Ogden School District looking at advisory council, survey for November bond - 5-7-18**
“ ‘The idea of the advisory council, Bates said, is to bring together members of the community and create a “balance of opinions.’ This group is expected to advise the board of education and the school district throughout the process of the creation of a new bond proposal that aims to fix structural, electric and seismic issues at some of the elementary schools in the district.”



CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARDS

Increase Public Input

6B. WSD BOARD BYLAWS- Specific Powers and Duties

- **26. ADVISORY COMMITTEES - School Boards may enlist citizen groups to assist and counsel them, making certain that three principles are followed:**
 - **1. citizen groups should be broadly representative,**
 - **2. recommendations should be based on research and facts,**
 - **3. recommendations should be submitted to school boards which alone have the authority to act upon them.**

OTHER COMMUNITY CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARDS

Wasatch Fire District, Heber City General Plan Review, Envision 2050, Wasatch County Parks and Recreation, Midway Open Space and Trails, Wasatch County Open Space Bond. Future- Heber Light and Power.



Budget Facts

- 2020 Budget more than \$92 million
- All but 7% (fees, interest) is some form of tax
- Property tax alone is 56% of total revenue
- 2016-20 \$31.8 million-\$51.8 million from Wasatch County property owners
- 2016-19 enrollment increased by 1,200
- Amended 2019 budget amount was \$87,358,775, original was \$84,400,959. \$3 million more.
- **You are turning to Wasatch County taxpayers for 56% of your revenue, but not including them in your decision making process?**

Source was June 2019 budget public hearing, and audio of same.



Salary and Benefit Info

- Teacher compensation up by 17% over last few years
- 6% just this year
- Step and Lane increases 2.5%
- Continues full benefits
- 2016-20 per student cost increased \$7,449 to \$9,294
- District employs more than 1,000 (licensed, classified, admin)



23% Tax Increase Concerns

- Has the school board taken into account an inevitable downturn in the economy and housing market? What happens when the assessed value of the county drops by 33%? This proposed % will increase for each property owner, and will especially hurt our Main Street merchants and commercial owners.
- Your video mentioned the cost of housing for teachers in Wasatch County, but this tax increase, and possible \$150 MIL bond, will increase property taxes for these homeowners and further put a home out of reach. Higher taxes could also force young families to live elsewhere- see Park City. PC enrollment has not increased.
- Year round school would allow these teachers to have full-time jobs, if they so choose. Increasing their pay by 30-50%, and retaining more teachers.
- We understand increasing pay for new teachers to \$43K. But does this give an across the board increase to all teachers, even those above \$100K for 180 days of work?
- Video mentioned we are competing with the other Utah School Districts for new teachers. Are we advertising and attracting teachers nationally? There are teachers from other regions that would love to make our salaries and benefits.
- A portion of this tax increase goes to the “capital fund”. \$600K splash pads and close to \$1 million for the 600 South parking lot, has caused residents to question WSD expenditures in the past. Not enough vetting, and public input, on these projects. The school board has not been clear about what % of this tax increase goes to teachers, and what % to the capital fund.



Tax & Fee Increases- 2019

TAXES

- School District
- Charleston
- Hideout
- Interlaken
- Central Utah Water
- Wasatch County General Fund
- Wasatch County Parks and Recreation

- + Population Growth
- + Property Values

FEES

- JSSD
- Twin Creeks
- Irrigation Companies
- Heber Light & Power



A Taxpayer Tsunami!



\$150 MIL Bond Concerns

- Not enough vetting of locations, design, preferred outcomes to vote this year. No other options were provided to voters like separating school projects, other locations, different project budgets, year round school, addition to the existing high school as promised 10 years ago, etc.
- High school location is in a flood zone, and disrupts the ongoing process with UDOT on determining the Bypass Road route and the inevitable increased traffic by the high school. UDOT will know route in a year or two, WSD should at least wait to see the outcome of that process.
- School board should also coordinate with county and cities to encourage all developers to DONATE land for future schools. It's a benefit to developers and taxpayers.



Future Goals

WTPA would like to present again in the near future to follow up on these ideas.

- **Revise your policy and process for requesting to be put on the meeting agenda, or comment at a public meeting. Allow a public comment agenda item at the beginning of all board meetings. All other Wasatch public entities allow citizen comment for items NOT on their meeting agenda.**
- **WTPA encourages the creation of an education advisory board, and a facilities advisory board, to assist the school board in investigating issues the district faces. We respectfully request that one WTPA member is a member of these advisory boards, or any others, to represent taxpayers who fund these projects.**
- **Add “responsibility to taxpayers “ and fiscal responsibility in the school board’s bylaw duties.**
- **Open Meeting Act requires all study sessions to have minutes and recordings. Minutes should have actual board votes included. Agendas should explain each item clearly so citizens have a general idea of subject matter discussed.**
- **The School Board members, and superintendent, should be available for media interviews monthly, directly communicate with all public entities in Wasatch County regularly, and have public town halls. We will be contacting you shortly for interviews to commence with us on a regular basis. We would appreciate your cooperation.**



State Lobbying Efforts?

- Wasatch School District could lead the effort to organize other state school districts, and the PTA, to lobby the legislature for changing the impact fee for school construction law for developments.
- WSD should check to see if the MIDA tax increments will affect county school property taxes. If MIDA does not have to pay their fair share for 25-40 years, WSD should get that law reversed. New MIDA law SB-269 passed in 2019.

Wasatch Taxpayers Association would help in those efforts.