

An Interview with Taylour Tedder

Perspectives from the COVID-19 Pandemic: Leadership and Learning in Nevada

Produced by:

The University of Nevada Las Vegas
The Lincy Institute
2024

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The following interview was a part of the “Perspectives from the COVID-19 Pandemic: Leadership and Learning in Nevada” research project. The recorded interview and transcript were made possible through the generosity of The Lincy Institute at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The goal of the project was to understand and document how Nevada organizations and leaders responded to the myriad challenges that the pandemic engendered. The interviewees thank The Lincy Institute and their supporters for the opportunity to reflect on their roles throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers also acknowledge the following individuals who contributed to the conceptualization, data collection, and analysis of the project: Dr. John Hudak, Dr. Makada Henry-Nickie, Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio, Taylor Cummings, Peter Grema, Kristian Thymianos, Saha Salahi, Madison Frazee, and Katie Lim.

Each interviewee had the opportunity to review their transcript. All measures have been taken to preserve the style and language of the interviewee. This interview features Taylour Tedder, City Manager for Boulder City, and was conducted on 7/20/22 by Kelliann Beavers. This interview covers topics including reflections on leadership, organizational challenges, and opportunities for collaboration.

Interview with Taylour Tedder

Date: 7-20-2022

SPEAKERS: Kelliann Beavers, Taylour Tedder

Kelliann Beavers [00:05]

I have to record you, saying that you reviewed the form and that you confirm that it's okay. So I'm asking you again, even though I asked you 30 seconds ago if that's fine.

Taylour Tedder [00:15]

Yeah. I reviewed the form, and it's okay.

Kelliann Beavers [00:18]

Okay, thank you. The first question is, as a leader in your local community, how did you view your role during the pandemic? And I should say, throughout this interview, anytime I say, "during the pandemic," I recognize that it's sort of like *throughout the pandemic* because we're still in this sort of weird territory.

Taylour Tedder [00:35]

Sure.

Kelliann Beavers [00:38]

But particularly, at the height of the pandemic.

Taylour Tedder [00:40]

So it's really interesting. I actually joined the city about a year ago. So I came in maybe towards the – when things were kind of in an interesting place, where people were tired of taking all the necessary steps, but we were still under a mask mandate. Previously I was-

Kelliann Beavers [01:06]

I mean, it was still pretty scary. Compared to how it is now, I feel like there was still a lot to protect people from, but at the same time, people were tired.

Taylour Tedder [01:14]

Yeah. So, you know – can you say the question again? I'm sorry.

Kelliann Beavers [01:17]

Sure, no worries. It's just how you saw your role during the pandemic, and because of what you just shared with me about when you started. Why don't you talk about that in the context of that period of time; coming on and seeing that you were going to step into this position? And what your role with respect to the pandemic felt like at that time.

Taylor Tedder [01:40]

Yeah. So, even in the last city I worked for – but specifically, here, I think my biggest role was making sure that we were getting information out to the community.

Kelliann Beavers [01:50]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [01:53]

So making sure that whenever requirements changed, communicating that to the residents in any way possible. We use everything from every social media platform – we have a local TV channel; and BCTV Channel 2. And then our elected officials were also a really big part in that, so getting them accurate information and making sure that they have what they need to also communicate to the public.

And then on the employee side – so I'm responsible for all the city employees. So making sure that our policies were in place to make sure that we can help people that had to be in quarantine or that were sick with COVID.

Kelliann Beavers [02:41]

Right.

Taylor Tedder [02:45]

We made a lot of exceptions, where we kept paying people that were out of leave; you have a new police officer start, and they only have a little bit of leave, but they go respond to a call of a child drowning in a pool, and give CPR, and the whole household had COVID, well, they got COVID.

Kelliann Beavers [03:08]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [03:11]

So we really made sure that we were treating people fairly, and trying to make sure that they still got paid, especially when they-

Kelliann Beavers [03:20]

Did that particular incident happen?

Taylor Tedder [03:23]

Yeah.

Kelliann Beavers [03:24]

Oh, my gosh. A child drowning is my nightmare. I mean, it's everyone's. But wow.

Taylor Tedder [03:26]

Yeah. So that was terrible, and we had police and fire there, and a lot of them ended up getting COVID from that situation.

Kelliann Beavers [03:34]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [03:37]

But it was a household where, I think several families were living in it, and they all had COVID.

Kelliann Beavers [03:43]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [03:45]

So, a lot of our employees did end up getting it. But yeah, it was really focusing on information and then taking care of the employees.

Kelliann Beavers [03:58]

Yeah. And you said that you were with another city before you came here. Were you in a role similar to what you're in? And so, did you feel like it was similar when the pandemic initially started or – I mean if you want to speak to that?

Taylor Tedder [04:16]

Yeah. I was the assistant city manager of Leavenworth, Kansas for almost six years. So, yeah; when the pandemic happened in March 2020, it was so shocking. We closed everything down. We didn't really do remote work, and they had the same thing here, where people still came to work.

Kelliann Beavers [04:43]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [04:44]

But yeah, it was very uncertain. The requirements were changing every day. And there were a lot of grant funds that we worked with for businesses and nonprofits.

Kelliann Beavers [04:58]

Oh, sure.

Taylor Tedder [05:01]

So it was also providing support as well. It really was a lot of information. My mayors there and here had both gone out of their way to do special video podcasts – things where they were going through talking to different people, just making sure all the information was out there.

Kelliann Beavers [05:32]

Oh, that's really neat. Yeah, I can only imagine – I'm thinking about this now – that personalizing the experience to what Boulder City specifically experienced. And there are so many – I mean, I live in Henderson, but I come here relatively frequently to go to some of the shops and just enjoy being out of town. And there are so many businesses that I feel have started really thriving and having a strong brand, and you can see their signage – and you can see that a lot of people are embracing it. And I feel like that must have been a really jarring moment for them, as compared

to some of the larger cities, when the pandemic happened, and the lockdowns happened, and the threats to some of those businesses were different and were felt differently than elsewhere.

Taylor Tedder [06:22]

Mm-hmm. And so, if I'm getting ahead, just tell me.

Kelliann Beavers [06:24]

That's fine.

Taylor Tedder [06:29]

So, from my understanding, the rest of the Valley, the health district, handled the vaccinations.

Kelliann Beavers [06:34]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [06:36]

So, in Boulder City, our fire department handled the vaccinations. We received the vaccines from the health SNHD, but our fire department did all of that. And they also did testing until just a couple of months ago.

Kelliann Beavers [06:53]

Wow. That's a lot.

Taylor Tedder [06:57]

So they actually did so well that we were cut off from the vaccines for a while because we were getting too ahead.

Kelliann Beavers [07:01]

Uh-huh.

Taylor Tedder [07:04]

So that was, I guess, positive, and a nature that-

Kelliann Beavers [07:09]

Yeah, but a strange experience, right? To be like, you're doing the right thing, and then- (laughs)

Taylor Tedder [07:14]

And it's kind of funny to look back on it. Yeah, there were all of the different age groups and condition groups. And so they were able to get through all of the senior population. Then they're like, "We're ready to keep going."

Kelliann Beavers [07:29]

Right.

Taylor Tedder [07:31]

But we had to wait for everyone else to catch up because it was that whole statewide effort.

Kelliann Beavers [07:36]

Yeah, that was definitely a complicated part of the whole experience.

This is somewhat related to that, but you can also speak about it broadly – how did the city work with, or observe the groups that were hardest hit by the pandemic, and who were those groups in your opinion? And with this, I think you can speak specifically to this community and what you observed here because-

Taylor Tedder [08:05]

Yeah. So we kind of accomplished that through volunteers and nonprofit organizations.

Kelliann Beavers [08:09]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [08:12]

So we have an organization here called "Emergency Aid," and they have always been a really helpful organization for people going through a tough time. So they became a conduit for our federal aid to get out rental assistance and utility assistance to residents.

Kelliann Beavers [08:34]

Wow.

Taylor Tedder [08:36]

They already had all of the screening processes in place for income guidelines, means testing, and things of that nature. So they were able to directly get out that money from the CARES Act to people that really needed it.

Kelliann Beavers [08:50]

Mm-hmm. Had they already been working in the realm of housing assistance or not necessarily?

Taylor Tedder [08:57]

Yeah, they have done that in the past. But with all of the extra funds and the need, that kind of skyrocketed a bit.

Kelliann Beavers [09:04]

Yeah.

Taylor Tedder [09:09]

They remained really busy, and they also helped out with childcare assistance as well. So, people that still worked in person couldn't send their children to school.

Kelliann Beavers [09:23]

Right.

Taylor Tedder [09:24]

So if they had a need, they were looking for assistance with that as well.

Kelliann Beavers [09:28]

That's great. It sounds like a really versatile organization.

The next question I think you've somewhat gone through, so you don't necessarily have to speak to it again. But if there is anything that comes to mind, as you look back at the timeline, the question is, can you walk through a timeline as you remembered it? What happened? What did you do? I think, given when you stepped into your role, and sort of the strange transitional moment that was. You've probably spoken somewhat to that just by telling the story of what you shared with me. But if anything else comes to mind.

Taylor Tedder [10:08]

Sure. So I interviewed in May of '21 in my final in-person interview with the city council. And wore a mask in the interview and everywhere.

Kelliann Beavers [10:21]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [10:24]

And then my wife and I came to look at houses over the July 4th weekend, and there were no masks. And then when I started at the beginning of August last year, we were back to masks. And we had – yeah, until when they recently lifted it. So that was different than other parts of the county, but I think it saved, at least, our productivity here, to keep doing business and to keep the community running for the residents.

Kelliann Beavers [10:58]

Yeah. And you're saying, to some extent, to keep each other safe while you were here.

Taylor Tedder [11:03]

Yeah. And we also operate our electric, water, and wastewater utilities with the community. So there's really critical things that have to get done. So making sure that we had enough people were always kind of a concern.

Kelliann Beavers [11:18]

Yeah, that's an interesting part. I wonder if you want to speak, a little bit, to some of those kinds of services. Where I can only imagine, there are certain aspects of it that you can't shut down.

Taylor Tedder [11:30]

Yeah.

Kelliann Beavers [11:32]

And I know you weren't here during the height of the shutdown, but I'm sure, just in terms of interfacing with these people and talking about appropriate steps along the way, you've learned some things about that.

Taylor Tedder [11:43]

Yeah. So, our electric crews would essentially distance themselves from other employees, so they had specific places that they could go in where they'd work out of.

Kelliann Beavers [11:55]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [11:58]

And then they would work-

Kelliann Beavers [12:01]

Oh, like certain entrances where some of them are allowed to come and- [overtalking 12:03] interesting.

Taylor Tedder [12:04]

Yeah, so they have different sections of the building, and so they were able to kind of stay isolated from others.

Kelliann Beavers [12:11]

Yeah.

Taylor Tedder [12:14]

And then most of them had the ability to be in a vehicle alone. So we were able to stagger their shifts so that when they were eating lunch or coming and going, other people weren't doing that as well. So then they limited the exposure with even their coworkers for the most critical people.

Kelliann Beavers [12:32]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [12:40]

So that's interesting to me because we always focus a lot, at least – city hall and collaboration. So when you're isolating employees, it's definitely a different way of doing business.

Kelliann Beavers [12:55]

Yeah, absolutely. And there's a lot of moving parts to even making something like what you just described happen and work and let everyone know that's how it's going to work and make sure people understand it, and it's complicated.

Taylor Tedder

But yeah, we had more than 90% of our staff report to work every day during the pandemic. And we had directives on social distancing, wearing masks, and enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of everything daily. So all of our employees really did step up here.

Kelliann Beavers [13:30]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [13:31]

And it was really evident to me, even not being a part of the team at that point. But they organized supplies for the community. They made calls to check on residents. So we had this program for seniors, where we could call them and see how they were doing. And then we actually scheduled vaccination appointments for residents that wanted to call because it was all internet-based.

Kelliann Beavers [14:00]

Yeah, that was a very complicated part of it early on. I was speaking with someone else about that. That's great you were able to make that happen.

Taylor Tedder [14:09]

And then some facilities were opened at various times, so the people – if there were certain things they needed to do, they were able to do that, like paying their utility bill.

Kelliann Beavers [14:21]

Oh, city service facilities, you mean?

Taylor Tedder [14:22]

Yeah.

Kelliann Beavers [14:23]

Have specific blocks of time and say, "This is generally closed; but these hours, they will be available."

Taylor Tedder [14:29]

Yeah. And then our fire department really stepped up, though. It literally consumed their time for two years.

Kelliann Beavers [14:37]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [14:39]

And they're still working-

Kelliann Beavers [14:40]

Yeah. With what you were explaining about the health district – because I was just – wheels were turning in my mind, and I was thinking about, I wonder – the city's relationship with the county, and all of the other many different kinds of broader relationships that are necessitated. But also then, with respect to what you articulated about the fire department, is that something that, internally, you all decided was best and the way to go? Or how did that unfold versus, as you articulated, the health district caring for it, or the way it might have unfolded elsewhere? I mean, I'm not positive how it unfolded everywhere.

Taylor Tedder [15:13]

Yeah. We have a really good relationship with the health district and the county, for that matter. But I think that we were asked to do it.

Kelliann Beavers [15:24]

Uh-huh.

Taylor Tedder [15:26]

And so they literally stepped up and did it.

Kelliann Beavers [15:28]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [15:31]

So, our fire department led our emergency operations center during the entire pandemic. They met multiple times a week to discuss changes, and so that was really positive. And when I started, we were still meeting weekly, just to make sure we were following all the CDC guidelines that were always changing and things of that nature.

Kelliann Beavers [15:54]

Yeah.

Taylor Tedder [15:57]

And then they did the entire vaccination clinics, they did drive-through, and they did mass vaccination clinics at one of our larger facilities, the Smith Building.

Kelliann Beavers [16:08]

Mm-hmm. What an enormous undertaking. It's really interesting.

Taylor Tedder [16:13]

And so we have a hospital here in Boulder City, but they did not want testing at their – just general like walk-in testing.

Kelliann Beavers [16:28]

With the traffic overlapping and everything. That sounds complicated.

Taylor Tedder [16:29]

So, you have people with underlying health issues going there for a specific purpose, and so, they didn't want that.

Kelliann Beavers [16:36]

Yeah.

Taylor Tedder [16:38]

So we handled that at the fire department. And we actually had an employee that was on – gosh,

what is the term? So, he'd had an injury, and so he was placed on light duty. And so, he was actually assigned to lead the testing. So we were able to do-

Kelliann Beavers [17:05]

Well, light duty but not light responsibility.

Taylor Tedder [17:07]

Yeah.

Kelliann Beavers [17:08]

Yeah, that's amazing.

Taylor Tedder [17:10]

So, he was exposed like every day to all these people.

Kelliann Beavers [17:11]

Mm-hmm, yeah.

Taylor Tedder [17:13]

And so we provided free testing to residents and people that work here. And I think at times, people from Henderson got word that they could come here-

Kelliann Beavers [17:23]

No doubt. (laughs)

Taylor Tedder [17:28]

So we had to start asking for proof of residence or work.

Kelliann Beavers [17:32]

Yeah. (laughs)

Taylor Tedder [17:35]

Because at one point, a lot of major employers, I think like CCSD, and some others required that they had testing weekly or something like that.

Kelliann Beavers [17:44]

Oh, yeah.

Taylor Tedder [17:46]

And so, all the testing facilities were full, so people started coming down here. So that was fun.

Kelliann Beavers [17:53]

(laughs)

Taylor Tedder [17:58]

But yeah. We ended the testing I think after the holidays. And it was actually our mayor that was

really adamant that we kept doing it through the holidays because of what happened last year where there was a huge spike.

Kelliann Beavers [18:12]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [18:14]

And it did happen again. So we were really thankful that he did push us to do that. Sort of the costs associated with it.

Kelliann Beavers [18:24]

Yeah, no doubt. And I mean if I remember correctly, at that moment there was also a sense of things unwinding, and not a lot of clarity about whether or not those things were necessary to maintain. But I can see how that was a really wise foresight.

And how about now? I don't – I assume, to some extent, that it's the same from place to place, but you never know, in terms of what people are experiencing, and how much the pandemic is or is not at the forefront of the mind. And how things are unfolding in terms of cases, and also just attitudes about whether the pandemic is a concern.

Taylor Tedder [19:20]

Mm-hmm. So it's really interesting. We've actually had a lot of people out with COVID lately.

Kelliann Beavers [19:26]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [19:28]

So that's been kind of a gentle reminder that hey, this is still going on. A lot of our staff have the vaccine, booster, and all of that. And so did I, and I've actually been lucky enough to never have caught it yet.

Kelliann Beavers [19:49]

Right. I have too, although I try not to say that out loud. (laughs) I don't want anyone to hear.

Taylor Tedder [19:54]

I'm going to knock on wood. But yeah, it's still happening and it's here. It's probably going to be here to stay; be another common cold-type thing perhaps.

Kelliann Beavers [20:07]

Yeah.

Taylor Tedder [20:08]

But it's still concerning. Really, what we're focusing on now is all of the federal aid. So Boulder City was-

Kelliann Beavers [20:16]

Yeah, tell me about that.

Taylor Tedder [20:19]

So there were two different things. There was the CARES Act, and we received \$21,000,000 for that, and that all went out in 2020. And I think there was some funding left in the first half of '21, and it was all spent. We-

Kelliann Beavers [20:40]

Yeah, thanks for articulating that. It's hard to remember exactly how things unfolded. But a lot of that funding was dispersed as early as late 2020, I think you're right. And then-

Taylor Tedder [20:52]

Yeah. So we provided financial assistance to businesses, nonprofits, and individuals, and I talked about rental assistance.

Kelliann Beavers [21:00]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [21:02]

And we even did a vaccination drawing/bonus thing for community members. So people got vaccinated, and this was after it had been widely available for a couple of months. They were able to get prizes; so a few people that won got money, like cash, and then others received pool passes or other things.

Kelliann Beavers [21:32]

That's great.

Taylor Tedder [21:35]

So that was neat. But right now, we're really focusing on the ARPA funds; so the 21.8 million dollars, it's kind of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the city.

Kelliann Beavers [21:45]

Mm-hmm. Just to make sure I understood – although I guess look this up separately. But was it the same number you articulated for CARES and ARPA, or it's-

Taylor Tedder [21:53]

So that was actually wrong.

Kelliann Beavers [21:55]

Oh, no worries. It's fine.

Taylor Tedder [21:56]

So I was looking at the wrong line.

Kelliann Beavers [21:57]

No worries.

Taylor Tedder [21:57]

I think on the CARES Act, we received like a million or two.

Kelliann Beavers [22:04]

Sure, okay. Anyway, just so I can comprehend.

Taylor Tedder [22:05]

So the ARPA funds, we received the first half in '21, and then we just received the second half. So the city council just passed a third spending plan for the funds. It ranges from everything from support to nonprofits; so helping them – like our senior center; emergency aid. And then there's another organization here in town called "Lend A Hand," and they give rides to seniors.

Kelliann Beavers [22:31]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [22:34]

And so their allocation is going towards increased gas costs.

Kelliann Beavers [22:36]

Yeah, no doubt.

Taylor Tedder [22:40]

But we're also doing quite a lot of things. So we engaged the public through a survey and a town hall meeting. And so we've gotten really good feedback. And so the public-

Kelliann Beavers [22:56]

About the investment of those funds and where they thought they should be allocated. Is that kind of like [overtalking 23:00]

Taylor Tedder [23:01]

Yeah. So there are two different pots of money. So, one, we're able to use for prescribed uses only, so water and wastewater.

Kelliann Beavers [23:09]

Uh-huh.

Taylor Tedder [23:17]

Park maintenance, support of the nonprofits, and mental health support.

Kelliann Beavers [23:18]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [23:19]

And utility bill assistance. And then the other part – so in Boulder City, a lot of communities had a loss in revenue during the pandemic, and Boulder City did not lose revenue; we actually ended up coming out slightly ahead.

Kelliann Beavers [23:35]

Uh-huh.

Taylor Tedder [23:36]

And I think it's because of the solar development that we have. We received a surprise exercise of an option agreement. So Boulder City's a little different than other cities. We own the majority of the land that's in the city.

Kelliann Beavers [23:51]

Oh.

Taylor Tedder [23:52]

So we lease thousands of acres for these solar developments out in the Eldorado Valley. So we received a surprise \$4,000,000 option exercise on one of those parcels, and it made us come out ahead.

Kelliann Beavers [24:06]

Wow, that's really rare and interesting.

Taylor Tedder [24:09]

Yeah. Actually, about 40% of our revenue comes from solar leases instead of property tax. So it really benefits the community and keeps their liability low for what they pay.

Kelliann Beavers [24:27]

Yeah. When you say, "The city owns such a substantial amount of property," do you mean – and it's fine if there's not a "yes" or "no" answer to this? But I'm presuming that when you say, "the solar," you're talking about peripheral land versus the commercial land downtown and land throughout-

Taylor Tedder [24:49]

Right. So the developed part of the town is actually a tiny, tiny portion of the city. Boulder City is 208 square miles, which is larger than Las Vegas and Henderson. So it's one of the top largest cities in the nation by area.

Kelliann Beavers [25:09]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [25:11]

But by population, we're tiny. So we're just – the developed portion of the town's just kind of the tip. And then-

Kelliann Beavers [25:20]

But it's on federal land, I mean, as opposed to some of the adjacent land you're-

Taylor Tedder [25:21]

Yeah.

Kelliann Beavers [25:22]

Interesting.

Taylor Tedder [25:24]

So when you come over Railroad Pass, and if you were coming here, on your right, you'd see all the solar panels. That's where the energy zone was. And then a lot of it's designated as a conservation area for desert tourists.

Kelliann Beavers [25:38]

Right.

Taylor Tedder [25:39]

So we can't develop there.

Kelliann Beavers [25:40]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [25:42]

But the city has a controlled growth ordinance.

Kelliann Beavers [25:50]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [25:51]

So we have limits on how many houses we can build a year.

Kelliann Beavers [25:52]

Oh, interesting. Is that how it's been from the get-go? Or that's something that's been implemented-

Taylor Tedder [25:59]

So, in the 70s, they experienced rapid growth, and people didn't like that, so they implemented controlled growth-

Kelliann Beavers [26:08]

Oh, interesting. I'll have to look that up. Outside of this, urban planning is my background. So I think that's really interesting.

Taylor Tedder [26:15]

Yeah. So it's 120 homes a year or 30 per developer.

Kelliann Beavers [26:18]

Wow.

Taylor Tedder [26:19]

And so that makes it tough for developers to build; so they have to do multi-year developments for a neighborhood.

Kelliann Beavers [26:27]

Yeah.

Taylor Tedder [26:31]

But yeah. So the other pot of money, the Department of the Treasury came out with an exemption, so if you didn't have a revenue loss, you could take \$10,000,000 as your standard deduction, as your revenue loss exemption.

Kelliann Beavers [26:45]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [26:46]

So the \$10,000,000, we actually just passed.

Kelliann Beavers [26:55]

And that's a more flexible use is what you're saying.

Taylor Tedder [26:58]

Yeah. So you can pretty much use that for anything; so we're going to be doing facility upgrades of \$3,000,000; ADA compliance. We're going to do an electric vehicle pilot program for the police department, to see how we can – they actually cost the same as an explorer police [overtalking 27:18] interceptor

Kelliann Beavers [27:20]

That's neat.

Taylor Tedder [27:21]

So, looking at Tesla, Ford, and those options.

Kelliann Beavers [27:26]

When you say, "ADA compliance," do you mean with the properties that are city properties, or throughout the community, or-

Taylor Tedder [27:33]

City properties. So, specifically, this building has a lot of ADA issues. We only have one door.

Kelliann Beavers [27:40]

Yeah, with the stairs at the entrance.

Taylor Tedder [27:41]

Yeah. So, looking at an elevator and other ways to make it more ADA-compliant.

Kelliann Beavers [27:48]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [27:52]

So, some folks in public safety, some requests from them. Specifically, a new fire department substation. They had identified that response times for all the properties on the lakeside are above the national standard.

Kelliann Beavers [28:11]

Oh, so creating a station that's closer to the housing-

Taylor Tedder [28:14]

Yeah. So moving an existing unit up there, so we don't have to hire any new employees, but addressing that response time.

Kelliann Beavers [28:22]

Wow.

Taylor Tedder [28:23]

And then parks are another thing – they were really utilized during the pandemic. So, focusing on park maintenance, signage, and-

Kelliann Beavers [28:35]

You have so much beautiful land here.

Taylor Tedder [28:37]

-benches, pickleball courts, and meaningful things for the community that would be nice things. And then focusing on mental health support.

Kelliann Beavers [28:49]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [28:50]

So that's two-fold. We have a drug court program at our municipal court, and they really help people rehabilitate. But in that program, they have to have entered the court system, because they would have been arrested and already be at a low point in their life. And it's really successful, and they have a lot of really good success stories out of there.

But another thing that we've been working with is the community group called "The Nevadans for the Common Good." They approached the city about a year ago, about the need for a mental health worker here in Boulder City. And we didn't want to duplicate any services that were already being provided by the county or the SNHD.

So we were trying to look at it from a different perspective of limiting the amount of calls for service from police and fire-related to mental health; the frequent calls that are repeat callers.

So we've worked with the hospital to create a program where they'll hire an LCSW – Licensed Clinical Social Worker – to be a hospital employee, but they will work at that community-based need and try to solve the issue at the root.

Kelliann Beavers [30:13]

Wow.

Taylor Tedder [30:16]

And then the goal would be, after four years of funding that salary, they could become self-sufficient through Medicaid, Medicare, and grant funding.

Kelliann Beavers [30:25]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [30:26]

So that's another thing we're trying to do.

Kelliann Beavers [30:29]

Mm-hmm. That position, you mean, over time, they would find a way to support that – because when you say, "become self-sufficient."

Taylor Tedder [30:38]

Yeah.

Kelliann Beavers [30:39]

I'm just clarifying that from the "becomes self-sufficient with the population served." Interesting.

Taylor Tedder [30:46]

And then a bunch of support to nonprofits in the community. So, just trying to spread the money around. And in the last council meeting we had, one of the council members pointed out that this funding touches everyone.

Kelliann Beavers [31:02]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [31:04]

So, one person might be affected by the improvements at the senior center, and another might be affected through the improvements at the parks or something like that or a grant to the schools. Because CCSD received, I think, close to a billion dollars.

Kelliann Beavers [31:28]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [31:29]

But they're using it in different ways, and our schools expressed a need for funding for afterschool programming.

Kelliann Beavers [31:34]

Mm-hmm. Are your schools a part of CCSD or not?

Taylor Tedder [31:38]

Mm-hmm.

Kelliann Beavers [31:39]

Okay. And so, you're just saying how they're applying the funding doesn't necessarily serve this specific need your school is hoping to have.

Taylor Tedder [31:46]

Yeah. So we're going to give them \$100,000 for that.

Kelliann Beavers [31:50]

Yeah. I'm sure that will be felt by people throughout the community, that have children and need those programs.

Taylor Tedder [31:56]

Yeah. And our council was really tuned into the fact there were a lot of gaps that children probably fell into through distance learning.

Kelliann Beavers [32:09]

Yeah. The experience of children is also something that I'm curious to hear your perspective on, which is sort of naturally what you were talking about.

Taylor Tedder [32:19]

Yeah. So it – just when they're away from other students and the teacher, there's the perceived notion that they weren't able to go as quickly. The high school principal has told me that the freshmen she's getting are more like 8th graders.

Kelliann Beavers [32:49]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [32:50]

Or they're all kind of delayed in their development.

Kelliann Beavers [32:52]

Yeah, even just that social development.

Taylor Tedder [32:57]

So that's kind of been the driver behind that.

Kelliann Beavers [33:05]

Yeah. Is there anything you wish the government, at any level – it doesn't have to be the Boulder City Government – did differently or could do differently now in response to the pandemic and the economic downturn following the pandemic?

Taylor Tedder [33:24]

That's a great question. I think there could have been more strategic planning to have more coordinated messaging that was put out. I think everything was really confusing, at least, probably, the first year.

Kelliann Beavers [33:53]

Yeah.

Taylor Tedder [33:55]

Because things changed so quickly. But no one knew what to expect. And as much disaster and emergency planning as you can do, it might not be applicable to the situation. But I think what we've learned from the entire pandemic, just from even federal, state, and government levels, this is something we can have as a plan for the future if it ever came up again and look at what worked and what didn't. And that's going to be really valuable if what was learned – I'm sure, from even what you're doing, that is going to be meaningful for the future.

Kelliann Beavers [34:38]

Yeah, I certainly hope so. When you talk about coordinating and looking toward the future, and the emergency training, some other folks have mentioned to me the MAC – Multi-Agency Coordination – something that's established by FEMA that's required. Is Boulder City a part of that, or that's – it's sort of like a required collaborative entity, that existed before the pandemic, to respond to emergencies?

Taylor Tedder [35:06]

I don't believe so, yeah. So we were on these weekly calls with the county all the time, and I was told they were happening daily at one point.

Kelliann Beavers [35:23]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [35:25]

Where every jurisdiction-

Kelliann Beavers [35:25]

Yeah, and that was probably that.

Taylor Tedder [35:27]

Yeah. Every jurisdiction in the entire area had representation there. And I think those were really valuable. I came in on the tail-end of that, so-

Kelliann Beavers [35:39]

Oh, yeah, I'm sorry. I keep asking you questions that were probably not unfolding at the time.

Taylor Tedder [35:44]

It was kind of like, what *are* we doing on these calls so often? But it's because they were doing that all along, and it was probably really valuable to us.

Kelliann Beavers [35:53]

Yeah. I can only imagine that kind of regional coordination, set aside the emergency, which is so hard to do. But then you start recognizing the value of just connecting with all these folks, and understanding what's going with them, and having your ear to the ground in that way, it changes things.

Another person was also saying to me how it helped build trust among the different communities.

Taylor Tedder [36:26]

We worked really closely with all of the municipalities and the county because we were all coming up with policies and procedures and trying to learn from each other and see what everyone else was doing. I know, when I arrived, the thing that everyone was looking out for was a vaccine mandate for employees.

Kelliann Beavers [36:46]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [36:49]

And no one ended up pulling the trigger on that, specifically, the county was waiting to see what the school district did. We were waiting to see what Henderson did, but they were looking at everyone else. So, in Las Vegas, their council was never interested in it at all.

Kelliann Beavers [37:07]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [37:10]

What's interesting about where I came from, the state issued a statewide mask mandate that allowed counties to opt out; because there are so many really small rural counties in Kansas and in western Kansas, they didn't think worked for them or whatever.

Kelliann Beavers [37:39]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [37:40]

And I think that was the only way that the governor was able to get that through. But our county, we were essentially an outer-ring suburb of Kansas City. The county was about 88,000 people. And our county commission opted out; the only one in the entire area topped out. So our city commission took the initiative to pass a city mask mandate. And so that was a lot more-

Kelliann Beavers [38:10]

It's really interesting. Probably a rare thing throughout the county to have that very specific thing unfold.

Taylor Tedder [38:16]

Yeah. So it was a really hot topic. We had people protesting outside. And they passed it, and we did it.

Kelliann Beavers [38:24]

Mm-hmm. Was the county big, such that there was a lot of rural community that was also a part of the community, or not exactly?

Taylor Tedder [38:31]

No. Leavenworth was the county seat for most of the population base, about 36,000. And then we had a city directly to our south connected to us that was about 11,000. So it – yeah. But with Fort Leavenworth there, it's like the intellectual center of the army, like an army university where they send high-level people in to do master's-level courses, and they would be there a year or two and leave. But the federal government was really stringent on all of their policies, so it was really fitting with the community, and it worked.

Kelliann Beavers [39:14]

Yeah. It's a lot of people too. I mean, 88,000 people is not a small town at this point.

Taylor Tedder [39:21]

But the politics of it were really interesting.

Kelliann Beavers [39:28]

Yeah, no doubt. I think just that specific dynamic you described of the city choosing to do something that went against what the county was doing, or in response to what the county was doing is really interesting.

You talked a little bit about this when you talked about the Emergency Aid Organization. But anything you might have to say otherwise – what do you think has been the most innovative ways that organizations have dealt with the challenges of the pandemic? Examples of collaboration; programs; anything that comes to mind, as far as what you know of, that has become new now in response to that, or happened since you stepped into your role.

Taylor Tedder [40:16]

Probably just the wide availability of assistance. You don't always have that at the front of your mind. That with the pandemic, it really put out there, at least to me, all of the places where people can get assistance because you don't think about that when something isn't happening.

Kelliann Beavers [40:40]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [40:41]

But now, it's at the front of our minds that, hey, people can get help here. They can go there.

Kelliann Beavers [40:46]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [40:48]

So just the fact that it was pushed out so much to the public, I think it is connecting people better to services they might need.

Kelliann Beavers [40:59]

Yeah. And that goes somewhat with what you were saying about the role of just disseminating information and being able to do that effectively.

You talked a little bit about CARES and ARPA already, so I'm going to skip that one. How about – well, you observed there were lessons to be learned for the future, that you feel are impactful, that happened as a repercussion of this emergency. But are there any specific learnings that you think we can take away from this pandemic experience for the future, or specific learnings based on what unfolded in Boulder City?

Taylor Tedder [41:51]

Yeah. I think, on a national level, the politicization of the issue kind of hampered a lot of the mitigation efforts, and kind of made it hard for cases to go down at points in time. I don't know if that's something that can be overcome.

Kelliann Beavers [42:24]

Yeah, not being aware that it exists.

Taylor Tedder [42:27]

But it just depends on who people listen to and where they get their information.

Kelliann Beavers [42:35]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [42:37]

So I think that was definitely a hurdle when there was a lot of misinformation out there. Like when people literally thought you could inject Clorox or other things that were just absolutely insane, maybe, to you and me, but some people actually thought that.

Here specifically, I would just say, the ability to work together with all of these different organizations is just key.

Kelliann Beavers [43:14]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [43:16]

Really working together, having coordinated messaging, and making sure we're doing everything we can is kind of just the base point that I would take away from our community specifically.

Kelliann Beavers [43:34]

Yeah. Okay. Are you hopeful? And if yes, what are you hopeful for?

Taylor Tedder [43:44]

I am hopeful that we can spend this money.

Kelliann Beavers [43:49]

Yeah.

Taylor Tedder [43:50]

The clock is ticking. We have until the end of 2026 to spend it, or we have to return it.

Kelliann Beavers [43:52]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [43:53]

And we don't want to return it. So we-

Kelliann Beavers [44:00]

Is it just the issuing of the funding to the organization that has to happen? Or the organization has to then, also, spend the money to do the things?

Taylor Tedder [44:08]

Yeah. So the funds have to be committed to specific spending plans by the end of 2024, and then it has to be spent by the end of 2026.

Kelliann Beavers [44:22]

That's the tricky part.

Taylor Tedder [44:23]

So the availability of companies to do that work – contractors, materials-

Kelliann Beavers [44:31]

They have to report back and say, "It's spent." Is that how it works?

Taylor Tedder [44:34]

Yeah. So, a lot of-

Kelliann Beavers [44:35]

Say, "Thank you for funding. Here's what we did with it."

Taylor Tedder [44:37]

Yeah. So there are complex reporting requirements. We have to report quarterly to the Department of the Treasury.

Kelliann Beavers [44:45]

Mm-hmm. That sounds like a whole lot of work in and of itself.

Taylor Tedder [44:49]

Yeah. So the actual tracking of it, our finance department is handling that, and I think it is a lot of work.

Kelliann Beavers [44:55]

Yeah. Is that – I mean did the finance department have to grow? That's not easy. I'm sure they had things to do otherwise.

Taylor Tedder [45:05]

Yeah, I think they do have things to do otherwise (laughter). But yeah. They were able to handle it because it's not – the actual information we have to report isn't too different because it just kind of integrates into our financial system – specific codes. And so we already have the systems in place to do this.

Kelliann Beavers [45:28]

Yeah.

Taylor Tedder [45:29]

But I would say, for smaller communities, like communities that aren't lucky enough to have as many staff members as we do, that's probably *really* difficult.

Kelliann Beavers [45:38]

Yeah.

Taylor Tedder [45:41]

And I would hope that the federal government is forgiving to them if they don't do it right. Because you spend the money and I mean, it's gone.

Kelliann Beavers [45:51]

Yeah.

Taylor Tedder [45:52]

But yeah. I'm also hopeful that people are able to continue to be respectful of each other, and that people make their decisions even to wear masks now. I just went to a conference in Cincinnati, and there were a lot of people in the airports wearing masks. And I think it just comes down to being respectful of others, and hopefully, we can get back to fully normal.

Kelliann Beavers [46:33]

Yeah.

Taylor Tedder [46:34]

I know our airport is still experiencing a lack of traffic. So helicopter tours are primarily completely driven by international travelers. They're the people from China and countries like that in Asia that are the primary customers for the helicopter tours.

Kelliann Beavers [47:00]

Coming to scout development opportunities, or is that just something made up?

Taylor Tedder [47:04]

For tours of the Hoover Dam and the Grand Canyon.

Kelliann Beavers [47:05]

Okay. It just so happens that's-

Taylor Tedder [47:11]

Yeah. And so they operate out of Boulder City Airport.

Kelliann Beavers [47:13]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [47:14]

And so their traffic's down. So they're looking at ways to diversify their revenue. It's an enterprise fund, so it self-sustains.

Kelliann Beavers [47:21]

Mm-hmm.

Taylor Tedder [47:26]

Yeah. So just trying to get back to normal. Our businesses downtown actually, we had conveniently been tracking through this company called VisaView Credit Card Sales because of the opening of I-11 because everyone was worried that it would hurt their businesses. So we wanted to track how they were doing, and early this year, they were surpassing 2019 pre-pandemic sales.

Kelliann Beavers [48:04]

Well, I'm so glad to hear that because it's such a great city.

Taylor Tedder [48:06]

Yeah. So they're doing even better than before I-11 opened. And I think the pandemic also helped people discover Boulder City. So our primary visitors traditionally were from California, Arizona, Utah, Washington State, and Texas.

Kelliann Beavers [48:30]

That's where I'm from.

Taylor Tedder [48:32]

And now, half of the visitors are from the Las Vegas area.

Kelliann Beavers [48:39]

Mm-hmm. That's really interesting, and I'm really happy to hear that part. Well, thank you so much. This has been so meaningful.

Taylor Tedder [48:46]

Yeah.

Kelliann Beavers [48:48]

I appreciate you sharing all of this information with me, and I'm excited for you about the spending of the funding. It sounds like some really neat changes are in store, which is great for the community.

Taylor Tedder [48:56]

Yeah. Some really fun projects and some that will make a real long-term impact.

Kelliann Beavers [49:05]

Yeah.

End of audio: 49:07