

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL, NAPLES CITY COUNCIL, BALLARD TOWN COUNCIL AND Uintah County Commission Special Joint Meeting Held February 26, 2010 at 3:00 p.m. in the Vernal City Conference room, 447 East Main, Vernal, Utah.

PRESENT: Uintah County Commissioners Mark Raymond and Darlene Burns. Vernal City Mayor Gary Showalter. Vernal City Councilmembers Bert Clark, JoAnn Cowan, Ted Munford, Sonja Norton and Cal Dee Reynolds. Naples City Mayor Dean Baker. Naples City Councilmember Robert Hall. Uintah County Commissioner Mike McKee was excused.

STAFF PRESENT: Ken Bassett, Vernal City Manager and Stacy Palmer, Vernal City clerk.

GUESTS PRESENT: Kam Pope, Robin O’Driscoll, Sheila Sessions, Ed Zurbuchen, Steve Evans, Michelle Dana and Kelly Harvey.

Mayor Gary Showalter welcomed everyone present and noted that this was his first time attending the joint City/County meeting as Vernal City’s mayor.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT & APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING: Councilmember Bert Clark moved to acknowledge and approve this special meeting. Commissioner Mark Raymond seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Clark, Cowan, Munford and Reynolds and Commissioners Burns and Raymond voting in favor. Councilmember Norton was not present for the vote.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 22, 2010: Councilmember JoAnn Cowan made a motion to approve the minutes of January 22, 2010 as presented. Councilmember Bert Clark seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Clark, Cowan, Munford and Reynolds and Commissioner Raymond voting in favor. Commissioner Burns did not vote and Councilmember Norton was not present for the vote. Councilmember Clark noted that since Commissioner Darlene Burns was not present at the January 22nd meeting, Uintah County may want to present these minutes for approval at one of their subsequent meetings. Mayor Showalter stated that it was his opinion that Commissioner Raymond was present at the previous meeting and can approve the minutes on behalf of Uintah County. Commissioner Darlene Burns concurred and the minutes were approved.

UINTAH RECREATION DISTRICT IMPROVEMENTS: Robin O’Driscoll, Uintah Recreation District Executive Director noted the presence of District Board members Steve Evans, Kam Pope, Mark Raymond and Bert Clark, and also welcomed Sheila Sessions, Program and Marketing Director for the District. Ms. O’Driscoll stated that the new baseball complex near Vernal Junior High is complete and invited the elected officials to the ribbon-cutting ceremony to be held Saturday, May 1, 2010 at 9:00 a.m. at the baseball field. Ms. O’Driscoll indicated that the Recreation District would like to extend an invitation to the elected officials present and turned the time over to Steve Evans. Mr. Evans complimented Ms. O’Driscoll and

her staff on their expertise overseeing the baseball field construction and noted that the project was completed on time and under budget. Mr.

Evans then stated that the Recreation District Board would like to invite the County and Cities' elected officials to participate in an exhibition softball game to be held in conjunction with the ribbon cutting ceremony on May 1st. Mr. Evans explained that the parks committee thought this would be a good idea to help the community get involved and stated that the committee was hoping that the County would field a team to compete against a combined team from Vernal, Naples and Ballard cities. Mr. Evans also indicated that the winning team would be given the opportunity to purchase **one** picnic table for the baseball field which would be labeled "courtesy of ..." and the losing team would be given the opportunity to purchase **two** picnic tables, with the Recreation District providing the fourth and final picnic table needed for the park. Councilmember JoAnn Cowan asked if City and County employees would be eligible to play. Mr. Evans replied that it was the hope of the committee that the elected officials would field the two teams and noted that it would just be an exhibition game. Councilmember Cal Dee Reynolds asked if Ballard has been invited to participate. Mr. Evans replied that he has extended an invitation to them to participate as well. After further discussion, Commissioner Darlene Burns, Mayor Dean Baker and Mayor Gary Showalter each agreed that their respective entities would participate in this exhibition softball game. Mr. Evans thanked the elected officials and stated that he would see to the final arrangements and make everyone aware of the specific details as they become available. Mr. Evans concluded that the Recreation District has experienced very exciting times in the recent past and noted that the District is currently moving from a capital-expansion mode to more emphasis on program-expansion. Mr. Evans stated that the District has also created a new committee which specializes in community enrichment, and they will be looking at various demographics of the County to find ways to expand and enrich their programs to meet the needs of Uintah County's residents. Mayor Gary Showalter thanked the Uintah Recreation District Board members, on behalf of all those elected officials present, for their efforts and the tremendous amount of time spent providing a great asset to the community.

NATURAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE: Michelle Dana, Director of the Emergency Management Office, explained that as part of the Natural Hazard Mitigation plan update, she wanted to review with local officials the items that were included in the original plan which was adopted in 2005. Ms. Dana provided a copy of the previous plan and invited the elected officials to review the document and the original goals which were outlined and provide her with feedback as to what, if anything, had been accomplished with regard to these goals. Ms. Dana also noted that the original plan includes the names of those who assisted with drafting the 2005 plan and asked local officials to update who would be working with her on the 2010 draft. Ms. Dana explained that this review would provide elected officials with an opportunity to recommit themselves to projects that will be implemented during the next mitigation cycle. Ms. Dana stated that there is Federal funding available for larger, pre-disaster projects, especially with regard to flooding issues. Commissioner Burns asked how soon Ms. Dana needs a response from the elected officials to submit the 2010 plan on time. Ms. Dana stated that the mitigation plan is supposed to be submitted by June or July 2010. Ken Bassett asked if this information could be obtained during subsequent LEPC meetings. Ms. Dana replied that LEPC would not have time to address this particular plan until April or May and that would delay the process too long. Ms. Dana also noted that it is important for elected officials to review the list

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of priorities carefully. Many projects are inexpensive, but budget constraints may also influence the type of projects the elected officials will support. Commissioner Burns stated that it would be wise for each entity to discuss the mitigation plan and have their representative to LEPC provide her with their respective updates. Councilmember Bert Clark suggested that Ms. Dana may want to invite Cheri McCurdy of the Uintah Transportation District to participate because the long-term road planning would be relevant to the Natural Hazard Mitigation plan. Ms. Dana explained that the planning process includes forums for public comment and input that will probably be taken in conjunction with subsequent LEPC meetings. Ms. Dana stated that public information will also be posted in local newspapers and on the County's web site.

NEW AIRPORT BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION COST INFORMATION:

Commissioner Darlene Burns stated that during the last two years, a new building was constructed at the Vernal Airport and explained that the project was underfunded by approximately \$100,000. Commissioner Burns explained that Commissioner Mike McKee, who was not present today, had indicated that there was a Community Impact Board (CIB) grant for this building for \$328,000 which did not end up being enough money to totally complete the project. Because of this shortfall, Commissioner Burns explained that there was not enough money to put a skirting or asphalt around the building or furnish the interior. Commissioner Burns reported that she had tried to research the source of the cost overruns, but the only change order she was aware of was the fact that engineers overlooked the fact that the site does not have sewer access so a more expensive septic system had to be installed. Councilmember JoAnn Cowan asked who constructed the building. Commissioner Burns replied that Brett Wood Construction built the facility. Councilmember Sonja Norton asked who did the engineering work. Commissioner Burns stated that she did not know who engineered the building and asked if those elected officials present who sit on the Airport Board had any additional information about the construction of this building. Councilmember Bert Clark stated that there was very little communication between the County Commission, the contractor and the Airport Board so he had little else to add regarding the background for this project.

Commissioner Burns explained that the whole issue came to light because the County Auditor sent a bill to Vernal City for 25% of the shortfall amount. Commissioner Burns asked if Vernal City would be willing to allocate \$15,000, while the County allocated \$45,000 during the subsequent budget years to finish the building and make the facility more usable. Commissioner Burns apologized for the apparent lack of communication regarding this project. Councilmember JoAnn Cowan asked when this building was constructed. Airport Manager, Kelly Harvey replied that it was completed in January or February of 2009. Councilmember Cowan stated that a number of public facilities which were completed recently have come in significantly under budget and stated that she does not understand how this building cost 25% more than an architect or engineer originally estimated. Councilmember Ted Munford asked how the project got approval to proceed without sufficient funding. Councilmember Sonja Norton expressed her concern that the whole budgetary and bidding processes must not have been completed properly to end up with a 25% budget shortfall. Commissioner Burns stated

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that she would consult Commissioner McKee, who sits on the Airport Board, to get answers to the questions that have been raised. The Commissioners would present their findings at next month's meeting. Councilmember Norton stated that she would like a comprehensive history as to who approved the contract, the bids that were submitted and information included in the CIB loan application. Councilmember Bert Clark stated that he would like to know whether or not anyone has applied for an addendum to the CIB for additional funding to cover the shortfall. Ken Bassett stated that reviewing the CIB application would be useful to assess what was originally designed, what was finally constructed and ascertain where the cost overruns occurred. Mr. Bassett expressed his concern that over the course of last two years, this project had never been discussed during this meeting, so Vernal City has a lot of questions they would like answered before allocating funds toward this project. Mr. Bassett stated that he visited the building earlier in the day and noted that something has to be done to complete the building properly. This is a substantial building with a nice meeting area, storage for the airport fire truck and snow-removal equipment. Mr. Bassett explained that he is concerned though, because there is mud everywhere that is being tracked into the building and even out onto the tarmac. At very least, gravel needs to be put down to mitigate the conditions until a permanent solution is agreed upon. Commissioner Burns stated that she would have the County road department put together an estimate for putting down gravel and asked if Vernal City would be willing to pay 25% of this cost. Councilmember Munford stated that the City understands that the building needs to be finished properly or else all the money that has already been spent will have been wasted, but noted that the City isn't ready to approve spending monies until they have more answers about the history of the project. Commissioner Burns stated that the County never properly furnished the interior of the building because those funds were put toward completion of the building itself. The minimal furnishings that are now in the building have been salvaged from other County departments and Commissioner Burns noted that more items will become available when the County Justice Court and Sheriff's offices move to their new facility. Commissioner Burns stated that she has already addressed the issue of custodial maintenance at the building in order to mitigate the impact of the mud being tracked into the building. Councilmember Clark stated that the floors need to be sealed and waxed to prevent grit from getting into the flooring and causing permanent damage.

AIRPORT RUNWAY ICE REMOVAL EQUIPMENT AND MATERIAL: Kelly Harvey, Vernal Airport Manager, stated that because the Vernal Airport has been designated a "139 Airport" there are certain FAA regulations with which the airport must comply. Recently the FAA issued an Advisory Circular for winter operations which states that if the runway at a "139 Airport" reaches nil conditions (no braking action), the runway must be shut down. Mr. Harvey stated that during back-to-back storms in January, the snow accumulated quickly and despite removal efforts, the runway was basically a sheet of ice. Unfortunately, there was a bad vehicular accident in the area and AirMed was unable to come in to transport the patient back to Salt Lake City for critical care because the runway was closed that night. Mr. Harvey explained that airport staff are left with two options – 1) wait for the ice to melt on its own or 2) use FAA-approved chemicals to melt the ice and re-open the runway. Mr. Harvey stated that the

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FAA does not allow the use of salt to de-ice runways. Councilmember JoAnn Cowan asked what type of equipment is necessary to apply the FAA-approved chemicals. Mr. Harvey replied that it is a machine that sits on the back of a pickup truck that applies the chemical. Mr. Harvey stated that the chemicals are expensive and his initial cost estimate for a single application (down the center line and thirty feet on each side) would cost \$7,000. To cover the entire runway surface would cost closer to \$10,000 per application. Commissioner Burns asked how many times during this past winter that the Airport would have applied the chemicals if they were available. Mr. Harvey noted that winter is not over yet, but so far, he probably would have needed to de-ice the runway three times. Councilmember Cowan asked if crews regularly plow the runway to keep snow and ice off. Mr. Harvey stated that the problem is that snow usually melts faster than crews can plow it off to the side leaving water that turns to ice overnight. Mr. Kelly noted that often during the winter months, even daytime temperatures often remain well below freezing. Commissioner Burns asked how much the applicator would cost. Mr. Harvey replied that the unit, which is monitored by GPS signal to prevent duplicate application, costs approximately \$25,000. Commissioner Burns surmised that the total initial cost of equipment, plus four applications would be approximately \$60,000. Subsequent years would cost approximately \$35,000 for the chemicals. Mr. Harvey stated that he was aware that the FAA was considering implementing this policy and noted that he budgeted \$20,000 this year for snow and ice removal in anticipation, which could be used to cover most of the cost of the applicator, but not the chemical.

Ken Bassett asked if the runway is usually able to remain open during spring snow storms. Mr. Harvey explained that early spring is a difficult time because of the daytime warming and overnight freezing. Mr. Harvey stated that the runway surface is porous so some snow/water remains where the sweeper cannot reach. In addition, the sweeper only reaches within 1/8th of an inch of the runway surface, so snow/water remain on the runway despite removal efforts. Mayor Gary Showalter asked how many times this winter's runway closures had interfered with commercial air traffic. Mr. Harvey stated that the closures usually end up happening at night and usually only affect AirMed or private traffic. Mayor Showalter asked if the FAA allows for exemptions if the airport can show that commercial air traffic is not interrupted. Mr. Harvey explained that there are no exemptions for Advisory Circulars, and because the airport has been designated a "139 Airport," it is held to higher standards. Councilmember Bert Clark explained that the 139 status offers communities the opportunity to have commercial flights and is related to the Federal subsidies the airport is eligible to receive. The 139 status also made it possible to offer larger planes with pressurized cabins to provide service to Vernal. Mayor Showalter stated that having commercial air service available is essential for economic growth for a region. Mr. Harvey stated that local banks and businesses depend on commercial air traffic for their daily operations, so the 139 status of the Vernal Airport is of critical importance. There was further discussion regarding Essential Air Service and various issues regarding Great Lakes Airlines service record and enplanements.

Ken Bassett stated that once the City and County made the decision to become 139 certified, they have the obligation to accept the expenses associated with that designation. Mr. Bassett

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continued that Vernal has always had severe winters and it should be expected that the airport staff have all the necessary tools at their disposal to keep the runway open. **Councilmember JoAnn Cowan made a motion that Vernal City allocate 25% of the total cost of an applicator and chemicals for four applications for the Vernal Airport, up to a maximum of \$60,000 total, from the current fiscal year’s budget, with the additional direction that the elected officials be made aware immediately if the cost exceeds \$60,000. Councilmember Cal Dee Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:**

Bert Clark aye;
Cal Dee Reynolds..... aye;
JoAnn Cowan..... aye;
Sonja Norton aye;
Ted Munford.....aye.

Commissioner Mark Raymond made a motion that Uintah County allocate 75% of the total cost of an applicator and chemicals for four applications for the Vernal Airport, up to a maximum of \$60,000 total, from the current fiscal year’s budget. Commissioner Darlene Burns seconded the motion and the motion passed with Burns and Raymond voting in favor.

ADJOURN: There being no further business, Sonja Norton moved to adjourn. Mark Raymond seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Kenneth L. Bassett, City Recorder