

**M**INUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL BUDGET WORKSHOP  
MEETING HELD MAY 21, 2014 at 4:00 p.m. in the Vernal City Council room, 374  
East Main, Vernal, Utah 84078.

**PRESENT:** Councilmembers Ted Munford, Bert Clark, Dave Everett, Samantha Scott, JoAnn Cowan and Mayor Sonja Norton.

**WELCOME:** Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**FY2015 BUDGET:**

**GENERAL FUND:**

Victim Advocate:

Alisha Gowen, director of the Victim Advocate program, explained that this program is partially funded by grants. The Victims of Crimes Act (VOCA) provided \$8500 of funding, and the Violence Against Women (VOWA) grant awarded \$35,700 this year to help pay for personnel and emergency funds. The remainder of the budget is funded by Vernal City. Ken Bassett explained that the City and the County used to pay for this program jointly until an agreement was made that the County would pay for the homeless shelter and the City would pay for the victim advocate program. Chief Rooks stated this program is necessary so his officers do not have to deal with the victims. Alisha noted that her office coordinates with Duchesne and Dagget Counties as well. She noted that their role is to notify victims what their rights are as well as assist them with a safety plan as they work through the court system. Councilmember Munford stated that his understanding is that most domestic violence victims go back home. Alisha stated that the average times a victim tries to leave is seven. Some need to be educated on what is available while others never leave. There is a support group called "HEART" for women or victims of domestic violence and "SORE" for children who witness the violence. Ken Bassett stated this program has two full-time employees and many volunteers. Alisha stated they have four dedicated volunteers right now. Donations are also accepted for things such as clothing, gas cards, vouchers for hotel rooms etc. Ken Bassett reminded the Council that line item 4600 is for those donations. Chief Rooks stated that these ladies handle a large work load and are very busy.

Ken Bassett stated that there is a request to review the grading on the victim advocate position, and that will be reviewed by the Administrative Committee.

**SPECIAL FUNDS:**

**UBNSF:**

Mike Gledhill gave a brief explanation of how the Uintah Basin Strike Force runs. The funding comes through a grant provided by the Criminal Justice Department (UCJJ). All the entities in the Uintah Basin also participate and provide manpower. The grant has been dwindling over the years, so less personnel is available. Mayor Norton asked if all the entities also contribute financially. Councilmember Everett answered that they do although not equally. Chief Rooks stated that will be rectified because all the entities are receiving the same benefit. In the past all the entities paid \$26,000 a year except for Naples City who only paid \$13,000. If additional funding is needed, all the entities will pay the same amount. There is an investment of \$69,000 for the Strike Force and an impound amount of \$96,000 which can be used for working capital.

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Councilmember Cowan stated that some entities are not happy that they cannot use those funds the way they want, such as for regular staffing, but it cannot be used that way. Mike Gledhill stated that the Grant Administrator from the State will be at the next meeting and explain how the funds can be used. Those funds are set aside mainly to fund the Strike Force in case the grant funds are not awarded in the future. Mike Davis noted that the miscellaneous services line item covers the confidential funds. Chief Rooks agreed stating that they use informants who are trying to work off charges. There was some discussion regarding how the Strike Force receives proceeds from confiscated items.

### **GENERAL FUND:**

#### Police:

Chief Dylan Rooks explained that his department is dealing with many people who have mental illnesses, and his department needs specialized training to deal with these citizens. Only ½ the department has received some type of critical incident command training to deal with major incidents. Also, the local hospital has also revamped their policies when dealing with someone that has been arrested and is handcuffed receiving medical treatment. One problem is if there is a lawsuit filed, the department will need to show the officers had the necessary training to deal with these people. Two high risk injury situations are domestic violence calls and vehicle pursuits, and the officers have to have the training to recognize the risks. Equipment was purchased last year for a tactical team, but then the trained team members would have to be the ones responding, and that is not always possible. He noted that it is time for the department to expand the training to show they are trying to address these issues. Councilmember Munford noted that crime is always changing, and there is a never-ending need to stay ahead of the game especially with training. The police department is unique by handling life threatening situations, and because they are handling these situations, they are open to lawsuits. Ken Bassett explained that the Public Safety Committee discussed the canine program and is in favor of adding more dogs. Chief Rooks explained that a specialized trainer from POST assessed the dogs and is suggesting they receive more training along with the handlers. There is a private party that wants to help financially with the canine program and is willing to purchase 2 dogs for the department. The cost is around \$10,000 for each dog. The kennel will send a trainer to Vernal to train all the canine officers. The donor has requested to stay anonymous. Councilmember Cowan asked what the emergency management radio at a cost of \$19,000 is for. Chief Rooks stated that is actually for computers, not radios. Mayor Norton asked why the books line item doubled. Chief Rooks stated that is for the identity theft types of crimes. Councilmember Cowan asked for a short lesson on the NOVA program at an upcoming Council meeting. Councilmember Clark asked how the school officer is paid for. Chief Rooks stated that the School District pays \$26,000 a year for that officer. He noted that Officer Labrum has eight years of tactical training with Logan, and Mike Tribe has six years with North Ogden who help train the remainder of the department. Councilmember Cowan suggested the Chief send a letter to the School District thanking them for allowing an officer in the schools and meet with the administrator to give any input on that program. There was some discussion regarding the overtime budget and drug cases.

#### Finance:

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Ken Bassett asked Mike to explain the telephone line item. Mike Davis stated that his phone is a smart phone, and Mary and Sarah are reimbursed \$25 each for the use of their personal cell phones. He noted that in the personnel budget, the front office clerk used to be split between the finance department budgets and non-departmental and now the entire cost is in the finance department. Councilmember Cowan stated that since she is answering the phone for the entire City, some of her wages can be allocated out of non-departmental. Ken Bassett commented that the City has a great finance department with incredible employees with wonderful skills and great commitment. Councilmember Cowan agreed and stated they also do a great job with the Special Service Districts.

Councilmember Clark asked where the City is at, budget-wise, with the unappropriated balance and restricted funds. Ken Bassett stated there have been a few changes made during these budget workshops, leaving the general fund about \$100,000 in the black. That means that revenues are keeping up with expenditures even with a 3% cost-of-living and increases in the retirement and health insurance rates. Add to that the unappropriated fund balance and the City is doing well. However, there is no extra funding to set aside into reserve funds as in the past. There are new businesses opening up, but right now the sales tax is very flat. Councilmember Clark commended the departments for keeping expenses down during tight budget years. Councilmember Cowan agreed and stated she is honored to spend the time to go through the process the City uses to set the budget each year. Ken Bassett stated that one more item the Council needs to consider is the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks display. Over the years the Elks Club has paid for that show and has been doing so for fifty years. A new member of the Elks Club, Jim Lekas, approached the City and stated that they can no longer continue to spend the large sum for the fireworks. The County is donating \$2000 and the City may need to provide funding. Councilmember Cowan stated that this is one of the most well attended events in the City and suggested the City budget \$4000, on a continual basis for the fireworks display.

Ken Bassett explained to the Council that if funds are taken from the utility fund and placed into the storm water fund, every user on the utility has to be notified. He suggested another \$50,000 be transferred from green space fund instead.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business, Councilmember Ted Munford moved to adjourn. Councilmember Samantha Scott seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote and the meeting was declared adjourned.

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Mayor Sonja Norton

ATTEST:

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Roxanne Behunin, Deputy Recorder

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