

**M**INUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD  
OCTOBER 5, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Vernal City Council room, 374 East Main,  
Vernal, Utah 84078.

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

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

**INVOCATION OR UPLIFTING THOUGHT:** An invocation was given by Councilmember Dave Everett.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilmember Samantha Scott.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 7, 2016 REGULAR MEETING:**  
*Councilmember Bert Clark moved to approve the minutes of September 7, 2016. Councilmember Samantha Scott seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Munford, Allan, Everett, Scott, and Clark voting in favor for a unanimous vote.*

**SWEARING IN OF YOUTH CITY COUNCIL:** Councilmember Samantha Scott explained that the Youth City Council members were present to be introduced to the Council and Mayor and be sworn into office. She asked the members to come forward, state their names, and what grade they are in.

The Youth Council introductions are as follows:

- Jacob Abrams, senior – Youth Mayor;
- William Eskleson, senior – Council and Parks & Recreation Coordinator;
- Brant Johnson, senior, - Youth City Manager and Public Relations;
- Molly Etchberger, senior, Mayor Pro Tempore;
- Rachel Allred, junior, Youth Council & Police Chief;
- Kylie Larsen, senior, - Council and Finance Director;
- Katie Abrams, Youth Advisor.

Mayor Sonja Norton gave the Youth Council their oaths of office. Mayor Norton explained that the Youth Council do community service projects and learn about government by attending a legislative session in Salt Lake City. Councilmember Samantha Scott asked the students and audience to let other students know about this program.

Mayor Norton reminded the Council and students that she is requesting stories of pioneers or community members that did something great for this area. She gave an example of Uncle Charlie Decker, who had a story published in the Vernal Express in 1931. He was the first person in the Uintah Basin associated with the steam sawmill that helped change the community.

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**REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY CONTRACT WITH POLICE DEPARTMENT:** Detective Shaun Smith explained that in the past he had a radio loaned to him by the Uintah County Sheriff's office that provided communication with the US Marshalls office for task force operations. The Sherriff's office, because of budget constraints, will no longer provide this radio. The State is willing to enter into an agreement with Vernal City for this radio at a cost of \$23.20 per month. A grant was received from the State Attorney General's office for equipment in the amount of \$12,000, so a portion of that grant can be used to help pay for the radio. Councilmember Bert Clark asked if the radios have a specific ID number. Shaun Smith stated all of these radios have a unique id with GPS embedded so the communications authority is notified if there is a problem. Councilmember Dave Everett asked if he would be the only Vernal City officer carrying this type of radio. Shaun Smith answered yes. Councilmember Travis Allan asked how often he is contacted. Shaun Smith stated around two to three times a month. *Councilmember Dave Everett moved to approve the contract with the State Communications Authority for this radio. Councilmember Bert Clark seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

*Councilmember Munford.....aye;*  
*Councilmember Allan .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Everett .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Scott.....aye;*  
*Councilmember Clark.....aye.*

**BTA FUNDING REQUEST - MAYOR NORTON:** Mayor Norton reminded the Council of the meetings with the Uintah County Commission regarding the Basin Transit System. At the last meeting the Uintah Basin Association of Governments indicated the cost for the Vernal loop for the bus system was \$90,000 a year and the County would like the City to consider contributing half that cost. The Uintah Transportation Special Service District would match the other half. Ken Bassett presented to the Council a list of special project funds that the City has that could be transferred to this project. He noted that many of these funds have project commitments and can only be used for specific reasons. Further, the general fund has a balance of \$1.35 million dollars. He reminded the Council that the City is required to keep a balance of up to 25% of revenue with \$317,000 being used of the unappropriated funds to balance the budget for this fiscal year. The Strike Force and Municipal Building Authority fund cannot be used for this project. Mayor Norton asked what the annual payment is for the City Hall building. Ken Bassett answered between \$400,000 and \$500,000. Mayor Norton asked if funds could be used from the street construction fund. Ken Bassett stated the ADA project and sidewalk repair are tied to that fund. Councilmember Ted Munford stated he would like to see more accurate figures from UBAG for the Vernal loop and asked if there has been any further discussion about taxi vouchers. Mayor Norton stated she would like to know the level of service being provided for this amount of money. Councilmember Clark stated that UBAG does have the daily ridership logs so possibly the City can give input on what stops or times the buses should be running. Councilmember Ted Munford clarified that the City was short \$317,000 for this fiscal year to balance the budget. Ken Bassett agreed that amount of money had to be budgeted out of the unappropriated fund balance and funds have been taken out of the

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capital project funds for the last two years to help balance the budget. In good times the City has placed funds into the capital improvement funds. The price of oil has risen slightly, and for the month of July, the sales tax revenue was even with July of 2015. Councilmember Munford stated the City has to be very careful with available funds. Ken Bassett agreed, and he is cautiously optimistic. Councilmember Bert Clark stated the Council has the responsibility of providing essential services to City residents including water, sewer, streets and police protection. When this bus transit system was initially started, the City was told the cost would be covered by the federal grant. Now they are asking the City to pay for the Vernal route. The Special Transportation District has been covering the County's cost, and now the District is taking on more debt with a project on the west side. Their reasoning is that it is free money, however, nothing is free as that money comes from taxes collected from the oil and gas industry. Councilmember Ted Munford agreed that when this project was originally presented, it was shown that the area would lose federal funds if not implemented, although there was no complete data for routes yet. There has been no further communication until now. Councilmember Bert Clark questioned whether the riders of the bus would create \$45,000 in sales tax. Ken Bassett stated he appreciates the comments and noted that the media has asked how much does the Vernal loop benefit the City. There is no way to knowing that figure, however, residents do ride the bus for employment. or doctor or hospital visits so the need is there. Councilmember Samantha Scott asked if the businesses that benefit from the transit system may be willing to contribute. Mayor Sonja Norton stated she spoke with the School District, and they do not have any funds. The hospital is willing to contribute, and she will speak with Terra Academy and a few more businesses as well as the college. She asked the Council to be prepared to make a decision at the next joint meeting with Uintah County. Mayor Norton explained to the Youth City Council what happened with Proposition 1 that was on the ballot last year and was defeated by 21 votes.

Brant Johnson, student, asked if the proposition would raise taxes. Mayor Norton answered yes; it would add 25 cents on every \$100 that is spend on on non-food items. He asked when that tax would be passed. Mayor Norton explained that the City can ask the County to consider putting that tax proposition on the ballot again next year. If the tax passes, the bus system could be funded with that money. Councilmember Travis Allan stated his concern is the City is now being bullied to fund a program that was not initiated by the Council. Funds are being depleted, and the City will need to be careful over the next five years. Councilmember Dave Everett agreed that the Council has been put in the position as the bad guy although the City is doing what it can to keep this program running. Ken Bassett stated he will place this item on the agenda for the joint City / County meeting scheduled for October 17<sup>th</sup> and will ask UBAG for more detailed information, including if they eliminate stops, or adjust times, what options are available. Mayor Norton stated she rode the bus, spoke with the riders and driver and discussed how the service could be cut back. She asked the Council to be prepared for the October 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**RATIFICATION OF AIRPORT GRANT AGREEMENT AND AMENDMENT #9 TO  
THE AIRPORT ENGINEERING CONTRACT WITH GDA:** Ken Bassett explained he

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spoke with most of the Council regarding this item. The grant from the FAA had to be approved and sent back quickly, so approval was received over the phone - now ratification of that approval is needed. The grant is for \$16 million dollars to fund improvements at the airport, especially expanding the runway. The other contract is with the engineers for the airport, GDA Engineers, to perform the work necessary for the grant. This is amendment #9 to that contract. Councilmember Clark asked how the matching funds would be paid. Ken Bassett stated the Transportation Special Service Project will pay the 5% local match. Valerie Gamble, student, asked if the airport is asking for \$16 million dollars. Ken Bassett answered that they are receiving a grant from the FAA in the amount of \$16 million dollars. The FAA pays 95% of the funds and the local governments are required to pay 5%. Mayor Sonja Norton explained that the City owns 25% of the airport so anytime something is done there, the City has to approve it.

*Councilmember Bert Clark moved to ratify the approval of the grant with the FAA. Councilmember Ted Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

*Councilmember Munford.....aye;*  
*Councilmember Allan .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Everett .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Scott.....aye;*  
*Councilmember Clark.....aye.*

*Councilmember Bert Clark moved to ratify the approval of Amendment #9 with GDA Engineering. Councilmember Ted Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

*Councilmember Munford.....aye;*  
*Councilmember Allan .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Everett .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Scott.....aye;*  
*Councilmember Clark.....aye.*

**REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT TO THE VERNAL CITY MUNICIPAL CODE: CHAPTERS 5.04 – BUSINESS LICENSES GENERALLY, 9.76 - JUNKED MOTOR VEHICLES, 13.20 - PREVENTION OF CROSS CONNECTION TO WATER SYSTEM, 13.36 – MAINTENANCE OF USERS’ UTILITY SERVICE LINES AND TITLE 15 - BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION - ORDINANCE NO. 2016-14 :** Ken Bassett explained that the reason these changes are being presented to the Council is to move these sections out of Title 16 - Planning & Zoning, to clarify issuing business licenses and building permits. The building official also reviewed these suggested changes to expand Title 15 - Building and Construction, to deal with the permitting processes. There are still clarifications needed or may be items that are duplicated, so this Ordinance is for review only at this point. Also, the Planning Commission is reviewing another ordinance that will also help clarify these issues, which requires a public hearing. Mayor Norton asked the Council to review the Ordinance and

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give their comments or suggestions to the staff before the next meeting. *Councilmember Samantha Scott moved to table Ordinance No. 2016-14 until the next meeting. Councilmember Travis Allan seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

*Councilmember Munford.....aye;*  
*Councilmember Allan .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Everett .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Scott.....aye;*  
*Councilmember Clark.....aye.*

**REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT OF NEW MEMBER TO PLANNING COMMISSION - KEN BASSETT:** Ken Bassett explained that at the last Planning Commission meeting, Eric Hunting came to listen to the hospital expansion project and indicated his desire to serve on the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is in need of alternate members. After further discussion, *Councilmember Travis Allan moved to appoint Eric Hunting to the Planning Commission as an alternate member. Councilmember Ted Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Allan, Munford, Clark, Scott and Everett voting in favor for a unanimous vote.*

**REQUEST TO POSTPONE OCTOBER 19<sup>TH</sup> MEETING:** Mayor Sonja Norton asked the Council to check their schedules to see if they would be available on October 26<sup>th</sup> so the October 19<sup>th</sup> meeting could be postponed to the following Wednesday. She explained that Mr. Bassett will be out of town. *After further discussion, Councilmember Dave Everett moved to postpone the October 19<sup>th</sup> meeting to October 26<sup>th</sup>. Councilmember Samantha Scott seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Everett, Scot, Allan, Munford and Clark voting in favor.*

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business; Councilmember Bert Clark 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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