

**M**INUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD  
AUGUST 17, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Vernal City Council room, 374 East Main,  
Vernal, Utah 84078.

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

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

**INVOCATION OR UPLIFTING THOUGHT:** An invocation was given by Councilmember Bert Clark.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilmember Ted Munford.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 3, 2016 REGULAR MEETING:**  
*Councilmember Bert Clark moved to approve the minutes of August 3, 2016 after a follow-up question on Rockville Estates. Councilmember Dave Everett seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Munford, Allan, Everett, Scott, and Clark voting in favor for a unanimous vote.*

**BASIN TRANSIT ASSOCIATION (BTA) IN VERNAL - JOSEPHINE LEAVITT & JESS NICHOLS:** Mr. Jeff Nichols, resident at 419 East 600 South, explained that he is a user of the BTA bus to travel to work in Roosevelt. This transportation is cost efficient saving him money on gasoline as well as the danger and wear and tear on a car. The news that the buses are on the “chopping block” is troubling as so many people depend on the bus. One concern is that the elected officials think the wellness wagon is more of a priority than the BTA. This transportation is a necessity to some riders and is ADA compliant while the wellness wagon is not. Mayor Norton explained that the BTA is partially federally funded requiring it to be ADA compliant while the wellness wagon is mostly volunteers. Mr. Nichols stated the BTA serves all residents and supports local business. He asked the City Council to consider providing funds to help the County keep this program. Councilmember Ted Munford stated he appreciates the public feedback. He gave an example of someone who had a boat and decided it was too expensive. Also, a County official indicated it would be cheaper to buy everyone that rides the bus a car rather than fund the BTA. Tax dollars are being used to fund this program, and the City and County have to be fiscally responsible and decide how to spend limited funding, however, what would help is if there were more riders. Mr. Nichols stated that the City agreed to spend \$200,000 on the convention center, pay for Holly Days celebrations, Christmas lights, etc. and asked how those programs benefit everyday people. Councilmember Munford stated residents can argue that those items are “non-essentials”, yet the public transportation is not being used much. The wellness wagon would cost 1/3 the cost of the BTA and serve the same number of people. Mayor Norton explained that the County is looking at all the costs and will host a public meeting to get all the information needed to put together a plan. Jeff Nichols stated that BTA offers free transportation over Holly Days, and the City has budgeted for that program and perhaps the Council should reassess that. Mayor Norton explained that Holly Days is more complicated than that as a great deal of the expenses are paid with private donations.

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Councilmember Ted Munford asked if it is fair to charge the entire community to pay for the BTA when so few use it. Jeff Nichols encouraged the Council to ride the bus and get to know the people who depend on it. Councilmember Bert Clark asked if the City has ever contributed to this program in the past. Ken Bassett answered no. Currently the Uintah Transportation District is spending \$240,000 a year for the bus service. Mayor Norton noted that the bus system is partially funded by Duchesne County as well.

Mr. Jerry Davis, resident at 117 West 640 South, stated he would have to walk everywhere if not for the bus system. Councilmember Ted Munford explained that during the initial discussion with the County on eliminating this service the Commissioners mentioned a voucher system for taxi's and asked if that would work for Mr. Davis. He stated he did not know as it would depend on the cost. He noted that he does travel to Roosevelt on the bus and would not be able to go there at all without public transportation. Councilmember Everett asked how long the bus system has been operating. Ken Bassett stated over four years.

Crystal Kouris, resident in Ashley Creek Village, stated that she takes the bus twice a day five days a week to get to work and would lose her job if this program is stopped. She stated there are other people in the same position. Councilmember Bert Clark asked if it is a large bus she is riding. Ms. Kouris stated it usually is the small bus. Councilmember Munford asked Crystal if the voucher program would work for her. She stated it probably would solve her personal needs. Councilmember Munford asked if she would be willing to pay to ride the bus. Crystal Kouris answered she would be willing to by a weekly pass. Councilmember Dave Everett asked Crystal how full the bus is when she rides it. Crystal answered that she never rides alone and the bus is approximately ½ full in the mornings and 1/3 full later in the day.

Nancy Mace, resident at 221 West, stated she rides the bus to the doctor, for shopping etc. and would not mind paying to ride the bus from Roosevelt or the Vernal loop.

Abby Gordon, 3082 West 7300 South Myton, Utah, stated she and her friends use the bus every week to go shopping, or go to the recreation center as their parents have full-time jobs and cannot drive them. Mayor Norton asked how many ride the bus. Ms. Gordon stated at least five. Councilmember Munford asked if they buy a pass. She stated yes it costs \$1.

Teresa Buononato, resident at 1091 West 2000 North, stated she has driven the bus since this program started, and it is a great community resource. Many times this is the only way people can get around looking for housing or a job. Mayor Norton thanked everyone for their input and they will forward this information to the County when they meet.

**TRI-COUNTY HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT - JORDAN MATHIS:** Jordan Mathis, director of Tri-County Health, explained that they serve three counties and can adopt ordinances that impact other agencies so they are required to report annually to those agencies. He explained that they have refocused their efforts in serving the public. One way is they no longer require an appointment for an immunization, and that has increased the number of vaccines

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being given by 200%. Councilmember Bert Clark asked what the cost is for these immunizations. Mr. Mathis stated they bill their health insurance, and if they are uninsured or underinsured, they charge on a sliding scale based on income. The cost is never higher than \$14 per shot. Jordan Mathis stated there has been a large increase in the WIC program due to the unique economic situation in the area. The WIC program is a supplemental food program for mothers and children up to children up to age five. Also, Tri-County Health works with emergency managers on health related issues such as a disease outbreak. They would be in charge of administering a drug to the population affected. Last year a clinic was held for flu shots and that service will be provided again this year. The department completed 117 complaint investigations with the largest one the illegal dumping of tires. This property was cleaned up with the help of the State and County. Mayor Norton asked if they try to cite the owner if the problem is that huge. Jordan Mathis stated that they can cite them, however most of the time they simply need to educate them, and they are working on how to address these issues on a consistent basis. The water systems are tested especially at the schools and radon is also an issue. A youth group has been formed to address tobacco use in the school along with sexual violence and teen pregnancy. This area is high for smoking and tobacco use during pregnancy which leads to infant mortality. If the mothers enroll in the program and stay enrolled, they are given vouchers for diapers. Councilmember Bert Clark asked if local merchants participate in ATV safety programs. Jordan Mathis answered that they do not, however, they got a grant through the Utah department of Public Safety to address that concern. Councilmember Clark suggested he approach the local merchants. Mr. Mathis thanked him for the suggestion and will follow-up with the businesses. Jordan Mathis stated he will be giving a presentation on the Zika virus at the September 20<sup>th</sup> Chamber of Commerce meeting. Mayor Norton thanked Mr. Mathis for the report.

**MATCHING FUNDS FOR TRAIL SYSTEMS - MAYOR NORTON:** Mayor Sonja Norton explained that the City applied for a grant through the Utah League of Cities and Towns to help promote active and health communities. The grant is provided by IHC hospitals and was given to four communities. The City was one of the communities awarded in the amount of approximately \$225,000 over a three year period. Part of those funds can be used for trails. The City is interested in developing more urban trails for those who want to get out and not be afraid of biking on the City streets. Jordan Mathis stated he is on the Dino Trails Committee, and they are trying to pursue grants through the National Parks river and trails program. Some of these programs do require matching funds. Mayor Norton stated that they have received funds for a master plan for the entire valley and will start implementing that plan as grants are received. No City or County funds will be used, although part of the Healthy Community funds can be used as the match. Ken Bassett explained that the Healthy Community grant has many aspects to address with different entities being involved such as the Hospital, Tri-county Health and the School District. Councilmember Dave Everett stated members of the community are excited about this. Mayor Norton stated that it will be vital for the public to be involved in the planning process.

**TEMPORARY SIGNS FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION:** Ken Bassett reminded the Council that

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at the last meeting they had several questions regarding temporary signs. The code does address banners and designates them as temporary, although they do require a permit. The maximum amount of time banners can be displayed is 45 days unless an extension is granted to 90 days. Another item that was questioned was pole signs only being allowed on Highway 40 and Vernal Avenue up to 150 feet off those streets. Uintah County does allow the same type of signs up to 450 feet away. Ken noted that it is up to the Council how this is regulated as the State does regulate off premise signs along the highway. The height of these signs was changed several years ago to forty feet maximum. There is a conflict however with signs on top of a roof. Councilmember Bert Clark asked if billboards are still in compliance. Ken Bassett answered yes. Mayor Norton stated a big issue is electronic signs that distract drivers. Ken Bassett stated that the City has had a property owner indicate interest in putting up an electronic sign and the City code will need to be in compliance with State law. Councilmember Ted Munford asked if there is a fee to put up a banner. Ken Bassett answered that it does require a fee. Councilmember Ted Munford asked that the City pursue adding banners to the exception list and deleting the time frame as banners disintegrate over time. There was some discussion about maintenance of these signs. Councilmember Travis Allan stated that a business should have some leeway to advertise with a pole sign. Councilmember Ted Munford suggested the code be changed from a number of feet to a zoning issue. Mayor Norton asked that the Planning Commission consider these issues and bring back a recommendation.

**JOB DESCRIPTION FOR CITY MANAGER POSITION - MAYOR NORTON:** Mayor Norton reminded the Council that the staff recently sent a copy of the current job description to them for the city manager position. She reminded them that Mr. Ken Bassett will be retiring in June of 2017 so the job description has to be updated. The schedule for that recruitment is to advertise around September then screen the applications and put together an interview panel around the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year so applicants are not traveling during the holidays. Ken Bassett stated that one purpose of a job description is to screen applications. Many times there is a lot of interest in a position, but the applicants do not have the minimum qualifications. He suggested they require some experience, preferably with Utah laws. A master's degree can be substituted for some years of experience, although he noted that what he learned to handle this job was not from college. Mayor Norton asked the Council if they had any specific changes to the job description. Councilmember Clark asked if they will be able to look at their resumes as they go into the interview process. Ken Bassett stated they can require a resume as part of the recruitment process. Councilmember Munford asked what happens if they do not get any qualified applicants. Ken Bassett stated they can cancel the recruitment and revamp the requirements. He suggested the Council look at the salary for this position as that will play a big part in who will apply. Roxanne Behunin referred the Council the budget to see the current salary range for this position. Mayor Norton asked if a salary survey could be completed to see if the City is competitive. Ken Bassett answered yes. He suggested once the top ten candidates are identified some type of problem solving scenario be sent to them that they can respond to in writing before bringing the top three or more applicants to Vernal for a social gathering to get to know their personalities. Mayor Norton stated she does want to open this position up to the public although there are qualified applicants working here now. Mr. Bruce Tippetts with the

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Vernal Express, stated that when a college in Wyoming was looking for a President they held interviews in public and the applicants had to answer questions from interested citizens. Mayor Norton stated the City can consider that.

**PROHIBITION OF AERIAL FIREWORKS:** Ken Bassett explained that Utah law does not allow local government to regulate aerial fireworks unless the fire marshal determines there is a fire hazard in wooded areas. The problem for Vernal City is that these fireworks are discharged everywhere and are dangerous. Councilmember Munford stated he likes fireworks, however he understands that the State of Utah is telling local government what is best rather than letting local officials make that decision. Ken Bassett agreed. He noted that the State has that right, although the City Councils have a better feel for what is good for their communities. Mayor Norton noted that the State should not be deciding for each community and stated she would like to ask the Utah League of Cities and Towns to go to the Legislature and ask for changes. Ken Bassett stated the process would be to submit a resolution to the League and then the Policy Committee for ULCT determines which resolutions they will pursue with the Legislature this coming year. After further discussion, the consensus of the Council was to pursue submitting a resolution to the League to see if they will pursue this issue.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:**

Youth City Council Advisor:

Councilmember Samantha Scott stated they are still looking for an advisor for the Youth City Council and asked the Council to let her know if they think of anyone that would be interested.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business, Councilmember Dave Everett 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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