

**M**INUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING HELD MAY 12, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. in the Vernal City Planning Conference room, 374 East Main, Vernal, Utah 84078.

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

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING:** *Councilmember Dave Everett moved to acknowledge and approve this meeting. Councilmember Samantha Scott seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Everett, Scott, Clark and Munford voting in favor. Councilmember Cowan was not present for the vote.*

**FY2016 BUDGET WORKSHOP:** Ken Bassett explained that in this budget a 5% decrease is anticipated in sales tax so all capital items and personnel items have been put on hold. Mike Davis stated that general sales tax has decreased by \$250,000 and the highway sales tax by \$95,000.

**GENERAL FUND:**

Government Buildings:

Ken Bassett explained that this department maintains all the City buildings, along with the fire station and animal shelter. Danny Anderson stated there are approximately 14 building along with a few parks. Councilmember Clark asked if repairs are planned for the walking park water way. Danny Anderson explained they have ordered parts for the fountain, and it will be repaired this fiscal year. Mike Davis stated there is \$7500 budgeted for defibrillators in this department with three being placed in this building and one at public works. Ken Bassett stated the new parking lot next to the police department needs to be crack sealed and the public works yard needs a seal coat. The storage buildings at 1500 East also need to be refurbished, and the gate entrances need updated. Councilmember JoAnn Cowan asked if the parking lot on 100 North and 500 East is on the list for repairs. Danny Anderson agreed that parking lot needed replaced. Allen Parker stated that the property needs better drainage. Danny Anderson suggested it be added to a Community Impact Board project. Ken Bassett stated it can be added to the other parking lot projects.

Planning

Ken Bassett explained that this department is requesting a full-time planner, and that request has been put off until there is a better idea of the sales tax revenue. Allen Parker presented the duties for this position and explained that there is still a lot of economic activity, and someone is needed to manage current planning by answering questions at the front desk. This building was designed with an office that faces the counter for someone to manage the front desk components. He noted that his desire is to become more involved in other aspects of his position such as better over site of public works, more involvement with economic development, and work with State-wide planning. Further, Allen stated he has been asked to serve as the safety manager and does not have the time as he is dealing with current planning issues first. Councilmember Cowan

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stated that the bulk of his time needs to be spent dealing with Vernal City issues, answering questions face-to-face with City residents, not doing economic development. She understood the desire to be involved on the State level, however with taxpayer dollars, the preference is to focus on the residents. Allen Parker agreed that is the first priority. Mayor Norton asked why the other staff cannot answer generalized questions. Allen Parker stated that the code enforcement officer is too busy, and the administrative secretary is specializing in permits. The planning process requires a large amount of knowledge. Councilmember Clark agreed, with the economy, it is not wise to hire an additional person. Councilmember Clark questioned the travel budget. Corey Coleman stated that is to keep the entire department up-to-date. Ken Bassett stated it is important to keep them trained on the changes to building codes. Mayor Norton asked about updating the code to make sure it complies with federal and state laws. The current code is not being tracked. Ken Bassett explained that there are companies that profess to do that, however the staff is using software that keeps the code functional. Most of those companies do not have attorneys to review the code, rather they simply want to codify what we already have. He noted that even the State of Utah has to deal with conflicts that are found in their code. When those conflicts are found, they are brought forward and dealt with. Councilmember Cowan asked how many employees are in this department. Allen Parker answered there are six. Mayor Norton stated there is one line item that was increased by \$1500 that still shows \$230. Mike Davis made that correction for a total of \$8100. Ken Bassett stated there is GIS and building inspection software expense in the amount of \$7500. Ken Bassett asked Corey for an update on the garage by Ashley Elementary. Corey Coleman stated that it is permitted, and he will inspect the setbacks. Mayor Norton asked for some type of tip of the week be placed on the webpage from the planning department.

### IT Department

Mayor Norton asked who the student was working in this department. Roxanne Behunin explained he is part of the school-to-careers program which has now ended. GJ Searle stated the students are limited in what they can do, and he will not hire one this next fiscal year. The hope is to hire a full-time employee eventually. Ken Bassett asked GJ to explain the web filter. GJ Searle responded that the web filter was purchased five year ago and now needs replaced. Councilmember Munford agreed that it is essential to have a good filter to block bad content. Ken Bassett stated he recently attended a meeting dealing with liability, and they gave an example of someone asking you to print something off their usb drive which then can collect data off your computer. Councilmember Munford stated that is why you need an internal and external filter.

### Justice Court

Ken Bassett stated there are no major changes to this budget. Councilmember Cowan asked if the police department is still handling bailiff duties. Judge Ray Richards answered yes, noting that they also serve warrants. He explained that with the downturn in the economy, crime goes up and people are not able to bail out. Councilmember Bert Clark asked how the court is doing on collecting fines. Ray Richards stated that during this economic downturn the court is finding

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it necessary to set up lower payments or provide community service which is required by State law. Ken Bassett responded that it has been good to be able to use credit cards to pay fines. There was some discussion regarding training for the Judge. The consensus was to be supportive of additional training for the Judge. Ken Bassett suggested the Council attend a court calendar to see how the court functions.

### Motor pool

Ken Bassett stated there is not a lot of changes to this budget. A new pick-up truck was requested, which the Public Works Committee agreed to replace the transmission in the current truck instead of replacing it. Rick Green stated they will drive it until it no longer runs.

### City Council

Councilmember Bert Clark stated they may need to look at event funding. Ken Bassett stated that so far the same level of funding has been placed in this budget. During the course of the year if revenue falls sharply, the events could be scaled back.

### Revenue

Ken Bassett explained that this budget does reflect a \$300,000 decrease in sales tax. The legislature is allowing local governments, through counties, to adopt an additional sales tax to take care of transportation systems after a vote of the people. One major concern is the City will be required to meet EPA requirements for storm water which has a significant impact on the budget. This additional funding could be used for the storm water requirements. There was some discussion regarding additional EPA requirements for the sewer system. Ken Bassett explained that the Utah League of Cities and Towns was instrumental in getting this legislation passed, and the State-wide coalition may help educate the public to get voter support. The City cannot spend taxpayer money to influence this vote. Ken Bassett explained that there is another .2% sales tax increase available to the City. Back in 1983, the formula to distribute sales tax was changed to the 50% population 50% point of sale. For a handful of cities, including Vernal, that distribution was devastating. The Legislature approved a provision that until 2012 those cities would continue to receive the same level of funding regardless of the new distribution formula. Many of these cities started growing, however, five cities including Vernal, South Salt Lake, Riverdale, Murray and Park City have still lost funding. In 2012 those Cities were allowed to impose another .2% sales tax to offset the decision made in 1983. The decision must be made before April of 2016. This change in sales tax would bring in an additional \$1.4 million dollars and is not subject to the 50/50 distribution model. Mike Davis stated he calculated \$1.7 million dollars. Ken Bassett stated this will help level out the up and down economy. Councilmember Cowan stated it is a tough thing to do. Ken Bassett reminded the Council that over 50% of the sales tax paid comes from residents outside of Vernal City.

## **SPECIAL FUNDS**

### Uintah Basin Narcotics Strike Force

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Ken Bassett stated that the Strike Force is asking all participants to put in \$7500, as the majority of the funding comes from federal funding. Mike Gledhill stated that Roosevelt City, Naples City, Duchesne County and Uintah County all participate with Vernal City to help get narcotics off the streets and out of our communities. Councilmember Bert Clark asked who gets the funds if assets are confiscated. Sgt. Gledhill explained it goes to the State, and the arresting agency can apply for 30% of it back. Councilmember Munford asked how much was collected last year. Mike Gledhill stated the Strike Force received around \$16,000. If someone other than the person arrested has a vested interest in the property, they can claim it, however. Chief Rooks stated the agencies have an understanding that if the grant does not continue to pay the costs, their participation may increase. Ken Bassett asked if there has been an increase in the use of drugs with the downturn in the economy. Sgt. Gledhill stated drug use is always a problem. One thing that may change things is the new law dropping some drug charges to a misdemeanor. Councilmember Clark stated he would like a presentation from the police on prescription drugs and other current issues. Dylan Rooks stated they can give training on home security, drugs etc.

### **GENERAL FUND**

#### Police

Chief Dylan Rooks stated there may be changes in the use of force policy based on new legislation. If there is an incident involving a City officer, a task force with an individual from each agency will conduct an independent investigation. Ken Bassett asked if the Attorney General's office approves of this task force. Dylan Rooks stated currently he is mandated to contact the county attorney, and he activates the correct protocol. There was some discussion regarding the officer's perception of danger. Mayor Norton asked the Chief to focus on public education on this issue. Chief Rooks agreed. He thanked the Council for their support. Councilmember JoAnn Cowan noted that this budget has all the basics for training, equipment, dogs, etc. that responsible cities should do to take care of public safety. Chief Rooks stated that some agencies are now looking at costs to add digital recorders and cameras while the City has already invested in that equipment. Vernal will not be held to the same standard as a larger city. Councilmember Clark asked about the fees for central dispatch. Dylan Rooks stated that there are some changes and a lot of turnover which may increase the cost. Ken Bassett stated that effective July 1<sup>st</sup> dispatchers will be added to the public safety retirement system which will increase the cost. There was some discussion regarding gang activity. Dylan Rooks stated if there is an increase in gang presence, the drug task force will take an active role.

#### City Council (continued)

Ken Bassett noted that the Chamber of Commerce forwarded a contract for the Council's approval. There are a few corrections needed, and the Chamber will make those adjustments. The election cost has been added to the budget, although the County may have a bond issue on the ballot to refinance the public safety facility. Councilmember Clark asked about the incentives and wellness line items. Mayor Norton stated that the department heads can reward an employee who does a great job. Ken Bassett stated he has a meeting in the near future to set up a wellness program.

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City Manager

Ken Bassett noted there are not any changes in this budget.

Finance

Mayor Norton noted that the personnel line item went down. Mike Davis stated two employees retired requiring the pay out of leave, and lower wages are being paid to the new employees. Mayor Norton asked about moving business licensing to the planning department. Ken Bassett stated business licensing has to coordinate with building inspection. The planning department that's that might streamline the process. The downside is the clerk also does utility billing and helps with the front desk in finance. Mike Davis stated that the business license clerk actually spends one-quarter of her time on business licensing and three-quarters of her time on utility billing. Also, the planning department would like the clerk to investigate if businesses have a license. She is not trained to be an enforcer so the code enforcement officer should handle this. Ken Bassett stated if business licensing is moved, another person would have to be hired in finance to handle utilities. Councilmember Clark asked for a report on the cost to have on-line payments.

**ADJOURN:** *There being no further business, Councilmember Ted Munford moved to adjourn. Councilmember Dave Everett 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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