

**M**INUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD  
FEBRUARY 1, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Vernal City Council room, 374 East Main,  
Vernal, Utah 84078.

**PRESENT:** Councilmembers Nicholas Porter, Robin O’Driscoll, Ted Munford, Dave Everett, and Corey Foley and Mayor Doug Hammond.

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

**INVOCATION OR UPLIFTING THOUGHT:** The invocation was given by Councilmember Corey Foley.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilmember Nicholas Porter.

**APPROVAL OF CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 18, 2023:** *Councilmember Nick Porter moved to approve the minutes of January 18, 2023. Councilmember Dave Everett seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Everett, O’Driscoll, Munford, Foley and Porter voting in favor.*

**FUNDING REQUEST FOR MARVELOUS EXTREME BULL MADNESS – TONYA LOFTHOUSE:** Ben Lofthouse indicated this is the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Marvelous Extreme Bull Madness event in Vernal. In the past, the contestants have been able to fly in for this event. This year there are other events at the same time that may impact the numbers. The PRCA helps with this event, however, they are requiring a larger prize of \$15,000 that hurts the budget. Tonya Lofthouse stated they are excited and are bring more entertainment for a family friendly event. Councilmember Ted Munford asked what the numbers were for last year. Ben Lofthouse answered that they had 2500 people attend with the capacity being 3700. Tonya Lofthouse noted that they ended the year with \$4000 and charged \$20 a ticket. This year they lowered the ticket cost back down to \$15 hoping to draw more people. Councilmember Corey Foley asked if this was in the budget. Carl Morton indicated that it was not specifically budgeted, however there are funds in the miscellaneous section of that line item. After further discussion, *Councilmember Corey Foley move to approve \$1000 to support to Marvelous Extreme Bull Madness event this year. Councilmember Robin O’Driscoll seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

*Councilmember Munford.....aye;*  
*Councilmember O’Driscoll.....aye;*  
*Councilmember Everett .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Porter .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Foley.....aye.*

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**UPDATE REGARDING DOWNTOWN FAÇADE GRANT AND INTRODUCTION OF NATE ZILLES AS A NEW MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE – CARL MORTON:** Carl Morton reminded the Council the façade grant program started in March of 2022. So far there have been 31 applications with ten projects completely finished and six partially completed. With the departure of Allen Parker, another committee member was needed. It was decided that Nate Zilles, the director of the Chamber of Commerce would be a good fit and is willing to serve. Nate Zilles expressed his appreciation for the relationship and partnership with the City. He stated this program will build a better community and he is excited to see wonderful things happening downtown. Carl Morton displayed pictures of some of the updates that has been done to the businesses. The majority of the work has been doors and windows with some paint, parking lot improvements and landscaping. One of the best projects is the sign at Vernal Theatre Live. The City has paid out \$252,491 so far. Nate Zilles, on behalf of the Committee and the City, presented checks to two businesses, Oh La La and Country Bear for their improvements. Quinn Bennion reminded the Council that these grants to local businesses is funded through a community reinvestment area (CRA). Councilmember Corey Foley asked if there were any applicants that were still waiting for approval. Carl Morton stated there were two that were not approved and two are still pending. Quinn Bennion stated that at first there were some delays. The program was restructured with new assignments and it is going much better with the turnaround time being a few weeks. The Mayor and Council thanked Carl for the update.

**CONSIDER APPROVAL OF A MINOR CHANGE TO THE FAÇADE GRANT PROGRAM – CARL MORTON:** Carl Morton stated that there has been some inquiring from businesses that have completed improvements and were not aware of the program who now would like to get their projects approved. The current program does not allow that. He asked if the program can be changed slightly to help out businesses that are not aware and their projects would have qualified. Councilmember Ted Munford asked what the staff prefers. Carl Morton stated he would like to be able to consider projects that have been completed within the last three months.

Councilmember Nick Porter suggested that businesses be made aware of this program when they apply for a building permit. Councilmember Dave Everett stated it would be good to allow the Committee to look at these improvements on an individual basis. Nate Zilles commented the concern with #7 of the program is consistency and if this is amended it will help businesses. After further discussion, *Councilmember Robin O’Driscoll moved to approve option #3 to section #7 in the façade grant, allowing funding within the last three months. Councilmember Ted Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

*Councilmember Munford.....aye;*  
*Councilmember O’Driscoll.....aye;*  
*Councilmember Everett .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Porter .....aye;*

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*Councilmember Foley..... aye.*

**CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE PURCHASE OF USED EQUIPMENT FOR AIRPORT OPERATIONS - KEN CAMPBELL:** Ken Campbell, director of the airport, requested approval from the Council to purchase a piece of used equipment at a cost of \$39,500. He explained that the airport is in need of a skid steer to help with the dirt on the runway. A new one is \$101,000. This machine was located and has been approved by the County, although it is not a budgeted item. Councilmember Ted Munford clarified that the City cost is \$25% of the total cost. After further discussion, *Councilmember Nick Porter moved to approve the purchase as presented at a cost of \$39,500. Councilmember Dave Everett seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

*Councilmember Munford.....aye;*  
*Councilmember O’Driscoll.....aye;*  
*Councilmember Everett .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Porter .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Foley..... aye.*

**DISCUSS ESSENTIAL AIR SERVICE PROPOSAL - KEN CAMPBELL:** Ken Campbell reminded the Council that the airport qualifies for a federal subsidy known as the Essential Air Service (EAS) for communities that are either economically deprived or in inconvenient areas. The current EAS contract with SkyWest expired in December and was re-bid by the FAA. Only one applicant submitted a proposal which was SkyWest again. The good news is if they win the bid, they are offering twelve flights a week with six of those flights to Salt Lake City and six flights to Denver. There will need to be some modifications at the airport as the flights to Salt Lake will be through Delta, via SkyWest and the flights to Denver will remain with United via SkyWest. Quinn Bennion stated there is a comment period before a contract is awarded and as the owners of the airport the City can provide comment although the FAA makes the final decision. He noted that air travel is essential for Vernal City and is fortunate to have this service. There are only two airports in Utah that qualify, Vernal and Moab, and Vernal also has TSA so travelers do not need to go through security when they get to a larger airport.

**CONSIDER APPROVAL OF UPGRADE TO THE LIVE-SCAN FINGERPRINT EQUIPMENT AND PARTIAL REIMBURSEMENT FROM EMERGENCY OPERATIONS GRANT– KEITH CAMPBELL:** Keith Campbell, Assistant Police Chief, reported that the police department purchased a finger print machine approximately twelve years ago. The technology is outdated and is no longer automated. In 2020 the City received a grant for 2 computers and upgrade the finger print system. The Council authorized the system, however, the costs have gone up drastically and an additional \$3467.56 is needed to purchase this equipment to provide live scan images. There is also an annual fee. Councilmember Ted

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Munford asked where the funds will come from. Carl Morton stated they will have to come from the general fund. Quinn Bennion indicated that the most common use is for residents applying for work as teachers, nurses or therapists. *Councilmember Ted Munford moved to approve the additional funds for the fingerprint machine. Councilmember Corey Foley seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

*Councilmember Munford.....aye;*  
*Councilmember O’Driscoll.....aye;*  
*Councilmember Everett .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Porter .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Foley..... aye.*

**CONSIDER APPROVAL OF CONTRACTOR TO REMEDIATE ASBESTOS ON 100 EAST CITY OWNED BUILDINGS:** Quinn Bennion explained that the buildings on properties that the City recently purchased on 100 East will be demolished. In order to do that, the asbestos that was found in the building has to be removed first. There are no local contractors who are licensed and certified to do this work. A request for proposals was issued and two certified companies responded. The lowest bid was received from Ballard Enterprises in the amount of \$17,998.75 and the other bid was from Thermal West in the amount of \$37,650.00. Both vendors came to Vernal and inspected the buildings before bidding. Quinn recommended the Council approve the low bidder. He noted that the roof is now failing on the back part of the building with the heavy snow load. The alley next to the building has been barricaded as the walls are bulging. The City will coordinate with the demolition contractor to get this building demolished. After further discussion, *Councilmember Nick Porter moved to accept the bid from Ballard Enterprises and award the contract for asbestos removal. Councilmember Robin O’Driscoll seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

*Councilmember Munford.....aye;*  
*Councilmember O’Driscoll.....aye;*  
*Councilmember Everett .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Porter .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Foley..... aye.*

**CONSIDER APPROVAL OF SAA-1 EQUALIZATION BOARD HEARING REPORT – KEITH DESPAIN:** Keith Despain, Public Works Director, reported that the Board of Equalization held three meetings in September to give business owners in the Zion’s Bank block the opportunity to voice their concerns or questions on the parking maintenance fee that is being proposed. No business owners attended. Councilmember Ted Munford stated this is a great way to handle the parking problem. *Councilmember Nick Porter moved to approve the Board of Equalization report for SAA-1. Councilmember Corey Foley seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

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*Councilmember Munford.....aye;*  
*Councilmember O’Driscoll.....aye;*  
*Councilmember Everett .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Porter .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Foley.....aye.*

**LEVYING ASSESSMENT FOR PARKING SAA WITH EFFECTIVE DATE -  
RESOLUTION NO. 2023-02:** Quinn Bennion explained this is the final step to establish the mechanism for the City to bill businesses in the Zion’s Bank block for parking. The assessments will not start until after the parking lot improvement project is completed even though the City crews are doing snow removal. *Councilmember Ted Munford moved to approve Resolution No. 2023-02 and have the assessments not applied until the improvements are finished. Councilmember Robin O’Driscoll seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

*Councilmember Munford.....aye;*  
*Councilmember O’Driscoll.....aye;*  
*Councilmember Everett .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Porter .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Foley.....aye.*

**CONSIDER APPROVAL OF COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT WITH UDOT FOR THE  
DISCOVERY TRAIL PROJECT** Quinn Bennion reported that the City received a grant from UDOT to complete the trail to Discovery School from 1500 South. The City is working with Uintah County as part of this project is within their jurisdiction. There will be an offset fence and gate to slow the pedestrian and bicycle traffic and a solar powered LED lit cross walk sign. Councilmember Nick Porter asked where the funding will come from for the cross walk sign. Quinn Bennion answered that the County will pay half and the City will pay half. Councilmember Nick Porter reported that it has been brought up to SSD1 and they may be willing to help with this project. *Councilmember Ted Munford moved to approve the agreement with UDOT. Councilmember Robin O’Driscoll seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

*Councilmember Munford.....aye;*  
*Councilmember O’Driscoll.....aye;*  
*Councilmember Everett .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Porter .....aye;*  
*Councilmember Foley.....aye.*

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**DISCUSSION ON EFFORT TO DESIGNATE DINAH AND T-REX ON THE NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTRY:** Gabby Blackburn explained that the State Historic Preservation office reached out to her to add the T-Rex and Dinah dinosaur statues on the national historic registry. The City can do maintenance, decorate etc. and they will simply offer suggestions. The advantages to this is recognition and rehabilitation advice. Councilmember Dave Everett speculated that this came about because of the recent exposure to fix T-Rex. The consensus of the Council was to allow them to put the dinosaurs on the registry.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

Grants:

Quinn Bennion reported that the City was not successful in receiving the SS4 grant applied for. There were only 37 of the 200 implementation grants approved. The City can submit again in September.

LED Light conversion:

Quinn Bennion stated that Rocky Mountain Power will provide a contract in two weeks to change to LED conversion of all 674 street lights to soft white including all decorative lights. Gabby Blackburn commented that these lights are dark sky compliant.

Building demolition:

Quinn Bennion reported that a contractor was located to demolish the building as it was an emergency situation with the collapse of the roof.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business; *Councilmember Nick Porter 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 Doug Hammond

ATTEST:

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Roxanne Behunin, City Recorder

( S E A L )