

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING
HELD APRIL 26, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. in the Vernal Planning conference 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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING: *Councilmember Dave Everett moved to acknowledge and approve this special meeting. Councilmember Nick Porter seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Everett, Porter, O’Driscoll and Foley voting in favor. Councilmember Ted Munford was not present for the vote.*

FY2024 BUDGET WORKSHOP INCLUDING GENERAL FUND, WATER FUND, SWER FUND AND SOLIDWASTE FUND, MBA, STRIKE FORCE AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS FUNDS AND PROJECTS IN THE CITY AND ALL SALARY AND WAGE SCHEDULES: Quinn Bennion gave a broad overview of the projected budget for FY2024 which is in very good shape. The City is set to receive a high amount in sales tax although the Council should still take a cautionary view as that revenue source is also the quickest to change or drop. The State legislature was favorable to rural communities and added an increase to B & C road funds so the transportation funding will increase. Several departments are requesting vehicles so staff met with Shawn Rasmussen, motor pool supervisor, to determine what should be done and will present those recommendations at the next meeting. Also, a meeting was held with the health insurance broker so the Council will need to make a decision on that benefit along with salary. The capital improvement projects and funds have not been finalized yet, so that will be brought to the Council in the next few weeks. Carl Morton noted that he has projected \$5 million in sales tax and the general fund beginning balance is \$13.2 million. Last year the City has too much in surplus funds so money will need to be placed in the CIP fund to keep that amount lower than 35%.

GENERAL FUND:

IT Department:

Alyx Larsen, IT Supervisor, explained that the professional services line item historically only has the internet costs, however, now all software costs will be in this line. The City has a contract for the fire wall and the last payment is this year. The social media costs went up and the City has contracted with a company to archive all posts. Quinn Bennion stated there was some debate on if that should be done and it was decided to implement it. Councilmember Dave Everett stated the Animal District implemented it also. Councilmember Ted Munford asked about the hardware costs. Alyx Larsen stated that new audio-video equipment is needed in the Council room. The former IT Manager was trying to collect parts over the years, however, it will be better to purchase it all at the same time to make sure it is compatible. The cost to redo the entire system is estimated at \$60,000. Councilmember Ted Munford agreed this system is going to die and needs replaced.

Quinn Bennion stated the City does not currently broadcast the meetings. Councilmember Nick

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Porter stated the City should be. Roxanne Behunin commented that eventually the State Legislature will mandate it. Larger communities are already mandated to broadcast their meetings. Councilmember Corey Foley stated this should be on the list for consideration. Alyx Larsen stated the next capital item is the phone system. It is also getting old and is dropping voice mail accounts. It is being hosted locally which is an outdated mode. Quinn Bennion stated he has instigated a research project to look at the phone stipend program and a new phone system to see if there is a smart way to approach this. It may be less expensive to give employees a cell phone or maybe a Bluetooth handset. Alyx Larsen stated there will still be a handful of handsets with a cloud option. Councilmember Ted Munford stated one of the issues is staying with a local number. Alyx Larsen reported that there is a company that says they can transfer the local numbers. Councilmember Ted Munford explained that has been a major obstacle. Quinn Bennion stated once the cell phone is paid the cost is only \$20 a month. Alyx Larsen stated there will have to be rules in place for breaking the phone. Councilmember Corey Foley asked what about the internet. Alyx Larsen answered that is a gigabyte so it is more expensive. Councilmember Ted Munford suggested the funds be in the budget for the phone and audio systems and have the staff work on those systems and add podium for texting. Alyx Larsen stated there is also more expense for G-Mail as more accounts were needed than anticipated.

Mayor and Council Department:

Quinn Bennion explained this budget is similar to last year except for the election line item. There is an election this year so the cost is anticipated to be \$10,000. Councilmember Nick Porter asked about Holly Days. Quinn Bennion explained that last year the City received a lot of donations so the budget shows more revenue. Councilmember Nick Porter asked if that includes employee costs. Quinn Bennion answered no; that cost comes out of each department budget. There was some discussion on event sponsorships. Quinn Bennion reported that he will bring the list at the next budget meeting. He explained the miscellaneous line item covers the year end employee appreciation dinner, gift cards, and anniversary amounts. He suggested adding funds for one more event such as a summer barbeque or other event. The consensus of the Council was to add another event. The next item is the agreement with the Chamber. Quinn Bennion reported that the City pays \$45,000, the County pays half that amount and Naples pays \$5000. Councilmember Corey Foley stated he met with the direction and in upcoming years the Chamber needs to become self-sufficient. He asked if there is any duplication in services. Quinn Bennion stated there may be a little overlap with the Innovation Hub or economic development. Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll suggested the amount to the Chamber be dropped \$5000 after notifying them.

Finance Department:

Carl Morton explained the only change to this department budget is the software cost. There was a start-up cost that does not have to be paid this budget year.

Planning & Zoning:

Gabby Blackburn explained that the CDBG grant requires matching funds of \$5000. They are

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also asking for vehicles. Software costs have gone up 45% with the addition of business licensing to IWork's. This software will streamline the process. The training costs are higher with a new business license clerk and training for the other employees. Also, tuition reimbursement of \$3000 to that line item. Carl Morton explained that he has combined travel and training together for each department. Gabby Blackburn explained she is requesting \$10,000 for professional services and plan review and funds for the new international building codes. Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll asked about the impact fee study. Gabby Blackburn explained this is the last payment to complete that study. Councilmember Corey Foley stated he would like to see a full-time compliance officer as there was a lot of problems with parked cars this winter. Quinn Bennion stated that is a police department item. Gabby Blackburn stated the current employee will not go full-time. Councilmember Dave Everett stated that position requires a lot of grit with all the complaints. Councilmember Nick Porter stated that position handled business licensing until a new employee was hired. Mayor Doug Hammond noted that people are angle parking as that was the only way to park with the snow and now are still doing it. Gabby explained there are different ways to look at enforcement and currently the City works off of complaints first and inspection second. Judge Ray Richards stated it is tough to balance homeowner's rights with the City's expectations. There was some discussion regarding the enforcement of snow removal from the sidewalks. Gabby Blackburn stated what she is hearing is code enforcement is needed in the winter as well as the summer. Chief Dylan Rooks stated this is a manpower problem for his department as they look at priorities and time available. If they have an obligated issue, which is when a call or complaint comes in, that takes priority. When the officers do not have an obligated call they drive around and deal with traffic problems. Quinn Bennion agreed there needs to be more time for code enforcement and he will look at what is best for the City and bring a recommendation.

Justice Court:

Carl Morton explained that the County charged \$130,000 for bailiff services that were not originally budgeted and is in the agreement. Quinn Bennion stated he verified they are spending 100% of their time in court, and the County has to pay 64% of the court costs. Councilmember Corey Foley asked about the cost to Naples. Quinn Bennion stated the County has been covering those costs. Judge Ray Richards stated that all three entities have benefitted from the merger. The funds needed for the court, it was thought that a new podium was needed, however, only the microphone was broken so that amount needs to be lowered from \$35,000 to \$300. He noted that one of the clerks has resigned, who was full-time, and the part-time clerk is interested in going full-time. Although the case loads are just under the requirements for another full-time position, it would be beneficial to change the part-time position to full-time. Quinn Bennion stated there was a lot of down time before for the clerks. Ray Richards agreed, however, after the merger they went from six clerks down to 3.5 and there is a lot of work that needs to be done to prepare for court and it continues to grow. Councilmember Ted Munford asked about the cost to add benefits. Roxanne Behunin stated part-time employees have benefits. If the wages increase, the benefits increase because of the percentage amount. Judge Ray Richards stated that the State Legislature has mandated the pay

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for judges so his wage has to increase effective July 1, 2023. Quinn Bennion stated the staff is aware of it. After further discussion, *Councilmember Dave Everett moved to approve changing the part-time position to full-time. Councilmember Corey Foley seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

Councilmember Munford.....aye;
Councilmember O’Driscoll.....aye;
Councilmember Everettaye;
Councilmember Porteraye;
Councilmember Foley.....aye.

Victim Advocate:

Kim Luttrell, director, explained that the cost of office supplies has increased while special supplies has decreased. The grant funding through VOCA was cut 25%. The State Legislature is providing funding to one program per county and the City program qualified and secured that grant. Carl Morton noted that the City is not eligible for both grants. Kim agreed. Dylan Rooks stated this grant is less restrictive. The Council thanked them for their efforts.

Uintah Basin Narcotic Strike Force:

Mike Gledhill joined the meeting electronically. Quinn Bennion explained that this budget is the same except for the miscellaneous line item. Mike Gledhill explained there are changes to some of the laws with how informants work off some of their charges. Now they have to pay informants and for the Strike Force this process has paid off. The cost to the agencies for the Strike Force has remained the same. The Management Board looked at what Roosevelt wanted to do with the policies and voted to stay with Vernal City’s policy. Roosevelt Chief indicated he would get back with them so at this point it is not known if they will continue to be part of the Task Force. Carl Morton stated their contribution is \$11,000. Mike Gledhill stated it will not affect the grant.

Police Department:

Dylan Rooks explained that the maintenance agreement for the car cams and body cams increased by \$6000 so that line item needs to increase from \$34,000 to \$40,000. Also, every five years they rotate out the duty weapons and they are experiencing failures at the range. They will look for a distributor to trade out the current weapons. The rifles are kept for a longer time before being rotated out. The department will go with a different size weapon for better accuracy and reaction time. The handguns will cost around \$30,000 and the rifles are \$26,000 with ammunition for a total budget of \$82,700. Dylan stated the next issue is manpower. Pre-COVID the department had 22 sworn officers with one of those serving as a School Resource Officer (SRO) and the School District compensated the City \$26,000 for that position. The District requested three middle school SRO’s and there is a negotiation on what they will

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pay. Right now they are paying \$103,000 per officer to the County. There have been some challenges with the special education program so it is beneficial to them to have all three officers there. Also, Terra Academy and Christian Academy want the officers to teach a class. Quinn Bennion stated he thinks the City will land at \$86,000 an officer. Dylan asked the Council to consider adding two additional officers bringing the total to 25. There was some discussion regarding mental health calls and what can be done when it is not a criminal matter. Another issue is the administrative assistant position that was eliminated. He asked the Council to consider funding that position again.

Airport:

Ken Campbell explained that the cost for the equipment including fuel, def and oil has increased putting them over budget. The airport has been getting by with four employees, and he asked the Council to consider adding another employee. The terminal building also needs attention with the roof leaking and other issues at an estimated cost of \$200,000. Councilmember Corey Foley asked if that will add bathrooms. Ken Campbell answered no that will require a terminal upgrade. Mayor Doug Hammond asked about the enplanement funds. Ken Campbell stated those funds go toward maintenance. The County funds could be used to purchase property for the future of the airport. The last major budget item is the operations building. There is no office space and to add space above would cost around \$180,000. There has been an issue with the agreement with the County so they have not reimbursed the City yet. Once those funds are received, it can be used to fund the AEAS.

Innovation Hub:

Quinn Bennion stated that the salary for this program was in the administrative budget and has been changed to the Hub budget. The speed pitch contest was paid by the County. There are not a lot of changes to this budget.

Attorney:

Quinn Bennion explained that the City is adopting a new model by hiring an attorney as an employee. Carl Morton stated the salary line is low. Quinn Bennion stated that Naples City does not seem to be in favor of joining the City. The Fire District and SSD1 are in favor of joining. The budget for this department was initially set at \$285,000. That amount may need to increase. Carl Morton stated he will set up a revenue line item as well.

Health Insurance:

Quinn Bennion explained the health insurance is increasing 4% which is a great renewal rate. However, they are eliminating the motion program and going with a new wellness program. If the City wants the expanded wellness the cost is an additional .51%. Roxanne Behunin reported that last year the employees received \$23,000 into their hsa plan with the motion program and \$7700 dollars so far this year. Quinn Bennion stated the cost to the City is \$4800 to get money back to the employees. Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll stated the City should take advantage of this program. After further discussion, the consensus of the Council was to

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add the expanded wellness program.

ADJOURN: There being no further business; *Councilmember Nick Porter moved to adjourn. Councilmember Corey Foley seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote and the meeting was declared adjourned.*

Mayor Doug Hammond

ATTEST:

Roxanne Behunin, City Recorder

(S E A L)