

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL AND UTAH COUNTY
COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING HELD APRIL 29, 2019 at 4:30 p.m. in
the Uintah County Conference room, 147 East Main, Vernal, Utah 84078.

PRESENT:

VERNAL CITY: Councilmembers Dave Everett, Samantha Scott and Mayor Doug Hammond. Councilmember Travis Allan joined the meeting.

UINTAH COUNTY: Commissioners Brad Horrocks, Bart Haslem and Bill Stringer.

STAFF: Quinn Bennion, Roxanne Behunin, Wendy Long, John Stermer, Sylvia Wilkins and Leesha Colthorp.

GUESTS: Sonja Norton, Pam Cinch, Cheryl Meir, Dan Dilsaver, Josh Bake and Doug Brown.

Commissioner Bill Stringer declared the meeting can begin and will formally approve this special meeting when the Vernal City Council has a quorum present.

DISCUSSION ON AIRPORT MANAGEMENT:

Cheryl Meier, Director of the Uintah Transportation District, explained that the Board members of the District have approved that notice be sent to the City and the County to change management of the airport from the District back to the County. Commissioner Bill Stringer stated he understands that the agreement with the District has a termination clause requiring up to a year's notice to end their management of the airport. However, the notice has not been received yet. Cheryl Meier stated the clock does start ticking once the letter is sent. Commissioner Stringer stated that the County and City could accept management back sooner than a year, however there are a lot of items that will need to be discussed and ironed out before that can happen. Mayor Hammond stated that with the budget restraints, the City cannot jump quickly. Cheryl Meier stated that they are also having budget constraints, although they have budgeted to manage the airport for this year. No funds can be transferred to the County, only the City. She noted that the District is prepared to negotiate and agree upon a plan that is beneficial for all entities. There was some discussion regarding the transfer to the City so there would be no problems with County funding. John Stermer stated that the City does have a 25% interest in the airport so they are more involved than any other entity besides the County. There was some discussion regarding basic rules for mineral lease funding. Commissioner Brad Horrocks asked when the City's budget year would begin. Quinn Bennion answered July 1st. Commissioner Brad Horrocks clarified that the City makes a payment to the conference center in lieu of paying for the airport. Quinn Bennion answered yes, that agreement was for five years, and starting with the July 1st budget will be the 5th year. John Stermer stated that one of the issues is the bonds from the District. He stated that the City and County do not want to be straddled with a lot of debt from the airport. Cheryl Meier stated that there are projects that might not be finished yet, and that could be part of the negotiation to relinquish the airport. Dan Dilsaver commented that the District would keep the projects as that is their focus - not operations. Commissioner Bill Stringer stated that the County cannot entertain this request until all aspects are outlined such as

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airport status change, liability, day to day expenses etc. Commissioner Bart Haslem asked if the operation of the airport returns to the County, can the District still work on projects such as the crossway runway, new terminal etc. Cheryl Meier stated that the Board would have to discuss that issue. She stated that in the future, once the transfer happens, if the airport has the need for a project and it is on the project list it would go through the process as other projects. There was some discussion on how to address the different budgeting cycles to move the operation of the airport back to the City and County. John Stermer stated once the letter is received requesting the move then the timing and financial obligations can be worked on. He noted that there will have to be deliberations on budget, personnel, liability etc. Councilmember Dave Everett stated that from the City's perspective, the only money available is what is obligated for the conference center and it is hard to budget for next fiscal year without specific numbers. Quinn Bennion stated that the City would need annual operations costs. Commissioner Stringer stated that this issue will need to be worked out for the benefit of the community throughout the next few months.

Councilmember Travis Allan joined the meeting.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT & APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING: *Councilmember Samantha Scott moved to acknowledge and approve this special meeting. Councilmember Travis Allan seconded the motion. The motion passed with Commissioners Horrocks, Haslem and Stringer voting in favor and Councilmembers Everett, Allan and Scott voting in favor.*

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 25, 2019: *Councilmember Dave Everett moved to approve the minutes of February 25, 2019. Councilmember Samantha Scott seconded the motion. The motion passed with Commissioners Horrocks, Haslem and Stringer voting in favor and Councilmembers Everett, Allan and Scott voting in favor.*

CONTINUED DISCUSSION ON AIRPORT MANAGEMENT:

Pam Cinch asked how the \$1 million dollars that the airport will receive from the FAA will affect the operation. Doug Brown explained that the airport has a one and five year plan and the first allotment of funds will have to be used to pay back the entity that paid for equipment that has already been purchased. Cheryl Meier stated that the District has been receiving reimbursement funds from the FAA in small amounts. Commissioner Stringer stated that there is a limit on what the funds can be used for. Sonja Norton asked if it can be used for administrative costs later on. Doug Brown stated that it cannot be used for operations only for capital items. After further discussion, Commissioner Bill Stringer stated the City and County will continue to discuss this issue after the letter is received from the District.

MONITORING AND COLLECTION OF TRT TAX: Leesha Colthorp explained that there are representatives from the recreation industry on the TRT Committee / Task Force and they have been trying to track who has been paying this tax and who is delinquent. The State has indicated that only one-third of the TRT tax has been collected for the entire State, and it is definitely not being paid properly for Uintah County. She stated that this is affecting both the Cities and the County. Commissioner Bill Stringer asked why the State Tax Commission is not

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more aggressive to get businesses to pay the tax. Leesha Colthorp stated the State does not want to spend money on travel to conduct audits. However, they are receiving more pressure to get an auditor out here. One option is when a business comes in to renew their business license the entity can require that all their taxes be paid. She suggested the Cities and County coordinate their efforts. John Stermer stated that technically these businesses are stealing if they are collecting a tax and not submitting it to the State and there are things that can be done locally to fix that issue. The consensus of the elected officials was to work with the TRT Committee to develop an ordinance for compliance of the TRT tax. Dereck Hopper, Vernal Express editor, suggested a story be placed in the paper announcing that the County was implementing a task force to motivate businesses to pay the tax. Commissioner Stringer stated that the article should say that the funds actually benefit them since it has to be used for tourism.

BALANCE UTAH: Commissioner Bart Haslem explained that he has been working on a new program and it is moving faster in some areas than expected. The issue is that Uintah County does not have enough work and the Wasatch Front has a lot of jobs, but not a lot of candidates to fill those positions. There are a lot of cars on the road from people that are commuting to Salt Lake City area making the roads congested and affecting the air quality and one of the main problems is there is no affordable housing. The estimate is that 7000 people a day commute to the Wasatch Front at a cost of \$81 a day. The program being worked on is to provide a commuter plane from Vernal where there is affordable housing and transporting workers to the Wasatch Front and back each day. There are currently 21,000 jobs in Salt Lake with 600 alone at the airport. The preliminary figures show it will cost \$75 a day to commute this way and the hope is to get tax incentives to lower that cost. This program could also work if Uintah County booms, then workers from other areas could be transported here to work. The hope is to balance the entire State providing jobs and workers. He noted that they have met with the Governor's Office and UDOT and will be meeting with the airlines to pitch this program. The State of Wyoming has a State run airline that does this very thing. Commissioner Bill Stringer stated that this is not a new idea. It is happening everywhere using trains or subways. Commissioner Bart Haslem stated that there would have to be a commitment of 100 seats to make this work. Councilmember Travis Allan asked if there would be any seats open to the public. Commissioner Haslem answered that it would depend on the size of the plane. He stated that another part of this plan to make it viable is by adding cargo. Councilmember Dave Everett asked if this would help the enplanement numbers. Doug Brown stated possibly, and the goal is to have 25,000 within 5 years. The elected officials thanked Commissioner Haslem for the update.

ENFORCEMENT FOR AGGIE BLVD AND MAIN STREET:

Quinn Bennion informed the elected officials that currently in Utah code there is a provision that allows an offense to be heard by a court that is near the boundary of where the offense occurred so there is no need to work out any jurisdictional agreement. This is helpful particularly for

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Aggie Blvd. The Vernal City police will start enforcing traffic laws in this area. Commissioner Bill Stringer stated that the County will do the same.

ADJOURN: There being no further business; *Councilmember Dave Everett moved to adjourn. Commissioner Brad Horrocks seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote and the meeting was declared adjourned.*

Quinn Bennion, City Recorder