

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD
JANUARY 5, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the Vernal City Council room, 374 East Main,
Vernal, Utah 84078.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Nicholas Porter, Ted Munford and Corey Foley and Mayor Doug Hammond. Councilmember Dave Everett was excused.

WELCOME: Mayor Doug Hammond welcomed everyone to the meeting.

INVOCATION OR UPLIFTING THOUGHT: The invocation was given by Councilmember Ted Munford.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilmember Corey Foley.

APPROVAL OF CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 15, 2021: *Councilmember Nick Porter moved to approve the minutes of December 15, 2021 as written. Councilmember Ted Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Munford, Porter and Foley voting in favor.*

INTRODUCTION OF NEW CHAMBER DIRECTOR - LARRY MOON: Larry Moon stated he is looking forward to working with the City as he moves forward as the new director for the Chamber of Commerce.

DOWNTOWN PLAN UPDATE: Quinn Bennion presented a flow chart referencing the projects of the downtown plan starting with the Zions Bank block. The chart showed the upcoming components to begin implementing the downtown plan. Some of the items have been completed, and the next steps are to formalize the Downtown Revitalization Group, set up the non-profit through the Charitable Friends of Ashley Valley and consider approving the downtown CRA. Mr. Bennion explained that the City is applying for a grant through the Utah Main Street Program and has developed a budget to show the costs and how the CRA funds will be used. Interlocal agreements with the other agencies who have to approve the CRA are also in progress and there has not been too much progress on establishing the parking district for downtown. That program is scheduled for discussion with the downtown businesses over the next few weeks. Downtown parking lots have been identified and the City has committed to securing property, for sale or lease, to build the parking lots. The businesses will need to provide financial input if they do not have their own parking to help cover cost of operation and maintenance. Councilmember Corey Foley asked about the parking on the Zion's Bank block and how the business cost will be computed. Quinn Bennion answered that would be the first block to be rehabbed with public utilities and parking this summer as there are only two property owners. The criteria for cost is still being evaluate with the most logical way being square footage.

PUBLIC HEARING: COMMUNITY IMPACT BOARD FUNDING APPLICATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF SECURING FUNDING FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF WATER AND SEWER LINES, STREET IMPROVEMENTS, AND OTHER PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS IN THE DOWNTOWN VERNAL BLOCKS OF 100 WEST,

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100 EAST, 100 SOUTH AND VERNAL AVENUE FROM 100 NORTH TO 200 SOUTH IN THE AMOUNT OF FIVE MILLION DOLLARS: Quinn Bennion explained that part of the financing component for the downtown infrastructure improvements is a part grant part loan from the Utah Community Impact Board (CIB). The application is due February 1st and will be for \$5 million dollars. The request will be for 60% grant 40% loan over 20 years. The loan will be paid using the special transportation tax. He explained that the CIB uses mineral lease dollars that comes from leases on public lands for extraction of oil and gas. The federal government keeps 51% of the tax collected and then 49% goes back to the States where the funds are collected. Some of those funds are given back to the counties of origin to mitigate the impact. Uintah County receives a good portion of those funds as 50% of the funds are collected here and those funds are allocated to the six Special Service Districts. The Community Impact Board also receives a good portion of those funds and allocates them to agencies through an application process to rural communities. This is one piece of the financing for downtown as the City is seeking other grants. Mayor Doug Hammond opened the public hearing.

Keith Despain, Vernal City public works director, provided more detail on the four projects that will be included in the funding application. The first project, as mentioned, is the Zion's Bank block and is scheduled to be completed this summer. The project includes the relocation of old water and sewer lines and burying the electrical as well as building parking lots in a good portion of that block. The water and sewer lines are very old in that block and are in dire need of help. The concept of a walking boulevard behind the buildings from 100 East to Vernal Avenue will add a new atmosphere to invite people to stay and mingle. The next project is the Cobble Rock block with the water and sewer lines being moved from under buildings and connection to a plaza for a uniformity of an inviting area and more parking. The 3rd project is the reconstruction of Vernal Avenue from 100 North to 200 South. The block to the north is a UDOT road (Hwy 191) so the City is limited on what can be done. The 2 blocks south of Main Street will include angled parking, widened sidewalks and perhaps a medium down the road with green scape. The 4th and final part is to replace the sewer line along 100 South, upgrading it from an 8 inch line to a twelve inch line that is almost at capacity. The work will be from 200 West to 500 East and down to 300 South to tie into a 12 inch line. The CIB Board will decide the final funding and the hope is it is a favorable funding package. Councilmember Corey Foley asked if \$5 million is enough for these four projects. Keith Despain stated it is not enough, however it is a substantial amount to get there with other funding. Quinn Bennion stated the City anticipates using City ARPA funds that can be used for water, sewer, storm drain and broadband. There is also a UDOT grant to help with the Vernal Avenue project that is not available for two years. That leaves a projected balance of \$500,000 to be paid with the new transportation tax.

Leesha Colthorp, tourism director for Uintah County, stated there are a lot of things that are not visual to the eyes of tourists, yet are an important piece of the puzzle to make a community walkable and visually appealing. She noted that in order to get people here in hotels,

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restaurants or attending festivals the infrastructure needs to be in good shape. Tourism is a needed component of the community along with shopping to have great place to live and work.

Joel Brown, representative from Mike Lee's office, stated he is in favor and supportive of what is happening downtown.

Larry Moon, Chamber of Commerce Director, stated he is the public voice for businesses impacted by this project and the Chamber fully supports the revitalization of downtown and this funding application. He commented that the community is thankful for the oil and gas industry and amazing things that is able to be done with those funds. However, it is a cyclical business so it is nice to hear of a plan to stimulate the economy in other ways.

Kevin Remington, business owner in downtown, noted he is directly affected by this plan and wants to see life injected into downtown. More foot traffic will help business and this plan will make downtown feel homier. He stated this plan is exciting and the City is looking for the best possible means to make this happen without burdening the citizens. Mr. Remington offered his full support.

Bart Jensen, business owner in Vernal City and the downtown area expressed his support for this project. He stated that Quinn Bennion and staff have done a fantastic job assembling the financial pieces to make this happen. He noted that it breaks everyone's heart to see empty store fronts on Main Street.

Ray Hawkins, property owner and delivery driver, reminded the staff that he expressed his concerns for deliveries at the last meeting and was encouraged to reach out. The City did listen and he is pleased that a solution is being considered. Also, the old sewer line directly impacts his property and he will be upgrading his line so there will not be any issues with his home. He stated that he hopes the checks and balances continue and thanked the Council for listening to the people.

Mayor Doug Hammond noted that the input from the community is appreciated and they want everyone to be involved. Councilmember Ted Munford agreed, and asked the community members to reach out with any concerns or questions.

Rebecca Boren, downtown business owner, thanked the City for the hard work and transparency. She noted that the timing is perfect, and the expense is not being left to the businesses and residences.

Quinn Bennion stated he received two letters from people who could not attend and asked that he read their comments:

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- 1) Trisha Sorensen, small business owner downtown, sees this renovation with excitement that will help the area rich in history. There are many buildings that could be improved and would benefit her business and so many more. A stronger economy creates a closer community. She stated she supports the grant submission as it will help the community to grow.
- 2) Vance and Sonja Norton, property owners downtown see this plan as creating a more vibrant and welcoming downtown. They support anything that helps improve historic downtown with more commerce and economic diversity. A walkable City center with renewed areas and green space will provide better experiences. Renovations to the exteriors will motivate neighbors to also make improvements.

There being no further public comments, Mayor Doug Hammond closed the public hearing and thanked the citizens for stepping forward.

RENEWAL/REPLACEMENT FOR PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBER TERMS THAT ARE EXPIRING 12/31/2021:

Allen Parker explained that several regular members of the Planning Commission terms expired and they have declined to continue. Those members are Eric Hunting and Samantha Scott. There are two alternate members who are willing to move into those positions and Mr. Parker recommended the Council appoint Brandon Parker and Stephen Lytle to those slots. Also, Troy Allred’s term expired and he is willing to continue. That will fill all except one regular member position. There will, however, be three vacancies for alternates. He noted that now is a great time to be a part of the Planning Commission with so much going on downtown. *Councilmember Nick Porter moved to appoint the alternate members, Brandon Parker and Stephen Lytle, as regular members of the Planning Commission and renew Troy Allred’s term. Councilmember Corey Foley seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

Councilmember Munford.....aye;
Councilmember Porteraye;
Councilmember Foley.....aye.

PLANNING COMMISSION SCHEDULE FOR 2022: Allen Parker explained the Planning Commission meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month and they are proposing the same schedule for 2022. Councilmember Ted Munford asked if there was any feedback from the Planning Commission. Allen Parker stated they will discuss it at their next meeting. *Councilmember Ted Munford moved to approve the schedule for 2022. Councilmember Nick Porter seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

Councilmember Munford.....aye;
Councilmember Porteraye;
Councilmember Foley.....aye.

RECESS FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & RENEWAL AGENCY MEETING:

Mayor Doug Hammond recessed the meeting to hold the special CDRA public meeting.

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RECONVENE INTO CITY COUNCIL MEETING: The Council reconvened into the Council meeting.

**REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF CDRA PROJECT AREA PLAN FOR THE
DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT PROJECT AREA – ORDINANCE NO.**

2022-01: Quinn Bennion reminded the Council that they looked at this Ordinance at the last meeting and it will adopt the CRA project area for downtown Vernal. *Councilmember Ted Munford moved to adopt Ordinance No. 2022-01. Councilmember Corey Foley seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

Councilmember Munford.....aye;
Councilmember Porteraye;
Councilmember Foley.....aye.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Youth Council Day at the Legislature:

Quinn Bennion reported that the Day at the Legislature for the Youth Council is scheduled for January 19th. Councilmember Nick Porter stated he is not able to attend this year. Mayor Doug Hammond stated he is planning on attending.

Council Vacancy:

Quinn Bennion stated that interviews are scheduled for Wednesday, January 19th for those interested in filling the vacant Council seat with Travis Allan moving out of the City. The applications are due by January 13th at 4 pm and the City Council interviews must be conducted in a public setting.

Council Board Assignments:

Mayor Doug Hammond asked the Council to review the Board assignments and let him know of any questions before final approval.

CLOSED SESSION: *Councilmember Nick Porter moved to go into closed session to hold a strategy session to discuss the purchase, exchange, or lease of real property, including any form of a water right or water shares and return to open session once the discussion is complete. Councilmember Ted Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

Councilmember Munford.....aye;
Councilmember Porteraye;
Councilmember Foley.....aye.

ADJOURN: There being no further business; *Councilmember Nick Porter moved to adjourn.*

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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)