

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL AND UTAH COUNTY
COMMISSION SPECIAL JOINT MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 22, 2021 at
4:30 p.m. in the Uintah County Conference Room, 147 East Main, Vernal, Utah 84078.

PRESENT:

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

VERNAL CITY: Councilmembers Dave Everett, Ted Munford, Nick Porter, and Mayor Doug Hammond.

STAFF: Quinn Bennion, Ken Campbell, Leisha Coltharp, Jon Stearmer and Roxanne Behunin.

GUESTS: Cheryl Meier, Robin O'Driscoll, Kent Bunderson, Jeremy Raymond, Joel Brown, Steve Evans, Dan Dilsaver, Derick Hopper, Aaron Averett and Naples City Mayor Dean Baker.

WELCOME: Vernal City Mayor Doug Hammond welcomed everyone to the meeting.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT & APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING: *Commissioner Bill Stringer moved to acknowledge and approve this special meeting. Councilmember Ted Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed a unanimous vote.*

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 25, 2021: *Councilmember Dave Everett moved to approve the minutes of January 25, 2021 as presented. Councilmember Nick Porter seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.*

DISCUSSION REGARDING GEOFENCE BOUNDARIES FOR SCOOTERS: Quinn Bennion explained that the Active and Healthy Community committee was formed 4 years ago consisting of representatives from the County, School District, Hospital, Tri-County Health, and the City to find ways to promote healthy and active living in the Ashley Valley. The City received a grant to help with initiatives. One idea was to find different modes of transportation so several companies were contacted to see if they were interested in providing scooters. One company, Bird Scooter Company, is willing to bring scooters to Vernal. The City has approved an MOU with them to operate the scooters in the City and the agreement has been sent to the County for review. As part of the program, the owners create a geofence allowing the scooters to be ridden to that boundary. Mr. Bennion displayed a map of the area showing the boundaries for the geofence. He noted that the logical areas include the airport, college, library and retail. Anyone interested in riding the scooters uses a phone app with their credit card to pay the initial fee and per minute cost. There will be a local operator managing the scooters. Commissioner Brad Horrocks clarified that they are picked up and charge every night. Quinn answered yes, the GPS signal is used to find the scooter and show the usage. The City will discourage use on Highway 40 and require the scooters stay in the bike lanes. Jon Stearmer stated the idea seems good with the clarification of one section that says they have exclusive rights. Quinn Bennion stated he would verify that, although there was only one company willing to try a rural area. Commission Stringer asked if the scooters have

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stands. Quinn Bennion answered that they do have kick stands and will be placed in key locations. Jon Stearmer requested the final form be sent to the County to be put on the next agenda.

FREEDOM FESTIVAL CONCERT ON JULY 2, 2021: Leisha Coltharp stated that the first year for this festival was last year and it was held at the park. This year there will be the field of flags, concerts and vendors. The Committee would like to do another concert on Main Street on Friday night. Steve Evans stated that they have booked Colin Raye to perform and will have a political, business revival theme to bring a sense of pride to the community. Jon Stearmer asked what was meant by political. He noted that rural Utah loves values; however, there may be some items that get in the way of spending public funds such as politics. Steve Evans clarified that it is more to support local businesses and stand up for individual rights and liberties, not a political rally. He suggested Jon meet with him to go over the guidelines. Leisha Coltharp stated this will be a ticketed event. Commissioner Bill Stringer asked how long Main Street will be blocked off. Leisha answered around 4 hours. Derrick Jaramillo stated this event will need employees from the City and the County to help. Quinn Bennion stated that the downtown businesses have been supportive and see a lot of foot traffic during these events.

UPDATE FOR DOWNTOWN VERNAL PLANNING PROCESS: Quinn Bennion reminded the elected officials that the City is in the process of developing a revitalization plan for downtown. This has been a group effort with many entities involved. Grant funding was received from UDOT in the amount of \$100,000 and the Community Impact Board in the amount of \$30,000, with the City and County each contributing \$15,000. An architectural firm, MTHN, was hired to complete the plan and Sunrise Engineering is involved as the local manager. Public engagement will be started and the steering committee will tour other downtowns to see what will work in Vernal. The City has hired an attorney to develop a community reinvestment area (CRA) for downtown to help businesses develop or expand.

AIRPORT BUDGET AND POSSIBLE USE OF CARES ACT 2 FUNDS: Ken Campbell reported that in an effort to look ahead, he has evaluated the financial needs of the airport and the amount of money needed to run the airport on an annual basis is approximately \$800,000. The concern each year is how much in entitlements will be received based on enplanements. If the number of enplanements reaches 10,000 the airport receives \$1 million dollars to take care of the airfield. If that number drops below 7000 the funding is only \$150,000. The pandemic has had a dramatic affect on travel and as of today there have only been 856 enplanements so far this year. The hope is that the FAA will use the 2019 year totals for the 2021 allotment, however, that amount has not be set yet. The numbers will need to be at least 7001 for funds 3 years from now. The airport will receive an allocation of \$2 million dollars from the COVID response funding through the CARES ACT 2. The complicating news is that funding has stipulations on how it can be used. The funding that was received previously through the CARE Act was received by the Transportation SSD. Cheryl Meir noted those funds were used to cover the operation and maintenance of the airport from January thru June. Councilmember Ted Munford stated it takes money to expand services, and asked if there is a Salt Lake route being worked on. Ken Campbell stated they have held meetings on that subject with no plans yet. Quinn Bennion stated it may need a jump start possibly using the quarter cent sales tax as the bus system is not using all the funds being allocated to them. Commissioner Brad Horrocks stated that percentage would have to be changed. Jon Stermer stated it can be changed; however it is a complicated process.

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Commissioner Brad Horrocks asked if there are plans for a new terminal. Ken Campbell answered once the master plan is completed then they will approach the FAA to see how much they will fund. He reminded the elected officials of the three courses of action discussed in a special meeting including the 750 foot expansion of the runway, the lighting upgrade, and the cross wind runway. The FAA does not think the cross wind runway is needed and will not pay for it. Another item is the possibility of installing a general aviation hanger as there are no hangars for sale and no rental space. The elected officials thanked Mr. Campbell for the update.

DISCUSSION REGARDING SPECIAL SERVICE DISTRICTS AND MINERAL LEASE FUNDS: Commissioner Bart Haslem reminded everyone of the meeting held last year to decide what to do with the Special Service Districts, and the final vote of the Commission to form a new District and merge 3 of them into 1. That is still the intention of the County. Jon Stermer stated that in reviewing the statute, a public hearing needs to be held to listen to protests and give the public time to respond. The hearing is scheduled for March 22nd. Once that is done, the Commission can adopt a final resolution to form the new Special Service District. The documents are then sent to the Lieutenant Governor's office and they issue a certification. No contracts can be executed with the other districts until the new District has been formed. Councilmember Ted Munford voiced his request for the cities to have representation on the Board for the new District. Commissioner Brad Horrocks stated he has spoken with representatives from the cities and understand representation is needed. Commissioner Bill Stringer reported that the mineral lease funds came in \$1 million dollars short of the 2019 amount and the first allocation for this year covered the amount needed for all the Districts except the Transportation District only received \$288,000. So far the new federal administration has not affected the drilling; however, there are concerns with what will happen in the West. The new deputy director for the BLM is not a friend of the extraction industry and the new 30/30 initiative to put 30% of the land and water resources in conservation status by the year 2030 will have a large impact as the area is currently at 12%. The federal stimulus funds left out special service districts and Senator Romney has drafted language to include them in the next funding.

ADJOURN: There being no further discussion; Councilmember Ted Munford moved to adjourn. Commissioner Bill Stringer seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote and the meeting was adjourned.