

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY SPECIAL WORKSHOP MEETING HELD
MAY 19, 2021 at 5:30 pm in the Vernal City Planning Conference Room, 374 East
Main., Vernal, UT 84078

PRESENT: Mayor Doug Hammond, Councilmember Bert Clark, Dave Everett, Nicholas Porter, Travis Allan and Ted Munford.

WELCOME: Mayor Doug Hammond welcomed everyone to the meeting.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING: *Councilmember Bert Clark moved to acknowledge and approve this special meeting. Councilmember Nick Porter seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Clark, Everett, and Porter voting in favor. Councilmembers Munford and Allan were not present for the vote.*

FY2022 BUDGET WORKSHOP:

UTILITY FUNDS:

Ryan Blackburn stated that they are asking for a truck and seasonal employee to work on replacing valves. The crew is busy with other repairs and has not had time to work on valves. Quinn Bennion stated the sewer department budget does include a one-ton truck at \$50,000 and a seasonal employee at a cost of \$10,000. Those items are on the consideration list that will be discussed later tonight. Councilmember Bert Clark asked if the Conservancy District has a cost for Tyseck each year. Quinn Bennion answered that it is not a set amount instead the City is charged by the use. He noted that there is a cost for water treatment and pumping. The cost for pumping was \$24,000 in 2019 and less for 2020. The cost will probably be higher this year with the drought and more pumping from Red Fleet. Councilmember Ted Munford asked about the leak detection. Ryan Blackburn stated they are working on the larger leaks and will continue looking for any leaks. Quinn Bennion stated this is a major item that needs to be addressed. The current water loss rate is 49%. Councilmember Travis Allan asked what that means in dollars. Quinn Bennion stated that is around \$30,000 a month. Councilmember Travis Allan asked what is causing the leaks. Ryan Blackburn answered he thinks it is bad installation where the pipes are covered with cobble rocks and the leaks are going underground making it hard to find them. Quinn Bennion stated there have been several meetings with the crew and they have come up with a list of 29 strategies to try to get a handle on it. Councilmember Ted Munford asked if there is a way to make sure the City is getting the correct amount of treated water. Quinn Bennion stated yes, there are actually two meters, one from the treatment plant and one for the City and they are tracking very closely. This issue will be the highest priority for the new public works director. One item in the budget is to bid out and contract to test every commercial meter over 2 inches and there are hundreds of them. There are also cast iron pipes that need to be addressed that will cost around \$3 million dollars to replace. That cost is not in the budget so the City would have to go to the CIB Board and structure a loan payment to take over when one drops off. There is a cost of \$10,000 for GIS for the water and sewer lines to bring the system up to date. Councilmember Travis Allan asked how many fire hydrants are being tested. Ryan Blackburn stated they try to do all of them in a three year rotation. Councilmember Dave Everett stated the GIS system is critical.

General Fund:

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY SPECIAL WORKSHOP MEETING HELD MAY 19, 2021

Mayor & Council:

Quinn Bennion stated that there are two changes to this department. The first one is the neighborhood outreach program. Ken and RoJean Bassett have been asked to volunteer to get this program going. The other change is Holly Days budgeted at \$60,000 although the hope is to get \$50,000 in donations. Councilmember Travis Allan asked how much time is being devoted to that event even with the changes. Quinn Bennion stated he will direct the staff to track their time. The County will pay for a planner to work on this event so it will be a much better situation.

Administration:

Quinn Bennion stated the change to this department is adding an intern for the summer. The candidate has to be a graduate level student interested in city management. There was some discussion regarding the health insurance and changes to prescription drug coverage. Roxanne Behunin indicated the drug companies make changes every May and it does affect a few employees. Councilmember Travis Allan stated the City is still offering two health insurance plans and there was talk about going to one. Quinn Bennion stated that there was not any cost savings and the increase for this year is 4%. Roxanne Behunin explained the cost and difference between the high deductible plan and the traditional plan. Councilmember Bert Clark asked how the motion program is going. Quinn Bennion stated United Health Care has paid out \$50,000 for the program so far with a 58% participation rate of employees on the high deductible plan.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:

Quinn Bennion explained that this list is items and ideas for consideration in this budget. The first item is a wage increase for employees and suggested this item be discussed later. The budget is still \$200,000 over the projected revenue although that amount is not much of a concern as the departments can get closer to \$100,000 so there is a smaller use of the fund balance. Councilmember Ted Munford noted that they can take care of some items that have been neglected for a while. Councilmember Bert Clark asked what percentage the budget is at for unexpended funds. Quinn Bennion stated 25% although that amount has been expanded to 35%. Quinn Bennion stated that the budget does not include any ARPA funds that is expected to be \$1.1 million dollars over the next two years. He stated he is advocating those funds be used for downtown Vernal and possibly some water line repair. Quinn Bennion indicated #4 on the list is for wellness, possibly doing a tobacco use differential or motion program participation that affects the insurance rate the employees pay. Councilmember Ted Munford voiced his concern on how you police that type of program. Roxanne Behunin stated it may be better to give an incentive to quit smoking which can be done through the wellness program. There is \$2000 in the budget for incentives for wellness such as healthy eating etc. Quinn Bennion stated another item is combining services such as the courts and victim services. The next item is the phone allowance. Currently the police officers get \$40 a month to use their personal phones for city business and other key employees get \$25 a month. There are a few employees who use a City phone. There was some discussion regarding the difference in use. Quinn Bennion suggested increasing the employee's reimbursement to \$30 acknowledging it is more expensive for a phone. The next item is a vehicle for the city manager. Councilmember Ted Munford asked if there was a used Durango from the PD that could be used for this vehicle. Councilmember Travis Allan agreed that is a good use of city assets. Councilmember Ted Munford suggested a police truck be kept for motor pool also. The next item is \$50,000 for capital improvements at the cemetery. The City already pays \$110,000 for maintenance. There was some discussion regarding city residents paying twice for

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY SPECIAL WORKSHOP MEETING HELD MAY 19, 2021

cemetery services. Quinn Bennion stated the next item is the My Home Town program using volunteers to help neighborhoods. The next item is combining the courts which will probably happen July 1st. The County judge accepted a buy-out offer so the City will provide court services. The County will cover the bailiff costs.

Quinn Bennion stated the next item is the heat pumps for this facility which is badly needed. That department has also requested a seasonal employee to help with landscaping. The next item is social media archiving and cameras. Councilmember Ted Munford stated those items are needed. Quinn Bennion stated the next item is fire inspection services which are needed, however, there needs to be a way to pay for them. Allen Parker stated he is working on a system for this. He noted that the seasonal code enforcement position really needs to be year round. Councilmember Travis Allan stated he has noticed snow is getting piled up. Roxanne Behunin mentioned that fire inspections can also be completed in the winter.

Quinn Bennion stated that the next item is replacing lights with LED bulbs which will drop the cost for electricity for street lights in half. The next items are the chip and seal work at a cost of \$260,000, and the aerial lift truck at a projected cost of \$100,000.

RECESS: The Council took a short recess to convene the regular City Council meeting and reconvened after that meeting concluded.

Quinn Bennion stated that #25 on the consideration list is the aerial lift truck. After discussion, the consensus was to put the funding into the equipment reserve fund and wait for the public works director to make a recommendation. Quinn Bennion stated one item not in the budget is a GIS system for the streets department. It is not as critical as the water and sewer departments; however it will track pavement needs, ADA ramps etc. Councilmember Dave Everett agreed this is critical information.

Quinn Bennion stated the next item is rebuilding the T-Rex dinosaur. The cost is estimated at \$120,000 and has not been placed in the budget. Councilmember Dave Everett again stated that the City needs to start a "Save T-Rex" campaign. Councilmember Ted Munford suggested setting aside \$10,000 and see if more funds can be raised. Quinn Bennion stated the next item is a vehicle for the public works director. Councilmember Ted Munford suggested a police truck be kept for this purpose.

Quinn Bennion stated that the next item is a possible change to the code so the City does not have to use a flow able fill on road cuts. Currently the City requires this from contractors so they warranty the work, however, it is expensive for the City to do this. Councilmember Ted Munford suggested having the public works director consider this and bring a recommendation. The next items are for the sewer system vehicle and seasonal position. The consensus of the Council is to put the funds in the equipment replacement fund and drop the seasonal position.

Quinn Bennion noted the items that have not been placed in the budget is funding for the pickle ball court, and the work on 500 North street that may not be needed until next year, although the design work may be completed in this upcoming budget. Councilmember Ted Munford stated those funds need to be in this budget. The consensus was to add \$20,000 to this budget. Quinn

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY SPECIAL WORKSHOP MEETING HELD MAY 19, 2021

Bennion stated that the work at Ashley Springs was budgeted at \$40,000, but the work has not been completed yet. He suggested those funds be moved to this budget or go to the CIB Board for funding as the City cost will be closer to \$100,000. The water banking will require CIB funding in the amount of \$400,000 and then the \$90,000 can be used for the radio read meters. The next item is the use of ARPA funds, possibly to help downtown Vernal. There was some discussion on the revitalization of downtown.

SPONSORSHIPS FOR FY2022:

Quinn Bennion brought the Council's attention to the contribution / sponsorships for the coming year. Councilmember Travis Allan suggested the funds from the baseball event and Rock the Ride be put into the miscellaneous line item to see if those events ask for funds. Councilmember Bert Clark questioned if the Chamber contribution was supposed to drop by \$5000 each year. Mayor Hammond stated he remembers it should drop. Councilmember Travis Allan suggested the Chamber bring a proposal and show the Council where his budget is. Quinn Bennion explained how the funding was moved from the grant rider and hub manager with Uintah County.

ADJOURN: There being no further business, *Councilmember Bert Clark moved to adjourn. Councilmember Dave Everett seconded the motion. The motion passed and the meeting was declared adjourned.*

Mayor Doug Hammond

ATTEST;

Roxanne Behunin, Deputy Recorder

(S E A L)