

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD
JANUARY 6, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the Vernal City Council room, 374 East Main,
Vernal, Utah 84078.

This will be an electronic meeting with the anchor location being held at the Vernal City Council Chambers, 374 East Main St, Vernal, Utah. Those in attendance will be required to wear a mask unless they are speaking. Because of gathering restrictions put in place by Governor Herbert, the anchor location will only have ten participants in attendance. The meeting will be streamed live via Facebook and broadcast on the Vernal City YouTube Channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvGzca67KY_BIQwmNfNyzEQ

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

WELCOME: Mayor Doug Hammond welcomed everyone to the meeting.

INVOCATION OR UPLIFTING THOUGHT: The invocation was given by Councilmember Dave Everett

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilmember Nick Porter

APPROVAL OF CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 22, 2020: *Councilmember Bert Clark moved to approve the minutes of December 22, 2020. Councilmember Ted Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Clark, Munford, Allan, Porter and Everett voting in favor for a unanimous vote.*

APPROVAL OF CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 16, 2020: *Councilmember Dave Everett moved to approve the minutes of December 16, 2020. Councilmember Nick Porter seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Everett, Porter, Munford, Allan and Clark voting in favor for a unanimous vote.*

INTRODUCTION OF KAITLYN WINTERTON: Quinn Bennion introduced Kaitlyn Winterton who joined the City’s workforce on November 4th, filling the administrative clerk position. Kaitlyn told the Council she has one child that is 3, and lives in Roosevelt with her husband. Mayor Doug Hammond and the Council welcomed Kaitlyn to the City.

REQUEST TO AMEND THE VERNAL CITY PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, CHAPTER 5.20 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE – RESOLUTION NO. 2021-01: Quinn Bennion stated that this item relates to the holidays observed by the City in 2021. Currently the employees are paid for 11 holidays; 10 specific observed days and 1 the employee picks. Resolution No. 2021-01 proposes exchanging the floating day for Martin Luther King Day keeping the total number at 11. A survey was conducted to see who observed this Holiday and almost all the cities in Utah do. *Councilmember Travis Allan moved to approve Resolution No. 2021-01. Councilmember Bert Clark seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

Councilmember Munford aye;

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Councilmember Allan *aye;*
Councilmember Everett *aye;*
Councilmember Porter *aye;*
Councilmember Clark *aye.*

Councilmember Travis Allan asked if the employees are aware of this change. Quinn Bennion answered that not all of them are and he will notify them of the Council’s approval.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH BIRD SCOOTERS FIRST READING- QUINN BENNION: Quinn Bennion presented an agreement for scooters from BIRD Ride LLC, to be brought to Vernal for approval. He explained that this idea had been brought to him by the Healthy and Active Community Committee which was formed about 3 to 4 years ago. Vernal City received a sizable 3-year grant from IHC with the help of the Utah League of Cities and Towns and the Committee consists of members from the Chamber of Commerce, Ashely Regional Medical Center, the School Board, and other entities to encourage Vernal residents to become more active. The purpose of the BIRD Scooters is to encourage alternate modes of transportation other than vehicles, a trend that is already seen in larger cities. Quinn Bennion presented each council member with a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the BIRD Scooters for this first reading. He noted that the Vernal City attorney still needs to review the contract. BIRD Ride would provide 50 scooters that are activated by an app on a phone that will charge the user’s credit card for the duration of the time it is used. A geofence would be set up to prevent users from taking the scooters outside certain parameters. Councilmember Bert Clark asked if they will have a kills switch to which Quinn Bennion responded yes. Councilmember Bert Clark also asked if they are waterproof to which Quinn Bennion responded yes. Quinn Bennion explained that because the user’s name and credit card information are attached to the scooter they used, he is hoping this will decrease the potential for vandalism. Councilmember Bert Clark presented a concern with where the BIRD Scooters would be allowed to be ridden and whether or not there was a time limit for them to be used. Quinn Bennion stated that riding down Main Street would be highly discouraged due to the danger of driving them in and out of traffic. In essence, they would be treated the same as bicycles. He answered the time limit question by stating that they can be ridden a long time, so there really isn’t a time limit.. Mayor Doug Hammond asked if law enforcement would be stopping people who used the BIRD Scooters in traffic. Quinn Bennion reiterated that while it will be highly discouraged for people to drive them in traffic, the scooters will be treated with the safe rules as bicycles. Councilmember Dave Everett asked about the top speed of the scooters. Quinn Bennion responded that they go about 15 mph. Quinn Bennion brought up the potential for them to be used at the Airport as well. Councilmember Ted Munford asked about the running time and how it charges if someone stops somewhere to eat or visit with another individual. Quinn Bennion stated that the time starts when the scooter is activated and stops when the user stops it on their phone. Quinn Bennion stated that he will bring the topic of the BIRD Scooters back in a month for approval.

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CONSIDER APPROVAL TO EXTEND THE FAMILY’S FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT LEAVE TIME FOR 2021 – QUINN BENNION: Quinn Bennion stated that at the end of March 2020, Congress passed the CARES Act which included a requirement for most employers to provide 80 hours of leave time to employees who had contracted or been exposed to COVID-19 to allow them time to recover or quarantine. On December 31, 2020, the policy expired, though most cities have extended their COVID leave to April or June. Quinn Bennion proposed that Vernal City extend the use of COVID-19 leave for employees until they have the opportunity to get the vaccine. He mentioned that the Vernal City Police Department had the option of obtaining the vaccine this week, and only about half of them decided to get it. While it is not mandatory for city employees to get the vaccine, Quinn Bennion proposed that Vernal City not provide COVID-19 leave to those who opt out. Councilmember Ted Munford stated that he agreed as long as employees are aware of this change going into it. Councilmember Nicholas Porter stated it was reasonable. Councilmember Ted Munford asked if there were any changes in the numbers of cases with the vaccine beginning to emerge. Quinn Bennion stated that he wasn’t aware of any changes yet *Councilmember Ted Munford moved to approve the extension of the Family’s First Coronavirus Response Act Leave Time for 2021 as presented. Councilmember Dave Everett seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

Councilmember Munford aye;
Councilmember Allan aye;
Councilmember Everett aye;
Councilmember Porter aye;
Councilmember Clark aye.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Employees Running for City Council:

Quinn Bennion informed the Council that there was no policy regarding employees running for elective office. While Vernal does have a policy for political activity, it does not, unlike other cities, have a policy preventing an employee from being elected to the City Council. He recommended considering a policy that would allow an employee to run for City Council with the understanding that if they are elected they will have to resign from their position with the City. Councilmember Ted Munford stated that he could see the value, yet agreed they would have to leave Vernal City employment if elected. There was discussion about how it would impact the employee when hard decisions had to be made within Vernal City if they remained an employee while serving on the City Council. Quinn Bennion stated he would bring it back later for further discussion.

Fireworks for Statehood Celebration:

Quinn Bennion acknowledged the Statehood celebration that occurred on Monday, January 4, 2021 stating it was a good show.

Discovery Channel Show on Blind Frog Ranch:

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Quinn Bennion commented on the series on the Discovery Channel that did a few episodes on the Blind Frog Ranch here in the Uintah Basin. Councilmember Dave Everett discussed his opportunity over the summer in 2020 to get to know the owner of the ranch and the supernatural aspects of the ranch. He stated that Discovery will begin filming for the 2nd season of the ranch February 2021

Snow Removal:

Councilmember Bert Clark expressed appreciation for Vernal City's snow removal team. Quinn Bennion stated that Clint Morton, Streets Supervisor, approached his team this year and asked for their ideas which led to getting out early ahead of the storm to keep roads clear.

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

Mayor Doug Hammond

ATTEST:

Roxanne Behunin, Deputy Recorder

(S E A L)