

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD
JUNE 17, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the Vernal City Council room, 374 East Main, Vernal,
Utah 84078.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Nicholas Porter, Ted Munford, Travis Allan and Bert Clark 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 Travis Allan.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilmember Ted Munford.

APPROVAL OF CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 3, 2020: *Councilmember Bert Clark moved to approve the minutes of June 3, 2020. Councilmember Nicholas Porter seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Munford, Allan, Porter and Clark voting in favor.*

REQUEST FOR SPONSORSHIP OF GRAD NIGHT FOR 2020 – KAM POPE: Kam Pope explained that usually grad night is held after graduation, however, with school being shut down with the pandemic a regular graduation was put on hold. The School District is planning a graduation in July or August so grad night will be held at the same time. He asked the Council to consider sponsoring the event with \$2000. *Councilmember Travis Allan moved to sponsor grad night in the amount of \$2000. Councilmember Bert Clark seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

Councilmember Munford.....aye;
Councilmember Allanaye;
Councilmember Porteraye;
Councilmember Clark.....aye.

PRESENTATION BY UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY (USU) –BOB PETERSON: Bob Peterson, representing Uintah Basin USU, explained that he wanted to let the City officials know how much they appreciate the support they have received over the years. He noted that technology has changed higher Ed over the years from Ednet to web based classes and now Zoom. Councilmember Clark reminded everyone that the City purchased the building on west Highway 40 so there would be a brick and mortar campus here in Vernal. Mr. Peterson acknowledged that gift from the City and stated they are appreciative for continued support. He noted that with the help of Bob Williams, Marc Bingham, the City, County and the State, Vernal has a nice campus now. One of the challenges is high school graduates can earn higher wages without a bachelors degree, but higher education is needed today. He stated that they can boast the highest number of scholarships in the State, and no other USU campus has the relationship this school does with elected officials. Quinn Bennion stated that USU is a tremendous asset to this community and plays a huge role in economic development. He asked if there is the possibility to getting athletics here like the Eastern Utah campus and what would be needed to promote that idea. Bob Peterson stated that USU wanted the Eastern campus to be able to keep

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their identity which included their sports program. He stated that he would bring it up with James Taylor.

PRESENTATION REGARDING THE POSSIBLE ADDITION OF BIKE LANES ALONG SR-121 AS PART OF UDOT RESURFACING PROJECT – CIVCO ENGINEERING: Brett Reynolds, representing CIVCO Engineering, explained he wanted to update the City officials on this issue after talking with the County. He noted that the Commissioners came to the same conclusion as the City, although there is enough room to allow parking with a bike lane by the walking park. The County’s concern was the major intersections and UDOT is still looking at those. As a compromise, the State is considering installing bike route signs that would identify Hwy 121 as a bike route. Councilmember Ted Munford agreed that would be a good compromise for now. Brett Reynolds stated that if any work is done on that road in the future, they will look at accommodating the trails master plan. Councilmember Nicholas Porter stated this is a good first step. The Council thanked Mr. Reynolds for the update.

DISCUSSION AND ADOPTION OF PROPERTY TAX RATE – ORDINANCE NO. 2020-04: Mike Davis explained that the County figures the certified tax rate based on three items – personal property, centrally assessed property and real property. The City receives \$336,000 in property tax while the County received \$14 million. Councilmember Travis Allan asked how much property tax the County received from City residents. The staff did not have those figures. Quinn Bennion stated it is not as high as thought because of the oilfield equipment. Mike Davis stated that the largest property tax collector is the School District at \$22 million. Quinn Bennion stated he completed a study for Utah cities outside the Wasatch Front to see where the City fell with property tax rates and Vernal is the 3rd lowest. Moab does not have a property tax rate. Councilmember Travis Allan stated that the residents need to understand the property tax rate is lower here than other places. Mike Davis stated that the certified rate will give the City the same amount of tax as last year; minus any growth. *Councilmember Ted Munford moved to approve Ordinance No. 2020-04 adopting the certified tax rate. Councilmember Nicholas Porter seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

- Councilmember Munford.....aye;*
- Councilmember Allanaye;*
- Councilmember Porteraye;*
- Councilmember Clark..... aye.*

SALARY SCHEDULE FOR THE AIRPORT RESOLUTION NO. 2020-08: Quinn Bennion explained that the salary schedule has to be revised to add the airport employees. He noted that the staff looked where these employees will fit in comparison with other similar City positions and the airport manager position as compared to other airport managers in Utah and other areas before coming up with a recommended range. If this range is approved, the next step is to provide an offer letter to the three employees outlining wage, insurance benefits, probation etc. *Councilmember Ted Munford moved to approve Resolution No. 2020-08 amending the City salary schedule to add the airport employees. Councilmember Nicolas Porter seconded the motion.*

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The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

Councilmember Munford.....aye;
Councilmember Allanaye;
Councilmember Porteraye;
Councilmember Clark.....aye.

ADOPTION OF FY2021 BUDGET - ORDINANCE NO. 2020-05: Mike Davis explained that the certified tax rate is not included in this budget so the Council will need to approve that revenue in the budget reopener. Also, there will be changes to the beginning fund balance once the voluntary separation agreements are completed and funded. The tricky part is those employees that are leaving have vacation and sick leave hours that will be cashed out. He noted the financial benefit to the City will not be seen until FY2022. Also, the airport is a new fund being added to this budget. *After further discussion, Councilmember Ted Munford moved to adopt the FY2021 Budget with the changes mentioned. Councilmember Bert Clark seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

Councilmember Munford.....aye;
Councilmember Allanaye;
Councilmember Porteraye;
Councilmember Clark.....aye.

DISCUSSION ABOUT SMALL BUSINESS GRANT PROGRAM WITH UINTAH COUNTY, NAPLES CITY AND BALLARD TO ASSIST BUSINESSES WITH INTERRUPTIONS DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC FUNDED WITH CARES ACT FUNDS: Quinn Bennion stated that Ballard, Naples City, Uintah County and Vernal City will be offering grants to small businesses using CARES Act funding. The City costs for COVID-19 will be covered first, then the rest of the first allotment will be used to help struggling businesses. The hope is this will boost the local economy. The amount that can be requested will range from \$1000 to \$10,000. Councilmember Ted Munford asked what determines the amount. Quinn Bennion stated there is a priority list with a point system. The criteria includes a decreased customer count, no other grant funding, and a high employee loss. Councilmember Ted Munford asked if they are required to have a current business license. Quinn Bennion stated there will be a few exceptions such as a home based business that is not required to have a license. There was some discussion to require these businesses to have a license without paying a fee. Also, the businesses will be given a 1099 at the end of the year. The Council thanked Mr. Bennion for the update.

DISCUSSION REGARDING WATER SHUTOFF NOTICES: Quinn Bennion explained that at the beginning of COVID-19, the decision was made to halt shut off notices for those unable to pay their bill as many people were losing their employment. Now, two months later, the City has under 20 households that are 1 month past due and have 3 properties that have been placed on a reduced flow meter. That type of meter still provides water at a reduced rate making it harder to take a shower which encourages the user to pay the bill. He asked the Council when they would like shut off notices to be sent. Councilmember Ted Munford asked

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if arrangements can be made to pay their bill if they get behind. Mike Davis stated they do have options. Councilmember Travis Allan stated with the amount of unemployment people are getting this should not be an issue now, but down the road it may be a concern. Mike Davis agreed. After further discussion, the consensus was to send the reminders out and start collecting delinquent accounts.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF AMENDMENTS TO THE VERNAL CITY PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, CATEGORIES OF APPOINTMENTS -

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-07: Quinn Bennion explained that the personnel policy needs to be **modified** to clarify the definition of a full-time employee to comply with federal regulations. Councilmember Bert Clark stated there are also changes to the volunteer fire department. Quinn Bennion agreed he is recommending that volunteers do not receive benefits. He stated that the District is paying for those benefits, not the City. *Councilmember Nicholas Porter moved to approve Resolution No. 2020-07 as presented. Councilmember Ted Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:*

Councilmember Munford.....aye;
Councilmember Allanaye;
Councilmember Porteraye;
Councilmember Clark.....aye.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Rodeo:

Quinn Bennion stated that the rodeo has received the green light to be held and will be selling tickets. Because this is one of the only rodeos still operating, they have received an incredible number of participants signing up. They will be handing bandanas for everyone to wear and will only have reserved seating.

Sewer Rates:

Councilmember Bert Clark stated that the Sewer Management Board is looking at increasing the sewer rates by 32 cents per household per month to replenish the replacement fund. Quinn Bennion asked when the increase will go into effect. Councilmember Clark stated it has not been decided yet.

Property Tax:

Mike Davis stated that the Council questioned earlier what the property tax amount is that the County received from City properties. He stated he computed the tax rate with the value and that amount equals \$2.2 million dollars.

Water leak:

Allen Parker stated that a significant water leak was found around 500 South and 500 East from a line that was not on the map and had been shut down. The hope is that leak will correct a lot of the water loss.

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ADJOURN: There being no further business; *Councilmember Nicholas Porter moved to adjourn. Councilmember Bert Clark 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)