

**MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD
NOVEMBER 19, 2025**

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD,
NOVEMBER 19, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Vernal City Council room, 374 East
Main, Vernal, Utah 84078.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Robin O'Driscoll, Randel Mills, Ted Munford and Corey Foley and Mayor Doug Hammond. Councilmember Ed Long was excused from the meeting.

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 Randel Mills.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD
NOVEMBER 5, 2025**

Councilmember Ted Munford moved to approve the minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting held November 5, 2025. Councilmember Randel Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Munford, Mills, and O'Driscoll voting in favor.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD
NOVEMBER 17, 2025**

Councilmember Randel Mills moved to approve the minutes of the Special City Council Meeting held November 17, 2025. Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Munford, Mills, and O'Driscoll voting in favor.

INTRODUCTION OF YOUTH CITY COUNCIL - HEIDI BENNION AND ROBIN O'DRISCOLL

Councilmember Randel Mills noted for the record that the Council Chambers were full and expressed appreciation for the strong turnout from the community. He encouraged residents to attend future meetings and remain engaged in local government.

Youth Vernal City Council Leader Heidi Bennion invited the members of the 2025–2026 Vernal Youth City Council to come forward as their names were called. Evan Lewis, Kesley Fladeland, Wilson Liesik, Hannah Grover, Adelle Grover, Addison Christofferson, Max Chapoose, Bridger Christensen, Daniel Johnson, Lily Peterson, and Darren Ross stepped forward to participate in the swearing in ceremony. Ms. Bennion commended these students for their willingness to serve the community and participate in local government.

Mayor Hammond administered the oath of office. Each Youth City Council member repeated the oath, affirming that they would support, obey, and defend the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of Utah, and faithfully discharge the duties of their office. The Youth City Council members acknowledged their roles and responsibilities and formally accepted their appointments for the upcoming term.

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The record reflects that the Vernal Youth City Council for 2025–2026 was duly sworn in on November 19, 2025.

CONSIDER THE REQUEST FOR EVENT SPONSORSHIP FOR COMMUNITY TREE LIGHTING - STANLEY PADIGIMUS

The Council received a presentation from Stanley Padigimus regarding a proposed community Christmas Tree Lighting event. Mr. Padigimus described being inspired by a similar celebration in Steamboat, Colorado, and expressed a desire to bring the same welcoming and memorable holiday experience to Vernal City. He explained that the event would center around the large evergreen tree at Vernal Library Park, which he plans to wrap in thousands of lights for a countdown lighting ceremony, followed by illumination throughout December. He stated that the long term goal is to expand the event annually and eventually relocate it to the future Vernal Plaza once development is complete.

Mr. Padigimus outlined the activities planned for the inaugural event, including live entertainment, children’s craft stations, mechanical attractions, Christmas themed vendors, a visit from Santa, and a toy drive. He reported that the event will be free to the public, with only vendor fees collected. He explained that the total budget is five thousand dollars, with fifteen hundred dollars already secured, and noted that sponsorship efforts were delayed until required permits were obtained. Mr. Padigimus stated that he owns Sky High Fun Rentals, allowing him to provide much of the equipment and support services at no additional cost, and affirmed that he is prepared to personally cover gaps in funding if necessary.

City Manager Quinn Bennion informed the Council that the City has ten thousand dollars budgeted for miscellaneous community events and that no expenditures have been made from that allocation to date. Councilmembers expressed appreciation for Mr. Padigimus’s initiative and discussed the importance of helping the event launch while encouraging long term financial self-sufficiency.

Councilmember Ted Munford made a motion to approve the sponsorship of the community tree lighting event for \$1,000. Councilmember Randel Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

Councilmember Munford..... aye;
Councilmember Mills..... aye;
Councilmember O’Driscoll..... aye;

Councilmembers requested that Stanley Padigimus return to the Council following the Christmas tree lighting event to report on the outcome. The Council stated that future requests for event funding should include financial information such as total revenues, expenses, and whether the event resulted in a profit or loss. They expressed appreciation for the effort being undertaken and noted that having financial statements will help the Council evaluate the effectiveness and sustainability of events seeking City support.

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**CONSIDER THE REQUEST FOR EVENT SPONSORSHIP FOR COMMUNITY
CONCERT - DANA DURHAM, UINTAH SCHOOLS FOUNDATION**

The Council heard a presentation from Dana Durham, who recently stepped down as Treasurer of the Uintah Schools Foundation, accompanied by Foundation President Charmian Siddoway. Ms. Durham explained that the Foundation has sponsored a holiday concert for more than twenty years, drawing attendees from across the Uintah Basin and into Colorado. She stated that the annual concert traditionally serves as the Foundation's primary fundraiser, with proceeds used to support teachers and students through classroom projects and educational needs not otherwise funded. She noted that teachers consistently give all they can to their students, and the Foundation's mission is to assist them by providing additional resources.

Ms. Durham reported that the Foundation secured a higher-profile musical act early in the year, hoping the increased name recognition would boost ticket sales and allow for greater contributions to local schools. However, the concert venue was unexpectedly double booked with a competing performance, resulting in significantly lower ticket sales. She emphasized that the Foundation does not wish to reduce the funds available for students and therefore sought sponsorships to help cover this year's costs. Ms. Durham identified the featured performers as Matt and Savannah Shaw, a well-known father-daughter duo from the Wasatch Front with a substantial national following. The concert is scheduled for Monday, December eighth, at the Uintah High School Auditorium.

Ms. Durham requested a one-time sponsorship of one thousand dollars from Vernal City, stating that the Foundation has not previously needed financial assistance and does not anticipate making future requests. She explained that recent years have required the use of reserve funds due to the effects of the pandemic, and the Foundation had hoped this concert would replenish those reserves. Councilmembers expressed appreciation for the Foundation's long-standing service to local educators and its efforts to remain self-sustaining. They acknowledged the unusual circumstances and discussed the request as a unique one-time need brought forward to avoid reducing support for students.

Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll made a motion to approve the event sponsorship of \$1,000 for the community concert for the Uintah Schools Foundation. Councilmember Randel Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

Councilmember Munford..... aye;
Councilmember Mills..... aye;
Councilmember O'Driscoll..... aye;

**CONSIDER THE ADOPTION OF THE UINTAH BASIN REGIONAL PRE-DISASTER
MITIGATION PLAN, ORDINANCE 2025-32 - HEIDI LUNDBERG**

Uintah County Emergency Manager Heidi Lundberg presented an overview of the updated Hazard Mitigation Plan and explained the purpose and background of the document. She stated that the plan is intended to identify hazards throughout the region and outline strategies to reduce future impacts, noting that it is not an emergency response plan but rather a mitigation framework. Ms.

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Lundberg emphasized that adoption of the plan is required for eligibility for critical federal funding and that the Federal Emergency Management Agency mandates an update every five years.

Councilmember Randel Mills asked which agency leads the development of the plan, and Ms. Lundberg responded that Uintah County Emergency Management oversees the process, with specific sections included for each municipality. She noted that Vernal City’s participation in the planning meetings has been essential to ensure local needs and priorities are represented. Councilmember Ted Munford expressed appreciation for the effort involved, and City Manager Quinn Bennion commended those who reviewed the extensive document, which totaled approximately eight hundred pages. In response to Mr. Bennion’s question regarding involvement, Ms. Lundberg confirmed that the plan includes input from all incorporated communities within the Tri-County area. Vernal City Police Chief Mike Gledhill stated that while he had not completed a full review of the document, he had worked with Ms. Lundberg during its development.

Ms. Lundberg informed the Council that the plan had already received approval from both the State of Utah and the Federal Emergency Management Agency and that the current update primarily refines and expands existing mitigation strategies.

Following the presentation, Councilmember Ted Munford made a motion to adopt the Uintah Basin Regional Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan. Councilmember Robin O’Driscoll seconded the motion. The motion was approved by the following roll call vote:

Councilmember Munford..... aye;
Councilmember Mills..... aye;
Councilmember O’Driscoll..... aye;

City Manager Quinn Bennion noted that the Council had acknowledged Uintah County Emergency Manager Heidi Lundberg the previous week for her assistance with the Genasys communication project and expressed appreciation once again for her support and collaboration.

After concluding a previous engagement, Councilmember Corey Foley then joined the meeting.

**CONSIDER APPROVAL TO AMEND THE VERNAL CITY GENERAL PLAN TO
INCLUDE A WATER USE AND PRESERVATION ELEMENT ORDINANCE 2025-24 -
BRAEDEN CHRISTOFFERSON**

Assistant City Manager Braeden Christofferson presented a proposed amendment to the Vernal City General Plan to include a Water Use and Preservation Element, explaining that recent changes to Utah Code require municipalities to incorporate water planning components as an advisory element of their general plans. He stated that the purpose of the addition is to provide a long-term framework for water supply projections, demand trends, and conservation strategies. Mr. Christofferson recognized Gabby Blackburn of Sunrise Engineering, who assisted in preparing the document, and invited her to review the plan’s content. Ms. Blackburn summarized the data included in the new element, noting that the reduction goal for the Green River Basin is eighteen percent and that the policies proposed are voluntary in nature. She reviewed current and projected

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water usage estimates, explained that the analysis relies on existing water rights information, and emphasized that the general plan serves as an advisory document rather than a regulatory mandate.

Councilmember Randel Mills asked where the public could review the document, and City Recorder Sara Bell noted that the document would be available with the Council Packet documents on the City’s website and listed on the Public Notice Website. Ms. Blackburn added that a related zone metering study, completed through a state grant awarded to Vernal City, would not be part of the General Plan but could be obtained through the Public Works or Planning Departments. Mayor Doug Hammond opened the public hearing. City Manager Quinn Bennion offered context on regional water usage, noting that approximately six percent of the water entering Ashley Valley is used for municipal and indoor purposes, with the remainder attributed primarily to agricultural irrigation. He stated that conservation efforts remain important, while acknowledging the need for accurate perspective regarding local demand. The Council discussed related data from the Uintah County Water Use and Preservation Element, which identifies approximately 2.29 percent culinary use and 97.71 percent irrigation use countywide.

During public comment, Ken Bassett asked whether the plan addressed mandatory outdoor watering restrictions during drought years. Ms. Blackburn responded that the proposed element focuses on long-term planning, rezoning impacts, and advisory conservation practices rather than enforcement measures. Councilmember Ted Munford noted that such restrictions may need to be considered in the future. Hearing no further comments, Mayor Hammond closed the public hearing.

Councilmember Ted Munford moved to approve Ordinance 2025-24, amending the Vernal City General Plan to include a Water Use and Preservation Element. Councilmember Robin O’Driscoll seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the following roll call vote:

Councilmember Munford..... aye;
Councilmember Mills..... aye;
Councilmember O’Driscoll..... aye;
Councilmember Foley..... aye

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL TO REPEAL THE VERNAL CITY MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND ZONING CODE SECTION 16.20.308 IADUS AND ADDING SECTION 16.20.100 ADUS, ORDINANCE NO 2025-31 - BRAEDEN CHRISTOFFERSON

Assistant City Manager Braeden Christofferson presented Ordinance 2025-31, proposing the repeal and replacement of Vernal City’s outdated internal accessory dwelling unit ordinance with a unified Additional Dwelling Unit (ADU) section. Mr. Christofferson explained that the State of Utah is preparing to mandate updated ADU standards statewide, and Vernal City seeks to proactively adopt its own regulations. He outlined that the proposed ordinance would address internal, attached, and detached ADUs and establish clear standards, including size limits, parking requirements, design compatibility, utility connections, and a requirement for owner occupancy of either the primary dwelling or the ADU. He stated that the ordinance would prohibit short-term rentals of fewer than sixty days to ensure ADUs serve long-term housing needs. Planning

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Commission reviewed the proposal in prior months and supported the approach, emphasizing the importance of expanding housing options for families in Vernal City.

Councilmembers discussed several provisions, including how short-term rental restrictions would be enforced. Mr. Christofferson stated that compliance would be monitored primarily through business licensing, as is customary for Airbnb and VRBO properties. Councilmember Ted Munford and Nick Porter of the Planning Commission shared concerns about aesthetic standards and requiring structures to match older architectural materials. Councilmember Ted Munford expressed support for expanding housing opportunities but noted that the balance between affordability and the community's need for short-term rentals is challenging. Councilmember Munford stated he would like additional public feedback before adopting a final policy.

Mayor Doug Hammond invited public comment. Carol Kendall, a resident, shared her experience owning a home with a basement apartment and noted the value of having flexibility to use the space for family or short-term rentals. She stated that short-term rentals provide important lodging alternatives for visitors and can be a necessary source of income for homeowners. Following discussion, Councilmember Munford expressed interest in revisiting the proposed short-term rental restrictions and exploring options used in comparable communities. Councilmember Corey Foley stated that additional research would be beneficial.

Councilmember Corey Foley made a motion to table Ordinance No 2025-31 to allow more time for research with Councilmember Ted Munford seconding the motion. The motion to table passed with the following roll call vote:

Councilmember Munford..... aye;
Councilmember Mills..... aye;
Councilmember O'Driscoll..... aye;
Councilmember Foley..... aye

**CONSIDER THE APPROVAL TO AMEND THE VERNAL CITY MUNICIPAL
PLANNING AND ZONING CODE SECTION 16.28.50 OFF PREMISE SIGNS,
ORDINANCE NO 2025-22 - BRAEDEN CHRISTOFFERSON**

Assistant City Manager Braeden Christofferson presented proposed revisions to the City's sign ordinance, explaining that the Planning Commission had reviewed the language multiple times. He stated that one component addresses temporary signage for community events by allowing signs to be placed up to twenty-one days prior to an event and requiring removal within seventy-two hours afterward. Another component addresses on-premise signage for small businesses that have faced challenges under the current code. Mr. Christofferson explained that the proposed update follows the standards applied on Main Street while ensuring that the City can appropriately manage sign size, placement, and visibility. He noted that determining appropriate distances and dimensions has been one of the primary considerations in developing the proposal.

Councilmember Ted Munford expressed support for the revisions, stating that the changes would be helpful for both businesses and event organizers. Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll asked how

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the ordinance would affect existing billboards, noting the intent to prevent new billboard construction. Mr. Christofferson clarified that all existing billboards would be classified as legal nonconforming signs. Under this status, a billboard may continue to be used as long as it is maintained, but it cannot be replaced if destroyed, substantially damaged, abandoned, or left unused for a significant period. He added that nonconforming billboards may not be reconstructed following ownership transfer and must be removed if they become a safety hazard.

Mr. Christofferson emphasized that the revised ordinance is intended to balance business needs with community aesthetics and safety while preventing future expansion of off-premise billboard structures.

Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll made a motion to approve Ordinance No 2025-22 to amend the Vernal City Municipal Planning and Zoning Code Section 16.28.50 Off Premise Signs. Councilmember Ted Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

Councilmember Munford..... aye;
Councilmember Mills..... aye;
Councilmember O'Driscoll..... aye;
Councilmember Foley..... aye

CONSIDER A CHANGE REQUEST REGARDING CENTRAL CANAL CULVERTS REPLACEMENT AT MAIN STREET & 1500 WEST - KEITH DESPAIN

Public Works Director Keith Despain presented an update regarding the Central Canal piping project along 1500 West and the deteriorating condition of the two culverts located beneath the intersection at Main Street. He reported that the culverts are severely rusted and have contributed to repeated sinkholes in the roadway, which currently requires steel plates for safety. Mr. Despain outlined three potential options. The first option includes fully removing both culverts and replacing them with the new canal piping. The second option focuses on stabilizing the existing culverts by filling the cavities with flowable fill while routing the 30-inch irrigation and stormwater line through the east culvert. The third option would be taking no action, which risks future structural failure of the roadway. He noted that the first option would be eligible for 75% funding through the NRCS grant, leaving the remaining 25%, approximately \$15,000, to be shared between Vernal City and Uintah County.

Representing the Central Canal Company, Wayne Simper discussed the condition of nearby culverts that have already collapsed during construction, emphasizing the urgency of resolving the issue at the Main Street crossing. Mr. Simper noted that Option 1 would require removal of the existing concrete headwalls but could include new curb and gutter and allow sidewalk extension on the south side. Councilmembers discussed the jurisdictional boundary at the intersection, with Mr. Despain showing that the northern half of Main Street lies within Uintah County. Councilmember Corey Foley stated that if the County contributed half of the remaining costs, a full culvert replacement could be a long-term solution, whereas the flowable-fill option felt like a temporary measure. Public Works Director Keith Despain noted that Option 2, which fills the existing culverts with flowable fill, carries risk if voids are not completely filled because the material does not flow like water. He also observed that removing the south culvert structure could

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allow the City to extend sidewalk to the corner, which would be a benefit, but the north concrete wall would require a replacement safety barrier if removed.

Additional concerns were raised about future maintenance. Councilmember Ted Munford asked whether flowable fill would limit access to other utilities in the future, and Mr. Simper confirmed that any future water line work would require digging through or around the filled culvert. The Council agreed that Option 1 provides a safer, more permanent improvement but acknowledged the need for cost participation from Uintah County due to the shared boundary. Mr. Bennion recommended a contingent approval if Uintah County agrees to participate in its portion of the remaining cost, the City will proceed with Option 1. If no agreement is reached, the City will move forward with Option 2. The Council expressed support for this approach.

Councilmember Corey Foley made a motion to approve the change request regarding the Central Canal culvert replacement, stipulating that Option 1 shall be authorized contingent upon Uintah County participating in half of the remaining cost, and that Option 2 shall be selected if the County does not agree to participate. Councilmember Ted Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

*Councilmember Munford..... aye;
Councilmember Mills..... aye;
Councilmember O'Driscoll..... aye;
Councilmember Foley..... aye*

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF THE PROJECT SELECTION FOR THE SMALL URBAN STP AND TPA GRANT APPLICATIONS - KEITH DESPAIN

Public Works Director Keith Despain presented information regarding upcoming grant opportunities the City intends to pursue. He explained that Vernal City has successfully completed two small urban projects in recent years, 500 North and Vernal Avenue from Main Street to 200 South, and staff now proposes applying for similar funding to continue improvements along Vernal Avenue from 200 South to 500 South, connecting the corridor to the Uintah Recreation Center. Due to the grant's funding limit of \$1.5 million, the project would focus on sidewalk, curb, and gutter improvements and widening pedestrian access rather than full roadway reconstruction. Mr. Despain also noted a second grant opportunity through the Technical Planning Assistance (TPA) program, which would fund a consultant to study traffic solutions.

As part of the TPA grant proposal, Mr. Despain recommended evaluating the feasibility of installing roundabouts at two challenging intersections, 500 South and 500 West near the Care Center, and 500 South and Vernal Avenue near the Recreation Center. He stated that both intersections experience significant congestion and heavy distracted-driving behavior, making them strong candidates for safety improvements. Councilmembers expressed general support for studying options while noting potential concerns, including limited space at each intersection and mixed public sentiment toward roundabouts. Mr. Despain emphasized that modern designs can shift a roundabout off the exact center of an intersection, allowing for greater flexibility.

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City Manager Quinn Bennion recommended expanding the scope of the TPA study to include a full traffic-signal warrant analysis, noting that while traffic signals are costly and the City does not currently own or maintain any signals, some residents may prefer that option. Councilmembers agreed that reviewing both roundabouts and traffic signals would provide the most complete picture for future decision-making. Mr. Bennion also noted that the timing is ideal given recent and upcoming additions to the Recreation Center campus and the All-Wheels Park, which have increased public requests for bike lanes, sidewalks, and trail connections. Mr. Despain concluded that both intersections appear to have feasible alternatives. Councilmembers were in support of staff proceeding with preparing the grant applications.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF CHANGE ORDER FOR 200 S, 400 N WATERLINE REPLACEMENT PROJECT FOR SILVER SPUR - KEITH DESPAIN

Public Works Director Keith Despain stated that staff had anticipated receiving additional information from Silver Spur necessary to complete the discussion on the pending item. Because that information had not yet been provided, he recommended that the Council table the matter until a future meeting.

Councilmember Corey Foley asked whether liquidated damages were being assessed. Mr. Despain explained that this topic is part of the ongoing discussion, noting that Silver Spur reached substantial completion approximately one week after their contractual deadline and is still working on final cleanup tasks.

Councilmember Randel Mills moved to table the item, and Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the following roll call vote:

*Councilmember Munford..... aye;
Councilmember Mills..... aye;
Councilmember O'Driscoll..... aye;
Councilmember Foley..... aye*

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF A RMP AGREEMENT FOR AMERICAN DREAM SUBDIVISION - KEITH DESPAIN

Public Works Director Keith Despain reported that Phase One of the American Dream Subdivision is well underway, with four self-help homes progressing as future occupants build their own houses. Phase Two, located north of the current construction, includes an additional four single family homes and seven tiny home lots. To continue development, power must be installed to the new sites. Rocky Mountain Power has provided a cost estimate of \$49,045 for the installation. Consistent with previous phases, the City will install conduit and transformer pads, while Rocky Mountain Power will set the transformers and complete the electrical connections.

Mr. Despain noted that the project is funded through federal grants. The final grant award documentation has not yet been received, so the City may need to either delay payment until the grant is confirmed or submit a request for pre-award expenditure authorization. He requested approval of the agreement with Rocky Mountain Power so the project can proceed as soon as

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funding is finalized.

Councilmember Randel Mills asked whether the existing transformers located in the roadway that are scheduled for removal would be reused. Mr. Despain stated that it is his understanding they will not be reused, though staff can inquire further. Councilmember Corey Foley asked whether the power installation cost is divided among the lots. Mr. Despain clarified that the federal grant will cover these expenses and the City will be reimbursed through the grant program.

Councilmember Ted Munford moved to approve the agreement with Rocky Mountain Power for the American Dream Subdivision. Councilmember Randel Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

*Councilmember Munford..... aye;
Councilmember Mills..... aye;
Councilmember O'Driscoll..... aye;
Councilmember Foley..... aye*

OVERVIEW OF UTAH TRAIL NETWORKS PLAN FOR THE AREA - KEITH DESPAIN

Public Works Director Keith Despain provided an informational update regarding UDOT's statewide trails initiative. He explained that UDOT has been developing a comprehensive statewide trails plan and recently released an interactive trails map. The map highlights areas such as St. George and the Wasatch Front where significant trail systems already exist, but also shows that the Uintah Basin is well represented in UDOT's future planning efforts. Mr. Despain noted that UDOT's vision is ambitious, featuring proposed 12-foot asphalt trails that the agency would own and maintain. UDOT planning crews have visited the region to gather local input, and future phases show several planned trail connections across the Basin. For Vernal specifically, a trail project along the Steinaker Canal is already in design and is scheduled for construction next year.

City Manager Quinn Bennion added that he was pleasantly surprised by the level of attention given to the Uintah Basin on the statewide map, likely influenced by strong public engagement at prior meetings. He clarified that the statewide map is intended to show the major trail network rather than every sidewalk or connector path. While the exact alignments may shift over time, the overall representation of the region is strong, and the map provides a solid foundation for future planning.

Mr. Despain concluded by noting that the map is available for public viewing on UDOT's website.

UPDATE ON THE 500 SOUTH TRAIL PROJECT - KEITH DESPAIN

Public Works Director Keith Despain reported that Uintah County is leading a new trail initiative that would run from 3500 West down to Highway 40 along 500 South. He explained that the project is in the early planning stages and that several factors still need to be evaluated, including whether the trail should run on the north or south side of the roadway. Mr. Despain emphasized that the County does not intend to acquire additional property for the project; all improvements would occur within the existing public right-of-way. He noted multiple site-specific challenges the design team will need to resolve but stated that the project has momentum and is progressing.

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City Manager Quinn Bennion added that the County has secured grant funding for the planning phase and has hired Sunrise Engineering to conduct the analysis. He stated that the County is preparing to begin public outreach, including notifications to adjacent property owners, door-to-door flyers, and a potential neighborhood meeting. Because the timeline requires public input to be gathered before January, the process will move quickly. Mr. Bennion stated that the purpose of informing the Council was to ensure they are prepared when residents begin asking about the project.

Sunrise Engineering representative Gabby Blackburn confirmed that conceptual alignments have been drafted on both the north and south sides of 500 South and that, at this early stage, the cost and design challenges appear similar. She explained that issues such as fences built inside the public right-of-way and existing power poles will need to be addressed as part of the design. Ms. Blackburn noted that locating the trail on the north side offers advantages, such as avoiding multiple roadway crossings for children accessing nearby neighborhoods, and allowing future connections to the Steinaker Service Canal Trail, which would eliminate the need for young trail users to cross 500 South.

Councilmembers discussed potential alignment preferences, the possibility of shifting the trail from one side of the road to the other, future trail connectivity to Main Street and Highway 40, and long-term annexation considerations. The Council expressed general support for the project and appreciation for early communication as planning progresses.

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF THE AGREEMENT WITH UTAH COUNTY FOR LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE OF STEINAKER CANAL TRAIL - KEITH DESPAIN

Public Works Director Keith Despain explained that the Steinaker Service Canal Trail, scheduled for construction next year, will weave in and out of both Vernal City and Uintah County boundaries. To avoid future confusion regarding maintenance responsibilities, the City and County have drafted a cooperative agreement outlining how day-to-day upkeep and major repairs will be handled.

Mr. Despain stated that routine maintenance has been divided in a way that benefits both entities. Vernal City will be responsible for emptying garbage cans and weed control, while Uintah County will conduct snow removal and trail trash collection. For major trail repairs, costs will be shared in proportion to how much of the trail lies within each jurisdiction. While the exact percentage is not finalized, he noted that the split will be close to 50/50, as the trail is nearly evenly divided between city and county boundaries.

Mr. Despain further noted that although the project is funded through the Utah Trail Network, UDOT will not assume ownership at the time of completion. Instead, all easements will remain under Uintah County until such time as UDOT elects to take over the facility. He clarified that the version of the agreement in the Council packet incorrectly suggested that ownership would automatically revert to UDOT; the final draft will reflect the correct language. The agreement also includes a provision requiring a joint annual inspection by representatives from Vernal City and

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Uintah County.

Mr. Despain reported that both entities are satisfied with the arrangement and that Uintah County is scheduled to consider approval of the agreement at their meeting the following week.

Councilmember Corey Foley moved to approve the agreement with Uintah County for the long-term maintenance of the Steinaker Canal Trail. Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

*Councilmember Munford..... aye;
Councilmember Mills..... aye;
Councilmember O'Driscoll..... aye;
Councilmember Foley..... aye*

STAFF REPORTS

Councilmember Corey Foley provided an update from the Ashley Valley Sewer Management Board meeting, which was delayed due to Veterans Day and held the previous day. He reported that the sewer lift station project being constructed by Stubbs and Stubbs is significantly behind schedule on multiple components. Although the contractor's deadline for substantial completion is in March, with a final completion deadline at the end of June, progress has slowed. He noted that the structure is erected, with ice and water shield installed on the roof. The steel roofing has not yet been placed. Some flat concrete work and most electrical work are underway. However, one of the major remaining tasks, recoating the oxidation ditch, cannot be completed in current temperatures. Because of this, the contractor will delay bypass pumping until warmer weather. He stated there is concern regarding spring runoff and infiltration entering the system before the bypass pumping and coating work occur. The contractor has assured the board that adequate bypass-pumping capacity will be available to handle increased flows should that occur.

City Manager Quinn Bennion noted that Thanksgiving would be the following week and the following day marks the community's Holly Days celebration. He encouraged everyone to attend and noted City Recorder Sara Bell is serving as the committee chair this year. He acknowledged the significant work involved in coordinating the event and stated that everything is coming together very well. Councilmember Randel Mills commended the planning process and emphasized that the event is a great community project.

Mayor Doug Hammoed announced that the Closed Session portion of the meeting would be held in the Council Chambers following the exit of the present members of the public. Councilmember Randel Mills moved to go into closed session for the following items:

- 1. Strategy sessions to discuss the purchase, exchange, or lease of real property, including any form of a water right or water shares, or to discuss a proposed development agreement, project proposal, or financing proposal related to the development of land owned by the state or a political subdivision.*

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2. *Strategy sessions to discuss the sale of real property, including any form of a water right or water shares.*
3. *Discussion of the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual;*

Councilmember Ted Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following rollcall vote:

Councilmember Munford..... aye;
Councilmember Mills..... aye;
Councilmember O'Driscoll..... aye;
Councilmember Foley..... aye

RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURN: *There being no further business; Councilmember Randel Mills moved to adjourn. Councilmember Ted Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote and the meeting was declared adjourned.*