

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD
MARCH 18, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the Vernal City Council Room, 374 East Main,
Vernal, Utah 84078.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Randel Mills, Robin O’Driscoll, Ed Long, and Mayor Corey Foley. Councilmembers Ted Munford and Nick Porter were excused from the meeting.

WELCOME: Mayor Corey Foley welcomed everyone to the meeting.

INVOCATION OR UPLIFTING THOUGHT: The invocation was given by Councilmember Randel Mills.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilmember Ed Long.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD
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Councilmember Ed Long moved to approve the minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting held March 4, 2026. Councilmember Randel Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Mills, O’Driscoll, and Long voting in favor.

Mayor Corey Foley recognized that Councilmembers Ted Munford and Nick Porter were excused from the meeting, as well as Assistant City Manager Braeden Christofferson.

RECOGNITION OF THE ELK’S HOOP SHOOT WINNER - TODD SHINER

Mr. Todd Shiner, representing the Elks Lodge, addressed the City Council regarding the Elks Hoop Shoot program and recognized local participant Jackson Labrum for his outstanding achievement.

Mr. Shiner provided a brief history of the Elks Hoop Shoot, noting that the program began in 1946 as a free-throw shooting contest designed to give all youth an opportunity to participate, regardless of athletic ability. He explained that the program has since grown into a nationwide competition involving approximately three million participants annually, divided into age and gender divisions.

Mr. Shiner reported that Jackson Labrum competed in the 10–11-year-old boys division and advanced through multiple levels of competition. Jackson first won at the local level, then advanced to the district competition in January, where he successfully competed against participants from across the region. He then advanced to the state competition, where he again demonstrated exceptional performance, making 22 of 25 free throws and earning the title of Utah State Champion.

Mr. Shiner noted that Jackson is the first participant from Vernal to achieve a state championship in the Elks Hoop Shoot since 1985. He further explained that Jackson advanced to the regional competition in Las Vegas, where he competed against champions from California, Hawaii,

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Arizona, and Nevada. At the regional level, Jackson made 20 of 25 free throws and finished tied for 13th place nationally out of approximately 500,000 participants in his division.

Mr. Shiner expressed appreciation for the recognition provided by Vernal City and highlighted plans to expand participation in the program throughout the region, including local schools. He noted that Jackson has additional years of eligibility remaining and commended his accomplishments.

Mayor Corey Foley thanked the Labrum family for attending and expressed appreciation to Mr. Shiner for his remarks, noting that Jackson's achievement is a significant accomplishment for the community.

REQUEST FOR SPONSORSHIP: DIAMOND MOUNTAIN SPEEDWAY - SARAH GRAY

Ms. Sarah Gray, President and Promoter for Diamond Mountain Speedway, addressed the City Council regarding a sponsorship request and provided an update on recent progress at the racetrack.

Ms. Gray reported that this is her third year promoting the local racetrack and highlighted significant growth and momentum achieved over the past year. She noted that Diamond Mountain Speedway was featured in the "50 States of Short Tracks" and was also one of three tracks highlighted in a national NASCAR monthly publication. She explained that the feature emphasized the Speedway's "racing for a cause" initiative, in which each race weekend promotes a community resource or organization.

Ms. Gray further reported that, in addition to ongoing partnerships with Northeastern Counseling, Uintah Basin Healthcare has joined as a participating community partner, supporting one of the race weekends. She stated that the Speedway anticipates hosting five full racing weekends, bringing approximately 700 participants to the area. Ms. Gray noted that the events generate economic activity over an estimated 30 days within the Uintah Basin and expressed expectations for continued growth in future years.

Ms. Gray requested sponsorship funding in the amount of \$2,500, consistent with prior years. City Manager Quinn Bennion noted that the City has previously provided funding at similar levels over the past two years. Councilmember Ed Long inquired whether sufficient funds were available to support the sponsorship and Finance Director Nick Rousseau confirmed that funds are available within the miscellaneous budget to accommodate the request.

Councilmember Ed Long made a motion to approve the sponsorship funds of \$2,500 for Diamond Mountain Speedway. Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the following roll call vote:

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Councilmember Mills..... *aye;*
Councilmember O’Driscoll..... *aye;*
Councilmember Long..... *aye;*

Quinn Bennion further commented that, as discussed in previous City Council meetings, the City is in the process of establishing a new procedure for handling sponsorship requests. He explained that future requests will be incorporated into the annual budget process, with initial review conducted by an administrative committee, followed by City Council approval, and final inclusion through the budget process. He noted that a few remaining requests will be considered under the current approach before transitioning to the new process.

RECOGNITION OF HONORARY VERNAL CITY COUNCILMEMBER - MAYOR COREY FOLEY

Mayor Corey Foley introduced the recognition of Honorary Vernal City Councilmember and invited Dustin Sprouse to come forward to the podium.

Mayor Foley explained that the recognition was proposed by members of the City Council and City staff in appreciation of Mr. Sprouse’s consistent attendance and support of City Council meetings. Mayor Foley noted that during his time serving on the City Council and as Mayor, he could not recall a meeting at which Mr. Sprouse was not present. He further remarked that Mr. Sprouse has dedicated a significant amount of time attending meetings, demonstrating exceptional civic involvement.

Mayor Corey Foley presented Mr. Dustin Sprouse with a certificate recognizing him as an Honorary Vernal City Councilmember. Mayor Foley invited Mr. Sprouse to receive the award and participate in a photograph to commemorate the recognition.

PRESENTATION OF THE COMMUNITY BLOCK PLANNING PROCESS AND APPROVAL OF THE CONCEPT PLAN – TERRACON

Hailey Wall, Senior Landscape Architect with Terracon, presented the preferred concept plan for the Vernal Community Block and a brief overview of the planning process. She explained that the project focuses on redevelopment of the Lamplighter block and adjacent parcels in alignment with the City’s downtown plan developed in partnership with MHTN. She stated that key goals of the project include enhancing connectivity, supporting local business growth, and creating a central gathering space to strengthen Vernal’s identity and quality of life.

Ms. Wall outlined the extensive public engagement conducted throughout the process, including a site tour with over 40 participants, 12 stakeholder interviews, two public surveys with over 750 and 210 responses respectively, an open house with approximately 50 attendees, and collaboration with a steering committee. She explained that five initial concepts were narrowed to three, and ultimately refined into the preferred concept based on public and stakeholder feedback.

Ms. Wall presented an overview of the preferred concept, noting key features including a slip lane

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along the north side to provide a buffer and additional parking, a central terraced event lawn and stage, a signature splash creek and themed playground, a visitor center and café along Main Street, a multi-use pavilion for seasonal events, a food truck court and vendor kiosks, a flexible plaza space, and a lookout tower serving as a visual landmark. She also noted proposed improvements to pedestrian connectivity, including alignment of a crossing to better connect the site to the civic block.

Ms. Wall further reviewed supporting elements included in the concept, such as restrooms, gathering spaces, stormwater features, seating areas, and landscaping designed for durability and ease of maintenance. She noted that the full report includes phasing and implementation strategies, with a projected full buildout timeline extending to approximately 2032, as well as potential revenue opportunities to help offset development and maintenance costs.

City Manager Quinn Bennion clarified that the primary action before the City Council is approval of the concept plan itself. He requested additional clarification regarding the contents of the full report.

Ms. Wall explained that the report includes a comprehensive summary of community engagement efforts, detailed analysis of the three concepts presented to the public along with corresponding feedback, and full documentation of the preferred concept. She stated that the report also includes sections addressing phasing and implementation, maintenance recommendations, revenue opportunities, and programming considerations. Ms. Wall noted that the first portion of the report contains the primary analysis, while the remaining pages consist of appendices compiling materials developed throughout the project.

Mayor Corey Foley expressed appreciation for the significant amount of work completed by the project team and community participants. Councilmember Ed Long noted the community’s excitement to move forward with the project, highlighting the amount of work it took to refine the concept into what was presented.

Councilmember Ed Long made a motion to approve the Community Block Concept Plan as presented. Councilmember Robin O’Driscoll seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the following roll call vote:

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

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF AMENDING CHAPTER 6.28.010, “CRUELTY TO ANIMALS”, IN THE VERNAL CITY MUNICIPAL CODE, ORDINANCE NO. 2026-08 - DEVIN COBB

Devin Cobb, Executive Director of the Uintah County Animal Control and Shelter, addressed the City Council regarding a proposed ordinance amendment, explaining that the proposed ordinance

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was developed in coordination with the Uintah County Attorney’s Office and has been approved by the Uintah County Commission. He stated that the intent is to present the same ordinance to Vernal City in order to maintain consistency between the County and the City, and to align with applicable state standards.

Councilmember Ed Long expressed appreciation for the work completed by Animal Control and inquired whether the proposal involves amending an existing ordinance currently in place within the City. Mr. Cobb confirmed that the proposal is intended to mirror the County’s ordinance and align with state regulations, effectively updating the City’s existing provisions.

Councilmember Ed Long made a motion to approve amending Chapter 6.28.010, Cruelty to Animals, in the Vernal City Municipal Code, Ordinance No. 2026-08. Councilmember Randel Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the following roll call vote:

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

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 2026-03 AUTOMATIC ENROLLMENT IN 457(B) PLAN AT TIME OF HIRE - SARA BELL

City Recorder Sara Bell presented a proposed resolution amending the Vernal City Personnel Manual to incorporate automatic enrollment provisions related to the Utah Retirement Systems (URS) 401(k) plan, as previously presented by the City’s URS representative.

Ms. Bell explained that the resolution establishes automatic enrollment for newly hired employees at a 2% contribution rate at the time of hire. She noted that employees retain full flexibility to opt out, increase, or decrease their contributions, and may manage their participation in accordance with plan provisions.

Councilmember Randel Mills inquired when employees would be notified of the automatic enrollment. Ms. Bell responded that notification would occur at the time of hire as part of the onboarding process conducted by Human Resources.

Councilmember Mills further inquired whether existing employees would be notified and given the opportunity to participate. City Manager Quinn Bennion clarified that existing employees may elect to participate in the plan, however, they must initiate enrollment independently as the automatic enrollment provision applies only to new hires.

Mayor Corey Foley referenced prior discussion on the item and expressed support for the resolution, noting that automatic enrollment encourages employee savings while still allowing individuals the option to opt out.

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Councilmember Randel Mills made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2026-03 Automatic Enrollment in 457(b) Plan at Time of Hire. Councilmember Robin O’Driscoll seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the following roll call vote:

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

RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE NO. 2026-04, AMENDING OR VACATING A RECORDED SUBDIVISION, JACOB FLEMMING MINOR SUBDIVISION - MICHAEL HARRINGTON

City Attorney Michael Harrington presented a proposed ordinance to vacate the Jacob Fleming Minor Subdivision, explaining that the property is located near 500 South and approximately 70 East, generally across from the recreation center. He stated that, pursuant to state law, the City Council may vacate a subdivision or portion thereof by ordinance.

Mr. Harrington advised that the intent of the proposed ordinance is to vacate the existing Jacob Fleming Minor Subdivision to allow for the development of a new subdivision, identified as the Uintah Heights Subdivision. He noted that the proposed development consists of a 13-unit townhome project and that the preliminary plat for the new subdivision has already received approval from the Planning Commission.

Councilmember Ed Long made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2026-04 Amending or Vacating a Recorded Subdivision, Jacob Flemming Minor Subdivision. Councilmember Randel Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

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

RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE NO. 2026-05, VACATING LOT 2A OF THE TYLER & MARILEE SHINER AMENDED MINOR SUBDIVISION - MICHAEL HARRINGTON

City Attorney Michael Harrington explained that the subject property is located along 300 West, with its northern boundary adjacent to 500 South. Mr. Harrington stated that the proposal is to vacate Lot 2A from the existing subdivision.

Mr. Harrington explained that the proposal would divide the lot into three portions. The northern and central portions would be incorporated into the existing Marcella Meadows Subdivision, with the northern portion joining property owned by Tyler and Merrily Shiner, and the central portion becoming part of property owned by the Morris family. The southern portion is anticipated to be purchased and would remain a separate parcel.

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Discussion followed regarding easements present within the subdivision. Mr. Harrington explained that the ordinance is written such that any existing easements or rights-of-way not specifically vacated would remain in place, including access easements and public utility easements. He noted that any future modification to easements would require a separate process.

Mayor Corey Foley invited public comment.

Tyler Shiner approached the podium and explained that access to the northern and central portions would be through the respective residential properties, while the southern portion already has access from 300 West and is anticipated to be developed as a residential lot.

There being no further comment, Councilmember Robin O’Driscoll made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2026-05, Vacating Lot 2a of the Tyler & Marilee Shiner Amended Minor Subdivision. Councilmember Ed Long seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

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

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE BRIAR CREEK SUBDIVISION ANNEXATION PROTESTS - QUINN BENNION

City Manager Quinn Bennion presented an update regarding the proposed annexation of the Briar Creek Subdivision, located near 1500 South and 500 West. He explained that the subdivision consists of approximately 25 lots and that annexation into Vernal City was pursued due to limited water connections available through Ashley Valley Water and Sewer District. The annexation petition met state requirements, allowing the process to move forward and initiate a protest period.

Quinn Bennion reported that two formal protests were received, one from Ashley Valley Water and Sewer District and one from a property owner. The Ashley Valley protest outlined concerns regarding infrastructure requirements, reimbursement for staff time and equipment, and retention of existing infrastructure and easements. The property owner’s protest primarily related to communication concerns and did not identify issues directly related to Vernal City. He noted that the protests have been forwarded to Uintah County for review by a Boundary Commission, which will evaluate the annexation and provide a recommendation. He further explained that the City Council may either deny the annexation at this stage or allow the process to proceed.

Mayor Corey Foley discussed the Boundary Commission process and expressed concern regarding maintaining a unified position, potential infrastructure requirements, and the impact on City resources. He also raised concern regarding existing properties subject to dual taxation by Ashley Valley Water and Sewer District and expressed a desire to avoid increasing that number.

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Councilmember Ed Long stated he would recuse himself from voting but expressed support for allowing the process to proceed, noting that the protests appeared to focus on cost and communication rather than opposition to annexation.

City Manager Quinn Bennion stated that connection fees have already been paid to Ashley Valley Water and Sewer District and questioned the necessity of additional reimbursement requests. He noted that the City will meet with Ashley Valley representatives to seek resolution prior to the Boundary Commission meeting.

Mayor Corey Foley invited public comment. Brian Nielsen, a developer associated with the Briar Creek Subdivision, confirmed that prior water service commitments had been rescinded and stated that development would proceed either through annexation or alternative water solutions. He expressed support for annexation and willingness to work with the City on infrastructure needs. Discussion followed regarding potential water line requirements, and City Manager Quinn Bennion indicated efforts would continue to coordinate with Ashley Valley Water and Sewer District.

Following discussion, consensus of the City Council was to allow the annexation process to proceed to the Boundary Commission for further review.

DISCUSSION ON PROPOSED POLICY REGARDING MEMORIALS WITHIN RECREATIONAL FACILITIES MANAGED BY USSD1 - MICHAEL HARRINGTON

City Attorney Michael Harrington presented a proposed policy concept regarding memorials on properties managed by Uintah Special Service District 1 (USSD1). He explained that existing memorials, such as benches and plaques, have created maintenance challenges and raised concerns regarding fairness and First Amendment implications. He stated that the proposed approach is to implement a permanent policy prohibiting new memorials on USSD1 properties, while allowing existing memorials to remain, subject to review for safety, maintenance, or operational concerns.

Cheryl Meier, Director of USSD1, further explained that existing memorials would be grandfathered but could be removed on a case-by-case basis if they become damaged, unsafe, or create maintenance burdens. She noted that the policy is intended to provide consistency and avoid situations where individuals may request memorials based on their ability to fund them, creating inequity. She also emphasized the importance of establishing a clear rule rather than relying on case-by-case decisions.

Councilmember Randel Mills raised concerns regarding potential First Amendment issues and asked about the number of existing memorials. Ms. Meier estimated a limited number across USSD1 properties, including locations at the golf course and recreation center, as well as memorials on City properties such as walking paths and parks. City Manager Quinn Bennion noted that additional memorials exist on Vernal City-owned properties, which could be considered for inclusion in a broader policy if desired.

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Councilmember Ed Long expressed support for a full moratorium and sought clarification regarding the treatment of existing memorials. Ms. Meier confirmed that while existing memorials would generally remain, USSD1 retains discretion to remove them if necessary. Mayor Corey Foley expressed support for the concept, noting the difficulty in managing memorial requests and ensuring fairness within the community.

Mr. Harrington clarified that the item was presented for discussion and feedback only, with a formal policy to be brought forward at a later date for consideration and potential adoption by participating entities.

Mayor Foley raised a concern regarding public perception of water use at USSD1 facilities, referencing prior discussion on regional water restrictions. Mayor Foley noted that community members have expressed concern about visible irrigation of parks and the golf course while residents may be asked to limit their own water use. He encouraged consideration of these concerns moving forward.

Ms. Meier acknowledged the concern and explained that the golf course serves as a revenue-generating asset, making it difficult to significantly reduce irrigation without long-term impacts. She stated that USSD1 has taken a proactive approach to water conservation, including pursuing grant funding for turf conversion on athletic fields and implementing reductions in irrigation across all facilities. Ms. Meier noted that while some reductions are possible, maintaining usable park space requires a baseline level of watering, as fully or near-dead turf would not support recreational use and would be costly to restore. She further explained that water usage is being closely monitored, with current projections indicating sufficient supply through mid-May, though uncertainty remains for later in the season. She stated that USSD1 has already made adjustments to planned water use, including the decision not to open the splash park and to potentially scale back water-related activities for upcoming events. She emphasized that staff will continue to evaluate conditions and adjust operations as necessary.

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF DECLARATION OF SURPLUS OF OLD WATER METERS - IVAN MERRELL

Water Superintendent Ivan Merrell presented a request to declare a quantity of replaced water meters as surplus and authorize their sale for scrap value. He explained that the meters have been removed over the past year and a half as part of ongoing system upgrades and are no longer needed due to outdated technology. Mr. Merrell noted that newer ultrasonic meters have replaced the older turbine-style meters, and the City has no further operational use for the removed units.

Mr. Merrell further requested that the authorization allow for ongoing disposal of surplus meters generated through future replacement projects, rather than requiring separate approval each time.

Councilmember Randel Mills expressed support for the request, noting the importance of avoiding accumulation of unused materials. City Manager Quinn Bennion confirmed that the meters have

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reached the end of their useful life. Mayor Corey Foley expressed agreement with proceeding with disposal.

Councilmember Randel Mills moved to approve the declaration of surplus of old water meters as presented. Councilmember Robin O’Driscoll seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the following roll call vote:

*Councilmember Mills..... aye;
Councilmember O’Driscoll..... aye;
Councilmember Long..... aye;*

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF THE MASTER SERVICES AGREEMENT - IVAN MERRELL

Water Superintendent Ivan Merrell presented a proposed renewal of the Master Services Agreement with Sunrise Engineering. He explained that the City previously entered into a similar agreement in 2023 and that the updated agreement includes minor revisions to standard contract language.

Mr. Merrell stated that the agreement establishes general terms and conditions, allowing individual projects to be authorized through separate work release documents, thereby streamlining the process for future project approvals.

Mayor Corey Foley inquired whether staff were satisfied with the terms of the agreement. Mr. Merrell responded that while he had reviewed the document, Public Works Director Keith Despain typically oversees such agreements and has indicated his approval of the updated terms.

Councilmember Ed Long moved to approve the Master Services Agreement with Sunrise Engineering. Councilmember Randel Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the following roll call vote:

*Councilmember Mills..... aye;
Councilmember O’Driscoll..... aye;
Councilmember Long..... aye;*

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF A WORK RELEASE FOR THE WATER SOURCE STUDY - IVAN MERRELL

Water Superintendent Ivan Merrell presented a proposed work release under the Master Services Agreement with Sunrise Engineering for a water source study. He explained that the study will evaluate potential water sources and identify opportunities not currently being utilized. The project was issued through a Request for Proposals process, with three engineering firms responding, and Sunrise Engineering was selected based on their approach.

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Mr. Merrell stated that the total project cost is \$100,000, with funding structured as a partnership. He explained that \$50,000 will be funded through a Community Impact Board (CIB) grant, with the remaining \$50,000 split evenly between Vernal City and Ashley Valley Water and Sewer District at \$25,000 each. He noted that the agreement is based on time and materials, and that regular coordination meetings will be held to guide the study and ensure alignment with City priorities.

Councilmember Ed Long inquired how the benefits of the study would be allocated given the shared cost. Mr. Merrell responded that specific allocation of benefits has not yet been defined, but acknowledged the importance of addressing that issue. Discussion followed regarding coordination with Ashley Valley Water and Sewer District and ensuring that the City’s interests are protected as the study progresses.

Mayor Corey Foley suggested that staff coordinate internally, including with Public Works Director Keith Despain, to further define expectations and ensure appropriate agreements are in place.

Councilmember Ed Long made a motion to approve the work release for the water source study, noting the \$25,000 commitment from Vernal City. Councilmember Robin O’Driscoll seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the following roll call vote:

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

USSD1 REPORT

Cheryl Meier, Director of USSD1, expressed appreciation to the Vernal Police Department for their assistance in addressing vandalism and property damage at City and USSD1 facilities. She reported that the installation of surveillance cameras in parks and public spaces has significantly improved the ability to identify individuals responsible for graffiti and other damage.

Ms. Meier noted a recent incident involving extensive graffiti at the baseball fields in the rookie field dugouts, where limited video footage made identification more difficult. Despite these challenges, she reported that a suspect was successfully identified with assistance from the Vernal Police Department.

Ms. Meier specifically recognized Officer Chad Watt for his efforts and expressed appreciation for the ongoing support and strong working relationship between USSD1 and the Vernal Police Department, including regular officer presence at the recreation center.

REVIEW AND CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF A CHANGE IN CODE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS - QUINN BENNION

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City Manager Quinn Bennion presented an item regarding the code enforcement position, noting that the current part-time officer is retiring and the position has been posted as part-time. He explained that the vacancy provides an opportunity to consider maintaining the current structure, adding an additional part-time position, or transitioning to full-time, but recommended maintaining the current level of service and addressing any changes during the budget process.

City Recorder Sara Bell confirmed that applications have been received and the posting will close at the end of the week. Discussion followed regarding workload and enforcement approach, with current efforts focused on visible and complaint-driven issues.

Mayor Corey Foley expressed appreciation for the work of the current officer and the challenges of the position. Councilmember Randel Mills supported maintaining the current structure for now. Councilmembers agreed with maintaining the current structure and reevaluating the department's needs during the upcoming budget review season to determine if changes needed to be made.

STAFF REPORTS

Councilmember Randel Mills provided an update on water and sewer board activities, noting that the manhole cover survey remains in progress but has been delayed due to required approvals through UBAOG and other entities prior to submission for Community Impact Board (CIB) funding. He also reported that progress is being made on the lift station project.

Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll reported on a recent brush fire in Uintah County near Lapoint, during which a fire officer sustained second and third-degree burns and is currently receiving treatment. She noted that the incident is under investigation and that appropriate coverage, including workers compensation, is in place.

City Manager Quinn Bennion reported that Councilmember Nick Porter and Assistant City Manager Braeden Christofferson were absent due to attendance at the Utah Main Street Conference, which is required to maintain the City's Tier Two status. He noted that the training provides valuable opportunities for continued downtown development efforts.

Mr. Bennion further reported that Vernal City was selected as one of three communities to participate in a Downtown Outdoor Recreation Connection planning process. He announced an upcoming public open house to be held on Tuesday, March 24, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Petrie's Patio, located behind Market on Main. He explained that the initiative is intended to strengthen connections between downtown activities and outdoor recreation opportunities.

Mr. Bennion also provided an update on the 100 North Water and Sewer Project, noting that construction will begin on Fifth East and proceed west. He stated that the project spans approximately 500 East to 1000 West and is partially funded through Community Impact Board (CIB) funding, with the remaining costs funded by the City. He noted that the project has

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previously been approved by the City Council and that additional information will be brought back for consideration at a future meeting.

Water Superintendent Ivan Merrell provided additional information regarding the 100 North Water and Sewer Project, noting that a significant number of sewer laterals within the project area may be constructed of Orangeburg pipe, which is nearing the end of its useful life. He explained that replacing these laterals prior to roadway improvements is critical to avoid future excavation of newly paved streets.

Mr. Merrell reported that staff have notified residents and are encouraging inspections and voluntary replacement. He noted that replacement costs are substantial and that staff are exploring a financing option allowing property owners to repay costs over time through their utility bills, secured by a lien on the property. He emphasized that the City does not have sufficient budget capacity to fund these replacements and that sewer laterals remain the responsibility of the property owner.

Mr. Bennion stated that staff are working to provide information and assistance to residents, including potential financing options and service line warranty programs, and will return with a formal proposal for Council consideration.

Regarding the newly installed security cameras at Ashley Gorge, Mr. Merrell reported that installation of the spring's camera system is substantially complete, with 13 cameras in operation and minor technical issues still being addressed. He noted that the system is providing effective coverage and monitoring capabilities, and that costs are being shared with Ashley Valley Water and Sewer District.

CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Corey Foley announced the closed session portion of the meeting would be held in the Jury Room following the exit of the present members of the public. *Councilmember Ed Long moved to go into closed session for the following items:*

- 1. Discussion of the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual;*
- 2. Strategy sessions to discuss pending or reasonably imminent litigation;*
- 3. 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.*

Councilmember Randel Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with all in favor.

RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURN: The meeting reconvened into an

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open session. There being no further business; *Councilmember Randel Mills moved to adjourn. Councilmember Ed Long seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote and the meeting was declared adjourned.*