

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD,
MAY 20, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the Vernal City Council room, 374 East Main, Vernal,
Utah 84078.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Ted Munford, Randel Mills, Robin O'Driscoll, Ed Long, Nick Porter and Mayor Corey Foley.

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 Nick Porter.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD
MAY 6, 2026**

Councilmember Ted Munford moved to approve the minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting held May 6, 2026. Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Munford, Mills, O'Driscoll, Long, and Porter voting in favor.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER, BRIAN BLEVINS -
BRAEDEN CHRISTOFFERSON**

Assistant City Manager Braeden Christofferson introduced Brian Blevins as Vernal City's new Code Enforcement Officer. Mr. Christofferson stated that Mr. Blevins had been serving in the position for the previous few weeks and had been assisting with nuisance controls, property maintenance issues, business license compliance, and other code enforcement matters within the City.

Mr. Christofferson stated that Mr. Blevins is a veteran of the United States Air Force and a Uintah Basin graduate. He noted that Mr. Blevins served the community for ten years as a police officer and retired with twenty-one years of service as a federal probation officer in Nevada. Mr. Christofferson stated that Mr. Blevins and his wife have chosen to make the community their home and expressed appreciation for his work with the City.

Mayor Corey Foley welcomed Mr. Blevins and stated that the City is excited to have him on the team. Councilmembers also expressed appreciation and welcomed him to the City.

**ASHLEY REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER'S COMMUNITY BENEFIT REPORT -
ALAN OLIVE**

Alan Olive, representing Ashley Regional Medical Center, addressed the Council and presented the hospital's Community Benefit Report. Katie Scholes, Marketing and Communications Leader

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for Ashley Regional Health System, was also present. Mr. Olive stated that the hospital presents this information annually in order to share its role as a community partner and to highlight its contributions to the City and region.

Mr. Olive explained that Ashley Regional Medical Center operates as a for-profit health system and contributes to the community through taxes and support for local infrastructure. He reviewed 2025 highlights, including the addition of new providers in emergency medicine, women's health, urology and incontinence care, pediatrics, and wound care. He noted that diabetes is a prevalent issue in the community and stated that wound care is an important service for many residents.

Mr. Olive reported that the hospital invested approximately \$4.7 million in capital improvements, including technology, imaging, ultrasound, orthopedic equipment, power supplies, and other facility upgrades. He noted that the hospital is more than 86 years old and that tens of millions of dollars have been invested over time to improve rooms, infrastructure, equipment, and services. He stated that the hospital continues to bring high-level technology and expertise to a rural market.

Mr. Olive also discussed provider recruitment and future service expansion. He stated that the hospital is adding providers and technology to support urology, gynecology, obstetrics, general surgery, family practice, orthopedics, physical therapy, and speech pathology. He noted that robotic-assisted procedures are expected to expand in multiple specialties and clarified that such technology assists physicians rather than replacing them.

Mr. Olive stated that Ashley Regional Medical Center provided approximately \$9.4 million in support to those in need through charity care and related assistance. He reported that the hospital paid approximately \$3.5 million to \$3.6 million in taxes, provides approximately \$27 million in payroll for more than 300 employees, and represents an estimated economic impact of approximately \$13.4 million to \$13.5 million.

Katie Scholes reviewed hospital sponsorships and donations, noting that the report highlighted approximately twenty examples, though the total number of supported efforts was greater. She referenced sponsorships and donations including Be the Light Foundation, The Energy Summit, Friends Against Family Violence, Mental Connection, the opioid symposium, Trees for Charity, and other community efforts. She stated that Ashley Regional Medical Center is a co-founder of Mental Connection and supports efforts to make mental health resources more visible and accessible in the community.

Mr. Olive stated that the hospital will host future events to introduce new providers and invite the community and Council to learn more about expanded services. He also requested that the City consider improvements to the crosswalk behind the hospital. He explained that hospital staff, including employees arriving for early morning surgeries, often cross the area in the dark and that improved lighting and a more formal crosswalk would improve safety.

Mayor Corey Foley thanked Ashley Regional Medical Center for being a strong community partner and noted the hospital's support for a wide variety of community events, including Trees

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for Charity and holiday activities. He also complimented the facility and stated that the hospital's economic impact and employment base are significant for the community.

Mr. Olive stated that patient feedback and Google ratings are the highest they have been and noted that Ashley Regional Medical Center is the only trauma center serving several surrounding counties. Councilmember Ed Long stated that Ashley Regional Medical Center is a blessing to the community and asked what the community could look forward to in 2026. Mr. Olive responded that the hospital anticipates expanded surgical technology, additional open houses for new providers, expanded orthopedics and physical therapy, and additional speech pathology capacity.

UPDATE ON THE VICTIM ADVOCACY GRANT - KIM ROOKS

Kim Rooks provided an update regarding the Victim Advocacy Grant. She stated that the program is going through its second-year revision and that the first year of the grant was successful. She noted that grant representatives requested that she provide updates to the Council a couple of times each year.

Ms. Rooks stated that the program receives a desk review and audit each fall, and that the February audit results included no findings. She explained that staffing has shifted from two and one-half employees to one employee and stated that City Attorney Michael Harrington has been helpful and patient as workflow adjustments have been made. She also reported that a high school student interested in social work had completed a forty-hour internship with the program.

Councilmember Ted Munford thanked Ms. Rooks for her work and service to the team. Ms. Rooks stated that she enjoys the work and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve. Mayor Corey Foley also thanked her and stated that she is doing a great job.

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF A COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UTAH DIVISION OF FORESTRY, FIRE, AND STATE LANDS AND VERNAL CITY - COREY AUGER

Corey Auger, representing the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands, presented a renewal of the cooperative agreement between the Division and Vernal City. He explained that the agreement is renewed approximately every five years, or when significant language changes are made due to policy or legislation.

Mr. Auger stated that the agreement is the master cooperative agreement for the cooperative wildfire system, which is used by many counties, cities, and agencies throughout the State. He described the agreement as an insurance policy against wildland fire, explaining that certain trigger points shift fiscal responsibility for large wildland fire events to the State and reduce the burden on local entities.

Mr. Auger noted that the Uintah Fire Suppression Special Service District maintains the required information and that Vernal City, the other cities, and Uintah County delegate this responsibility to the Fire District. He stated that the Fire District does a good job keeping the required information current. Councilmember Ed Long asked whether there were any changes to the agreement. Mr.

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Auger stated that the agreement includes some language related to House Bill 48 and the Wildland Urban Interface amendments previously discussed by the Council, but noted that the high-risk mapping did not show red areas within Vernal City limits.

Councilmember Ted Munford stated that the agreement is good for the community and provides additional assistance and ability to respond to wildland fires. He stated that the agreement is essential.

Councilmember Nick Porter made a motion to approve the Cooperative Agreement between the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands and Vernal City as presented. 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 Long..... aye;
Councilmember Porter..... aye.*

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE NO. 2026-14 AMENDING THE VERNAL CITY WATER RATES AND RATE STRUCTURE - KEITH DESPAIN

Public Works Director Keith Despain presented revised proposed water rates and rate structure for Vernal City. Mr. Despain stated that the City has been working for approximately one and one-half years to update the water rates and expressed appreciation for the assistance of the Council Public Works Committee and other contributors. He noted that a public hearing had been held three weeks earlier and that staff had worked to incorporate the concerns and desires shared by the public.

Mr. Despain reviewed background information regarding Vernal City's water supply. He explained that the question of whether Vernal City has water has two parts: whether the City has water rights, or "paper water," and whether water is physically available from the mountain, or "wet water." He stated that engineering studies indicate the City has water rights to support projected growth for the next thirty years at a 1.4 percent growth rate, while the physical water supply varies by year. He stated that the current year is lower than past years.

Mr. Despain stated that approximately 93 percent of water used in the valley is used for agricultural purposes, leaving approximately 7 percent for culinary use. He noted that each water district has its own rate structure based on the needs of that district.

Mr. Despain reviewed the six goals used to guide the rate structure update: supporting the replacement of aging water lines, many of which are more than fifty years old; more evenly distributing water costs across different types of users; correcting insufficient charges for large meters; encouraging long-term conservation; remaining mindful of low water users; and addressing state mandates and pressures to move toward a tiered system.

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Mr. Despain stated that staff heard three primary concerns during the public hearing: residents and businesses did not want the full increase implemented all at once, they wanted to be charged only for the water they use, and they wanted everyone to be charged under the same rate structure. He stated that the revised proposal was developed around those principles and was substantially different from the proposal presented three weeks earlier.

Mr. Despain explained that the proposed water bill would include two parts: a base rate and a usage charge. The proposed base rate would be based on meter size and would no longer include any water. Each meter would be charged independently. He stated that the proposed base rates were \$35 for a three-quarter-inch meter, \$40 for a one-inch meter, \$75 for a one-and-one-half-inch meter, \$125 for a two-inch meter, \$185 for a three-inch meter, \$225 for a four-inch meter, and \$400 for a six-inch meter. He explained that larger meters have greater access to the water system and create greater responsibility for the City to provide capacity.

Mr. Despain stated that the proposed usage rates would eliminate separate residential, commercial, and transient categories. All users would pay the same usage rates and would pay only for the water actually used. He explained that the revised structure includes a two-year rollout, with tiers one through four implemented in 2026 and tiers five through seven added in 2027.

Mr. Despain outlined the proposed 2026 usage tiers. Tier one would apply from zero to 8,000 gallons at \$2.00 per 1,000 gallons. Tier two would apply from 9,000 to 15,000 gallons at \$3.00 per 1,000 gallons. Tier three would apply from 16,000 to 50,000 gallons at \$3.75 per 1,000 gallons. Tier four would apply above 50,000 gallons in 2026 at \$4.50 per 1,000 gallons. He stated that in 2027 additional tiers would be added for higher users, including tiers for 151,000 to 250,000 gallons, 251,000 to 500,000 gallons, and more than 500,000 gallons, with the highest tier proposed at \$5.25 per 1,000 gallons.

Councilmember Ted Munford asked whether beginning tier one at zero gallons meant that a customer using water would effectively pay more than the base rate. Mr. Despain responded that customers who use no water, such as snowbirds or residents who are away, would pay only the base rate. He stated that a customer using 1,000 gallons would pay the base rate plus the usage charge.

Mr. Despain reviewed the City's online rate calculator, explaining that users can select residential or commercial status for sewer rate purposes, enter their meter size, and enter usage to compare current rates with the proposed 2026 and 2027 rates. He stated that the average household uses approximately 5,000 gallons in a winter month, which would result in an estimated water portion of the bill of approximately \$45.00. He stated that the average household uses approximately 17,000 gallons in a summer month, which would result in an estimated water portion of the bill of approximately \$79.50 under the revised proposal.

Mr. Despain stated that approximately 60 percent of City users operate within the lower-usage area of the rate charts throughout the year. He stated that the revised proposal is projected to

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generate approximately \$1 million in additional revenue in 2027 to support critical infrastructure needs and to help leverage additional funding from other entities. He stated that the revised proposal supports infrastructure replacement, distributes costs more fairly, addresses large meter costs, encourages conservation through tiered rates, remains mindful of low water users, and addresses state expectations for tiered rates.

Mr. Despain stated that conservation rates were not being proposed that evening. He anticipated a separate discussion regarding conservation rates in two weeks, with any conservation rates potentially being implemented later if needed. He stated that, from a billing perspective, immediate implementation of the regular rate structure would be easiest because the City was at a billing cycle transition.

Councilmember Ted Munford thanked Mr. Despain and staff for listening to public input and for the work that had gone into the revised proposal. Mayor Corey Foley agreed that a significant amount of work had been done and asked about the previously approved rate increase from approximately 2017 or 2018 that had been paused during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Despain and City Manager Quinn Bennion stated that the prior increase was approximately fifty cents per month per meter per year, which was not sufficient to address infrastructure needs or inflationary operating costs.

Mayor Corey Foley expressed concern regarding the potential impact of water rates on businesses and the City's sales tax base. He stated that, based on his own residential bill, the proposed rate would produce a relatively small increase for a typical residential account, but he was concerned about larger water-using businesses and whether increased costs could affect sales tax revenue. Mr. Despain clarified that sales tax revenue does not support the water and sewer enterprise fund and that water and sewer must operate from user fees. He stated that current rates are only sufficient to maintain basic operations and do not provide adequate funding for substantial system improvements.

Councilmember Ed Long stated that the water system is old and that continuing to rely on temporary repairs is not responsible. He stated that the City has an estimated \$80 million infrastructure need and approximately 40 percent water loss, and that the proposed structure provides a path to pursue funding and begin replacing the system without overburdening normal residential users. Mr. Despain stated that, based on the data available to the City, approximately 60 percent of the additional revenue would come from the lower-usage group, indicating that the proposal was intended to be balanced rather than overly focused on the highest users.

Councilmember Randel Mills expressed reservations and stated that he believed a work session was warranted so the Council could review scenarios, understand the projected revenue over time, and be better prepared to answer public questions. He stated that additional information from the Aesterra water loss analysis may also be beneficial. Mr. Despain stated that staff had visited with many business owners and residents and had run numerous scenarios, including with large users such as Ashley Regional Medical Center. He stated that many users who reviewed the calculator found that the proposed impact was not as large as they had initially heard. Mr. Despain stated that

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the proposal did not include an automatic annual increase, though such an option could be considered, and reiterated that the proposal was projected to generate approximately \$1 million in additional annual revenue.

Mayor Corey Foley stated that he was hearing portions of the revised proposal for the first time that evening and expressed frustration that the Council had not received more direct information prior to the meeting. Mr. Despain apologized and stated that staff had attempted to make the rate calculator and information publicly available through online channels. Mr. Bennion stated that his prior explanation to the Mayor had been simplified and may not have included the tier details. He noted that much of the public concern and many of the calls received by staff were from very high water users.

Discussion continued regarding the cost to treat and provide water, the City's operating budget, the need for a long-term replacement fund, and the importance of being able to qualify for grants or other funding assistance. Councilmember Nick Porter stated that many municipalities face similar problems when water infrastructure has not been funded at a level sufficient for replacement. Councilmember Long stated that the City will not be in a strong position to receive grant funding without adopting a rate structure that shows the City is doing its part. Councilmember Porter also noted that if low-water years continue and water loss is not addressed, physical water availability could become a growth limitation even if the City has water rights on paper.

Councilmember Ted Munford asked where the numbers for the higher tiers came from and whether the proposed higher tiers were necessary if much of the additional revenue would come from lower-usage customers. Mr. Despain stated that, in order to meet the goals identified for the rate structure, staff believed the proposed numbers were appropriate. He noted that reducing those rates would reduce projected revenue and the City's capacity to replace the system.

Councilmember Randel Mills made a motion to table Ordinance No. 2026-14 until the Council could receive additional information and better understand the proposal through a work session. Councilmember Ted Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

<i>Councilmember Munford.....</i>	<i>aye;</i>
<i>Councilmember Mills.....</i>	<i>aye;</i>
<i>Councilmember O'Driscoll.....</i>	<i>aye;</i>
<i>Councilmember Long.....</i>	<i>nay;</i>
<i>Councilmember Porter.....</i>	<i>nay.</i>

Following the motion to table, additional discussion occurred regarding the urgency of water conservation and the need for a mechanism to reduce water use if supply conditions worsen. Water Superintendent Ivan Merrell stated that, depending on weather and spring flows, the City could face serious water supply concerns by July. He emphasized that conservation rates would be a separate discussion from the regular rate structure but stated that the City needs a mechanism in place because voluntary requests alone have not historically resulted in sufficient conservation.

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Mr. Merrell discussed the cost of Red Fleet water, water costs in other Utah communities, and the need to provide the Council with comparative data and fact sheets that could be used when responding to public questions. Councilmembers Munford and Mills reiterated that additional information would help the Council better understand and explain the proposal. Mr. Merrell stated that staff could provide the information that had already been gathered, including market comparisons and scenario calculations.

Councilmember Mills asked whether additional outreach, such as radio advertising or broader public messaging, had been used to encourage conservation. He stated that he supports conservation and has personally reduced watering, but wanted additional discussion and public information. Mr. Merrell stated that the Ashley Creek River Commissioner had estimated that spring flows could be significantly reduced around July 1, though Mr. Merrell hoped continued weather patterns would improve the outlook. Mayor Foley asked whether the City should focus first on conservation rather than adopting both conservation and regular rates during the same year. Councilmembers Porter and Long stated that the City can address both issues and that delaying infrastructure funding also presents risks, including uncertainty over future grant and mineral lease funding availability.

Mr. Merrell stated that conservation rates are not intended to be a revenue generator, but rather a mechanism to reduce usage when water is physically unavailable. He stated that if customers reduce usage to winter levels or otherwise demonstrate conservation, the goal would be achieved. Councilmember Long suggested that Councilmembers requesting a work session should communicate specific questions to staff so staff can prepare the needed information. Councilmember Munford requested that staff provide the information already available and stated that, if further work session discussion is needed, the Council could request additional information after reviewing those materials.

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF THE AESTERRA CONTRACT - KEITH DESPAIN

Water Superintendent Ivan Merrell presented the Aesterra contract on behalf of the Public Works Department. He explained that the contract is for analysis of satellite imagery to assist with water leak location. He stated that City Attorney Michael Harrington had reviewed the contract, identified concerns, and that revisions had been made and approved.

Councilmember Ted Munford stated that he was excited about the project and believed it would help the City identify needed adjustments and changes within the system. Councilmember Randel Mills asked about the schedule. Mr. Merrell stated that the first satellite scan should occur within approximately thirty days of the contract being signed. He explained that the contract includes two scans, with an initial scan, follow-up ground verification and acoustic leak locating, and a second scan likely occurring approximately six months later after the City has had time to address identified leaks.

Councilmember Mills asked about funding for the project. City Manager Quinn Bennion stated that funding was included within the water and sewer budget. Mr. Merrell stated that the total

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amount of the contract was \$48,000.

Councilmember Ted Munford made a motion to approve the Aesterra contract as presented. Councilmember Ed Long seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the following roll call vote:

*Councilmember Munford..... aye;
Councilmember Mills..... aye;
Councilmember O'Driscoll..... aye;
Councilmember Long..... aye;
Councilmember Porter..... aye.*

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF THE AQUAHAWK CONTRACT - KEITH DESPAIN

Water Superintendent Ivan Merrell presented the AquaHawk contract. He explained that AquaHawk is a portal that allows City residents and businesses to view daily water use and see how much water is going through their water meter. He stated that the tool will help customers see the results of conservation efforts.

Mr. Merrell stated that customers would be able to use information from their utility bill to access the website, set budgets by dollar amount or gallons, and receive alerts when usage reaches those limits. He stated that the platform appears user friendly and that the company has been responsive. He noted that the system also offers additional dashboard options that could assist with district metering and future analysis of water usage by area. He estimated a rollout period of approximately forty-five days while accounts and data are established.

Councilmember Nick Porter stated that he was excited about the tool. Councilmember Ed Long noted that the contract is annual and that the City will be able to evaluate the tool's use and value at the end of the year. Mr. Merrell stated that the ongoing cost is approximately \$2.90 per meter per year, with some additional initial setup costs, and stated that he believed the tool is worth the cost.

Councilmember Ed Long made a motion to approve the AquaHawk contract as presented. 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 Long..... aye;
Councilmember Porter..... aye.*

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF THE VERNAL CITY MEDICAL INSURANCE RENEWAL WITH SELECT HEALTH - QUINN BENNION

City Manager Quinn Bennion presented the Vernal City medical insurance renewal with Select

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Health. He stated that this item would typically be addressed during budget work sessions, but the timing required a response sooner than the budget process would allow.

Mr. Bennion stated that Vernal City moved to Select Health the previous year after several years with United Health, due in part to significant renewal increases and other concerns. He stated that the City has been pleased overall with Select Health and that employees have largely adjusted to the change. He explained that Select Health handles renewals differently and performs claims analysis, including a leveling premium structure that allows for some sharing of unused premiums.

Mr. Bennion reported that Select Health proposed a 2.02 percent renewal, which he stated is very low for a health insurance renewal. He recommended approval of the renewal and stated that other benefit renewals, including dental and vision, would be discussed during upcoming work sessions. Councilmembers expressed appreciation for the low renewal rate and noted that it was lower than many recent renewals they had seen.

Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll made a motion to renew the medical insurance with Select Health as presented. Councilmember Randel Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the following roll call vote:

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

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF AN AGREEMENT WITH UDOT FOR VERNAL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL FY27, PROJECT NUMBER F-LC47(21) - KEITH DESPAIN

Public Works Director Keith Despain presented an agreement with the Utah Department of Transportation for the Vernal Safe Routes to School FY27 project. He stated that Vernal City applied for and was awarded \$442,000 in grant funding through UDOT's Safe Routes to School program.

Mr. Despain explained that the project will continue sidewalk improvements on 500 West near Discovery Elementary. He stated that the grant-funded project will cover sidewalk from 500 South to 775 South, near the north entrance to the Haven Estates subdivision. He noted that a remaining gap will be filled by the developer as the fourth and final phase of the subdivision proceeds. When both the City project and developer improvements are complete, there will be continuous sidewalk on the east side of the road from 500 South to the school.

Mayor Corey Foley expressed excitement for the project and stated that Safe Routes to School improvements are important for the community. He thanked staff for pursuing the grant. Mayor Foley also clarified for the public that the project is funded by a grant rather than a loan or local match. City Manager Quinn Bennion stated that the project will be administered by UDOT, which may take longer because UDOT selects the engineer and contractor and administers the project,

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while Vernal City works closely with them.

Councilmember Ted Munford made a motion to approve the agreement with UDOT for Vernal Safe Routes to School FY27, Project Number F-LC47(21), as presented. Councilmember Randel Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the following roll call vote:

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

DISCUSSION REGARDING POLITICAL SPEECH ON VERNAL CITY PROPERTY AND POTENTIAL CHANGES TO VERNAL CITY MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 16.28.080 - MICHAEL HARRINGTON

City Attorney Michael Harrington provided a discussion regarding political speech on Vernal City property and potential changes to Vernal City Municipal Code Section 16.28.080. He stated that new state law regarding the placement and use of political signs had recently become enforceable. He explained that Vernal City's existing code generally aligns with the new law, including prohibitions on placing political signs on utility poles and provisions addressing traffic, pedestrian, and line-of-sight hazards.

Mr. Harrington stated that the City may not adopt a code that prohibits private property owners or entities from allowing political signs within a park strip. He noted that this requirement does not conflict with the City's existing code. He also stated that the City is required to establish a location to deposit signs that are legally removed. He recommended that removed signs be held at the front desk in the southwest portion of the City building. He stated that the City must make a good-faith effort to contact the owner and that signs may be disposed of if they are not picked up within five days or if the owner cannot be contacted after good-faith efforts.

Mr. Harrington asked whether the Council wanted this process added to City code or whether state law was sufficient. He recommended not changing the City code because state law already addresses the issue and the City does not have a conflicting provision. Councilmember Nick Porter stated that he preferred not to add the requirement to City code so the City would not need to remove it if state law changes.

Mr. Bennion clarified the definition of a park strip, explaining that it is generally the area between the sidewalk and curb, even though it may be within public right-of-way and maintained by the adjacent private property owner. He stated that the City has already been operating consistent with the new law. He explained that where an area is City-maintained, such as City Hall, City parks, Walking Park, or other City-maintained locations, the City removes political signs in order to avoid the appearance of endorsing a candidate. He stated that signs in privately maintained park strips are treated differently.

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Councilmember Ed Long expressed concern about the requirement to store and contact owners regarding removed signs. Mr. Harrington stated that this was another reason not to add the provision to the City code. The Council reached consensus that no change to the City code was needed at that time.

STAFF REPORTS

City Manager Quinn Bennion stated that he had no additional staff reports.

Councilmember Randel Mills asked about Ashley Valley Sewer’s potential application for funding related to a manhole project and sewer master plan. Mr. Bennion stated that the application was expected to be submitted through the UBAOG process and noted that planning grants are often treated favorably and may be funded on a 50/50 basis, though approval is not automatic. Mr. Despain confirmed that the item related to a planning grant.

CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Corey Foley stated that there was a need for a closed session. Councilmember Randel Mills made a motion to go into closed session, to be held in the Jury Room, pursuant to Utah State Code Title 52, Chapter 4, Sections 204 and 205, for the following purposes:

- 1. Strategy session to discuss pending or reasonably imminent litigation; strategy session to discuss the purchase, exchange, or lease of real property, including any form of water rights or water shares;*
- 2. Strategy session to discuss the sale of real property, including any form of water rights or water shares.*

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 Long..... aye;
Councilmember Porter..... aye.

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.