

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD
JULY 15, 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 regular City Council 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.

Mayor Corey Foley announced that the public hearing with respect to the issuance of sales tax revenue bonds has been canceled. City Manager Quinn Bennion stated that the public hearing would be rescheduled for the following month.

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF THE PURCHASE OF A NEW FORKLIFT AND AIR COMPRESSOR TRAILER - CLINT MORTON

Streets Supervisor Clint Morton presented a request to purchase a replacement forklift and air compressor for the Public Works Department. He explained that funding for both pieces of equipment had been included and approved during the City's FY2027 budget process. Mr. Morton stated that the current forklift is approximately 21 to 22 years old and the existing air compressor is approximately 24 years old, and both have experienced increasing maintenance issues and reliability concerns.

He further explained that staff obtained multiple quotes for the forklift, including State contract pricing, but identified a demonstration model with approximately 20 hours of use from another JCB dealer that would save the City approximately \$5,000. He added that the air compressor was quoted several thousand dollars below the amount originally budgeted.

Councilmember Ted Munford made a motion to approve the purchase of both the forklift and compressor trailer 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 APPROVAL OF WATER CONSERVATION RATE STRUCTURE FOR FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION, IF NEEDED - KEITH DESPAIN

Public Works Director Keith Despain reminded the Council that the City recently adopted revised water rates following a public hearing and significant public input. At that time, the Council chose

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to postpone consideration of conservation rates, and staff was now returning with a proposal to establish those rates in advance so they would be available if future water supply conditions warranted their use. Mr. Despain emphasized that staff was not recommending implementation at this time, only approval of the rate structure for future use.

Mr. Despain explained that the proposed conservation rates were designed to encourage reduced water consumption rather than generate additional revenue. Under the proposal, the first 8,000 gallons of water usage would receive a reduced volumetric rate to reward low water users, while higher usage tiers would increase substantially. He clarified that the proposal affected only volumetric water rates and would not change the monthly base rate. Staff evaluated several usage scenarios, demonstrating that low-volume users would see reduced charges while higher-volume users would experience significantly higher costs under conservation rates. He reiterated that conservation rates would only be considered during periods of limited water supply and would serve as a temporary tool to encourage water conservation.

Mr. Despain noted that the Ashley Valley Water and Sewer Improvement District had implemented conservation rates over the past two years and observed increased water conservation after adopting more aggressive pricing. While the City's proposed rates differed because Vernal no longer distinguishes between residential and commercial customers, he stated the proposed multipliers were generally comparable.

Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll asked how much notice residents would receive before conservation rates were implemented. Mr. Despain explained that implementation would be determined by the Public Works Committee after reviewing key water supply indicators with staff. If conservation rates were deemed necessary, they would take effect during the following billing cycle, allowing time to notify residents. The same review process would be used to discontinue the rates once conditions improved.

Councilmember Ed Long commented that Ashley Valley Water and Sewer Improvement District's previous conservation rates resulted in approximately a 20 percent reduction in water usage, prompting the district to adopt even stronger multipliers this year. He stated he believed Vernal City's proposed two to three times multiplier was appropriate to achieve a meaningful reduction in water use during a critical water shortage and supported establishing the rates for temporary use if needed.

City Manager Quinn Bennion noted that staff had also discussed creating an appeal process for customers experiencing unique hardships. Mr. Despain explained that the original proposal included an application process that would allow businesses or other customers with exceptional circumstances to request individual consideration. Councilmember Ted Munford expressed support for including an appeal process, and Mr. Bennion cited the hospital as an example of a customer with limited ability to reduce essential indoor water use while acknowledging that determining eligibility could become complex.

Mayor Corey Foley expressed concern that conservation rates should not become a source of excess revenue. He stated that any additional funds generated should be dedicated solely to water-related purposes, such as acquiring additional water, improving water infrastructure, or funding conservation efforts, rather than unrelated City expenditures. Mr. Despain agreed, emphasizing that the objective of the conservation rates was to reduce water consumption, not increase revenue,

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and that any additional revenue generated would be reserved for water acquisition and conservation purposes.

Councilmember Ed Long made a motion to approve the water conservation rate structure as presented for future implementation, with the caveat that the additional funds raised from the price increase would be used for conservation and acquiring more water. Councilmember Nick Porter 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 A DESIGN AGREEMENT WITH MHTN FOR DESIGN ON PHASE 1 OF THE COMMUNITY BLOCK - QUINN BENNION

City Manager Quinn Bennion presented a proposed design agreement with MHTN for Phase 1 of the Community Block project. He explained that the project was identified as a priority in the City's Capital Improvement Program adopted during the budget process and would advance development of the Lamplighter Block, also referred to as the Community Block or future Town Square.

Mr. Bennion stated that the City had secured approximately \$3 million in capital funding and an additional \$2 million in grant funding for Phase 1. The initial phase would include installation of underground utilities, including water, sewer, gas, and potential future fiber infrastructure, construction of perimeter parking, and grading and site preparation to accommodate future project elements.

Mr. Bennion explained that the City had worked with several design firms on downtown projects over the past five years and recommended selecting MHTN based on its previous work developing the 2021 Downtown Master Plan and its involvement as a subconsultant on the Community Block concept plans. Although the agreement was not procured through a formal Request for Proposals or Request for Qualifications process, he stated that the Public Works Committee requested assurance that the proposed fees were reasonable. To address that concern, MHTN agreed to utilize the Utah Division of Facilities Construction and Management fee schedule, which Mr. Bennion noted was slightly below the firm's standard rates and provided confidence that the proposed fees were fair and competitive.

Mr. Bennion further explained that MHTN would partner with Sunrise Engineering to provide surveying and civil engineering services for the project. The proposed design fee of \$361,565 represented approximately 7.23 percent of the total project cost, which he described as reasonable for a project of this size. He also noted that certain services, including geotechnical work, were specifically excluded from the agreement. If approved, MHTN would begin work immediately with the goal of completing the design in time to advertise the project for bids during the winter months, allowing construction to begin the following summer.

Councilmember Ed Long asked whether the proposed fee included additional consultant charges billed on an hourly basis. Mr. Bennion clarified that all consultant hours identified in the scope of

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work were included in the proposed fee, as detailed on pages 17 and 18 of the agreement. He explained that only work identified as additional services, as outlined in the proposal, would be billed separately.

Councilmember Nick Porter motioned to approve the design agreement with MHTN for design on phase one of the community block, for the amount of \$361,565. 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.

DISCUSSION REGARDING ANNEXATION OF WILLOW BEND AND WATER SERVICE AREAS - QUINN BENNION

Quinn Bennion reviewed the status of the Willow Bend annexation petition, noting that the Council had previously accepted the application and initiated the annexation process. He explained that the current discussion centered on determining future water service for the annexation area, which is presently divided between the Maeser Water Improvement District north of Main Street and the Ashley Valley Water and Sewer Improvement District south of Main Street.

Mr. Bennion explained that approximately 17 years earlier, Vernal City, Maeser Water, and Ashley Valley Water jointly constructed water infrastructure along Main Street and Aggie Boulevard, with each entity contributing based on its respective service area. Because the existing infrastructure already serves both sides of the roadway, staff believed it would be most practical for a single provider to serve the entire annexation area rather than introducing additional exchanges or constructing new water lines. He reported that City staff had met with representatives from both water districts to begin discussions and described the meeting as productive, although no final agreement had been reached. Ashley Valley Water indicated it would support either Vernal City or Maeser Water serving the area, while Maeser Water expressed its desire to retain its existing service territory and any future customers within its district.

Mayor Corey Foley clarified that the Willow Park Apartments were not included in the annexation request and would remain in unincorporated Uintah County. Discussion also addressed the existing cost-sharing agreement for the jointly constructed water line. Mr. Bennion explained that if service boundaries changed, the participating entities had discussed adjusting each district's ongoing percentage of responsibility moving forward rather than attempting to reconcile costs retroactively.

Councilmember Nick Porter asked whether the City could annex the property while allowing another entity to continue providing water service. Mr. Bennion confirmed that municipal boundaries and water service boundaries are not required to be the same, although doing so could create customer confusion regarding utility services, require separate billing for certain City services such as residential garbage collection, and establish an additional taxing district within the City. Mayor Foley also noted that future annexations in the surrounding area could further complicate long-term service boundaries.

Andrew Dudson, General Manager of Maeser Water Improvement District, addressed the Council

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and outlined Maeser Water's existing water and sewer infrastructure serving the area. He explained that the district has invested significant resources maintaining those systems and wished to retain its existing service territory and future customers. He stated that the Maeser Water Board had authorized staff to negotiate with the City but also directed them to protect the district's current boundaries and indicated the district intended to submit a protest to the Boundary Commission if necessary.

Councilmember Ted Munford questioned whether Main Street itself could serve as the boundary between service providers. Mr. Bennion responded that while such an arrangement was possible, staff preferred minimizing the number of service exchanges to simplify operations and future development. Mr. Dudson noted that Maeser Water's existing district boundaries already extend south of Main Street in certain locations, creating irregular boundaries that further complicated the discussion.

Councilmember Ed Long stated that he placed significant value on honoring the property owner's request for annexation unless a substantial reason existed to do otherwise. He commented that he had not heard any justification that outweighed the landowner's wishes and believed the City's goal should be to accommodate the request. Mr. Bennion clarified that regardless of the outcome of the water service discussions, the annexation itself would still proceed into Vernal City if approved. Mayor Foley emphasized the importance of reaching an agreement among the entities before the matter reached the Boundary Commission, noting that municipalities are generally expected to provide services to annexed properties and that creating additional overlapping taxing districts should be avoided whenever possible.

City Recorder Sara Bell informed the Council that August 3 was the deadline for filing protests, marking the end of the 30-day protest period following certification of the annexation petition. She reported that all required notices had been mailed to affected property owners and entities in accordance with state law. Councilmember Nick Porter remarked that receiving a protest would not necessarily prevent the annexation from moving forward.

Councilmember Ed Long reiterated the importance of understanding the petitioners' motivations and ensuring the City's actions reflected the landowners' wishes. Mr. Bennion agreed that staff would continue discussions with the petitioners and Maeser Water to better understand their preferences regarding utility service and to work toward a mutually agreeable solution before the Boundary Commission process continued.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF CONDIE CONSTRUCTION CHANGE ORDER #2 - KEITH DESPAIN

Keith Despain presented Change Order No. 2 for the ongoing 100 North water and sewer improvement project. He reported that construction was progressing well, with the main water and sewer lines substantially complete except for the highway crossings at 500 West and Vernal Avenue, which were expected to be completed later in the month. Staff was also discussing the possibility of nighttime construction to minimize traffic disruptions.

Mr. Despain explained that the first item included in the change order resulted from the discovery of two abandoned water lines located directly within the alignment of the new water main. As construction progressed, the contractor was required to remove the abandoned lines while carefully working around existing utility crossings, including sewer and gas laterals, which slowed

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construction. Following negotiations with the contractor, staff determined the additional work resulted in a cost of \$31,120.61 and required an additional seven days of contract time.

The second item involved relocation of an existing sewer line near 800 West. Mr. Despain explained that the contractor discovered the elevation of the target manhole shown in the design plans was one foot higher than its actual elevation, requiring the newly installed sewer line to be excavated and lowered. The correction resulted in an additional cost of \$20,696.35 and two additional contract days. Mr. Despain stated that Jones & DeMille Engineering acknowledged the error as a design issue and agreed to reimburse the City's local share of the additional cost through a credit on a future engineering invoice.

Councilmember Ed Long asked whether Jones & DeMille would cover the entire cost of the change order. Mr. Despain clarified that the firm would reimburse only the City's local match, while the remaining eligible costs would continue to be covered through the project grant funding. Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll asked whether sufficient funding remained within the project budget to cover the change order, and Mr. Despain confirmed that adequate funds were available.

Water Superintendent Ivan Merrell noted that the contractor had verified elevations on approximately 20 manholes throughout the project, all of which had matched the design plans except for the final structure involved in this change order. He explained that because the previous elevations had been accurate, the contractor relied on the plans for the final connection, resulting in what he described as an unfortunate combination of circumstances. He emphasized that the project had otherwise progressed very well.

Mayor Corey Foley expressed appreciation for Jones & DeMille's willingness to acknowledge and take responsibility for the design error. Councilmember Long asked whether using grant funds for the change order would affect other planned improvements. Mr. Despain explained that the change order would not impact the 100 North project but could reduce available funding for planned work associated with the 3500 West improvements. He noted that staff anticipated sufficient funding would remain to complete the planned transmission line connection and vault improvements, although some discretionary project elements could be reduced if necessary.

Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll made a motion to approve Change Order No. 2 from Condi Construction as presented for the total amount of \$51,816.90 and an additional nine contract days. 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.

UPDATE ON UDOT 1500 WEST/HIGHWAY 40 ACCESS – KEITH DESPAIN

Keith Despain reminded the Council that the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) had previously expressed safety concerns at the intersection and had considered restricting left turns and through movements from 1500 West. He reported that UDOT had since decided to postpone the project indefinitely and would not pursue the proposed changes at this time. He noted that

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UDOT may revisit the intersection in the future, particularly if improvements are made at Aggie Boulevard.

Quinn Bennion asked whether the update was related to a corridor agreement recently received from UDOT. Mr. Despain clarified that it was a separate matter. He explained that the City and UDOT maintain a corridor agreement identifying potential future traffic signal locations along Highway 40. Because all previously anticipated signals identified in the existing agreement have now been constructed, the agreement is due for an update. UDOT has proposed revising the corridor agreement to identify a future traffic signal at Aggie Boulevard and Highway 40. Mr. Despain emphasized that inclusion in the corridor agreement does not constitute a commitment to construct the signal but simply identifies it as a potential future location for planning purposes.

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE NO. 2026-19, AMENDING VERNAL CITY MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 16.06.010, ADMINISTRATION AND PROCEDURES – BRAEDEN CHRISTOFFERSON

Assistant City Manager Braeden Christofferson introduced the first of several proposed amendments to Title 16 of the Vernal City Municipal Code. He explained that the series of updates was intended to make the City's land use code cleaner, more accessible, more consistent, more efficient, and better aligned with Utah law while improving service to residents.

Mr. Christofferson explained that the proposed amendment to Section 16.06.010 clarifies the procedures for amendments to the General Plan and Title 16. He noted that the current code references rezonings but provides little guidance regarding the applicable process or required considerations. The proposed amendment removes rezoning procedures from this section so they can be addressed more comprehensively in a separate code section, while clarifying the procedures for General Plan and Title 16 amendments.

Mr. Christofferson reported that the Planning Commission reviewed the proposed amendment and recommended approval without substantive changes. He noted that the amendment was intended to streamline the review process while providing greater clarity within the City's development code.

Councilmember Ted Munford made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2026-19 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 ORDINANCE NO. 2026-20, ADDING CHAPTER 16.07 AND AMENDING ZONING MAP SECTIONS OF THE VERNAL CITY MUNICIPAL CODE – BRAEDEN CHRISTOFFERSON

Braeden Christofferson presented Ordinance No. 2026-20, which creates a new Chapter 16.07 establishing a formal process for zoning map amendments and rezoning applications. He explained that the City's existing code provides limited guidance regarding the rezoning process, and the

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proposed ordinance would create a dedicated chapter outlining the procedures to improve consistency and transparency.

Mr. Christofferson stated that the proposed chapter establishes the review process for rezoning applications, including staff analysis, Planning Commission review, and final action by the City Council. It also formalizes public notification requirements, including mailed notice to surrounding property owners, posting notice on the subject property, and providing information regarding the time, place, and manner of the public hearing.

Mr. Christofferson further explained that the ordinance identifies 14 factors that the Planning Commission and City Council may consider when evaluating a rezoning request, including consistency with the General Plan, compatibility with surrounding land uses, and whether the proposal advances the purposes of the City's land use regulations. He noted that while infrastructure capacity and utility concerns may be discussed during the rezoning process, detailed engineering studies and capacity determinations are generally addressed during subsequent development review, such as the preliminary plat or site plan process. The ordinance also provides additional guidance regarding the use of development agreements when appropriate.

Mr. Christofferson concluded that the proposed amendments would provide a clearer, more comprehensive framework for staff, applicants, the Planning Commission, City Council, and the public throughout the rezoning process.

Councilmember Ed Long made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2026-20 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. 2026-21, AMENDING VERNAL CITY MUNICIPAL CODE SECTIONS 16.42.080 AND 16.44.080, R-3 AND R-4 RESIDENTIAL ZONES – SPECIAL PROVISIONS – BRAEDEN CHRISTOFFERSON

Braeden Christofferson explained that the ordinance includes several changes intended to improve the quality and functionality of future multifamily developments. He stated that the first amendment limits studio or efficiency dwelling units to no more than 25 percent of a multifamily development. He explained that the City had recently reduced parking requirements for studio apartments to encourage that housing type but wanted to prevent developers from using the reduced parking standard throughout an entire project. The proposed limitation would encourage a variety of housing types while maintaining adequate parking.

Mr. Christofferson also described new architectural standards requiring building articulation for structures exceeding 120 feet in length. He explained that the requirement was intended to avoid long, uninterrupted building facades and create more visually appealing developments. In addition, the ordinance would require multifamily developments containing 20 or more dwelling units to provide usable common open space that encourages resident interaction and recreation.

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Councilmember Nick Porter questioned the basis for limiting studio apartments to 25 percent of a development. While he understood the parking concerns, he asked whether there were additional community impacts that justified regulating the mix of unit types rather than allowing market demand to determine the appropriate balance. Mr. Christofferson responded that the primary objective was to prevent developers from taking advantage of the reduced parking requirements by constructing an excessive number of studio units. He added that the same concept had been applied to age-restricted developments and acknowledged that the parking concern was the principal reason for the proposed limitation.

Councilmember Nick Porter further noted that he did not anticipate developers constructing projects consisting primarily of studio apartments in the current market and questioned whether the standard would have much practical effect. He also expressed concern that the proposed building articulation requirements approached architectural or aesthetic regulation, an area the City had generally avoided. While he understood the intent, he cautioned against adopting standards that could be viewed as purely aesthetic.

Councilmember Nick Porter also asked how the proposed common open space requirement differed from the City's existing landscaping standards. Mr. Christofferson explained that while current landscaping requirements could be satisfied with grass, rock, or other landscaping materials, the proposed amendment places greater emphasis on creating functional community spaces where residents can gather and interact, rather than simply meeting minimum landscaping requirements. Councilmember Porter indicated he understood the concept and had no further questions.

Councilmember Randel Mills made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2026-21 as presented. Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 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>aye;</i>
<i>Councilmember Porter.....</i>	<i>aye.</i>

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE NO. 2026-22, AMENDING VERNAL CITY MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 16.58.110 AND ADDING SECTIONS 16.58.112, 16.58.114, 16.58.116, AND 16.58.118 – BRAEDEN CHRISTOFFERSON

Braeden Christofferson presented Ordinance No. 2026-22 and explained that the current code contains a single section addressing amended plats but does not adequately distinguish between the various types of property boundary modifications or provide sufficient procedural guidance.

Mr. Christofferson stated that the proposed ordinance creates separate sections for subdivision amendments, subdivision vacations, boundary line adjustments, boundary establishments, and lot combinations. Each section outlines the applicable process, required plat information, and submission requirements, providing greater clarity for applicants, surveyors, and City staff. He noted that the proposed revisions were developed in coordination with the Uintah County Recorder's Office and the County Surveyor's Office after identifying several procedural gaps in

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the existing code. Both offices expressed support for the amendments, which are intended to create a more consistent and efficient review process.

Mayor Corey Foley expressed his support for the proposed changes, noting that inconsistent requirements between reviewing agencies can create unnecessary frustration for applicants. He stated that establishing uniform procedures would simplify the process for everyone involved.

Councilmember Nick Porter made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2026-22 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. 2026-23, AMENDING VERNAL CITY MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 16.16.050, PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT – SUBMISSION OF PLANS AND DOCUMENTS – BRAEDEN CHRISTOFFERSON

Braeden Christofferson presented Ordinance No. 2026-23, which updates the submission requirements for planned residential unit developments. He explained that the current code contains several outdated provisions that no longer reflect the City's review process or current state law.

Mr. Christofferson stated that one of the primary amendments eliminates the requirement for applicants to submit multiple paper copies of development plans, replacing those requirements with a more streamlined digital submission process. He explained that the change modernizes the City's procedures and improves efficiency for applicants, staff, and reviewing agencies.

Mr. Christofferson also noted that the ordinance updates the final plat approval process to comply with current Utah law. The proposed amendments remove outdated references assigning final plat approval authority to the zoning administrator or legislative body and instead align the City's code with state requirements by identifying the appropriate land use authority as the final plat approval authority. He concluded that the proposed amendments modernize the City's development review process, simplify application requirements, and ensure consistency with state law.

Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2026-23 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.

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CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE NO. 2026-24, AMENDING VERNAL CITY MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 16.24.160, OFF-SITE IMPROVEMENTS – BRAEDEN CHRISTOFFERSON

Braeden Christofferson presented Ordinance No. 2026-24, which amends the City's off-site improvement requirements. He explained that the current code lacks a clear process for addressing required improvements in areas where infrastructure, such as curb, gutter, and sidewalk, does not already exist. He cited the City's industrial areas as an example, where developers frequently request exceptions because installing isolated improvements is often impractical.

Mr. Christofferson explained that the proposed ordinance removes the Planning Commission from serving as a variance authority for off-site improvement requirements and instead establishes a process for administrative exemptions, deferrals, and other alternatives when appropriate. Under the proposed changes, the Zoning Administrator and Public Works Director would jointly evaluate whether required improvements are necessary and feasible for a particular project and determine appropriate alternatives that protect public safety while avoiding unnecessary costs for developers.

Mr. Christofferson stated that the amendments provide greater flexibility, establish a clearer review process, encourage appropriate development, and ensure infrastructure improvements are required only where they are practical and beneficial.

Councilmember Nick Porter commented that he was pleased to see many of the outdated provisions removed, noting that while the previous approach had been well-intentioned, it had not functioned as originally anticipated.

Councilmember Ed Long expressed appreciation for Mr. Christofferson's efforts to simplify and modernize the City's development ordinances.

Councilmember Nick Porter made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2026-24 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.

DISCUSSION REGARDING INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT FOR ATTORNEY SERVICES WITH THE COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - QUINN BENNION

Mayor Corey Foley explained that the discussion was prompted by two letters the City had received from Uintah County, dated June 30, 2026, and July 13, 2026. He stated that, due to legal considerations involving the County, the Council needed to discuss whether the existing Interlocal Agreement for attorney services should continue.

City Manager Quinn Bennion reviewed the background of the agreement, explaining that the Council had previously approved a temporary Interlocal Agreement allowing City Attorney Mike Harrington to assist the Uintah County Attorney's Office after several county attorneys resigned, leaving the newly appointed County Attorney in need of immediate assistance. Under the

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agreement, Mr. Harrington would provide legal services to the County on a temporary basis, with the County reimbursing Vernal City for the time worked.

Mr. Bennion commended the Council for supporting the agreement and noted that the City had missed having Mr. Harrington readily available for both civil matters and assistance to the Police Department. He explained, however, that the recently received correspondence from the County had created potential legal conflicts that prevented the City Attorney from advising the Council on matters involving the County. He stated that the City was now faced with either proceeding without legal counsel on those matters or retaining outside legal counsel at the City's expense.

Mr. Bennion recommended that the Council discuss the matter in a closed session to receive legal advice regarding pending litigation and the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual. He noted that, following the closed session, the Council could reconvene in open session to take any action it deemed appropriate regarding the Interlocal Agreement.

STAFF REPORTS

Mayor Corey Foley reported that the new sewer lift station project was nearing completion. He stated that only a few remaining tasks, including concrete work and equipment connections, remained and noted that the project had experienced delays due to the contractor's workload but was now close to completion.

Councilmember Randel Mills reported that representatives recently met with the Community Impact Board (CIB) regarding funding for the regional sewer master plan. He stated the meeting went well and that the funding request appeared likely to receive approval. He explained that the engineering work would begin with Ashley Valley Water and Sewer Improvement District, followed by Vernal City, with the completed studies ultimately being combined into a regional master plan.

Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll informed the Council that the Grizzly Ridge Fire had grown to approximately 23 acres but was currently contained. She noted that voluntary evacuations remained in effect, the road remained open, and encouraged anyone with campers in the area to retrieve them.

Councilmember Ed Long highlighted recent improvements at the Golden Age Center, noting that management changes implemented earlier in the year had resulted in positive feedback regarding programming and meal quality. He also reported that the Meals on Wheels program had increased from approximately 6,000 to more than 8,000 deliveries per month and encouraged residents to take advantage of the services offered.

City Manager Quinn Bennion thanked everyone who participated in the July 3 and 4 community celebrations. He commended Uintah County, the America 250 Committee, City staff, and community volunteers for their collaborative efforts in organizing the events. Mr. Bennion reported that attendance at the July 3 Block Party far exceeded expectations, with Placer.ai estimating approximately 6,000 attendees, not including individuals under 18 years of age or those with location services disabled, resulting in an estimated attendance of more than 8,000 people. He added that the celebrations continued successfully with the 5K race, parade, park festivities, and fireworks display. Mr. Bennion also announced that the groundbreaking ceremony for the

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Steinaker Service Canal Trail was scheduled for the following Monday at 2:15 p.m.

Mayor Foley reminded the Council of the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Naples pickleball courts scheduled for Friday evening and encouraged members to attend in support of the Naples community and Uintah Special Service District No. 1.

CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Corey Foley announced the closed session portion of the meeting, to be held in the jury room. *Councilmember Ted Munford made a motion to go into closed session for the following items:*

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

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

RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION: *Councilmember Randel Mills moved to reconvene into open session. Councilmember Robin O’Driscoll seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.*

DISCUSSION REGARDING INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT FOR ATTORNEY SERVICES WITH THE COUNTY ATTORNEY’S OFFICE

Mayor Corey Foley welcomed the public back to the meeting and reintroduced the discussion item regarding the interlocal agreement for attorney services. Councilmembers Munford, Mills, O’Driscoll, Long and Porter, along with three staff members, were in attendance of the closed session.

Councilmember Ted Munford stated that the City values its cooperative relationship with Uintah County and supports working together whenever possible for the benefit of the community. He noted, however, that the City had been notified of potential litigation involving the County and, as a result, required the full availability of its own legal counsel.

Councilmember Ted Munford moved to terminate the Interlocal Agreement for Attorney Services with Uintah County effective August 1, 2026, allowing the City Attorney to resume full-time service to Vernal City in anticipation of the pending legal matters. 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.

CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Corey Foley announced that the Council would reconvene in the jury room for the second closed session. He informed those in attendance that the meeting would adjourn following the conclusion of the closed session, and no further business would be conducted in open session.

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD JULY 15, 2026

Councilmember Ted Munford made a motion to go into closed session for the following item:

- 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;*

Councilmember Nick Porter 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 Ed Long seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote and the meeting was declared adjourned.*

Mayor Corey Foley

ATTEST:

Sara Bell, City Recorder

(S E A L)