

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD
AUGUST 5, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the Vernal City Council Room, 374 East Main,
Vernal, Utah 84078.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Ted Munford, Randel Mills, Ed Long, Nick Porter and Mayor Corey Foley. Councilmember Robin O’Driscoll was excused from the meeting. City Manager Quinn Bennion and City Recorder Sara Bell were also excused from the meeting.

WELCOME: Mayor Corey Foley welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the excused absences.

INVOCATION OR UPLIFTING THOUGHT: The invocation was given by Mayor Corey Foley.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilmember Nick Porter.

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

Councilmember Ted Munford moved to approve the minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting held July 15, 2026. Councilmember Randel Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Munford, Mills, Long, and Porter voting in favor.

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF THE WHITE HOUSE ACADEMY LEASE - BRAEDEN CHRISTOFFERSON

Vernal City Assistant City Manager and Planning Director Braeden Christofferson presented the proposed lease renewal for White House Academy. He explained that White House Academy is currently under lease and requested approval of a new lease term. Mr. Christofferson stated that the proposed lease would be for a ten-month period, ending June 5, 2027, and that the rent and other terms would remain the same as the prior lease, with the primary change being the lease timeframe. Mayor Corey Foley stated that the item was straightforward and expressed appreciation for the work completed with White House Academy.

Councilmember Nick Porter moved to approve the White House Academy lease as presented. Councilmember Ed Long seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

*Councilmember Munford..... aye;
Councilmember Mills..... aye;
Councilmember O’Driscoll..... absent;
Councilmember Long..... aye;
Councilmember Porter..... aye.*

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 2026-07, AMENDING THE BUSINESS LICENSE FEE SCHEDULE - BRAEDEN CHRISTOFFERSON

Vernal City Assistant City Manager and Planning Director Braeden Christofferson presented Resolution 2026-07, explaining that the update is intended to consolidate business license fees into one visible location within the City fee schedule and to clearly identify consequences for late renewals and operating without a business license.

Mr. Christofferson stated that the City Council previously approved a significant update to the business license code in February, and that the fee schedule amendment corresponds with that prior code update. He explained that the amendment clarifies that new business applications submitted on or after July 1 will pay one-half of the regular business license fee, and that new applications submitted in December will be charged a \$25 administrative fee.

Mr. Christofferson further explained that renewals submitted after February 1 will be assessed a 25% late fee, and renewals submitted after March 1 will be charged an additional 25% late fee. He noted that renewals submitted after April 1 occur after the license has expired and will be subject to a double assessment because the business would be operating under an expired license.

Mr. Christofferson also identified a drafting correction in item K3, noting that the term “reinstate” should be changed to “renewal” because the updated code does not allow reinstatement in that context. He stated that placing the information in the fee schedule will improve visibility and allow the schedule to be updated more efficiently when needed.

Councilmember Ed Long moved to approve Resolution 2026-07, amending the Business License Fee Schedule as presented. Councilmember Ted Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

Councilmember Munford..... aye;
Councilmember Mills..... aye;
Councilmember O’Driscoll..... absent;
Councilmember Long..... aye;
Councilmember Porter..... aye.

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL FOR 500 SOUTH INTERSECTION STUDY WITH SUNRISE ENGINEERING - KEITH DESPAIN

Vernal City Public Works Director Keith Despain presented a contract with Sunrise Engineering for a 500 South intersection study. He explained that the City received a grant through UDOT technical assistance planning to study the 500 South corridor, specifically including the intersections at Vernal Avenue and 500 West.

Mr. Despain stated that the proposed contract amount with Sunrise Engineering is \$63,809.65. He explained that the study will move the City into preliminary engineering and result in recommendations and concept plans, but will not include construction engineering or leave the project ready for construction at the conclusion of this effort.

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Councilmembers commented that the intersections have needed attention for some time and expressed support for moving forward with the study.

Councilmember Ted Munford moved to approve the 500 South intersection study with Sunrise Engineering in the amount of \$63,809.65. Councilmember Randel Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

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

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF GEOTECHNICAL SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR THE COMMUNITY BLOCK PHASE 1 - KEITH DESPAIN

Vernal City Public Works Director Keith Despain presented a geotechnical services agreement related to the Vernal Community Block Phase 1 project at the former Lamplighter Hotel site. He explained that as the City moves forward with design work for the block, staff needs additional site information, including soil borings in areas where buildings are planned and percolation testing to assist with stormwater planning.

Mr. Despain stated that the City received two proposals and recommended approval of the Socotec proposal for the preliminary geotechnical evaluation in the amount of \$19,600, along with percolation testing in the amount of \$1,200, for a total of \$20,800. He stated that staff recommended skipping the additional detailed seismic study, as that level of investigation is not anticipated to be needed for the City's planned improvements.

Councilmember Ed Long asked whether geotechnical work is required for the project, noting that much of the proposed Community Block concept is open space. Mr. Despain stated that whether the work is required would likely depend on the type of buildings constructed, but that the study would help with general planning, including determining whether soil amendments, foundation considerations, or other pre-foundation work may be needed. He noted that the study would be especially useful for City-planned improvements such as a visitor center, stage, roadway areas, and a large play structure.

Mr. Aaron Averett, a representative from Sunrise Engineering, addressed the Council and stated that the proposed eight boreholes would also help identify groundwater conditions on the site, particularly in relation to recessed features such as an amphitheater and the need to manage stormwater. The representative stated that, in some cases, geotechnical studies can save money by allowing foundations and footings to be designed for actual site conditions rather than overbuilt as a precaution.

Mr. Despain clarified that the geotechnical report would provide recommendations only and would

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not be binding on the City. He stated that the report would provide guidance regarding structures, groundwater, possible over-excavation, and other site conditions identified by the geotechnical engineer.

Councilmember Long stated that he understood the value of the information but remained concerned that some of the work may be redundant with investigations future private developers would conduct for their own projects. Mr. Despain stated that staff would focus the effort on the areas the City anticipates developing, rather than the areas expected to be developed by private commercial ventures.

Councilmember Ed Long moved to approve the geotechnical services agreement for the Community Block Phase 1 in the amount of \$20,800 as presented. Councilmember Ted Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

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

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF SURVEYING SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH SUNRISE ENGINEERING FOR THE COMMUNITY BLOCK PHASE 1 - KEITH DESPAIN

Vernal City Public Works Director Keith Despain presented a surveying services agreement with Sunrise Engineering for the Community Block Phase 1 project. He explained that the proposal would provide an ALTA survey for the block and the area the City plans to develop. The survey would document utilities, boundary information, topography, and other information needed as a basis for design.

Mr. Despain stated that while the first phase of construction will not touch the entire area, staff recommends completing one survey for the full site so that the information can be used throughout the different phases of development. He stated that the proposed contract amount is \$18,800.

Councilmember Nick Porter moved to approve the surveying services agreement with Sunrise Engineering for the Community Block Phase 1 in the amount of \$18,800. Councilmember Ed Long seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

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

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF THE CONTRACT FOR ENGINEERING SERVICES WITH JONES AND DEMILLE FOR THE MAJOR ROADWAY REHABILITATION PROJECT - KEITH DESPAIN

Vernal City Public Works Director Keith Despain presented a contract for engineering services with Jones and DeMille for the Major Roadway Rehabilitation Project. He stated that the City received funding through the Community Impact Board with a 50 percent grant component. The project includes a mill and overlay on 500 South, which has been in poor condition since the winter of 2023, as well as pavement preservation work on major roadways throughout the City, including chip seal or another selected surface treatment.

Mr. Despain stated that the contract includes pre-construction engineering in the lump sum amount of \$85,000, along with construction engineering billed hourly with an anticipated fee of \$108,300, for a total anticipated amount of \$193,300. He explained that pre-construction engineering includes design, bidding, and related services, while construction engineering includes field work, asphalt checking, quality assurance, and quality control during construction.

Mr. Despain stated that staff hopes to move quickly, with the potential to complete paving work on 500 South during the current construction season if weather and contractor availability allow. The remaining roadway preservation work would be anticipated for the following year.

Mayor Corey Foley asked about the use of chip seal compared to other options such as slurry seal or micro surfacing, noting concerns about chip seal on roads used by pedestrians, bicyclists, and trail users. Mr. Bart Jensen, a representative from Jones and DeMille, explained that chip seal is commonly used on highways, county roads, and major city streets because the oil rejuvenates the asphalt and the chip provides a protective wearing surface and friction. He stated that micro surfacing and other options may be available but are generally more expensive, although pricing can vary depending on contractors and timing.

Councilmember Randel Mills asked about in-place recycling methods, and the engineering representative explained that the process reuses existing asphalt aggregate, adds new oil, and places the material back on the roadway. He noted that the cost is likely significantly higher than chip seal, though exact pricing would depend on the project.

Councilmember Long asked whether other treatment options could be considered as part of the engineering proposal. Mr. Despain stated that when staff sought Community Impact Board funding, chip seal was identified because it is familiar and common, but he did not believe the funding necessarily precluded consideration of other pavement preservation options. He stated that staff would want to understand the longevity and value of any alternate treatment compared to chip seal.

Mr. Jensen stated that chip seal is generally the best value for pavement preservation, but provided an example of a Community Impact Board-funded road project where micro surfacing was ultimately selected after bids showed it to be a better-priced option at that time. Mayor Foley suggested that staff look at that example before finalizing the surface treatment approach. Mr.

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Despain noted that sealing newer asphalt can feel counterintuitive, but is often when the City can gain the most road life from pavement preservation.

Councilmember Ed Long moved to approve the contract for engineering services with Jones and DeMille for the Major Roadway Rehabilitation Project in the amount of \$193,300 as presented. Councilmember Nick Porter seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

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

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF CHANGE ORDER 3 WITH CONDIE CONSTRUCTION FOR WORK ON THE 3500 WEST TRANSMISSION LINE - KEITH DESPAIN

Vernal City Public Works Director Keith Despain presented Change Order 3 with Condie Construction for work on the 3500 West transmission line. He explained that the project is also funded through the Community Impact Board and is associated with the broader 100 North project funding package.

Mr. Despain provided a brief update on the 100 North project, stating that the contractor was on target to begin milling on August 10, with paving scheduled to begin August 17 and anticipated completion by August 28. He stated that staff is also looking at adding bike lanes along the full mile and one-half of the roadway.

Mr. Despain stated that, as the 100 North project winds down, the remaining 3500 West work includes construction of a new vault to control flow into the City's one-million-gallon tank. He noted that the water crew previously slip-lined approximately three miles of new HDPE pipe along 3500 West, and the vault is the final major piece needed to make that work operational. The proposed vault would house a control valve and related equipment to help the City control and monitor the tank, which is one of the City's two main tanks feeding the system.

Mr. Despain explained that the base bid for the work is \$214,875. Staff also requested alternates for an upgraded vault lid to improve access and fencing to enclose the vault within the existing fenced tank area. The alternates total \$10,700, bringing the total proposed change order amount to \$225,575. Mr. Despain recommended approval of the full change order, including alternates, subject to remaining within the available Community Impact Board funding. He stated that the project appears to be coming in under budget on several items, but staff would preserve flexibility in case unforeseen issues arise.

In response to questions, Mr. Despain stated that if the project were to exceed available Community Impact Board funding, the City would need to identify an internal funding source,

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self-perform portions of the work, or work with Condie Construction on possible cost adjustments. He complimented Condie Construction for its work on the project, noting that it has installed nearly three miles of pipeline and is completing approximately one and one-half miles of roadway paving within about five months, with only limited change orders on a large and complex project.

Mayor Corey Foley acknowledged that the project has been inconvenient for residents but noted the significant amount of water and sewer work completed. Mr. Despain stated that he was pleased with the project's timing and budget status.

Councilmember Ted Munford moved to approve Change Order 3 with Condie Construction for the 3500 West transmission line in the total amount of \$225,575, including the alternate options. Councilmember Randel Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

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

STAFF REPORTS

Mayor Corey Foley reported that the Ashley Valley Sewer Management Board meeting scheduled for the following week had been postponed to the next week. He stated that he did not have an additional report from that committee.

Assistant City Manager Braeden Christofferson reported that the Planning Commission would consider a rezone request on August 11 for property located near 275 South 400 East, south of City Hall and west of the fairgrounds. He stated that the property is an open vacant lot between commercial buildings and that the request would be to rezone the property from R-3 to a commercial zone.

Police Chief Mike Gledhill provided an update regarding license plate reader cameras and stated that Vernal Police Department had issued a social media post to provide public education on the topic. He stated that the Police Department manages approximately 12 license plate readers throughout the Basin and that there are strict Utah Code requirements and department policies governing their use.

Chief Gledhill explained that the cameras are not used for facial recognition or to enforce simple traffic violations. He stated that they are used for law enforcement purposes such as felony investigations, missing persons, child abductions, and similar matters. He further explained that the system includes an audit process requiring a case number or lawful reason when license plate information is entered, and that Sergeant Manning reviews entries weekly to ensure the system is being used appropriately.

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Councilmember Ed Long asked whether there are additional license plate readers in town that are not operated by Vernal City. Chief Gledhill stated that some private businesses have license plate reader systems, but the Police Department does not have access to that data and would need a search warrant to obtain it from private property.

Mayor Foley thanked Chief Gledhill and the Police Department for their work related to a recent tragic incident in the community. He acknowledged that the investigation was difficult for officers, those involved, and members of the community, and expressed sympathy for the family and individuals affected.

CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Corey Foley stated that there was a need for a closed session. Councilmember Ted Munford moved 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. 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. And 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 with the following roll call vote:

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

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