

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD
AUGUST 9, 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, and 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 Ted Munford.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilmember Randel Mills.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD
August 5, 2026**

Councilmember Randel Mills moved to approve the minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting held August 5, 2026. Councilmember Ted Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Munford, Mills, O'Driscoll, Long, and Porter voting in favor.

MAYOR'S RECOGNITION AWARD FOR IZZIE JACKSON - MAYOR COREY FOLEY

Mayor Corey Foley presented the Mayor's Recognition Award to Izzie Jackson for her continued service and generosity to the community through her lemonade stand, "Izzie's Squeeze of Joy." Mayor Foley explained that each year, Izzie uses her lemonade stand to raise funds to buy supplies for local food pantries.

Mayor Foley stated that this year, Izzie set a goal of raising \$1,776 for the Veterans Food Pantry. She exceeded that goal, ultimately raising \$2,070 to support local veterans and families in need. He recognized Izzie for the joy, generosity, and kindness she brings to her efforts and noted that her example demonstrates that community service does not depend on age or title, but on a willingness to help others.

Mayor Foley thanked Izzie and her parents for attending the meeting and noted that opportunities to recognize individuals making a positive difference in the community are among the rewarding aspects of serving in local government.

PRESENTATION ABOUT SIDEWALK REPAIR OPERATION - CLINT MORTON

Clint Morton presented a new method City crews have implemented to repair significant sidewalk trip hazards. He explained that minor elevation differences can typically be ground down or corrected by lifting sidewalk panels, however, larger trip hazards of two to three inches have traditionally required complete replacement. These repairs often require the City to wait for a

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contractor and may result in temporary asphalt or concrete patches remaining in place for an extended period. Mr. Morton noted that replacing a standard four-by-five-foot sidewalk section costs approximately \$350, with costs increasing considerably when multiple panels are included in a larger project.

Mr. Morton credited City employee Cordell Rich with developing an alternative repair method. Mr. Rich worked with City welder Riley Harrison to fabricate metal brackets that can be anchored to an existing concrete panel. Using the crane on the welding truck, crews are able to lift the entire panel without damaging it, repair and compact the underlying base, remove tree roots or other obstructions as necessary, and return the existing panel to a level position.

Mr. Morton explained that the method allows City crews to address significant trip hazards immediately without waiting for contractors or installing temporary patches. It also reduces the City's liability by allowing hazards to be corrected more quickly, improves the City's ability to maintain ADA-compliant sidewalks, and reduces concrete replacement costs. The process also allows the City to prioritize larger sidewalk replacement projects in high-use pedestrian areas rather than directing project funding toward isolated hazards simply because they require immediate attention.

Mr. Morton reported that City crews have completed approximately 13 major trip-hazard repairs using the method during the summer, with additional repairs planned. He commended the employees involved for identifying a problem, developing a creative solution, and successfully implementing it.

Councilmember Randel Mills requested that staff track the number of repairs and associated cost savings so an annual figure could be provided. He stated that the information would be a valuable way to demonstrate the City's efforts to use taxpayer funds responsibly.

Councilmember Ed Long stated that the process was an example of good City practice and commended employees for developing an innovative and effective solution. Councilmember Mills agreed and encouraged staff to communicate the Council's appreciation to the employees involved. He emphasized that the Council welcomes ideas from City employees and encouraged employees to continue identifying and proposing creative solutions that can improve City operations.

**CONSIDER THE DISMISSAL OF THE WILLOW BEND ANNEXATION PETITION –
BRAEDEN CHRISTOFFERSON**

Assistant City Manager Braeden Christofferson presented the status of the Willow Bend Annexation Petition, which had previously been accepted by the City Council and certified by the City Recorder. He explained that the petitioners submitted a written request to withdraw the petition and no longer wished to proceed with the current annexation. Staff recommended that the City Council formally dismiss the petition based upon the petitioners' withdrawal.

Mr. Christofferson explained that the timing of the withdrawal presented a procedural issue under State statute. The City received protests to the annexation on the final day of the 30-day protest

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period and did not have a City Council meeting within the remaining protest period in which to take action. He noted that there are differing interpretations regarding whether the City may dismiss the petition outside of that timeframe and that the County Boundary Commission may determine that the dismissal does not terminate its review. Staff nevertheless recommended that the Council formally act on the petitioners' request to withdraw.

City Manager Quinn Bennion stated that City staff viewed the property owners' and applicants' withdrawal as sufficient grounds for dismissal, and acknowledged that County staff had expressed a different interpretation. He explained that one provision of State statute references action at the next available City Council meeting, while another references action within the 30-day protest period. Because the protests were received on the final day of the protest period, the City had no practical opportunity to act before that period expired. Mr. Bennion stated that the County had previously indicated that the matter would continue to the Boundary Commission even if the petitioners withdrew and the City Council dismissed the petition.

Mayor Corey Foley reported receiving a recent update indicating that the County planned to pause the Boundary Commission proceedings. He disclosed that he serves on the Boundary Commission as a representative of Vernal City, having been appointed by former Mayor Doug Hammond. Mayor Foley noted that a Boundary Commission meeting had been contemplated for September 2, which conflicted with the regularly scheduled City Council meeting.

Mr. Bennion clarified that the petitioners intend to submit a new annexation petition after making revisions and adding property to the proposed annexation area.

Councilmember Ted Munford questioned why the withdrawal would present an issue and asked what additional action the City could have taken under the circumstances. Councilmember Ed Long asked why City Council approval was necessary when an annexation applicant voluntarily chose to withdraw its petition.

Mr. Christofferson explained that State statute does not specifically establish a process for withdrawal of an entire active annexation petition by the petitioner, although it does address withdrawal of individual signatures from a petition. Because there is no specific statutory process for the petitioner's withdrawal, staff recommended that the City Council formally dismiss the petition.

Councilmember Ted Munford moved to dismiss the Willow Bend Annexation Petition. Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll 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>aye;</i>
<i>Councilmember Porter.....</i>	<i>aye.</i>

CONSIDER RESOLUTION 2026-08 AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF WATER AND SEWER REVENUE BONDS - KEITH DESPAIN

Public Works Director Keith Despain presented Resolution 2026-08, a parameters resolution authorizing the issuance of water and sewer revenue bonds associated with Community Impact Board (CIB) funding for the 100 North and 3500 West projects. He explained that the resolution establishes a maximum bond amount of \$2 million, while the anticipated loan amount is approximately \$1.9 million.

Mr. Despain explained that approval of the parameters resolution was one step in the bond issuance process. Following approval, the City would publish a notice of bonds to be issued, followed by a 30-day public information period. A public hearing would be held on September 2, 2026, to receive public comment, with bond closing anticipated during the week of September 21. He noted that the funding originated from the City's 2025 CIB application for the 100 North and 3500 West projects.

City Manager Quinn Bennion clarified that the CIB approved funding for the projects through two separate actions, with the overall funding structured as approximately 70 percent grant and 30 percent loan. He also noted a correction was needed in the City Manager's memorandum regarding the funding amounts.

Mr. Despain explained that the City returned to the CIB for supplemental funding and that his understanding was that the CIB intended to package the original and supplemental loan amounts under the same 15-year term. Mr. Bennion stated that staff would verify the loan terms, as his information indicated that the original funding approved in June carried a 30-year term at 0.5 percent interest, while the supplemental funding carried a 15-year term at 0.5 percent interest.

Councilmember Ed Long asked whether the two loan amounts had been combined. Mr. Despain stated that his understanding was that the CIB intended to combine the funding under the same terms. Staff agreed to confirm the final loan structure prior to the next action on the bonds.

Mayor Corey Foley expressed appreciation for the CIB's financial support of the projects.

Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll moved to approve Resolution 2026-08, authorizing the issuance of water and sewer revenue bonds, 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..... aye;
Councilmember Long..... aye;
Councilmember Porter..... aye.

CONSIDER THE APPROVAL OF A PREFERRED CONTRACTOR FOR THE AMERICAN DREAM SUBDIVISION PROJECT - KEITH DESPAIN

Keith Despain explained that Vernal City has partnered with the Uintah Basin Association of Governments (UBAOG) to support affordable housing through its Mutual Self-Help Housing Program. The program assists income-qualified participants with achieving homeownership by having groups of participants work together to construct their homes.

Mr. Despain explained that the City previously purchased property and subsequently sold it to UBAOG for the development. Phase One consists of four homes located near 600 South between 300 East and 350 East, which are nearing completion and occupancy. Phase Two would develop the property immediately north of those homes and include construction of a U-shaped roadway, a pedestrian connection to the neighborhood to the north, water and sewer infrastructure with service stubs, curb, gutter, sidewalk, and asphalt roadway improvements connecting to 600 South.

Mr. Despain stated that the City had also hoped to construct an approximately 150-foot roadway stub south of 600 South as part of the same contract. However, bids for the entire project exceeded the available funding. The project is funded through a \$700,000 Community Development Block Grant. Two bids were received, with total project bids of approximately \$900,000 and \$971,000 when the southern portion was included.

Because the bid documents separated the northern and southern portions of the project, the City could proceed with the northern portion independently. Condie Construction submitted a bid of \$607,305 for the northern portion, while Backhoe Supremo submitted a bid of \$636,928.75. Mr. Despain recommended awarding the northern portion of the project to Condie Construction for \$607,305.

Mr. Despain explained that although the City's purchasing policy provides a local preference for certain purchases, the project is federally funded and federal requirements mandate selection of the lowest responsive bidder. Therefore, the City's local preference provisions could not be applied to the project. Councilmember Ted Munford expressed disappointment that the City could not utilize its local preference provisions. Mr. Despain explained that doing so would likely jeopardize the federal funding and require the City to fund the project from its own resources.

Councilmember Ted Munford moved to approve Condie Construction as the low bid contractor for the American Dream subdivision as presented. Councilmember Nick Porter seconded the motion. Mayor Corey Foley clarified for the record of the minutes that the low bid amount from Condie Construction totaled \$607,305. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

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

REVIEW OF DRAFT ANNEXATION INFORMATION PACKET - QUINN BENNION

City Manager Quinn Bennion presented a draft Annexation Information Packet developed to provide clear and accessible information to property owners considering annexation or who may be affected by a proposed annexation. He explained that Vernal City had experienced very little annexation activity for approximately 15 years, largely due to water availability within the Ashley Valley area. Annexation interest has increased considerably during the past two years, with several annexations completed and additional property owners currently making inquiries.

Mr. Bennion stated that staff recognized the need for consistent public information regarding the annexation process and the questions that commonly arise. Communications Coordinator Katie Flaniken worked with Assistant City Manager and Planning Director Braeden Christofferson, Mr. Bennion, and other City staff to develop the packet. He emphasized that the document was still in draft form and requested that Councilmembers review it and provide comments, corrections, or suggestions before it is finalized.

Mr. Bennion highlighted several topics addressed in the packet, including property taxes, fees, City services, animals, Greenbelt property, and differences in code enforcement. He noted that property taxes are one of the most common questions associated with annexation. The packet provides an example showing that a primary residence valued at \$300,000 would experience an estimated \$75 annual increase in property taxes following annexation. However, the City's contracted garbage service could provide an estimated annual savings of \$96 compared to individually contracted service. He noted that a typographical error identifying the garbage savings as monthly rather than annual would be corrected.

Mr. Bennion also discussed questions regarding differences between City and County ordinances. He explained that many City and County regulations are similar, but enforcement practices may differ. The packet identifies several commonly encountered City regulations, including weed and property maintenance requirements, restrictions on leaving trailers on City streets for more than 72 hours, and restrictions regarding inoperable vehicles on City streets.

Mr. Bennion encouraged Councilmembers and members of the public to provide feedback regarding information that may be unclear or should be expanded. Staff intends to begin distributing the packet within the next several weeks and may revise it in the future as additional questions or issues are identified through the annexation process.

The City Council expressed support for the packet and agreed that the information was comprehensive and easy to understand. Mayor Corey Foley complimented Communications Coordinator Katie Flaniken for her work in developing and designing an attractive, accessible resource for the public.

STAFF REPORTS

Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll reported that the Vernal Area Chamber of Commerce Public

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Relations Committee recently presented City employee Matt Tate with the Outstanding Public Service Award in recognition of his volunteer efforts during the Christmas season. She noted that Mr. Tate is humble about his service and does not seek recognition for his efforts.

City Manager Quinn Bennion added that Mr. Tate uses personal vacation time to assist Santa during the holiday season. Although he charges for appearances, he donates the proceeds back to families in need through Santa's Angels. Mr. Bennion reported that approximately 150 families were assisted through the program last year.

Mayor Corey Foley provided an update on the Ashley Valley Sewer Management Board lift station project. He reported that substantial completion is anticipated between September 1 and September 15, followed by approximately 30 days for completion of remaining punch list items. Mayor Foley stated that despite several challenges and delays throughout construction, the project is nearing completion and will provide an important improvement to the area's sewer collection system.

Keith Despain provided an update on the 100 North project. He explained that milling of the existing asphalt revealed significant variations in pavement thickness, resulting in a surface that was not suitable for placement of the new asphalt. Paving directly over the remaining material could have resulted in deterioration and reflective cracking within a short period of time. To provide a stable paving surface, the contractor is pulverizing the remaining asphalt and road base, adding moisture, and recompacting the material.

Mr. Despain stated that the additional preparation delayed paving by approximately one week. The contractor is expected to begin with smaller trench patches and utility tie-ins near 500 East, 1000 West, and along 800 West near the Post Office before beginning the full overlay of 100 North. Once the full paving operation begins, the contractor anticipates completing approximately one and one-half blocks per day, with the roadway paving expected to take approximately two weeks.

Mr. Despain estimated the additional pulverizing and recompaction work at approximately \$98,000. Any savings resulting from quantities coming in under budget elsewhere in the project would first be used to offset the additional expense. Any remaining amount beyond available project funding would be paid from water and sewer funds.

Councilmember Ted Munford asked whether staff would anticipate similar pavement conditions when planning future projects. Mr. Despain confirmed that staff is already considering the issue when evaluating future roadway projects. Mayor Foley commented that the improvements would be a significant benefit once construction is complete.

Mr. Despain also reported that the completed 100 North roadway would include bicycle lanes consistent with the City's Trails Master Plan. The planned configuration includes a double-yellow centerline, 12-foot travel lanes, a two- to three-foot buffer between vehicle and bicycle lanes, designated bicycle lanes, and parking adjacent to the curb.

Mayor Foley noted the potential difficulty of paving near schools while classes are in session. Mr.

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Despain stated that the contractor has maintained communication with the school district's bus garage and that coordination has gone well. He explained that maintaining access along 500 East to 200 South was the primary concern for school transportation, and the project had created less disruption than initially anticipated.

Mayor Foley asked for an update on the Utah Department of Transportation's Highway 191 project. Mr. Despain reported that the project remained on schedule to begin around the first of September, with preliminary work already underway. He explained that the project would include milling and overlay work on Highway 191 from Highway 40 north to the Simplot Overlook. Mayor Foley and Mr. Despain noted that the project would be substantial and would require coordination around significant truck traffic along the corridor.

City Manager Quinn Bennion reminded the Council that the Dinah "SOAR" Days Hot Air Balloon Festival would take place prior to the next City Council meeting. He noted that street closures were planned for Friday and Saturday and would generally follow the same traffic and event plan used the previous year.

CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Corey Foley stated that there was a need for a closed session. Councilmember Robin O'Driscoll 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. Strategy sessions to discuss the sale of real property, including any form of a water right or water shares*
- 4. 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..... aye;
Councilmember Long..... aye;
Councilmember Porter..... aye.

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ADJOURN: There being no further business; *Councilmember Randel Mills moved to adjourn. Councilmember Nick Porter seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote and the meeting was declared adjourned.*