

City of La Verkin

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La Verkin City Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 3, 2020, 6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers, 111 S. Main, La Verkin, Utah

Present: Mayor Richard Hirschi, Council Members: Micah Gubler, Patricia Wise, Ray Justice, and Kelly Wilson; Staff: Christy Ballard, Kyle Gubler, Kevin Bennett, Derek Imlay, and Chief Ben Lee; Public: Kristina Pledger, Amber & David Crouse, Nicole Shaw, Kallie Sizemore, Braden Crosby, Jana Anderson, Cheryl Hawkins, Amy Curtis, Damon Atkinson, Gail Atkinson, Brayli Karaim, and John Valenti.

Councilman Chuck Hardy was excused.

A. Called to Order –The invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance were given by Ray Justice at 6:00 pm.

B. Consent Agenda: (Items on the consent agenda may not require discussion. These items will be a single motion unless removed at the request of the Mayor or City Council.)

1. Declarations of conflict of interest
2. Agenda
3. Meeting Minutes: May 20, 2020, regular meeting
4. Review Invoices and Checks: \$114,389.49

The motion was made by Councilman Ray Justice to approve the consent agenda as written including the minutes of the May 20, 2020, regular meeting and Invoices and Checks in the amount of \$114,389.49 second by Councilwoman Patricia Wise. Roll Call Vote: Gubler-yes. Justice-yes, Wise-yes, Wilson-yes. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Citizen Comment & Request for Future Agenda Items:

Kristina Pledger-She met Sergeant Amber Crouse eleven years ago. She showed empathy and was compassionate. When Kristina moved to La Verkin and found out she was an officer here she felt grateful to have such a wonderful officer in the community. She firmly believes Sergeant Crouse is an example of what an officer should be like, compassionate yet firmly enforces the law. She goes above and beyond in serving the community by saving lives and doing community service for individuals. She has integrity. There are so many examples she could give but it would take the whole night. In the world today, we need more officers like her.

Jana Anderson-She feels Sergeant Crouse is a great officer as well. One time she was visiting someone with polio who was in a wheelchair when the neighboring field caught on fire. Jana called Sergeant Crouse and she showed up immediately. She got the firefighters there immediately. We can always count on Sergeant Crouse. Another time, a person had a heart attack, and Sergeant Crouse rescued him. We are so grateful. Another time her neighbor wouldn't answer the phone so she called Sergeant Crouse and knew she could count on her to help in any way possible. We feel like she is someone the citizens can trust as a policeman and that she will do her job.

Cheryl Hawkins-She is here to speak on behalf of so many other ladies who were not able to come. They are so grateful to have Amber on our police force. A few years ago, she was driving too fast and was pulled over by Amber and given a citation. At first, she was mad until she remembered Amber had given her a warning not a year before on that same street. She feels that kind of sums Amber up, that she is tough at enforcing the law, but she also has a heart. Cheryl has volunteered for 5 years at the animal shelter and she has seen Amber more than once there. Not just to sign something, but actual hands-on help. That makes a huge difference in a shelter where a lot of it depends on people helping.

Even if Amber is not on shift, if there is something that she can do, she'll be there to do it. Cheryl thinks it's because it really is in Amber's heart to do what she does. Amber has been on different police forces for a total of 14 years with 6 of those being in La Verkin. She is familiar with the people. She has seen people take their first breath and their last. If

Cheryl ever has grandkids and they get in trouble with the law, she hopes they deal with Amber. She hopes Amber is here for a long time because she is a hard worker and loves the work and that is what we need. She hopes Amber knows how much they appreciate all she does for our community.

Amy Curtis-She loves Amber. She is a great person, a great friend, and a great police officer. Amber was very instrumental in a service project of putting together first aid kits to hand out to homeless people or anyone in need. She knows Amber has been involved in bicycle safety at the school. Amy was driving in the car with her kids when an ad in support of our local heroes come on the radio. It was Amber talking about the lady on the bridge and how she stopped and helped. When it was over, Amy commented to her children how cool that was and her six-year-old asked who it was talking saying that she recognized the voice. Amy told her it was Amber. The little girl said, "oh ya, she is my friend". Any way that we can have positive interaction with a police officer, especially for our children, is good. Amber is great at that.

Amber helped Amy when there was a lot of drug activity in her neighborhood. She knew she could always call Amber to talk to her and she would help keep the neighborhood safe. They asked for the City's help and that was very short-lived. Amber was always there to help them even if it was just listening to frustrations. She respects Amber a lot. Amber can be hard and be a good police officer but also show compassion and that is not necessarily something that a lot of police officers do. She hopes Amber stays around. Her kids love seeing Amber and she does a lot for the community. She hopes the City will see that and recognize it.

Damon Atkinson-He is responsible for the Atkinson boys. Six boys and a lot of trouble over the years. Some of the boys were in a lot of trouble and when it comes right down to it, Sergeant Crouse is the only officer those boys would trust. She did help those boys through the rough stages. One time when one of those boys attempted suicide Amber and her husband Dave took him aside and encouraged him to do the right thing. Amber is a model officer for community policing which is what La Verkin needs. We don't need power struggles. We don't need the big guy on the block with the "you're going to listen to me" mentality. Our community needs community police officers. Amber has helped his kids. She has helped them grow, helped them see the light, and helped them become good citizens.

D. Business:

1. Discussion and possible action to approve Resolution R-2020-10; a resolution accepting a Utah Outdoor Recreation Grant award from, and authorizing and approving a grant-related cooperative agreement or contract with the Governor's Office of Economic Development, to assist with needed funding for proposed improvements at the Power Plant Trailhead Park in southwest La Verkin.

Kyle explained this grant needs to be formally approved after tentative approval was given at the last City Council meeting. The grant is a 50/50 match, up to \$27,000. That includes cash and labor.

Mayor Hirschi thanked Councilwoman Wise for her work in getting this grant.

The motion was made by Councilman Kelly Wilson to approve Resolution R-2020-10; a resolution accepting a Utah Outdoor Recreation Grant award from, and authorizing and approving a grant-related cooperative agreement or contract with the Governor's Office of Economic Development, to assist with needed funding for proposed improvements at the Power Plant Trailhead Park in southwest La Verkin, second by Councilman Ray Justice. Roll Call Vote: Wilson-yes, Wise-yes, Justice-yes, Gubler-yes. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Discussion and possible action to approve Resolution R-2020-11; a resolution accepting the Rachel Ray COVID 19 Grant Award from Best Friends Animal Society (BFAS), and authorizing and approving a grant-related agreement with BFAS, to fund various preventive, mitigating, and responsive efforts of the City and its animal shelter facility and personnel to meet challenges associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Chief Lee explained this grant needs to be accepted. Cathy Freitas, an animal control officer, applied for this grant on behalf of the City. He received a verbal confirmation that Best Friends would allow La Verkin to use the funds not only until September, which is what the grant originally stated but throughout the next budget year. Which is a huge benefit to the City.

The City utilizes Best Friends for all the spay/neuters of our animals, at no cost. Best Friends has been closed the last couple of months, so they offered this grant to help cover the costs while they have been closed due to COVID 19. The grant is for \$5,000.

The motion was made by Councilman Kelly Wilson to approve Resolution R-2020-11; a resolution accepting the Rachel Ray COVID 19 Grant Award from Best Friends Animal Society (BFAS), and authorizing and approving a grant-related agreement with BFAS, to fund various preventive, mitigating, and responsive efforts of the City and its animal shelter facility and personnel to meet challenges associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, second by Councilwoman Patricia Wise. Roll Call Vote: Gubler-yes. Justice-yes, Wise-yes, Wilson-yes. Motion carried unanimously.

E. Mayor & Council Reports:

Mayor Hirschi-Work on the Power Plant Trailhead Park has begun. Derek's crew has been installing and connecting the utilities. The restroom will be installed soon. He thanked Derek for all the great work they are doing there. He thanked the police department and the office staff for all the work they are doing.

Gubler-Thanked Chief Lee and the public safety department for the report they received regarding recent events with other public safety officers. He is grateful for the principles that our officers employ while they are doing their duties. They represent La Verkin City very well. The irrigation pressure has been good this year and the residents have noticed. He has received a lot of positive feedback and wanted to thank Derek and his crew for the work they are doing.

Wilson- He reported on the Ash Creek Special Service District meeting. There is an individual in Hurricane City that feels Ash Creek SSD should get out of the hay business. He presented his reasons why to the Board and it will be on the next agenda. It is in the best interest of the citizens who belong to the District that Ash Creek continues selling hay so he is confident that will not change.

Wise-The City has signed an agreement with SITLA for the right to police and maintain the La Verkin Overlook Trailhead and trail.

Justice-The Solid Waste District meets next week to finalize the contracts for trash collection, recycling, and the landfill. The concept of the District running the landfill was "shot down" even though there were quite a few members in favor of doing that. The proposal said it would save the District about \$700,000. They are going to continue with the recycling program. He thanked the police department for everything they do, especially with everything going on in the world right now.

F. Closed Session:

The motion was made by Councilman Ray Justice to adjourn to a closed session at the location of 111 South Main Street, La Verkin Utah to discuss pending or reasonably imminent litigation as well as discuss the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual, second by Councilman Micah Gubler. Wilson-yes, Wise-yes, Justice-yes, Gubler-yes. Motion carried unanimously at 6:35 pm

G. Reconvene from Closed Session:

The Councilmembers returned to the regular meeting at 8:21 pm

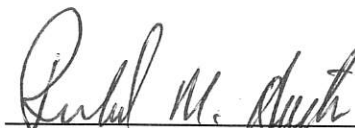
H. Adjourn:

The motion was made by Councilman Ray Justice to adjourn, second by Councilman Kelly Wilson. The motion carried unanimously at 8:21 pm.

Minutes were done by Christy Ballard.

June 17, 2020

Date Approved


Mayor Richard M. Hirschi

ATTEST.


Christy Ballard
City Recorder

