

City of La Verkin

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La Verkin City Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 19, 2022, 6:00 pm.

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

Present: Mayor Kelly Wilson, Council Members: Richard Hirschi, Patricia Wise, Blair Gubler, Micah Gubler, and Chuck Hardy; Staff: Kyle Gubler, Derek Imlay, Kevin Bennett, Chief Ben Lee, and Christy Ballard, Public: John Valenti, Chris Lindquist, Robert George, Ray Justice, Brian Stewart, Nick Nuccitelli, and Amanda Barr.

A. Called to Order –The invocation/thought and Pledge of Allegiance were given by Micah Gubler at 6:00 pm.

B. Council Vacancy:

1. Interview

The order of the interviews was drawn from a hat. Each candidate had 5 minutes to talk about themselves, why they wanted to be a council member, and what they could bring to the community.

Brian Stewart-He grew up with an agricultural background and earned his IT Degree from Utah State University. He contracted with the Department of Defense and spent the next five years at Dugway Proving Ground providing IT services for the Army. He also covered Toole and Deseret Chemical. After that, they spent 18 years in Europe doing the same job in different countries. This helped broaden his perspective and understand the world in which we live. From a small child to today, he has had the opportunity to work with a diverse group of people, people with different ideas, languages, and cultures. He has always tried to seek out their perspective and understanding of their world. Surprisingly, people are most concerned about their families regardless of where you go. That is important to understand. We are all very similar in that regard.

He loves to see things from a different perspective. To understand better what is being dealt with, whether the world, politics or the community. There are many issues the Council faces. He likes to get an understanding by probing and asking to make a better decision.

When they moved back from Europe, he had a very strong desire to become aware of what was happening around him. That is the reason he began attending city council and planning commission meetings. He feels like he understands some of the issues going on in the City. Through it all, there are strong opinions in certain situations. He would seek cohesiveness and civility to try to come to a decision that the majority of the citizens would agree with. He is a champion for those who feel they don't have a voice. He would seek those individuals out and try to understand their perspectives. The challenges facing La Verkin are growth, development, and economics. An article said 66% of Utah's population would increase over the next 40 years. That's a lot of growth that will need to be managed, and he is willing to look at that and make the best decision.

Ray Justice-He served on the Council in the past. In the last election, he was the 3rd highest vote. He feels he has put in the time, always does his research, and is always prepared.

When he was a young man, he received his Eagle Scout, and one of the things that were most important to him was to be active and productive in his community and government and be influential with votes made by Councilmembers.

He is already trained and would be able to "hit the ground running." He is prepared and knows the background of the facilities and the experiences that the Council is going through. He has made those tough decisions in the past and is ready to continue to do that for the next two years.

He did not grow up here, but he did marry a Gubler who did grow up here. He and his wife have two children that were born in La Verkin. His son now attends Utah State University, and his daughter is trying to figure out life.

We all have different types of backgrounds.

He received his bachelor's degree in Travel and Tourism from the Geography Department at BYU. He took a lot of economics, business management, and advertising classes to go into the hotel business. He spent 20 years as a successful administrator of a hotel in Springdale. He hired, trained, and performed all human resource roles for that business. The hotel sold, and the new owners got rid of all employees. Most of the crew had been together those 20 years.

After that, he moved to Branson, Missouri, for about one year. When he moved back, he attended meetings watching and learning.

He would like to be a part of and corporative with the current Council. He believes as elected/appointed officials, they are the ambassadors for the City of La Verkin. How they act and present themselves will always be in the public eye, how they handle themselves and the affairs by trying to stay out of the limelight and keep La Verkin City out of the news. He has seen what it is like when council members don't get along and felt very "put out" by that. He is prepared to hit the ground running and is ready, willing, and able.

Robert George-He has lived in La Verkin for about 11 years. He applied for City Council because the city council is where residents have a broader ability to make a meaningful difference to the people living and working in La Verkin. He wants to figure out a way to help the City move forward with incremental and affordable ideas without compounding liabilities with the knowledge he gained working for a local municipality. He would like to share his working knowledge with his community. He understands each municipality has different issues but recognizes the fundamentals are the same. What he has to offer the City of La Verkin is six-and-a-half years of experience working for the town of Springdale as the street supervisor. He has been responsible for developing and overseeing roughly an \$800,000- \$1.5 million-dollar annual streets department budget. He also carries certifications in water treatment and distribution of sewer lagoons.

As the project manager, he oversees the design phase, the complete reconstruction of streets, and other projects.

He is over the maintenance of roads and storm drains, surface trails, sidewalks, curb & gutters, and he has the contract with UDOT to maintain SR 9 for the three miles of Springdale. He has a good working relationship with UDOT, DOT, Zion National Park, several engineering firms, and local contractors.

As the street supervisor, he regularly works with the council, planning commission, town manager, lawyers, community development, police, and parks and recreation. He has drafted RFP's, sealed bid documents, helped create town code, and helped with revisions and updates to that code. He has worked on updating the general plan twice, stormwater master plan, active transportation plan, and construction standards and design. He is also on the trails committee, records management committee, and various other collaborative and community outreach committees. He was also on the SR 9 Springdale reconstruction design committee.

He has the motivation and time required for this position.

Richard Hirschi-He and his wife have lived in La Verkin for 41 years in the same house. In those years, he has seen a lot of growth and development in La Verkin. That is something that needs to be looked at.

He has served on the city council and has also been the mayor. There are things the Council is working on that he would like to see finished, which is one of the reasons why he decided to run for this seat.

He recently took a couple of his grandsons to the City Park. There were a lot of other kids playing, and it got him thinking about the other parks in La Verkin. The Power Plant Park is the newest park in the City and is in the final stages of completion. It is important to have these parks for our kids. Several people were walking around exercising, that may be something we think about also.

He loves La Verkin. He has a hard time telling somebody they can't move here. He often wonders what would have happened if someone had "closed the door" on the other side of the bridge and not let people in.

We do have to be careful, but if someone owns a piece of property and wants to build on it, he has a hard time telling them they can't if they follow the City ordinances. He also has a hard time telling bigger developments that help pay for the infrastructure they can't develop. He does understand it's a two-edged sword, and the City does need to make sure things are done the way they should.

He went to St. George and noticed how far out Washington and St. George have developed. It's coming this way and will be here before long. We need to be careful in how we do that.

There are several things throughout the City that the Council needs to be aware of and several departments to be mindful of. He would like to help those things move forward.

Amanda Barr-She and her husband moved to La Verkin about one year ago after ten years of visiting her parents, who live down the road. Every time her family would come for a visit going back to Las Vegas was dreaded, and some form of someday we're going to move here would be said. In July 2020, they decided to make that move. Within two months, she applied for jobs in Utah, put their house on the market, and moved. It was the best decision they have ever made.

Every day she is reminded of why they moved here as she waves to her neighbors, sees people helping strangers, and of course, the golden hour when the sun hits the La Verkin "L" just right, and it looks like the whole mountain glows.

The values and support from this community are amazing and something they didn't even know they were missing while living in Las Vegas.

She wants to run for the city council because she enjoys being an advocate for the people and working with others to help build our community stronger. She wants to be informed and make a positive impact on her neighbors.

She cares what is happening around her and doesn't want to slide into the background by not doing anything and find herself complaining in 10 years how much her town has changed.

Our community is growing, something we cannot stop. However, the core values of our community need to remain intact. She feels that by becoming a city council member, she can spread those values throughout our community, encourage community involvement, and be a voice for the people of La Verkin.

Her work history includes working as a substitute teacher, welfare fraud investigator, child protective services investigator. She is currently a caseworker specialist with the Division of Services for People with Disabilities.

Her previous experience as an investigator has taught her to gather all pertinent information necessary to make an informed decision that could affect all parties involved, even if it is unpopular. Her work as a teacher and her work with people with disabilities has taught her to listen to what people are saying and treat them fairly, so they know their opinion matters, and they are important.

She looks for these traits when she researches who to vote for during elections. They are traits she finds very important for every elected official and every government employee.

In her previous and current employment, she has collaborated with government officials, judges, attorneys, police, social workers, and people from all socio-economic backgrounds to ensure everyone is treated fairly and everyone is heard. As a member of the city council, she can use her experience to help the public be more informed about what is going on and have a voice when needed to feel they are an active participant in our community.

2. Election

There were two rounds of elections. The Councilmembers and Mayor first voted for two individuals. The top two votes were Richard Hirschi and a three-way tie for the second position between Amanda Barr, Brian Stewart, and Ray Justice. A deck of cards determined the tie with the highest number moving on to the next round. The highest card was Amanda Barr.

The Councilmembers voted a second time for one person. The Mayor's vote would only be counted if there was a tie. Richard Hirschi was elected to fill the Councilmember seat.

Mayor Wilson thanked all the individuals for their willingness to serve.

3. Swearing in

Christy Ballard, City Recorder, swore in Richard Hirschi.

C. Appointments:

1. Appointments to Boards, Commissioners, and Committees

Planning Commission: Hugh Howard (5-year reappointment), Richard Howard (1-year alternate reappointment), and John Valenti (1-year alternate reappointment), Board of Adjustment: Doug Gubler (5-year reappointment), Board of Appeals: Lynn Maxwell (4-year reappointment), and Lance Gifford (4-year reappointment), Water Board: John Valenti (4-year reappointment).

Councilwoman Patricia Wise motioned to approve the names recommended for the various boards, committees, and commissioners, second by Councilman Micah Gubler. Blair Gubler-yes, Wise-yes, Micah Gubler-yes, Hirschi-yes, Hardy-yes. The motion carried unanimously.

D. 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: December 15, 2021, regular meeting minutes
4. Checks and Invoices: \$72,638.82

Councilman Chuck Hardy made the motion to approve the consent agenda as written, including the minutes of the December 15, 2021, regular meeting and checks and invoices in the amount of \$72,638.82, second by Councilman

Richard Hirschi. Roll Call Vote: Hardy-yes, Hirschi-yes, Micah Gubler-yes, Wise-yes, Blair Gubler-yes. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Business:

1. Discussion and possible action to approve Resolution R-2022-01; a resolution creating the position of Director of Finance (City Finance Officer) and appointing City Administrator Kyle Gubler to said position.

Kevin explained Kyle initially held both positions as city recorder. There are two portions to the city recorder position; one is the official custodian of the records, and the other is the ex officio auditor of the City, which performs the financial audits of the City.

When Christy was made city recorder, Kyle had continued to function in the ex officio auditor position. This resolution gives him the legal authority to continue.

Councilman Richard Hirschi made the motion to approve Resolution R-2022-01; a resolution creating the position of Director of Finance (City Finance Officer) and appointing City Administrator Kyle Gubler to said position, second by Councilwoman Patricia Wise. Hardy-yes, Micah Gubler-yes, Hirschi-yes, Wise-yes, Blair Gubler-yes. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Discussion and possible action to approve Ordinance No. 2022-01; an ordinance amending section 4-4-8 of the La Verkin City Code (Establishment of Residential Fees); and providing an effective date.

Kevin explained in 2020 when the City was negotiating with the Washington County Solid Waste, there were several documents given to use with sample language and billing agreements.

When all was said and done, and the City had adopted what it was supposed to, a meeting was held by the WCSWD where they determined to assess a \$.50 increase. The current language adopted by La Verkin did not include a provision for this increase, so we cannot pass this increase on to the citizens.

This ordinance amends the original ordinance from 2020 to allow the City to pass any assessment from the Solid Waste District to our citizens.

Councilwoman Patricia Wise made the motion to approve Ordinance No. 2022-01; an ordinance amending section 4-4-8 of the La Verkin City Code (Establishment of Residential Fees); and providing an effective date, second by Councilman Chuck Hardy. Roll Call Vote: Hardy-yes, Hirschi-yes, Micah Gubler-yes, Wise-yes. Blair Gubler-yes. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Discussion regarding the FY 2022-23 Budget retreat.

Kyle passed out a timeline for the upcoming budget. He proposed Saturday, February 26th, 8–11 am for the retreat. This will be at the City Office building.

The tentative budget needs to be approved by May 4, 2022, with the final budget being approved and submitted to the County by June 22nd unless there will be truth in taxation.

The Councilmembers were fine with February 26th for the budget retreat.

4. Discussion and possible action regarding the youth recreation program.

Kyle reported the youth recreation program has tentatively been put on hold. There are a couple of challenges with the program right now. The biggest challenge is a lack of participation. La Verkin has one part-time employee running the entire program that competes with Hurricane, who has 5-6 full-time staff running their program.

This will need to be a discussion item in the future.

Councilman Micah Gubler pointed out facilities are a big issue for La Verkin.

Councilwoman Wise mentioned that hopefully, the program could be reinstated at some future date.

Kyle mentioned our part-time employee has also moved out of state. That is the other reason the program has been put on hold.

5. Discussion and possible action on compensation for the fairs & festivals position.

Kyle said Maridee has been doing a fantastic job, and he feels she needs a raise.

Councilman Micah Gubler mentioned by paying her more she would have the ability to put more time into the festivals. He also commented how she increased the number of volunteers for Winterfest. She is doing a great job and is really bringing the community together. He agreed that she should be paid more.

Councilwoman Wise agreed with Micah about her bringing the community together. She is in favor of the increase.

Councilman Blair Gubler asked how she was paid by the City.

Kyle answered Maridee is a contracted employee. She is paid a set amount each month. This will raise that monthly fee.

Councilman Hirschi agreed that she does need to be paid more.

Kyle will discuss the exact amount with Councilman Micah Gubler and let the other Councilmembers know. He would like it to be in effect by February 1st.

6. Discussion and possible action regarding a website & social media position.

Kyle explained the City might need to hire someone to handle the social media for the City.

The individual who handled the social media for Winterfest has reached out to the City and is interested in filling that new position.

Councilwoman Wise is currently doing this for the City.

Councilwoman Wise said she volunteered to help Kyle update the website several years ago to make it easier for staff to work on it. Social media is where the public goes for quick information, but the website is the "voice of the City" as far as publications. It is very important it is kept up to date. She has tried to keep current events current, and the company that created our platform has been a tremendous help, but it just isn't enough. The website is not as up-to-date as it should be. People look at a city's website to see how savvy it is. It is an important representation of the city.

This would be a separate position, but they would need to work closely with Maridee. This would help grow our festivals.

Kyle agreed that it is very time-consuming and essential to have an up-to-date website. It would be a part-time contracted position that would be under his direction.

The Mayor and Councilwoman Wise will discuss this position with Kyle.

Councilman Hardy asked if the position would be advertised.

Kyle said it could be advertised, but he would like to offer it to someone local.

Councilwoman Wise said she was okay with advertising the position. However, the City will not guarantee this position is permanent at the beginning. The Council will need to decide whether it's worth it. Because of that, advertising would be hard, with no guarantee for the individual.

Kyle had two people approach him who were interested in doing it.

Kyle said this position would be on a trial basis, to begin with, and the individual will know that up front. They would manage the City's website, Facebook, and Instagram accounts.

F. Mayor & Council Reports:

Mayor Wilson-There will be a work meeting at 5:00 pm on February 2nd regarding the hot spring's development. Email Kyle all questions by Friday to have them answered during the work meeting.

Wise-The Zion Regional Collaborative Transportation Committee had a meeting this week to review the status of the multi-use trail. It has not gone out for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) study. Because this is a new program, getting that money distributed through the proper channels has taken some time.

The legal paperwork has almost been completed. Once that is done, they will present the project scope possibilities to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

The trail is a 12-foot paved pathway from Zion National Park to the start of Confluence Park in La Verkin. There are several different trail alignment possibilities. The ZRC is trying to provide enough scope of property to the BLM that it can be reviewed at one time instead of doing a new NEPA study anytime there are changes in the alignment. They expect this to be completed by the first of April then the NEPA will be put out to bid. The design phase should begin by the end of the year. This project will tie into the Transit system for Washington County that will run from St. George to Springdale. She gave a brief report on the status of that project.

Confluence Park held a meeting today. The bridge project will be done in two parts and should be completed by the end of May. They also removed deadfall and did some restoration cleanup and tree planting with funds from the LeRay McAllister Grant. They will be applying for that grant again in 2022. The stairwell from Power Plant Park into Confluence Park has been completed.

Blair Gubler-Nothing to report.

Micah Gubler-Nothing to report.

Hirschi-Nothing to report.

Hardy-The historical walk in September drew some attention from those who attended. Loren Webb wrote a letter to La Verkin City, part of which said, "many individuals and organizations were involved in bringing the La Verkin Overlook Trail to completion and are deserving of recognition. I would be willing to work with the City's trail committee to develop wording to add to the existing kiosk or to create a new plaque in the same location that provides historical information and background related to the development of the trail." Mr. Webb has many documents he is helping Councilman Hardy go through to determine what would be necessary for the City to have copies of concerning the Overlook Trail.

G. Adjourn:

Councilman Chuck Hardy made the motion to adjourn, second by Councilwoman Patricia Wise. The motion was carried unanimously at 7:24 pm.

March 2, 2022

Date Approved

ATTEST: Christy Ballard
Christy Ballard
City Recorder

Kelly B. Wilson
Mayor Kelly B. Wilson