

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

TO THE RESIDENTS OF UINTAH COUNTY AND VERNAL CITY: Notice is hereby given that the Vernal City Council and the Uintah County Commission will hold a Special Joint Meeting on *Monday, March 23, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.* *This will be an electronic meeting with the anchor location being held at the Uintah County Commission Chambers located at 147 East Main St, Vernal, Utah. Because of gathering restrictions put in place by the Utah Department of Health, the anchor location will only have nine participants in attendance. The meeting will be streamed live via Youtube on the UintahIT channel.*

A G E N D A

4:30 p.m.

STANDING BUSINESS

1. ACKNOWLEDGMENT & APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING
2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 25, 2019
3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 27, 2019

SCHEDULED PUBLIC BUSINESS

1. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE VERNAL REGIONAL AIRPORT
2. UPDATE REGARDING POSSIBLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

ADJOURN

*NOTE: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals needing special accommodations during this meeting should notify Quinn Bennion at 374 East Main St, Vernal, Utah 84078, telephone: (435) 789-2255.

1 **M**INUTES OF THE JOINT VERNAL CITY COUNCIL AND UINTAH COUNTY
2 COMMISSION MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 25, 2019 AT 4:30 PM IN THE
3 VERNAL CITY PLANNING CONFERENCE ROOM, 374 East Main, Vernal,
4 UT 84078.

5
6 **PRESENT:**

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8 **VERNAL CITY:** Councilmembers Dave Everett, Samantha Scott, Bert Clark and
9 Travis Allan, and Mayor Doug Hammond.

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11 **UINTAH COUNTY:** Commissioners Brad Horrocks, Bart Haslem and Bill Stringer.

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13 **STAFF:** Roxanne Behunin, Quinn Bennion and Jon Stermer,

14
15 **GUESTS:** Nicholas Porter, Sonja Norton, Derek Hopper, Cheryl Meier, Robin
16 O'Driscoll, Doug Brown, Dean Baker,

17
18 **WELCOME:** Mayor Doug Hammond welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mayor Hammond
19 introduced Nicholas Porter, Councilmember elect to everyone.

20
21 **DISCUSSION REGARDING THE AIRPORT:** Quinn Bennion explained that this meeting
22 has been called to hold a continuation of the discussions to transfer the airport from the Uintah
23 Transportation Special Service District. There have been some advancements and the elected
24 officials need to be aware of where this is heading. He reminded the officials that in 2015 a
25 Memorandum of Understanding was approved for the SSD to manage the airport and the City
26 would contribute \$200,000 toward the conference center instead of paying the 25% of the costs
27 for the airport. The preliminary budget for the airport once it is transferred is \$900,000 so the
28 City share would be approximately \$240,000. Commissioner Brad Horrocks state that Doug
29 Brown has been working toward a transition on January 1st. There was some discussion that
30 single ownership would be easier to manage.

31
32 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING:** *Councilmember*
33 *Bert Clark moved to acknowledge and approve this special meeting. Councilmember Dave*
34 *Everett seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Clark, Everett, Scott and*
35 *Allan and Commissioners Horrocks, Haslem and Stringer voting in favor.*

36
37 **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 23, 2019:** *Councilmember Samantha*
38 *Scott moved to approve the minutes of September 23, 2019 as written. Councilmember Bert*
39 *Clark seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Clark, Everett, Scott and*
40 *Allan and Commissioners Horrocks, Haslem and Stringer voting in favor.*

41
42 **DISCUSSION REGARDING THE AIRPORT:** Commissioner Bill Stringer asked what the
43 view is of the Vernal City Council. Councilmember Bert Clark stated that this is not a long-term
44 contract to pay off the debt of the conference center. He noted that the City has not received an
45 accounting of the cost to run the conference center which is a requirement of the contract. Quinn
46 Bennion clarified the \$200,000 paid by the City is for operations and maintenance and the debt

47 service is from another source. Councilmember Travis Allan stated it is difficult to budget
48 without having some history on the costs and the City is pulling money from savings which is a
49 huge burden. Commissioner Brad Horrocks stated he would have Derk Hatch send over the
50 balance sheets. Councilmember Travis Allan asked what the County is proposing.
51 Commissioner Horrocks stated he would like to see the City continue to fund the conference
52 center. Quinn Bennion noted that the transportation tax cannot be used for the convention
53 center; however it can go toward the airport so the City would have to pay 25% of the expenses.
54 Jon Stermer stated the entities will need to identify the legal options and what level of services
55 will be provided to the community. Commissioner Bill Stringer acknowledged that the 2015
56 agreement is running out so a decision needs to be made on funding. Doug Brown explained
57 how FAA funds can be utilized for the airport. Commissioner Bart Haslem stated that the
58 conference center also cannot be closed down until the bonds are paid off which happens in
59 2030. Commissioner Bill Stringer stated the Western Park utilizes a restricted fund while the
60 conference center is funding through the general fund and TRT tax. Jon Stermer stated this is an
61 interesting situation and it would make perfect sense to keep this as a joint project for now.
62 Commissioner Stringer stated they would get reports to the City and they need to think about if
63 they want to continue to participate with the conference center or deal with the up and down of
64 the airport costs.

65
66 **DISCUSSION ABOUT PROPOSED LEGISLATION REGARDING SALES TAX**
67 **EXEMPTION:** Quinn Bennion reminded the elected officials of the bill that is being sponsored
68 by Senator Winterton and Representative Chew that modifies the base of what is collected on
69 sales tax. In summary, the bill would remove sales tax from materials used in the building and
70 production of oil and gas wells. This bill would affect entities in Uintah and Duchesne County
71 heavily. Commissioner Brad Horrocks stated this would need to be phased in and possibly could
72 stimulate economy recovering while at the same time hitting local government hard.
73 Councilmember Bert Clark asked if this excludes tribal work. Commissioner Bill Stringer
74 answered yes. Dean Baker, Naples City Mayor, stated they are still looking at the numbers.
75 However, the initial projection is they will lose 60% of their revenue. Commissioner Horrocks
76 stated when this was proposed they did not understand how much money this was. Quinn
77 Bennion agreed they did not understand the local impact. Commissioner Bill Stringer stated this
78 would be trading a one-time cost to the oil companies for a perpetual property tax raise. He
79 stated he did not think it would incentivize companies to drill. The consensus of the elected
80 officials was to discuss this bill with Senator Winterton again.

81
82 **ADJOURN:** There being no further business; *Commissioner Bill Stringer moved to adjourn.*
83 *Councilmember Samantha Scott seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote*
84 *and the meeting was adjourned.*
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1 **M**INUTES OF THE JOINT VERNAL CITY COUNCIL AND UTAH COUNTY
2 COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING HELD DECEMBER 27, 2019 AT 8:00
3 am in the Vernal City Planning Conference Room, 374 East Main, Vernal, Utah.

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5 **PRESENT:**

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7 **UINTAH COUNTY:** Commissioners Brad Horrocks, Bart Haslem and Bill Stringer.

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9 **VERNAL CITY:** Mayor Doug Hammond, Councilmembers Ted Munford, Samantha
10 Scott, Bert Clark and Travis Allan. Councilmember Dave Everett was excused.

11
12 **STAFF:** Quinn Bennion, Roxanne Behunin, Mike Davis, GJ Searle,

13
14 **GUESTS:** Cheryl Meier, Doug Brown, The Channel V6 press.

15
16 **WELCOME:** Mayor Hammond welcomed everyone to the meeting.

17
18 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING:** *Councilmember*
19 *Bert Clark moved to acknowledge and approve this special meeting. Councilmember Ted*
20 *Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed with Commissioners Horrocks, Haslem and*
21 *Stringer and Councilmembers Munford, Scott, Clark and Allan voting in favor for a unanimous*
22 *vote.*

23
24 **TRANSFER OF MANAGEMENT OF VERNAL REGIONAL AIRPORT:** Commissioner
25 Bill Stringer reminded the officials that they have been discussing this issue for some time, and
26 as the end of the year draws near it needs to be decided how to implement a change of
27 management of the airport. The Transportation Special Service District (SSD) has been
28 managing the airport for almost 5 years with the major reason for that change being the cost of
29 the construction. A letter was received from the SSD in May of 2019 indicated they wanted to
30 transfer the airport out of the District. He noted that the decision today would not affect the
31 ownership of 75% Uintah County, 25% Vernal City. Based on the discussions at the Vernal City
32 Council meeting and the last joint City / County meeting, it seems as though it is time for a
33 course of action. Commissioner Brad Horrocks stated that the City would still pay \$100,000
34 toward the conference center until June 30th if the airport stays with the SSD and asked what the
35 offer of the City is. Commissioner Bill Stringer stated the key issues if the City manages the
36 day-to-day operation is any capital improvements as that would need to be a City / County
37 discussion. Councilmember Bert Clark agreed that is good business practice. Quinn Bennion
38 also agreed, and stated those elements need to be discussed by the owners. He stated that if the
39 airport is managed by the City there are key steps that will have to be taken to move forward.
40 One item would be to outline who approves leases, policy changes, etc. Councilmember Ted
41 Munford stated that the City will not be truly managing if the County is making all the decisions.
42 Commissioner Bill Stringer stated they are reluctant to give up control since they are paying 75%
43 of the cost. Councilmember Bert Clark stated there was an advisory board in the past who
44 brought back recommendations to the elected officials and anything dealing with funds would
45 have to be discussed by both the City and County. There was some discussion regarding the
46 fence and snow plow. Commissioner Bart Haslem stated that if the airport management is

47 transferred to Vernal City then the remaining \$100,000 for the conference center will not be
48 paid. Councilmember Ted Munford clarified that the City will not gain \$100,000 because those
49 funds will be used for the airport. Commissioner Haslem stated it will be a different pot of
50 money and they need to decide what is best for the taxpayers. Councilmember Munford asked
51 then if the management decision is just financial. Councilmember Travis Allan noted that there
52 is a financial portion and wondered why other entities were not involved. Commissioner Bart
53 Haslem stated that the new sales tax can be used for the airport. Cheryl Meier stated that the
54 SSD received \$4.5 million dollars last year and is expected to only receive \$2.3 million this year
55 so they cannot keep the airport. Also, the SSD does not have any ownership of the airport.
56 Councilmember Ted Munford asked what would happen if the SSD manages the airport and uses
57 the sales tax to subsidize the costs. Commissioner Haslem stated the attorney said that cannot be
58 done. Councilmember Travis Allan stated he liked the idea of Vernal City managing with
59 definitive roles and they need to move forward. Commissioner Bart Haslem stated they are
60 willing to move forward. He noted that if there is a Board it will be advisory only.
61 Commissioner Brad Horrocks stated another option is to have a private entity manage the airport.
62 Quinn Bennion stated that will create the least control for the owners. Commissioner Bill
63 Stringer stated if the management is moved to Vernal City they want to be involved in capital
64 improvement obligations. The Vernal City Council members agreed.

65

66 **VERNAL CITY:**

67 *Councilmember Ted Munford moved to require the City to present a budget and management*
68 *plan for the airport each year.*

69

70 Commissioner Stringer stated the City has been steady on raises and bonuses and questioned
71 how personnel issues would be handled as he has a philosophical difference with how Vernal
72 City handles this. Quinn Bennion stated that whatever agency manages the airport will also
73 manage personnel. The goal is to make the airport as self-sufficient as possible.

74

75 *Councilmember Ted Munford moved to amend his motion to transfer the management of the*
76 *airport to Vernal City upon approval of an MOU and tentative budget. The motion died for lack*
77 *of a second.*

78

79 There was considerable discussion among the County Commissioners to move forward with
80 Vernal City taking management of the airport.

81

82 **UINTAH COUNTY:**

83 *Commissioner Brad Horrocks moved to transfer the management of the airport to Uintah County*
84 *for the next 2 months, work on procedures and an MOU for Vernal City to take over*
85 *management effective June 30th.*

86

87 Cheryl Meier suggested that if the direction is to transfer the employees to Vernal City that
88 should be done now. Mike Davis stated that another option is to leave those employees with the
89 SSD for now and use the \$100,000 that goes to the conference center to the SSD to manage for a
90 short period of time.

91

92

93 *Commissioner Brad Horrocks moved to amend his motion to transfer the management of the*
94 *airport to Uintah County until June 30th. Commissioner Bart Haslem seconded the motion.*
95

96 *There was some discussion regarding the deductibles and costs to the employees if they are*
97 *transferred to multiple agencies.*
98

99 *Commissioner Brad Horrocks withdrew his motion and Commissioner Bart Haslem withdrew his*
100 *second to the motion.*
101

102 *Commissioner Brad Horrocks moved to keep the management of the airport with the SSD at this*
103 *time, work in good faith with Vernal City to transition the management to the City and put a*
104 *budget together for the District to operate for the next few months until March 31st.*
105 *Commissioner Bart Haslem seconded the motion. The motion passed with Commissioner*
106 *Horrocks, Haslem and Stringer voting in favor.*
107

108 **VERNAL CITY:**

109 *Councilmember Travis Allan moved to work with the County to come to an agreement through*
110 *an MOU, develop a budget and accept management of the airport by March 31st.*
111 *Councilmember Samantha Scott seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers*
112 *Allan, Scott and Clark voting in favor. Councilmember Ted Munford was not present for the*
113 *vote.*
114

115 **ADJOURN:**

116 *There being no further business, Councilmember Bert Clark moved to adjourn. Councilmember*
117 *Samantha Scott seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote and the meeting*
118 *was declared adjourned.*
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AWAITING FORMAL APPROVAL