



WRITTEN REPORT

To: Ridgway Town Council
From: Preston Neill, Town Manager
Date: February 12, 2020
RE: **Town Manager's Report**

INTRODUCTION

This report serves as an update to Council on key projects, activities and community issues.

VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT PROGRAM GRANT

From Shane Schmalz, Marshal:

Since the inception of the Ouray County Victim Advocate Program, it has been funded with Local Victim Assistance and Law Enforcement (VALE) Program funds. This program provides grant funding to agencies that provide services to crime victims within Local Judicial Districts. For us that's the 7th Judicial District. The first year we received what we asked for to cover all costs associated with the program. In 2019 we requested \$38,000 and only received \$28,000. The rest of the cost was split between three agencies, including the Town of Ridgway, the City of Ouray and Ouray County. For 2020, we again asked for the full amount of the money and were awarded \$21,000. During the grant funding hearing, we were told that the agencies within the county needed to partner with the program and show more buy-in. Also, concerns were raised by the VALE Board as to the high cost of victim services. Due to our geographic challenges and the proximity to services, the cost in our area is elevated compared to more populated areas.

We feel that we need to find a more consistent funding source, especially with VALE funding being more geared toward training and not operational costs. We came across a Victims of Crime Acts (VOCA) Grant which is on a two-year cycle for 2021 and 2022. It is a federal grant and we qualify for funding for victim services. The grant application is due February 18, 2020 and we are in the process of completing the application. We are hoping the grant will cover most of the operational costs of the program for the two years. As part of the grant, there is a 25% match requirement that allows us to use in kind services, volunteer services and VALE grant funds to offset this. We hope that this will reduce the cost to the three agencies in the county. We respectfully request Council's support of the grant. The grant process is fairly quick, and we recently attended a class aimed at assisting us with completing the grant application and helping us to better understand the nuances. The class was on January 23, 2020. With the due date only a few days away, we are excited to finish preparing the grant application for submittal. Please feel free to call me with any questions related to this grant opportunity. Thank you.

RIDGWAY SPACE TO CREATE – LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT APPLICATION

Staff worked with Artspace to prepare another funding application to submit to the Colorado Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) for low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC) to support the Ridgway Space to Create Project. Feedback received from CHFA on the 2019 LIHTC application proved valuable as the project was adjusted to accommodate their comments and suggestions. Earlier this week, Andrew Michaelson, Director of Property Development for Artspace, and Will Law, Chief Operations Officer for



Artspace, visited Ridgway and met with staff to debrief about the application and discuss next steps. Staff plans to use our communication channels to inform the public about the status of the project. An idea was floated to hold a public meeting in March to discuss the status of the Space to Create project and answer questions from members of the public. Everyone in attendance liked the idea and we agreed to further explore it and identify dates in March when Artspace reps can visit Ridgway again. Artspace will be in regular communication with Town staff in the coming weeks as they learn more from CHFA about milestone dates, including a date for award announcements.

COLORADO MAIN STREET 2020 MINI-GRANT

From Diedra Silbert, Community Initiatives Facilitator

As planned and budgeted, Ridgway Main Street is ready to apply for its \$5,000 Colorado Main Street (COMS) 2020 mini-grant to implement landscaping and irrigation improvements at Heritage Park. Signage on the Visitor Center building will be prepared and paid for by the Chamber. The 2019 COMS mini-grant for \$5,000 was extended, and the two grants will both be applied to this project.

Ridgway Main Street also submitted its application to become a Graduate Main Street community at the end of January. If approved in April by COMS, the 2021 mini-grant should increase to \$10,000 annually.

2020 CENSUS

As mandated by Article I, Section 2, of the U.S. Constitution, every ten years the Census Bureau counts the entire population of the country. The Census Bureau also collects demographic information such as group living situations, sex, age and race of each person. The Town of Ridgway has a vested interest in achieving an accurate and complete census because the results:

- Determine how many seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives
- Affect the distribution of over \$675 billion in federal and state funding each year
- Are used to draw political districts
- Inform master planning, public safety, emergency preparedness and other Town projects.
- Assist residents as they use the results to support community initiatives

The Census Bureau is implementing new technology to make it easier than ever to respond to the Census. For the first time, people will be able to respond online, by phone, as well as by mail.

Over the next few months, Town staff will work to inform our residents about the importance of the Census in local affairs, while working to achieve a complete and accurate count of all persons in our community. We've learned that Census engagement is not one-size fits all. There are a variety of reasons people don't participate in the Census and it will be important for us to tailor our outreach strategies to be as effective as possible. Shay Coburn recently secured grant funding to cover the cost of producing a variety of 2020 Census outreach materials including flyers, business cards and a banner.

Responses to the 2020 Census are safe, secure, and protected by federal law. Answers can only be used to produce statistics. By law, all responses to U.S. Census Bureau household and business surveys are kept completely confidential.



Remaining Key Milestones for the 2020 Census:

- **March 2020**—The public can begin responding to the 2020 Census online at 2020census.gov. Replying by mail or phone will also be an option.
- **April 2020**—Every 10 years, we observe Census Day on April 1.
- **June 2020 through July 2020**—Census takers go door to door to count people who have not responded to the 2020 Census. Census takers are Census Bureau employees and will provide proof that they are official government personnel.
- **December 31, 2020**—By this date, as required by law, the Census Bureau reports to the President of the United States the population count and the apportionment of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives to each state.
- **2021**—Initial 2020 Census data are made available to the public on census.gov.

For more information about the 2020 Census, please visit www.census.gov.

RIDGWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT FACILITY MASTER PLAN

The Ridgway Board of Education has hired RTA, an architectural firm out of Colorado Springs, to facilitate the school district's facility master plan. RTA has worked extensively with school districts throughout Colorado including Ouray, Lake City, Pagosa Springs, and Ignacio and they have an outstanding reputation.

It has been over 15 years since the last district master plan work took place. The goal of this master plan is to identify facility improvement priorities that may include renovations, new construction and/or additions to current facilities. They need to understand how their school facilities can best support 21st century learning and align with the district vision and strategic plan.

Mayor Clark and I were invited to participate on a small Planning Advisory Team composed of district staff, Board of Education members, students, parents and community members. The Planning Advisory Team will work closely with RTA this spring.

The first Planning Advisory Team meeting was held on January 30th and the next meeting is on February 13th. The culmination of the process will take place at the beginning of May when an overview of the master planning process and recommendations will be presented to the Ridgway Board of Education.

SAFETY FLAGS AT HIGHWAY 62 CROSSWALKS

Staff has reached out to traffic and safety engineers at CDOT to inquire about their process for considering safety enhancements or speed mitigation devices in specific areas along CDOT right-of-way. At the last Council meeting, Council expressed interest in seeing safety flags installed at more of the crosswalks on Sherman St./Highway 62 since the safety flags at the Lena St. crosswalk have been very well received. Staff will update Council once we hear back from CDOT.

GUNNISON VALLEY TPR MEETING

I recently attended a Gunnison Valley Transportation Planning Region Committee meeting at Region 10 in Montrose. The Committee received updates on current transportation projects and discussed developing transportation needs. The group received a presentation from Elijah Henley, Transportation Planning Team Lead at Federal Highway Administration. He provided details on the Federal Lands



Transportation Program, which aims to improve the transportation infrastructure owned and maintained by a variety of Federal Lands Management Agencies.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- **Town Offices Closed** – February 17, 2020 in observance of President’s Day
- **Planning Commission Regular Meeting** – February 25, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. in the Ridgway Community Center
- **Regular Town Council Meeting** – March 11, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. in the Ridgway Community Center
- **Planning Commission Regular Meeting** – March 31, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. in the Ridgway Community Center

JOKE OF THE DAY

Why do seagulls fly over the sea?

Because if they flew over the bay, they would be bagels.