

RIDGWAY TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

FEBRUARY 12, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was held both in person and via virtual meeting portal Zoom Meeting, pursuant to the Town's Electronic Participation Policy.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. The Council was present in its entirety with Councilors Grambley, Kroger, Lakin, Scoville, Schuyler, Mayor Pro Tem Meyer and Mayor Clark.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Town Attorney suggested the Council enter into a closed session for a conference with the Town Attorney for the purpose of receiving legal advice on a specific legal question under C.R.S. Section 24-6-402(4)(b) and determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations, developing strategy for negotiations, and/or instructing negotiators, under C.R.S. Section 24-6-402(4)(e) concerning the possible condemnation of real property for the creation of a recreational trail along real property located at 539 Marion Overlook.

ACTION:

Mayor Pro Tem Meyer moved with Councilmember Schuyler seconding, to enter into closed session. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

The Council entered into a closed session at 5:30 p.m. with the Town Manager, Town Clerk, Town Attorney and Attorney Joseph Rivera.

The Council reconvened from closed session at 5:45 p.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Minutes of the Regular Meeting on January 8, 2025.
2. Minutes of the Workforce and Affordable Housing Committee meeting of January 8, 2025.
3. Register of Demands for February 2025.
4. Renewal of restaurant liquor license for Lazy Dog Saloon Bar and Grill.
5. Renewal of restaurant liquor license for True Grit Cafe.
6. Renew brew pub liquor license for Colorado Boy Depot.

ACTION:

It was moved by Mayor Pro Tem Meyer, seconded by Councilor Grambley and unanimously carried on a roll call vote to approve the consent agenda.

POLICY MATTERS

7. Introduction of Ordinance No. 01-2025 Amending Section 7-4 "Zoning Regulations" and Section 8-5 "Short-Term Rentals" of the Ridgway Municipal Code

Staff Report dated 2-6-25 from Planner Angela Kemp presenting Ordinance 1-2025.

Planner Kemp reported at the last Planning Commission meeting a proposed ordinance was finalized to forward to the Council. After the Commissions action staff identified an item which will require further discussion, and recommended Council refer the item back to the Commission. She reviewed the proposed changes to Section 7-4-6 of the Municipal Code which address licensing of Short Term Rentals.

ACTION:

Moved by Councilor Schuyler, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Meyer to send the ordinance back to the Planning Commission. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

8. Resolution No. 25-03 Amending the Fees and Charges for Short Term Rental Licenses

Staff Report dated 2-4-25 from Planner Kemp presenting a proposed ordinance changing the fees related to short term rental licenses.

Town Manager Neill presented a resolution amending fees for Short Term Rental Licenses. He stated staff is recommending establishing fees for short term rental inspections made by the Building Official. It is hoped the fee will prompt license holders to be prepared and avoid follow up inspections, he noted.

There were questions from Council to staff.

ACTION:

Moved by Councilor Scoville, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Meyer, the motion to approve Resolution No 25-03 Amending the Fees and Charges for Short Term Rental Licenses carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

9. Award of bid for Planning and Design Services for the Beaver Creek Diversion Restoration Project

Staff Report dated 2-11-25 from the Town Manager presenting proposals received to perform design services for the restoration of the Beaver Creek Diversion.

Manager Neill explained requests for proposals (RFP) for Planning and Design Engineering Services for the Beaver Creek Diversion Restoration Project were issued on January 2nd. Proposals were due on January 30th and three were received. The following week staff interviewed the prospective design firms, along with representatives from the Colorado Emergency Watershed Protection Program, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Colorado Water Conservation Board. He noted the three proposals differed due to scope of services, approaches and timelines, along with inclusions and assumptions. Based on the quality of the proposals, interviews and selection criteria outlined in the RFP, the interview board is recommending awarding the bid to RESPEC Company LLC.

The Town Manager explained RESPEC can meet the May deliverable date for final design, however they recommend to properly provide an alternative analysis, final design should be targeted for the end of July 2025, and construction should begin with the design phase to allow for completion by the end of the year. Staff is recommending design of the access road improvements and ditch piping be completed separately to allow RESPEC to concentrate on the diversion. He explained staff will prepare a request for proposals to solicit bids to construct the improvements, with the aim to have work completed by the end of May or early June. These will be undertaken in conjunction with the design process, he noted.

There were questions from Council to staff.

ACTION:

Councilor Schuyler moved to issue Notice of Award for the Planning and Design Engineering Services for the Beaver Creek Diversion Restoration Project to RESPEC Company, LLC not to exceed the amount of \$568,750. Councilmember Lakin seconded and the motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

10. Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce presentation on marketing and promotion activities

Ashley Perkins, Director of the Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce presented the 2024 Annual Report. Items highlighted from the document were sustainable tourism focus; visitors guide and gravel adventure field guide; visitor center; online and print media; statewide promotion and off season marketing strategies; Colorado Creative Corridor; support to business community; financial management plans for 2025 and projected use of lodging tax funds.

There were questions from the Council and staff.

11. Discussion regarding tourism promotion and marketing services for the Town, and potential action on Professional Services Agreement with the Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce

Staff Report dated 2-7-25 from Manager Neill presenting a draft tourism and marketing agreement with the Chamber of Commerce, and a number of potential actions for Council consideration.

The Town Manager reported staff is requesting direction on how to proceed in implementing tourism promotion for 2025. Options include renewal of the Professional Services Agreement with the Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce, or exploration of other options which could include renewing the agreement for a specific term; pursue a competitive process through requests for proposals allowing entities or individuals with proven marketing and tourism promotion experience to submit proposals; renew the existing agreement for a one year term and direct staff to pursue competitive solicitation in late summer or early fall to allow award of the contract to be made in conjunction with the 2026 budget process; bring tourism promotion in house and hire staff to fill rolls previously assigned to contractors.

Manager Neill noted fifty percent of the lodging tax is earmarked for tourism and marketing, and for many years the Town has been contracting the service to the Chamber of Commerce.

There were questions from Council to staff.

Interim Chamber Board President Mishi Countryman noted the funds are also earmarked for economic development, and this is an area in which "the Chamber can also shine".

Community Development Coordinator Tera Wick reported last year the Council directed staff to set measurable deliverables within the Chamber agreement. These included not intermingling public funds with other funding sources; provide a website and social media through the use of a multi-media campaign; maintain a business inventory separate from the one maintained by the FUSE Committee; operate the visitors center; and prepare a survey to ascertain community perception of the organization.

Coordinator Wick reported deliverables from the 2024 agreement have been reviewed and it was found the website is not up to date and is advertising businesses which have not operated within the past year, and does not include all existing businesses within Town; the business inventory is not up to date, and there was duplication in efforts between the Chamber and FUSE Committee; the request to move away from using printed pieces to using a multi-media campaign approach for the four different seasons, was not implemented; and the community survey was not performed. She noted these deliverables have been added into the proposed 2025 agreement.

There were comments from the Council.

The Mayor noted the Council has received a letter from Sue Husch dated 1-29-25 and Ashley King-Grambley dated 2-7-25 suggesting a change in the way the funds earmarked for tourism and marketing are allocated.

Speaking from the audience Ashley King-Grambley stated the lodging tax funds “can achieve many objectives” if distributed to other sources. She noted “Chambers rarely are funded by government” as they are “member based organizations to serve the members”. The current model requires “serving all the businesses in the community” and questioned how “self sufficiency has increased or decreased over ten years of receiving lodging tax funds”. She expressed the opinion that the organization should be “completely member funded”.

There were comments from the Council. The Council reviewed the proposed options with the Chamber representatives. Consensus of the Council was to conduct a work session with the Chamber and FUSE Committee to review missions and goals, and determine if there is duplication in marketing efforts.

Speaking from the audience business owner Brittany Miller supported the idea of a workshop, to “determine inefficiencies” and the amount of funds being spent by the FUSE Committee and Chamber to achieve the same goals.

ACTION:

Councilor Scoville moved to renew a Professional Services Agreement with the Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce for a term of one year and direct staff to pursue competitive solicitation in late summer or early fall so a contract can be awarded in conjunction with the budget process for Fiscal Year 2026 Councilor Lakin seconded the motion, which carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

12. Update on 2025 priorities for the FUSE Committee

Community Initiatives Facilitator Tera Wick, and Allison Etheridge co-chair of the FUSE Committee, gave a presentation on the Committee which represents the Town in the Colorado Creative Main Street Program. They presented the mission statement, accomplishments in 2024, and the strategic priorities planned for 2025.

13. Future direction of the Ridgway Independent Film Festival

Tera Wick Community Initiatives Facilitator, and Arielle Bielak volunteer director for the Ridgway Independent Film Festival (RIFF), gave a presentation regarding the 2024 festival. The tenth anniversary festival was held over four days in three locations, utilizing 3,268 volunteer hours, and was funded from the FUSE budget. They explained the goal in 2025 is to maintain a quality program and improve logistics and marketing, within a budget doubled from the previous year.

Facilitator Wick stated the festival has “outgrown the bounds of the FUSE program scope”. Options for the current year are to scale down operations or invest in contractual personnel; bring the festival “in house” and hire more staff; or form strategic operation partnerships with other organizations. She noted she has spoken to the Sherbino Theater which is considering “strengthening the partnership” they have had with the Town during the festivals.

There were questions and comments from the Council.

Ashley King-Grambley, Director of the Sherbino Theater, stated the theater “has been part of RIFF from its inception” and it has “grown over the past ten years” and “I do not have the resources and manpower to take it over”. She noted “as the festival grows” “there will be continued pressure to grow staff” and “we would still look to partner in some way”. She noted the theater has “dedicated a number of resources over the years” and so we have “collectively invested in the program”.

There was discussion between the Council and Ms. King-Grambley, then between Council and staff. Consensus of the Council was to proceed with a partnership with the Sherbino for a four day event, refocusing on the level of program offerings.

14. Order Extending the Declaration of Local Disaster in and for the Town of Ridgway related to the Beaver Creek Diversion

Manager Neill presented a declaration extending a local disaster related to damages to the Town water system from flooding at the Beaver Creek Diversion. He noted the order will end on December 11th unless it is extended or amended by the Council.

ACTION:

Councilor Lakin moved to approve the Order Extending the Declaration of Local Disaster in and for the Town of Ridgway related to the Beaver Creek Diversion. Mayor Pro Tem Meyer seconded and the motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

15. Request to authorize staff to hire a part-time deputy for the Marshals Office

Staff Report from Marshal Schmalz dated 2-7-25 presenting a request to hire a part-time Officer.

The Town Manager explained the Marshals department is in need of additional officer coverage which was not budgeted in the 2025 Fiscal Year Budget. He noted the Marshal is requesting hiring a part-time deputy to provide coverage for 20 hours a week, and noted staff feels the General Fund can accommodate the request.

Marshal Schmalz addressed the Council regarding the need for additional coverage during full-time officers vacations, use of sick time, or when unexpected staffing shortages occur. He recommended hiring a part-time officer for the extra coverage.

ACTION:

Councilmember Schuyler moved to authorize recruitment and hiring of a part time officer for the Marshals Department. Councilmember Grambley seconded and the motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

16. Request for authorization to expend budgeted funds and enter into a contract to purchase a fleet vehicle for the Public Works Department

Staff Report from the Town Manager dated 2-7-24 presenting a request to purchase a public works vehicle.

Manager Neill noted funds were earmarked in the 2025 Fiscal Year Budget for purchase of a fleet vehicle for the Public Works Department, and staff is requesting to expend the funds and enter into a contract to purchase a hybrid pickup truck.

ACTION:

Moved by Councilmember Lakin, seconded by Councilor Scoville to authorize staff to expend budgeted funds and enter into a contract to purchase a hybrid pickup truck for the Public Works Department at a price not to exceed \$40,000. After a call for the vote the motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

17. Resolution No. 25-04 Amending the Town of Ridgway Standard Specification and Typical Drawings for Infrastructure Construction

Staff Report from the Town Manager dated 2-5-25 presenting a resolution amending the standards for infrastructure construction.

The Town Manager presented a resolution amending the Standard Specifications and Typical Drawings for Infrastructure Construction.

ACTION:

Councilor Grambley moved to approve Resolution No. 25-04 Amending the Town Standard Specification and Typical Drawings for Infrastructure Construction. Councilmember Lakin seconded the motion which called unanimously on a roll call vote.

18. Intergovernmental Agreement with Ouray County concerning Noxious Weed Management and Control Services

Staff Report dated 2-5-25 from the Town Manager presenting a proposed agreement with Ouray County for noxious weed control services.

The Town Manager noted the Town has entered into an agreement with Ouray County for a number of years to retain services of the County Weed Department to survey, and make recommendations for the treatment of noxious weeds.

ACTION:

It was moved by Councilor Schuyler, seconded by Councilor Kroger and unanimously carried on a roll call vote to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement between Ouray County and the Town of Ridgway concerning Noxious Weed Management and Control Services as presented.

19. Sign-on to an amicus brief to be submitted on behalf of local governments in a state lawsuit challenging the federal funding freeze

Mayor Clark presented a proposed letter to become a part of a amicus brief from the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University, in a state lawsuit challenging the federal funding freeze.

ACTION:

Moved by Councilor Lakin to ratify the letter to sign on to an amicus brief from the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University to be submitted on behalf of local governments in the states lawsuit challenging the federal funding freeze, seconded by Councilor Kroger, the motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

20. Letter in support of the Billy Creek State Wildlife Area Uncompahgre River Fisheries Improvement Project

The Mayor submitted a proposed letter supporting the Billy Creek State Wildlife Area Fisheries Improvement Project, which will improve over a half mile of the Uncompahgre River aquatic habitat.

ACTION:

Moved by Councilor Lakin to approve the letter supporting the Billy Creek State Wildlife Area Uncompahgre River Fisheries Improvement Project, seconded by Councilor Kroger, the motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

21. Letter requesting Colorado monuments and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands be excluded from plans resulting from the Department of Interior Order 'Unleashing American Energy'

The Town Manager presented a proposed letter submitted by Robyn Cascade expressing concern with the Department of Interior Secretarial Order 3418 'Unleashing American Energy' and asking that Colorado be excluded from any "action plans".

ACTION:

Moved by Councilor Lakin to approve sending a letter to Senator Hurd regarding excluding Colorado monuments, BLM lands and Colorado River Vally Resource Management Plan from the Department of Interior Secretarial Order 3418, seconded by Councilor Kroger, the motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

The Marshal presented a 2024 End of Year Report, and reviewed some notable calls for assistance.

The Town Manager gave an overview of the monthly written Managers Report.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pam Kraft, MMC
Town Clerk