



To: Honorable Mayor Clark and Ridgway Town Council
From: Preston Neill, Town Manager
Date: December 12, 2023
RE: **Town Manager's Report**

INTRODUCTION

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

DATE CHANGES FOR 2024 BUDGET PROCESS

Please note that on November 20, 2023, Governor Polis signed Senate Bill 23B-001, which made several changes to the property tax process for the 2024 budget year (which is the 2023 property tax year). Deadlines to the property tax and budget process have been postponed. The new milestone dates are as follows:

- January 3: Final assessed values released
- January 10: Certification of mill levy to county commissioners
- January 10: Deadline to adopt budget
- January 31: Budgets due to DOLA

The budget actions (i.e., Adoption of 2024 Fiscal Year Budget, including Capital Projects Plan and 2024 Strategic Plan and Adoption of Resolution Certifying the mill levy) originally slated for the December 13th Town Council meeting are now scheduled for the January 10th Town Council meeting.

SPECIAL SESSION PRODUCES PROPERTY TAX LEGISLATION

By Elizabeth Haskell, CML Legislative and Policy Advocate:

Gov. Jared Polis called the General Assembly into a special session in response to the defeat of the ballot initiative Proposition HH. The governor's call directed the legislature to consider the following issues:

- a property tax relief package to reduce Coloradans' property tax burden in 2023
- rental assistance for fiscal year 2023-24
- adjustments to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR) refunds for 2023
- school nutrition programs in the summer months

The legislature introduced 14 bills, seven of which passed. Four bills have been signed into law by Polis thus far. Two of the bills that were enacted are of great interest to municipalities: Senate



Bill 23B-001, concerning reduction in 2023 property tax, and House Bill 23B-1003, concerning a property tax task force. All seven bills are summarized below.

SB23B-001 — CONCERNING REDUCTION IN 2023 PROPERTY TAX — SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR

The bill reduces the valuation for assessment of multi-family residential real property and all other residential real property to 6.7% of the amount equal to the actual value minus the lesser of \$55,000 or the amount that causes the valuation to be \$1,000 for property tax year 2023.

The bill requires the state to reimburse local governmental entities using monies in the state General Fund for lost property tax revenue resulting from the reductions in valuation and actual value. The bill specifies that reimbursements are calculated using the entities' mill levy for the 2022 property tax year, excluding bond or contractual mills. The bill provides the following reimbursements for lost revenue:

- 100% of revenue lost to fire districts, health districts, and ambulance districts.
- 100% to other entities in proportion to the amount they spend to provide fire protection services.
- For entities located in counties with less than 300,000 in population:
 - 100% of revenue lost to entities that had an increase in assessed value of real property from property tax year 2022 to property tax year 2023 of less than 10%; and
 - 90% of revenue lost to entities that had an increase of at least 10%, but less than 15%, in assessed value of real property between the 2022 and 2023 property tax years.
- For entities located in counties with greater than 300,000 in population:
 - 100% of revenue lost to library districts, sanitation districts, water districts, and municipalities that had an increase in assessed value of real property from property tax year 2022 to property tax year 2023 of less than 10%;
 - 90% of revenue lost to library districts, sanitation districts, water districts, and municipalities that had an increase in assessed value of real property from property tax year 2022 to property tax year 2023 of at least 10%, but less than 15%; and
 - 65% of revenue lost to all entities not identified above that had an increase of less than 15% in assessed value.

If the total of all reimbursements described above exceeds \$54 million, fire districts are fully reimbursed first, followed by any local governments for which assessed values decreased or did not change between the 2022 and 2023 property tax years. Following these reimbursements, all other reimbursement amounts are proportionally reduced so that the total reimbursements remain below \$54 million. The State Treasurer is directed to reduce a local government's reimbursement if necessary to prevent it from exceeding its local TABOR limit. The bill does not change reimbursement provisions previously established in SB 22-238. Local governmental



entities for which the assessed value of property increased by 15% or more between the 2022 and 2023 property tax years are not reimbursed for revenue reductions established in the bill.

The bill transfers \$146 million from the General Fund to the State Education Fund to be used to offset reductions in school district property tax revenue.

For the 2023 tax year, the bill extends various certification, reporting, and budgeting deadlines for school districts and local officials based on the changes to property valuations.

HB 23B-1003 — CONCERNING A PROPERTY TAX TASK FORCE — AWAITING SIGNATURE OF THE GOVERNOR

HB 23B-1003 creates a 19-member commission on property tax, which includes a mayor or city council member appointed by CML. The commission is charged with identifying, considering, and evaluating legislative options for a permanent and sustainable property tax structure that protects property owners from rising tax bills while maintaining stability for local governments and public schools. The task force will start meeting in early December and will present its recommendations to the governor and the General Assembly by March 15, 2024.

OTHER LEGISLATION

SB 23B-002 — Summer electronic benefits transfer program. The bill establishes the summer electronic benefits transfer program that will provide food benefits to low-income students during the summer months when students are not in school. The bill is awaiting the governor's signature.

SB 23B-003 — Identical TABOR refund. The bill creates a new temporary refund mechanism replacing the sales tax refund mechanism for fiscal year 2022-23. Taxpayer refunds using the sales tax refund mechanism are based on six adjusted gross income tiers and vary by tier. Under the bill, each qualified individual is eligible to receive an identical refund payment of \$800 for a single filer and \$1,600 for joint filers. The bill was signed by the governor.

HB 23B-1001 — Emergency rental assistance grant program. The bill establishes an emergency rental assistance program which will provide grants to residential tenants who have an annual household income of 80% or less than the area median income and who are at risk of eviction or displacement. The bill is awaiting the governor's signature.

HB 23B-1002 — Increased Earned Income Tax Credit 2023. The bill creates a one-time TABOR refund mechanism for excess state revenues for state fiscal year 2022-23 that are required to be refunded in fiscal year 2023-24, by expanding the Colorado EITC from 25% to 50% of the federal EITC. The bill was signed by the governor.



HB 23B-1008 — Appropriation for the Department of Treasury. The bill funds an administrative full-time employee in the Department of Treasury to provide support to the property tax deferral program in anticipation of increased taxpayer eligibility and increased volume of applications received in the current year. The bill was signed by the governor.

SHOP WITH A COP

Shop with a Cop was held at O Toy's in Ouray on December 9th. The Ridgway Marshal's Office, Ouray Police Department, and Ouray County Sheriff's Office shopped with 9 kids. A fun time was had by all.



DUCTILE IRON WATER LINE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

The Town has submitted a pre-application for State Revolving Loan Funds and a grant application for Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance Funds to support the Ductile Iron Water Line Replacement Project in 2024. The project will replace 4,000 lineal feet of ductile iron pipe with plastic pipe designed to serve the pressures and corrosivity of soils. The pipe replacement will start about 400 feet horizontal below the Water Treatment Plant and extend about 4,000 lineal feet horizontal to the pressure reducing station at Moffat St. and Amelia St.



ECO-CYCLE AND CoPIRG RELEASE 7TH ANNUAL STATE OF RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING IN COLORADO REPORT

Eco-Cycle has released their 2023 State of Recycling & Composting in Colorado Report. Click [HERE](#) to check out the full report. Key takeaways from the report this year include:

- Statewide recycling and composting rates have not changed in the seven years they have been releasing this report; it still hovers at 16%, just half the nation average. But change is on the horizon. New state and local policies and programs have the potential to significantly boost recycling and composting throughout the state in the very near future:
 - Colorado's Producer Responsibility for Recycling Law is in the implementation phase and on track to provide no-cost recycling to ALL Colorado residents and dramatically increase materials recycled back into the supply chain.
 - Composting infrastructure and programs are on the rise and the state has proposed updates to composting regulations that will facilitate the much-needed growth of composting infrastructure to meet increasing demand.
- Reduction and Reuse strategies are gaining traction in Colorado through entrepreneurial businesses and local programs and policies. Reduction and reuse programs prevent natural resource extraction in the first place, which also prevents water usage and greenhouse gases. These programs also save businesses and schools money. Here are just two of many examples of reduce and reuse highlighted in the report:
 - Reuse in school cafeterias presents an enormous opportunity to reduce waste and save money through the tens of millions of meals served every year in Colorado schools. Reusable trays and utensils reduce waste, are healthier for students as they keep food off toxic foam trays, and they save schools money. Switching to bulk milk dispensers with refillable cups, instead of cartons, reduces carton waste and costs to schools by eliminating roughly two gallons of wasted milk per student per year.
 - The Plastic Pollution Reduction Act (PPRA) is estimated to have reduced 1.8 BILLION single-use plastic bags in Colorado annually and is poised to eliminate polystyrene (foam) takeout containers in 2024, one of the most toxic types of plastic which is made with known carcinogens.

MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL EVACUATION PLAN KICKOFF MEETING

Staff attended the kickoff meeting for the development of a Multi-Jurisdictional Evacuation Plan. It was held on November 20th at the Ouray County 4H Events Center. Discussion items included but were not limited to:

- What is an evacuation plan?
- Who is involved?
- Challenges related to evacuation in Ouray County
- At risk-populations
- Planning process



- Strategies for public/stakeholder involvement
- Project schedule

The next meeting will be held in early 2024.

WASTEWATER UTILITY APPRECIATION WEEK

From Abby Wharton, Wastewater Surveillance Coordinator with CDPHE:

We are thrilled to share that Governor Jared Polis has declared the week of Nov. 27 - Dec. 1 as Wastewater Utility Appreciation Week! This is to recognize the invaluable contributions of all of you to our Wastewater Surveillance Program. Your efforts play a critical role in safeguarding public health in Colorado.

Please be on the lookout for packets with materials recognizing your participation in the program. These will be delivered with your monthly supply boxes. Furthermore, attached to this email is a copy of the proclamation signed by Governor Polis that officially commemorates this event for your records.

Thank you for all of your support and participation!

The Wastewater Surveillance Team





IMPACT REPORT FROM WASTEWATER SURVEILLANCE

The Town of Ridgway participates in the Colorado Wastewater Surveillance Program. Below is an image showing an impact report detailing the contributions made by the Ridgway Wastewater Treatment Plant, along with the essential data derived from these efforts.

THANK YOU, Town of Ridgway Wastewater Treatment Facility!

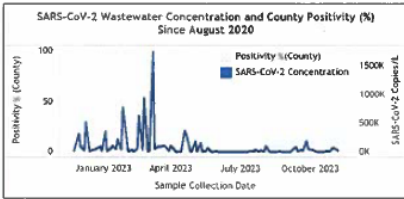

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment greatly appreciates your participation in the Colorado Wastewater Surveillance Program. Your dedication to providing wastewater samples for COVID-19 testing has been a vital part of establishing our statewide wastewater monitoring system.

Town of Ridgway Wastewater Treatment Facility is an integral part of our program's expansion phase. Your team is a key part of our statewide monitoring system and provides valuable data to the communities you serve.

Your team contributed **92 samples** to our program over 50 weeks!

Town of Ridgway Wastewater Treatment Facility is one of 55 wastewater treatment facilities participating in Colorado's Wastewater Surveillance Program.

Together, we've collected and tested **11,910 samples** since the start of the program in August 2020




At CDPHE, we partner with our local public health agencies. The local partner for Town of Ridgway Wastewater Treatment Facility is Ouray County. To contact the LPHA, please reach out to **Tanner Kingery** at tkingery@ouraycountycoco.gov

Your commitment to wastewater surveillance will allow us to continue to expand what is possible with wastewater epidemiology.

Through the highs and lows ranging from **1,760,000 to 2,000** viral concentration, your team helped CDPHE, local public health agencies, and community members identify COVID-19 trends and make informed decisions.

These samples encompass **3,413,551+** Coloradans.



INVITATION TO INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE RURAL LEGISLATION COALITION HOSTED BY HOUSING COLORADO

From Ally Upton, Housing Advocacy Manager with Housing Colorado:

I am reaching out to share an exciting initiative underway at Housing Colorado, one that underscores our dedication to fostering meaningful engagement with local rural communities and officials.

Following extensive discussions this past year, a prevailing theme emerged: rural communities expressed a desire for more concise updates during legislative sessions, tailored to their specific concerns. In response to this feedback, Housing Colorado has taken the strategic step of establishing a dedicated Rural Legislative Coalition (RLC).

This coalition is designed to host monthly meetings, exclusively focused on housing bills, issues, and relevant information that pertains to rural communities. The objective is to provide a platform that ensures a well-informed and engaged rural community and leadership. While we have identified key contacts, we acknowledge that there may be others whom we have not yet reached. We are particularly keen on involving County commissioners, rural city officials,



planners, leaders, affordable housing developers, and advocates. Should you know of individuals who may benefit from participating in this informative coalition, we encourage you to share this email and information with them.

I extend a formal invitation for you to join us at the inaugural coalition meeting scheduled for December 13 at 9 am via Zoom (Zoom info below). This initial session will serve as a brief introduction to outline the mission of the coalition and delineate the role that Housing Colorado will play as its facilitator. Subsequent sessions will be held on the first Wednesday of the month at 9 am via Zoom, and a recurring Zoom invitation will be sent to your inbox for your calendar planning.

Please note that these meetings will exclusively take place during the legislative sessions (January through May) to accommodate the time constraints of our stakeholders, respecting the demanding nature of their schedules.

Your participation and support in this endeavor are integral to the success of Housing Colorado's commitment to amplifying rural voices. We genuinely appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to your valuable contribution.

Thank you.

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87570466537?pwd=U3J4bEg1ZGI2YzdLUjRpS3FnR092UT09>

Meeting ID: 875 7046 6537

Passcode: 084112

**OURAY COUNTY ART SHOW AT DECKER
COMMUNITY ROOM**

This show is featuring 15 fantastic Ouray County artists working in a variety of media: Kathy Peckham, Connie Anderson, Cristin Johnson, David Bergerson, Nina Rea, Kay Rider, Ann Dettmer, Claudia Wolff, Heather Delgado, Cie Hoover, Alex Menard, John Clark, Michelle Montague, Jen Randolph, and Ed Werner. The show runs through February 4th. Click [HERE](#) for more info.





FREE COMMUNITY POTLUCK AND FILM

To continue CTC’s mental health efforts, they are hosting another screening on mental health in mountain towns. Join them for a free event, potluck, and Bode Miller film on December 19th starting at 5:30pm at the 4H Center. Click [HERE](#) to check out the trailer for The Paradise Paradox.

RIDGWAY REMINDS RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES ABOUT SNOW AND ICE CONTROL OPERATIONS

The Ridgway Public Works Department coordinates snow and ice control operations in conjunction with CDOT within the Town of Ridgway. The Department prides itself on its efforts to provide for safe and passable streets and public safety is the number one priority when clearing snow and ice on Ridgway’s nearly 15 miles of roadway. Snow and ice control efforts to create safe and passable streets impact every resident, business and visitor and are vital for maintaining safe mobility throughout the Town.

Let's Talk About Mental Health

**JOIN US FOR A
COMMUNITY
POTLUCK AND FILM!**

Tuesday, December 19th
4H Center
[22739 US-550, Ridgway, CO]

FREE EVENT

*Event
Schedule*

5:30PM
DOORS OPEN

5:30-6:30PM
MUNCH &
MINGLE
Bring a dish to share

6:30-7:45PM
SCREENING

7:45-8:15PM
Q&A: *Mental
health and
mountain
communities*

THE PARADISE PARADOX

FROM EXECUTIVE PRODUCER BODE MILLER

Questions? catevoyageryouth.org

Public Works will act diligently to remove snow as efficiently and quickly as possible. The response is determined by a variety of factors including, but not limited to, pavement temperatures, future weather forecast, duration of storm and type of snow. Public Works will typically plow when there is greater than 4 inches of snow fall on hard surfaces. Since all streets cannot be addressed at the same time, the priority is to keep transportation routes and main thoroughfares drivable, especially school streets. Once these streets are safe and passable, equipment is assigned to businesses, residential streets, and then critical public sidewalks. Public Works does its best to clear priority routes before the schools start and business doors open, while also taking advantage of the limited cars in the downtown area early in the morning. In short, Public Works will start removal in accordance with the priority list described above and depicted in the Town’s “Snow Removal Brochure” that can be found [HERE](#).

Snow removal is a community effort that requires everyone’s patience and cooperation. According to the Ridgway Municipal Code, private property owners are responsible for removing snow on sidewalks abutting their property. The Town will only remove snow from sidewalks abutting public property. On private property, it is the owner’s responsibility to remove or store snow from their property. Placing private snow on public streets will result in code enforcement violations. In historic downtown, property owners may put snow from public



sidewalks a few feet off the curb into the street. This prevents plow damage to curbs and sidewalks. The Town will haul this snow away when traffic allows.

Specific to Highway 62, where there are three lanes on the highway, CDOT will plow to the center. Where there is not a center turn lane, CDOT will plow to the sides to keep the streets unobstructed. Properties abutting Highway 62 should not place snow from driveways or parking lots onto the highway. Doing so may result in enforcement action by CDOT.

For more information regarding policies and procedures in place when it snows in the Town of Ridgway, please call 970-626-5308 or click [HERE](#). The Town of Ridgway greatly appreciates your patience and understanding this winter season!

TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR SERVICE LINE INVENTORY AND LEAD SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT PLANNING

As reported last month, the Town is taking advantage of free technical assistance and hands-on support with service line inventory (SLI) and lead service line replacement planning (LSLRP) process offered by CDPHE. All community and non-transient, non-community water systems must develop an SLI to identify the materials of service lines connected to the public water distribution system. The SLI is due by October 16, 2024.

The Water Quality Control Division has selected WSP in partnership with Sunrise Engineering to help public water systems with all aspects of the SLI and LSLRP. Staff held a kick-off meeting with representatives from these companies on December 5th. Staff is now working to provide these representatives with the necessary data and information to help them begin to formulate an SLI on our behalf.

MUNICODE UPDATED

The new version of Ridgway Municipal Code Chapter 7 titled “Land Use Regulations” is finally live and current on Municode! Check it out [HERE](#).

PLANNING UPDATE

From TJ Dlubac, Planning Consultant:

The development review team for the Town of Ridgway includes the Town Manager, Town Attorney, Town Engineer, Public Works Department, and Town Planner. This group meets regularly to discuss various land use and development-related projects and reviews all applications submitted to the Town to ensure compliance with applicable rules, regulations, and standards adopted by the Town Council. This team is currently working on the following projects:



1. Wetterhorn Homes – Amended Landscape Plan

The Applicant and Owner requested an amended landscape plan for the project after Town Council approval. Since the original landscape plan was approved as part of the PUD packet, the revised landscape plan will be reviewed and considered by the Town Council prior to the PUD being able to be recorded.

2. Alpenglow – CoHousing:

Our team has been working with the CoHousing team on a few fronts. The Town’s engineers have continued to work through a number of stormwater management items with the development team. The Town’s planner has been working with the applicant on the submittal requirements of a Site Plan and variance requests under the current code provisions. These applications are anticipated to be submitted in the coming weeks.

3. Old Firehouse Condo Plat

The applicant has submitted a condominium subdivision plat for the Old Firehouse building. The application was accepted as complete and is out for referral comment at this time. Comments are due back by December 21st. We would anticipate this application being scheduled for public meetings in January/February.

4. Ridgway Village Condos

Town staff met with the applicant on Phase 3 of this project to look through and evaluate the various past approvals provided for the project. Upon evaluation, staff sent a letter to the applicant reaffirming staff’s position that a site plan, building permits, and Condo Plat appeared to be the proper path forward for the project. Staff provided guidance and clarity on these processes and identified where previously submitted materials were deficient from the documents required for a site plan application. Staff anticipates an application for a site plan to be forthcoming.

5. Floating Lotus Brewery Site Plan

This is a new business wanting to open in town. While the brewery is only one tenant in a multi-tenant building, this would constitute a change of use and requires a site plan, per the new code. However, since this is an existing building and the request is only for one tenant, staff has requested that the applicant provide some of the site plan required documents in order to establish a baseline of current users and uses by square footage and the existing layout and design of the site including landscaping, parking, access points, etc. The intent of this effort is simply to establish a baseline for the property moving forward as we continue to transition to the new procedures in the Ridgway Municipal Code.



UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- **Sustainability Advisory Board Meeting** – December 12, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. at Town Hall and virtually via Zoom
- **Town Council Regular Meeting** – December 13, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. in-person at Town Hall and virtually via Zoom
- **FUSE Creative Main Street Committee Meeting & COMS Annual Visit** – December 19, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.
- **Youth Advisory Council Meeting** – December 21, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. at Town Hall
- **Parks, Trails, & Open Space Committee Meeting** – January 2, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. at Town Hall
- **Sustainability Advisory Board Meeting** – January 3, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. at Town Hall and virtually via Zoom
- **Town Council Regular Meeting** – January 10, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in-person at Town Hall and virtually via Zoom

JOKE OF THE DAY

Her: What do you do?

Me: I race motorcycles.

Her: Do you win many races?

Me: No, the motorcycles are faster.