

**TOWN OF YAMPA**  
**TOWN BOARD MINUTES**  
**November 5, 2025 – 6:00 pm**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mayor Geilert, Trustee Lewis, Trustee Geanious, Trustee Shoptaugh and Trustee Montgomery

**EMPLOYEES PRESENT:** Town Administrator/Clerk Sheila Symons Planner/Treasurer Mary Alice Page-Allen

**AUDIENCE PRESENT:**

**Online:** HP, Ann O'Shea, Crystal McLaughlin, Sue Walker

**In-Person:** Brad Wheeler, Joe Edwards, Aaron Symons, and Gary Burkholder

**1. Call to Order**

- Mayor Geilert called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm
- The Pledge of Allegiance was recited
- Roll call was taken

**2. Audience Participation**

No Public Comments were made

**3. Resolution 2025-12 – Personnel Policies Amendments**

The Board discussed Resolution 2025-12, which formally adopts amendments to the Town of Yampa's Personnel Policies and Procedures Handbook. Board Members confirmed that the proposed changes reflected prior Board direction and incorporated staff feedback from previous meetings. Updates included the removal of Columbus Day as a recognized holiday in lieu of an additional personal day, revised language for sick leave and bereavement policies, and adjustments to employee work hours, along with clarification of on-call hours and the distinction between compensatory time and overtime.

During the roundtable review, trustees agreed that their edits had been fully integrated and expressed readiness to move forward. Trustee Montgomery raised questions regarding the timing and structure of the resolution, specifically why multiple resolutions were being adopted separately for each policy amendment rather than bundled together. It was clarified that the amendments addressed distinct policy areas including personnel policies, the Board's code of conduct, and public behavior policy, and that adopting them individually was the most appropriate approach. This structure reflected prior and current Board consensus as well as operational needs.

Trustee Montgomery also referenced a past public comment questioning whether staff or the Board was directing Town policy. Sheila clarified that the passage of this resolution reaffirmed the Board's authority in setting policy, with staff responsible for implementation. Following discussion, the majority of the Board agreed to proceed with adoption of Resolution 2025-12, establishing November 1, 2025, as the effective date.

**Motion**

Trustee Lewis made a motion to authorize to sign Resolution 2025-12, A Resolution Approving and Adopting Amendments to the Town of Yampa Personnel Policies and Procedures Handbook and setting an effective date of November 1, 2025. Trustee Geanious seconded the motion. The motion passed with four (4) in favor and one (1) opposed.

**4. 2026 Budget**

The Board reviewed proposed outside entity funding allocations for inclusion in the 2026 Budget, followed by a public hearing on the full budget. Materials included prior year expenditures, encumbered funds, 2026 funding requests, staff recommendations, and existing commitments. Discussion focused on continued support for utility assistance programs, annual contributions to community events such as Fourth of July and Christmas activities, and reserve distributions. Other allocations reviewed included Parks and Recreation projects (such as Town Flowers) and a request from South Routt Housing based on population share. Trustees confirmed ongoing support for Town Cleanup Day, emphasizing its role in community support rather than enforcement. Additional line items considered included funding for out-of-cycle requests (such as prom or other donation requests), business signage, and potential Main Street program improvements, despite the absence of current grant funding. The Business Improvement Grant Program remains available for future consideration.

Staff requested feedback on all proposed allocations, noting that several items are tied to existing agreements and must be honored. The Board also discussed the availability and allocation of general fund resources, with staff confirming that all proposed funding would come from general fund sources, including contributions from Yampa Valley Electric, lease revenues, and designated line items for parks, public support donations, and economic development. An overview of the Palmer Zirkel lease was provided for newer members, explaining that when Zirkel approached Richard Palmer to place a tower on his property, he directed that the resulting lease revenues be distributed annually to support the Fourth of July celebration, the Historical Society, and Christmas activities.

Trustee Montgomery proposed reductions to certain line items. The items that can be reduced are specifically public support donations and economic development. Staff clarified that the economic development allocation includes both the Town's partnership with the Routt County Economic Development Partnership (RCEDP) and the business support program, recommending that reductions focus on business support rather than the RCEDP partnership. Adjustments were made accordingly. The Board agreed to prioritize committed funds and core community programs—including the Fourth of July donation, Town flowers, and out-of-cycle approvals—while reassessing other items such as business support and Regional Housing Authority support. Trustees noted that the out-of-cycle fund had not been used in 2025, and the allocation was reduced based on prior usage.

The Board discussed the South Routt Regional Housing Authority's funding request, calculated by population share among Yampa, Oak Creek, and Routt County. Trustees debated full versus partial funding, noting the Authority's role in affordable workforce housing and alignment with Yampa's comprehensive plan. A reduced allocation was approved for 2026, with the option to revisit full funding in 2027. Several outside entity funding requests from local organizations and community partners were also reviewed, with trustees agreeing to fully fund these requests. The Town's utility assistance fund was reduced due to lack of use in 2025, with clarification that future assistance should be defined more broadly to include essential services beyond water and sewer.

The Board then conducted a public hearing on the full 2026 budget, reviewing staff compensation, insurance costs, utility rates, and major expenditures. Salary increases were capped across all positions, insurance premiums were noted to have risen with employees absorbing the increase, and the Town confirmed continuation of the deferred compensation program with a matching contribution. Wages reflect full staffing projections and an upgraded deputy clerk role. Property and sales tax revenues were discussed, with sales tax continuing to be split between capital improvements and debt service. Planned expenditures include an accounting software upgrade, code enforcement activities, and capital projects such as furnace replacement at Old Town Hall, vehicle acquisition in partnership with Routt County, and pass-through grant funding for the museum.

Water and sewer rates were a central focus of the budget discussion. Based on the 2023 rate study, the 2026 budget incorporates modest increases in both rates, aligning with inflation and long-term recommendations. Trustees considered delaying the increase to provide temporary relief for residents but ultimately reached consensus that adhering to the study is essential to build reserves and prevent future funding shortfalls per the water rate study conducted. It was noted that past underfunding contributed to the need for voter-approved tax increase to assist with capital improvement projects.

Construction on the plant has been delayed until spring 2026 due to the federal shutdown and winter approaching, with costs covered by the capital fund. Trustees emphasized the importance of balancing affordability with sustainability, reaffirming that small, steady increases are preferable to steep hikes in future years. The Town's utility assistance program was confirmed as a safeguard for residents experiencing financial hardship.

Trustees and residents engaged in discussion about utility affordability, long-term infrastructure planning, and support for residents on fixed incomes. Outreach improvements were considered, including adding information about assistance programs to the Town newsletter and coordinating with Routt County Human Services and Lift-Up. Trustees also discussed the potential for a "round-up" donation program once new accounting software is implemented, as well as leveraging the food pantry's role in community support.

Additional discussion addressed code enforcement allocations and the planned acquisition of vehicles from Routt County, with trustees recommending independent inspections prior to purchase. Staff confirmed local mechanics are available to assist.

With no further questions from the public or online participants, the hearing was formally closed. Staff confirmed they have the necessary directions to finalize the budget, which will return for approval at the first Board meeting in December.

**5. Consent Agenda**

Trustee Montgomery requested October 22, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes to be removed from the Consent Agenda.

**Motion**

Trustee Lewis made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, specifically the October 15, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes and Item B ratification of approval and signing of Engagement Letter to provide 2024 & 2025 Audit Services with Hinton Burdick CPAs & Advisors. Trustee Geanious seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Trustee Montgomery noted concerns about the limited detail from the interview conducted during October 22, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes. Sheila clarified that summary minutes are standard practice for interviews and that the full staff packet, including the engagement letter and interview questions, remains part of the permanent record. While some trustees expressed a preference for more detail in the minutes, the Board ultimately agreed to move forward as presented.

**Motion**

Trustee Lewis made a motion to approve the October 22, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes as presented. Trustee Geanious seconded the motion. The motion passed with four (4) in favor and one (1) opposed.

**6. Staff and Board Member Reports/Updates**

Mary Alice gave a detailed update on the new status of the Town's 2023 Audit, which has become the subject of the Town filing a formal complaint with the Colorado Office of the State Auditor and the Department of Regulatory Agencies. The Town had engaged Lisa Nyland, Excel Tax and Accounting LLC, to conduct the audit, but it was discovered that she is not a licensed CPA, a legal requirement for performing municipal audits. Despite repeated requests for a signed audit and assurances from Nyland, she submitted an unapproved audit to the State Auditor's website, and it was found to be invalid and potentially fraudulent. A cover letter from Baker CPAs LLC was attached to the audit, though the Town had no contract or contact with that firm, and the audit itself contained errors and did not match the version accepted by the Board.

As a result, the Town will likely need to redo the 2023 audit. Staff has requested a refund of the \$10,434 paid to Nyland and are working with Chad Atkinson, CPA, of Hinton Burdick CPAs to amend the engagement letter to include the 2023 Audit alongside the 2024 Audit. This amendment will be presented at the November 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. The State Auditor's Office has also opened a formal case, and the Town is coordinating closely with them to ensure compliance and resolution for the Town.

Trustees acknowledged that the Town was in a time-sensitive situation when Nyland was hired and admitted that due diligence—such as verifying credentials—was not properly conducted. While Nyland misrepresented her qualifications, the Board accepted shared responsibility for the oversight. The situation has delayed access to certain county and state-held funds, which will be released once a valid audit is submitted. Fortunately, those funds are accruing interest and are not permanently lost.

The Board discussed potential impacts on wastewater treatment grants and reaffirmed the urgency of resolving the issue. Mary Alice confirmed that all financial records are in good shape and that the audit itself is the only missing piece. Trustees expressed frustration over the prolonged delays and misrepresentations but agreed to move forward with a verified CPA firm. The meeting concluded with a commitment to transparency, accountability, and corrective action, and with staff preparing to finalize the engagement with Hinton Burdick upon return from vacation.

Sheila shared several announcements and initiatives. The Routt County Climate Action Plan is accepting applications for community board seats, and information will be included in the Town newsletter; trustees were encouraged to help ensure Yampa representation.

A letter of support from the Colorado Rural Water Association was read into the record, offering strong recognition of the excellent work being carried out by Water and Sewer Operator Cannon Murray. The letter, submitted by Peter Huisman, commended Cannon's efforts and highlighted his effective representation of Yampa.

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) initiative passed in the recent election, and the Board will need to appoint an elected official to represent Yampa as the elected committee official for the future planning and budgeting meetings. Trustees were asked to consider their interest in serving in this role.

The April 2026 municipal election will include four open seats, the mayor's seat and three trustee positions—with nomination petitions available in early January.

Trustees were reminded of the upcoming governance workshop in Meeker on November 19, with RSVPs requested by November 14. Staff also shared highlights from the Small Communities Workshop in Breckenridge, which focused on navigating uncertainty in rural governance.

Sheila provided updates regarding the Blessing Box and food pantry, noting the addition of a mobile shelf to accommodate growing donations and exploring a partnership with the Friends of the Library to streamline food deliveries through Food Bank of the Rockies. Kudos were given to Amanda doing a great job.

The Routt County Economic Development Partnership will not attend the November 18 office hours, but plans to return in December.

The Town expressed appreciation to South Routt Medical for hosting a successful flu shot clinic, now planned as an annual event.

A joint meeting with the Fire Protection District is scheduled for November 19<sup>th</sup> to discuss Old Town Hall heating and the Wildland Resiliency Code (WRC). Trustees were also asked to review draft policies on board conduct and public behavior, with assignments divided among members for feedback. The Fourth of July committee will hold a Zoom-only meeting on November 11<sup>th</sup> to discuss fundraising. Plans are also underway for a holiday dinner at the Ore House on December 15<sup>th</sup>, open to board members, planning commission, and staff with guests, including a white elephant gift exchange and celebration of the year's accomplishments.

## **7. Scheduled Meeting/Work Sessions**

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a. Town Board and other requests for Agenda Items


- i. November 19, 2025 @ 6:00 p.m. – Town Board Regular Meeting (Joint Meeting with Yampa Fire Protection District)
- ii. December 3, 2025 @ 6:00 p.m. – Town Board Regular Meeting

**8. Adjournment**

**Motion**

Trustee Lewis made a motion for adjournment. Trustee Geanious seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Approved the 19<sup>th</sup> day of November 2025.

  
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Stacey Geffert, Mayor

Attest:

  
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Sheila Symons, Town Administrator/Clerk



motion passed