

**TOWN OF YAMPA**  
**TOWN BOARD MINUTES**  
**February 19, 2025 – 6:00 pm**

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

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Trustee Kindsvater

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

**AUDIENCE PRESENT:** Wes Hammond; Shannon Hammond; Krista Luciano; Jeff Brooks; Tim Brooks; Lisa Medina; Dan Nielsen (via Zoom), Lacy Trout and Joe Edwards, Yampa Fire Protection District; Kenny Trout; Rick Davey; Scott Williamson, and Dick Robuck.

**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**

None.

**3. MissionSquare 401A and 457 Plan Benefit Enrollment**

Sheila discussed the implementation of the 401(a) and 457 deferred compensation plan election forms with Mission Square. Additionally, she noted that employees can choose to contribute 3% of their annual salary to the 457 plan, which will be matched by 1.5% from the 401(a) plan, and some of the election choices align with common practices. She stated that the goal is to have this setup rolling through the March payroll.

Mayor Geilert mentioned that the plan was well laid out. Trustee Montgomery asked about the plan's transferability if an employee leaves before retirement age. Sheila confirmed that the plan is transferable, and employees can take their contributions with them even if they leave the town employment, and they can start taking out their funds without penalty at age 70 and a half, noting that for early withdrawals, penalties may apply, but options like loans are available.

Trustee Montgomery also asked if the town's contribution stays in the plan even if an employee leaves early. Sheila confirmed that it stays with the employee once vested, and each employee has their individual plan, not a pooled fund. In response to a question from Trustee Montgomery, Sheila stated that currently two employees have indicated that intend to sign up for the 401(a) and 457 plans, and she will keep the board updated on additional sign-ups. In explanation to another question from Trustee Montgomery, Sheila stated that new employees can sign up 30 days after they start with the town, or during the open enrollment period in November which would be effective the following January.

**Motion**

Trustee Lewis made a motion to authorize the signing of the 401A and 457 Deferred Compensation Election Forms with Mission Square. Trustee Geanious seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**4. Yampa Fire Protection District – Annexation, Zoning & Sketch Subdivision – Appx 27245 Watson Creek Road, Yampa**

Mary Alice reviewed the project and explained what has occurred to date related to the statutory annexation process and the Planning Commission's consideration of the land use elements of the Yampa Fire Protection District's (YFPD) proposal. She explained that what is being considered by the Town Board this evening is the recommendations of the Planning Commission related to the annexation and the zoning designation, noting that the sketch subdivision was included in the title of the matters inadvertently, and that the zoning designation requires the Town Board to also hold a public hearing. She stated that the applications concern the proposed annexation and zoning to Residential (R1-A) of a four-acre parcel of property owned by Julie Redmond Drake and under contract with YFPD, located to the west of the existing Town municipal boundary north of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street alignment. She outlined the processes involved in getting to an actual building permit for the proposed YFPD, noting that there are several additional steps that will each be subject to other required approvals to assure everything is in place before anything is recorded.

Mary Alice noted that the application was received and deemed complete in November, so these applications are being considered under the old land use regulations, noting that while these applications can be considered collectively, each needs to be considered on its own merits. She reiterated that the regulations only call for a public hearing on the zoning matter but stipulate that the Planning Commission needs to review any annexation and make a recommendation to the Town Board. She explained that the proposed zoning designation is as R1-A, and this district allows institutional facilities such as fire stations, schools or town halls as a conditional use. She outlined how the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan as well as the 1995 Master Plan identifies this 40-acre parcel owned by Ms. Drake as a growth area, and the 2023 Comprehensive Plan identifies this tract for the preservation of views and agricultural elements and clustering the residential development in the corners of the property on a 1-2 unit per acre density. She reviewed the information included in the Board's packet, and specifically noted that the Planning Commission has forwarded recommendations for approval of the annexation and R1-A zoning designation subject to conditions as further detailed in the draft Planning Commission minutes, adding that there is also some valuable information about this process and comments from many of the folks present tonight.

Dan Nielson, President, YFPD, outlined the situation and explained that they have outgrown our current facility and there's no feasible way to expand it. He added that the facility is not in compliance with both NFPA and OSHA standards for the fire stations, and because of this they started looking for an alternative site with consideration for the community of Yampa, which is their largest customer. He stated that the YFPD Board wanted to keep the facility as close to Yampa as possible and they needed a site that could be provided municipal water and sewer services. He stated that they explored available options and concluded that the Drake property made the most sense, and while they understand that some residents in the subdivision may not be happy about this, they really have no other options. Mr. Nielsen said that the district wants to be good neighbors and they value public input on what is built, adding that the district's goal is to make the new fire station aesthetically pleasing and functional, with minimal impact on the community.

Mayor Geilert opened the public hearing.

Lisa Medina asked if the district already own the land or if it is just proposed, and inquired why, if the land is to be zoned residential, the fire station isn't considered commercial, as she feels it should be classified as such. Mary Alice explained that in order to submit the annexation applications, the fire district needed to have standing on the property and there is an existing letter of agreement between Julie Drake and the fire district stating that once the district is satisfied with the entitlements on the property, they will proceed to closing, which is anticipated to happen in May. She added that the parcel has been surveyed, and this packet could not have been developed without that survey information. Mary Alice reiterated that fire stations, town halls, and schools are conditional uses within the Residential R1A Zone District, as they are considered institutional uses, not commercial uses, and are treated as such under the zoning code.

Jeff Brooks asked who the Fire District is responsible for, specifically if it covers just Yampa, or also Phippsburg and Toponas. Lacy Trout, volunteer, YFPD, outlined that the district serves 389 square miles and just under a thousand residents. She stated that the district's boundary extends from the county line at the top of War Pass to the county line with Eagle, and to the west, they are the initial responders for Garfield and Rio Blanco Counties as those districts are often only accessible through the South Routt area. She noted that depending on the situation, such as an injured person, the district will usually transport because the fastest way is best. Ms. Troutt also thanked the public for their support. Mr. Brooks asked why the fire station needs to be in Yampa if they cover such a large area. Lacy explained that if the fire station were moved far outside of town, there would be impacts to local insurance ratings (ISO) due to the lack of a nearby fire station, and noted that building outside of town would prevent access to municipal water and sewer services.

Trustee Montgomery asked when the ISO rating changed to in- or out-town differentiation as he recalled that there was no difference when he was involved with the district. Mr. Nielsen explained that the ISO rating has never been the same rate, that to his recollection it has always been dependent on the response time of the personnel, noting that in example someone living at the base of Dunkley Pass or at the base of Gore Pass will have a different ISO rating compared to those living in Phippsburg or Yampa where there are facilities, equipment and personnel. He added that it is also largely dependent on the proximity to fire hydrants and the response time of the district.

Shannon Hammond asked, looking at the future land use map on the wall, what led to the decision to place the fire station at the far end of the subdivision instead of near easy access to the county road? Mr. Nielsen addressed this by explaining that this area was considered, but the significant wetlands and the need to obtain an access easement from County Road 17 to the corner of the Drake property from another property owner presented challenges. Ms. Hammond also asked about the water and sewer situation, specifically if the town would pick up that bill for extending service lines or if the fire department would pay for it. Mary Alice advised that the construction costs will be covered by the fire district as would any developer, and they will receive a normal monthly water/sewer bill.

Rick Davey stated he is in attendance after seeing a note on his door, as he was unaware of the situation and wanted to understand what was going on. He admitted he missed previous meetings and didn't have a map to see other potential locations. He stated he felt that the zoning decision seemed sudden but acknowledged that he missed the last meeting. Mr. Davey emphasized the importance of the fire station fitting into the community's comprehensive plan, suggesting it could look like a barn to blend in, adding he wanted to ensure that everyone had a say in the process.

Mayor Geilert expressed her concern about the road having many kids sledding and playing around it and asked that this be taken into consideration.

Dick Robuck spoke and offered his expertise to the fire station for this property or any other that may come into play.

Scott Williamson asked whether there are any other alternatives to this site, advising that the property being looked at is not very sustainable for a fire department because when it is irrigated it's all underwater. He inquired if other properties, like the Bobby George property, have been considered, and if Dan Nielsen's family still owns the old sawmill property. Mr. Nielsen replied that they have looked at both properties and they have proven unfeasible for the district's use.

Krista Luciano asked about the timeline for the project and whether the water diversion will affect the adjacent homeowners' properties. Mary Alice advised that such management efforts cannot legally impact surrounding properties, and the engineer would have to provide plans in this regard. Ms. Luciano asked about the plan for the rest of the 35 or so acres and whether it would be subdivided. Mary Alice explained that it is a future growth area for the Town and such has been shown in the 1995 Master Plan as continues to be shown in the 2023 Comprehensive Plan. She added that the 2023 Comprehensive Plan calls for any development to be clustered in the corners to protect views and agricultural uses. She advised that no specific plan has been brought forward to date, and any future development would go through generally the same process as the fire station proposal. Mary Alice encouraged everyone to read the 2023 Comprehensive Plan on the Town website to understand the community's vision.

Mr. Nielsen explained that the district has hired an engineering company to help mitigate the issues at the site, noting that the district did look at the Bobby George property but would face the same water issue, and it would require extending water and sewer services over a long distance, which would be expensive. He added that Mr. George's property was only offered under a 99-year lease, which he believed was not in the best interest of the taxpayers, the community or the district. He stated that the Drake property will be gifted in fee simple to the fire department, emphasizing the need to protect taxpayers and minimize long-term financial obligations. He mentioned that the old sawmill location is not viable due to the difficulty of bringing water and sewer under the highway and railroad tracks. He provided an update on the project timeline, stating that the feasibility study will take most of 2025, and they are looking at a best-case scenario of breaking ground in 2027, adding that if their design professionals determine the current location is not feasible, they will continue to look for alternatives.

Mary Alice explained that this is one of several processes that the project will go through, stating that following this, the fire district will work with their architect and engineering firm to analyze their needs and evaluate the site. With regard to the land use processes, the district will need a conditional use permit and major site plan approval from the Town prior to obtaining any building permits, and during these stages, the district is required to submit detailed engineered plans, including the actual building designs and elevations, rather than just preliminary plans as was submitted with the applications currently being discussed and considered. She stated that this additional documentation,

such as a site foundation plan, soil investigation report and a drainage plan, will also be necessary to meet the building permitting process requirements. Mary Alice emphasized that the current processes will be conditioned on approvals that happen at later stages, much like a stack of dominoes, where each piece depends on the previous one, and it is only when all pieces fall into place that the district will have a satisfactory plan that leads to obtaining a building permit. She reiterated that tonight's consideration is by no means the final step.

There were no additional comments from the public. Mayor Geilert closed the public hearing.

**Motion**

Trustee Lewis made a motion to approve the proposed annexation of a 4.0-acre parcel of property located at approximately 27245 Watson Creek Road, Yampa with the findings of fact that the proposal meets the standards of the Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Yampa, Colorado, is in conformance with the applicable goals and policies of the Yampa Comprehensive Plan, and preserves the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the Town of Yampa subject to the following condition:

1. The Annexation Plat and any appurtenant documents shall be recorded concurrently with the Final Plat of the Yampa Fire District Subdivision.

Trustee Geanious seconded the motion. The motion passed with four (4) votes in favor. Trustee Montgomery abstained.

**Motion**

Trustee Lewis made a motion to approve the proposed zone district designation on a 4.0-acre parcel of property located at approximately 27245 Watson Creek Road, Yampa to Residential One "A" District – General Residential (R-1A) with the findings of fact that the proposal meets the standards of the Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Yampa, Colorado, is in conformance with the applicable goals and policies of the Yampa Comprehensive Plan, and preserves the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the Town of Yapa subject to the following conditions:

1. The approval of the rezoning shall be authorized and approved by an ordinance of the Yampa Board of Trustees, and such ordinance shall be recorded in the records of the Routt County Clerk and Recorder concurrently with the Final Plat of the Yampa Fire District Subdivision.
2. The effective date of approval of the zone district designation is the date of the recording of the Ordinance approving the rezone. Such approval shall expire in 24 months unless a building permit for construction of permanent improvements upon the property affected is applied for and received within said 24 months of the effective date of such approval, or, in the event such building permit is obtained within that period, if the work authorized by such permit is not commenced within 120 days of issuance of the permit, if the work is ceased for a period of 120 days or more at any time after work is commenced, or if the Board of Trustees does not renew the approval in accordance with the applicable provision of Section 20 (E), Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Yampa.
3. A conditional use permit, major site plan, and other required approvals of the Yampa Land Development Code shall be obtained prior to the authorization of any building permit(s) related to the proposed development of the property for the Yampa Fire Protection District's use.

Trustee Geanious seconded the motion. The motion passed with four (4) votes in favor. Trustee Montgomery abstained.

Trustee Montgomery stated that he is abstaining from voting on these matters as he is an adjacent landowner and believes he has a conflict of interest.

5. Consent Agenda

**Motion**

Trustee Lewis made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, specifically the approval of the February 5, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes, and the approval of the January 2025 Payment Approval Report. Trustee Geanious seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

6. Staff and Board Member Reports/Updates

Mary Alice provided updates on several ongoing projects including the Historic Guidelines and Design Standards Focus Group which is scheduled to meet on February 26<sup>th</sup> and for which they have an excellent group of people participating. She added that the Affordable Housing Focus Group is planned for March 11<sup>th</sup>, with a tentative heads-up on a date change due to a conflict on the 12<sup>th</sup>. She stated that the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Royal lot is next on the list, and that the signage project is moving forward with a cost estimate to be provided any day. She stated that the Town has received the final documents for the schematic design of the museum, and this grant-funded project can now move to the next step, adding that Janet Ray and she will work to finalize a proposal to complete the construction plans and specifications. She noted that the Ager Mobile Home Park project has not progressed any further than the last discussion, but things should start coming together in the next couple weeks.

Sheila provided an update: The Salsa Night event will be on March 6<sup>th</sup>, from 5:30 to 8:00 PM or until the food is gone, noting that all proceeds will go towards the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks. She added that Snowden Meat donated the meat, and Boots and Spurs are handling the rest of the supplies. She stated that she will be attending a training on ADA compliance for the Town website next Thursday and Friday, and the training is in-depth due to new house bill requirements.

7. Scheduled Meeting/Work Sessions

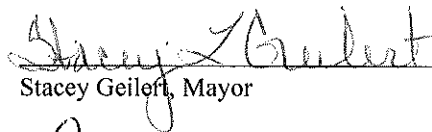
- a. Town Board and other requests for Agenda Items
  - i. February 26, 2025 @ 6:30 p.m. – Planning Commission Meeting
  - ii. March 5, 2025 @ 6:00 p.m. – Town Board Regular Meeting
  - iii. March 19, 2025 @ 6:00 p.m. – Town Board Regular Meeting
    - 1. Joint work session with Planning Commission – Phase II, Land Development Code

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 7:30 pm.

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

  
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 Stacey Geileff, Mayor

Attest:

  
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 Sheila Symons, Town Administrator/Clerk

