

**TOWN OF YAMPA**  
**TOWN BOARD MINUTES**  
**April 16, 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:**

**In Person:** Ryan Parker; Jo Parker; Travis Milway; Wes Hammond; Shannon Hammond; County Commissioner Tim Redmond; Margaret Chipman; Dan Nielsen and Joe Edwards, Yampa Fire Protection District; John Bristol, Routt County Economic Development Partnership; and Tom Yackey. **Via Zoom:** Bill Ray, Kristen Crawford, Dylan Anderson and Audria Herrera.

**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. Northwest Colorado Development Council – Commissioner Tim Redmond**

Routt County Commissioner Tim Redmond discussed the Northwest Colorado Development Council's (NWCDC) initiatives and the region's efforts to navigate the economic transition caused by the decline of coal-fired generation and coal mining. He emphasized that solutions must come from local communities working collaboratively, as neither Denver nor Washington can resolve these challenges alone. Redmond highlighted NWCDC's Innovation Center which will house their revolving loan program, offering accessible loans of \$5,000 to \$10,000 at 5% interest for two to three years, complemented by wraparound services to guide borrowers, including transitioning coal miners, in successfully starting businesses. Recognizing the distinct needs of local communities, NWCDC supports construction projects, provides gap financing, and partners with commercial banks to offer loans that larger institutions typically avoid.

Redmond noted the importance of active community engagement and hands-on support, which ensures lower default rates for revolving loans compared to commercial loans. He also highlighted plans to include mental health professionals at the Northwest Colorado Innovation Center to assist individuals dealing with the stress of economic transitions. Addressing affordability challenges, he expressed concerns that young people raised in the community may not be able to remain due to high living costs. NWCDC collaborates with commercial banks to fill financing gaps, support entrepreneurship, and encourage economic diversification.

Key initiatives include workforce development programs, such as certificate-based training tailored for transitioning workers, like aviation mechanic certification at Hayden's airport. These programs offer high-paying, globally relevant career paths and are designed to accommodate working families. NWCDC also provides grant-writing and project management services to ease administrative burdens on municipalities, supporting projects that drive economic growth. Currently, NWCDC is managing 28 active projects with \$2.36 billion in investment and 530 jobs, including Fitch Meats' expansion, local branding for grass-fed meat, Hayden's business park development, and a regional website ([northwestcolorado.org](http://northwestcolorado.org)) showcasing community opportunities.

Redmond emphasized the need for sustainable management of recreational industries, such as hunting, fishing, and skiing, while diversifying job opportunities in sectors like timber and forestry. He described the potential of mass timber technology, which outperformed steel and concrete in seismic tests, to create fire-resistant building materials. Redmond advocated for utilizing the million-and-a-half acres of Routt National Forest in need of forest health projects and explored partnerships with industries interested in processing timber sustainably. He stressed the importance of cleaning forest floors to prevent runaway fires and turning potential hazards into valuable resources.

Additionally, Redmond shared updates on NWCDC's collaboration with local municipalities to address housing shortages, such as Hayden's efforts to build employee housing in partnership with the fire department and school

district. He highlighted funding successes, including a \$100,000 grant for wayfinding and business support plans in Yampa, over \$3 million in grants for South Routt projects, and plans for the Innovation Center to expand at CNCC's old campus in Craig. NWCDC has set aside \$65,000 in a revolving loan fund and continues to secure financial resources, such as the Just Transition Fund and Senate Bill 25-037, which allocates \$50 million annually for Tier 1 coal communities over three years.

Redmond assured attendees that NWCDC's mission prioritizes community needs, creating opportunities and supporting economic resilience. Regarding railroad impacts, he noted that coal workers, railroad workers, and electrical workers unions are represented in just transition discussions. However, federal regulations limit state-level actions for railroad workers. Redmond expressed optimism about the region's capacity to drive innovation and economic growth, emphasizing local timber and manufacturing opportunities as alternatives to dependence on recreation industries.

In conclusion, Redmond thanked the community for its active participation and commitment to shaping its own future. He acknowledged their strength, resilience, and potential to overcome challenges through collaboration and innovation, inviting attendees to engage with NWCDC's initiatives and resources as partners in building a sustainable future for Northwest Colorado.

#### 4. **Yampa Fire Protection District (YFPD)**

Dan Nielsen provided updates on several ongoing matters. He shared that the engineering and architectural firms have scheduled their pre-work meeting for the pending new fire station next week to align plans, with a formal pre-work session to follow. The property closing is expected in early May, and progress will continue once finalized.

Nielsen also addressed an incident from last month when a fire broke out at the Antlers property. The fire department attempted to use a nearby hydrant, which was inoperable, leading to an embarrassing situation. While fire hydrants are required to be tested annually, he advised that it was his assumption the hydrant in question had not been properly inspected. Town Administrator Symons clarified that the Town was unaware the hydrant was out of service. Although a pole near the hydrant had been hit and repaired, the Town was not informed of damage to the hydrant itself. Symons emphasized that if hydrants are not reported as damaged, the Town cannot proactively identify issues, as daily inspections are not feasible. That is why this meeting was requested—to collaboratively find a way for the fire department to ensure that things are in proper working order as well. Since the Town relies on being notified if a hydrant is hit in order to investigate, it's important to establish a shared responsibility for addressing these situations and maintaining functionality.

Nielsen advised that he would follow up with the fire department after their upcoming Board meeting to arrange for one of their representatives to join the Town's water and sewer department in flushing hydrants this spring and logging inspections per state and federal requirements. Spring hydrant flushing typically occurs after snow melts and before any issues are discovered. Nielsen also noted the importance of assessing the impact of nearby damage, stating that common sense should dictate checking hydrants if poles or surrounding areas are hit. Sheila emphasized the diligence of the public works department, noting that many hydrants have already been replaced this year due to damage. Trustee Montgomery added that the pole near the Antlers hydrant was displaced but did not affect the hydrant, as they were situated far apart. He mentioned that he had heard that the hydrant had been discovered as non-functional during the fire department's 4th of July operations but was not reported. Symons reiterated that the Town was unaware of the issue, likely due to the busy nature of that day. However, again that cannot be helped if we are unaware because due to capacity limits for staff, they are not checked daily for operating.

The conversation shifted to the possibility of installing protective barriers around hydrants to prevent future damage. However, this solution presents logistical challenges due to limited staff and operational needs, such as snow removal and plowing. The group agreed to reach out to other small towns with limited staff for insights on effective hydrant management. Treasurer/Planner Page-Allen suggested since the distribution system is being worked on it may that this might be an opportunity to relocate vulnerable hydrants to safer locations, including the hydrants at Clifton and 1st.

Finally, Nielsen provided updates on transitioning the building's heating system from coal to electricity. Page-Allen advised it which is actively being assessed to ensure completion before the next heating season. She acknowledged the financial implications of the transition, emphasizing that it remains a priority despite the ongoing challenges.

## 5. Second Public Hearing – Yampa Valley Regional Transportation Authority Intergovernmental Agreement

The second public hearing on the Yampa Valley Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) intergovernmental agreement (IGA). Bill Ray, the consultant working on the RTA project on behalf of six jurisdictions considering its formation, provided a detailed presentation. He emphasized that an RTA is a public entity formed by two or more local governments to collaboratively address regional transportation challenges, such as transit, roadways, trails, and rail, along with the necessary services and infrastructure. An RTA is governed by a board of appointed elected officials representing member governments, adhering to open meeting laws and fiscal accountability standards. The creation of an RTA requires voter approval and may include voter-supported taxes or bonds to fund its operations.

Ray explained the draft IGA, which outlines governance, membership, service goals, funding mechanisms, and operating provisions. Permitted funding sources include sales tax (excluding groceries and utilities), motor vehicle registration fees, service fees, tolls, private contributions, and federal and state grants. Property taxes and lodging taxes are expressly prohibited in the current draft. Ray underscored the importance of this public hearing in enabling the draft IGA to be submitted to CDOT and neighboring jurisdictions for feedback, with additional amendments possible until August before final voter submission. A website has also been established at [steamboatsprings.net/rta](http://steamboatsprings.net/rta) to collect community feedback through a comment form, ensuring public input is shared with the formation committee.

Ray outlined eight proposed service goals of the RTA, including expanding regional bus routes between Craig and Steamboat Springs, creating circulator bus routes within Craig, introducing new bus routes to unserved areas in South Routt County (Stagecoach, Oak Creek, and Yampa), improving transportation to Yampa Valley Airport, upgrading bus stops and facilities, establishing park-and-ride locations, enhancing roadway safety, and participating in regional rail planning. He provided additional details on proposed services for Yampa, specifically a fixed-route bus service along Highway 131. The current proposal includes three hours of service every morning and evening, seven days a week, with 90-minute frequency at an estimated annual cost of \$300,000. A more frequent service with 45-minute intervals would cost approximately \$550,000 annually. The service would utilize 20-passenger buses with wheelchair accessibility, and an additional weekend activity bus is being considered for peak seasons.

Mayor Geilert asked for further route details for the Yampa area, highlighting concerns raised during prior meetings about the need for reliable and detailed transportation plans. Ray acknowledged that final service models would depend on the RTA board's planning process, including expert consultations to optimize ridership, costs, and service viability. He emphasized the importance of consistent and reliable operations to build ridership over time. Addressing concerns about the current focus on the Highway 40 corridor, Ray explained that it stemmed from Steamboat Springs' efforts to support its workforce commuting from Craig. However, the RTA aims to expand services to South Routt County and other unserved areas as part of its regional approach.

During the public hearing, Dan Nielsen raised concerns about the potential for empty buses running for extended periods before adjustments are made. Ray explained that such decisions would ultimately lie with the RTA board, which would include representatives from Yampa, allowing the town to participate in those discussions. Mary Alice added that transportation services would benefit not only the workforce but also other cohorts, such as senior citizens, school-age children, and those unable to drive. Joe Edwards highlighted potential challenges for elderly residents navigating the transportation system, which should be considered in planning. Mayor Geilert shared feedback from a resident who emphasized the need to account for Yampa's unique challenges, including limited access to grocery stores and services compared to Craig and Steamboat, when planning transportation solutions.

Final comments underscored additional concerns about the reliability of bus services. It was noted that travel times to and from Yampa can be impacted by factors like wrecks, road conditions, or other delays, making it difficult to ensure consistent punctuality for appointments. Ray acknowledged the importance of this feedback, emphasizing the value of engaging with the community to ensure that the RTA reflects local needs. He committed to sharing these insights with the formation group.

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

At the conclusion of the discussion, Mayor Geilert opened the floor for a motion.

**Motion**

Trustee Lewis made a motion to approve and authorize to sign Resolution 2025-06, A Resolution Approving an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Steamboat Springs, Routt County, Town of Yampa, Town of Oak Creek, Town of Hayden and City of Craig, Establishing the Yampa Valley Transportation Authority. Trustee Geanious seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

**6. Ordinance 2025-01 - Short Term Rentals Regulations**

Mary Alice noted that this is a review, discussion and public hearing on proposed Ordinance 2025-01, An Ordinance to Permit, Regulate and License Short-Term Rentals while making conforming amendments to Title Four of the Yampa Municipal Code. She provided a process update, explaining that discussions on licensing short-term rentals began during the Comprehensive Plan development and were later addressed in the Land Development Code (LDC) formulation. She noted that short-term rentals have operated in an undefined regulatory space for many years, making it necessary to establish clear rules to ensure safe and manageable operations, and the proposed ordinance sets a limit of six residential short-term rentals within the Town, a number determined through community outreach, planning commission meetings, and board discussions. Mary Alice clarified that this regulation is not binding to future boards and the number of available licenses was established within the capacity of current staff to manage effectively.

Mary Alice shared that the Town currently has two operational short-term rentals, both of which have been contacted regarding the new regulations. She stated that one operator has already submitted an application, with the second expected to do so, and both will be “grandfathered” into the new ordinance as such is written adding that the Town has accepted sales taxes from their operations in the past and not undertaken any enforcement actions. She emphasized that commercial-zoned properties would fall under lodging regulations, which are separate from the short-term rental ordinance.

Trustee Montgomery raised concerns about the principal residence requirement, asking for it to be removed from the ordinance. He argued that striking this restriction would increase tax revenue for the Town and provide more opportunities for property owners. Mary Alice explained that the principal residence rule is a policy directive, not statutory, and can be adjusted if the Board chooses. She noted that requiring operators to reside in the rental property for at least 181 days per year is consistent with regulations in neighboring towns like Hayden and Oak Creek. Mayor Geilert added that limiting the number of short-term rentals helps prevent issues seen in towns like Steamboat Springs and ensures that neighborhoods remain balanced and manageable.

Trustee Montgomery also proposed changing the cap of six short-term rentals to a percentage-based system, suggesting 10% of the approximately 200 private residences in Yampa, which would allow for 20 rentals. Mary Alice advised that while this approach could work, it would add complexity due to population changes and require additional administrative oversight. She suggested maintaining the cap of six for now and revisiting the number if demand increases, noting that the Town currently has four available licenses and is not seeing significant pressure for additional applications. Trustee Lewis and Trustee Geanious expressed support for keeping the cap at six, along with Mayor Geilert.

Mayor Geilert opened the public hearing.

Audria Herrera raised questions about the impact of the ordinance on accessory dwelling units (ADUs), noting that the principal residence requirement could limit applications for properties with multiple dwellings. Mary Alice clarified that ADU regulations in the LDC took effect earlier this year, and properties with ADUs can qualify as short-term rentals under the ordinance if the primary property is the operator’s residence as such is proposed. She suggested modifying the ordinance language to account for properties with ADUs not occupied by owners as their principal residence while maintaining the cap of six.

The conversation included concerns about short-term rental enforcement, with Mary Alice emphasizing the importance of operators being reachable within 30 minutes to address issues like noise, trash, and parking. She suggested

postponing the ordinance's adoption to incorporate the Board's direction and to ensure clarity in the regulations. Trustee Montgomery argued that limiting rentals to principal residences and imposing strict rules could discourage participation, while Trustee Milway suggested that fewer rentals may increase competition and benefits for existing operators. Mary Alice added that if demand exceeds the available licenses in the future, the Board could revisit the ordinance to accommodate the community's needs.

The discussion also touched on the impact of short-term rentals in commercial zones, which would be treated as lodging and taxed differently than residential rentals. Mary Alice noted trade-offs between property taxes and sales taxes for short-term rental properties and emphasized that the ordinance only regulates residential rentals. Travis Milway highlighted the potential for lodging opportunities to shift to commercial zones, which could provide economic benefits while ensuring neighborhoods are not overwhelmed.

Mayor Geilert proposed to the Board members postponing the ordinance to allow for language revisions, particularly regarding ADUs and primary residence definitions. Mary Alice agreed to add recitals to the ordinance to provide historical context for the Board's discussions and decisions.

Mayor Geilert closed the public hearing. The Board's consensus after discussion was to keep the cap at six short-term rentals, with the option to revisit this policy in the future.

#### **Motion**

Trustee Lewis made a motion to table authorization to sign Ordinance 2025-01, An Ordinance of the Town Board of the town of Yampa, Colorado, Permitting, Regulating and Licensing Short-Term Rentals, and Making Conforming Amendments to title 4 of the Yampa Municipal Code; Providing for Severability until the May 7, 2025 Town Board Meeting. Trustee Geanious seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

#### **7. Professional Services Agreement – AquaWorks DBO, Inc. – Wastewater Treatment Plant**

Mary Alice provided an update on the Town's wastewater system project, emphasizing that the Town is already under contract with AquaWorks DBO for the design and engineering of its wastewater system. She explained that a significant development has occurred with the awarding of \$5.6 million in USDA funding for the wastewater treatment plant update, noting that this funding represents a major opportunity for the Town, as all previous work and expenditures related to the project can be counted toward the package and the match requirements set by the USDA. She stated that to meet USDA standards, however, the Town must formalize an engineering agreement between AquaWorks DBO and the Town that meets the USDA standards. Mary Alice clarified that this agreement essentially serves as a reorganization rather than an entirely new process.

She outlined the funding sources already secured, noting that most of the \$877,000 in previously allocated funds are in hand, including a \$600,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), a \$250,000 grant from Colorado Rural Water and Power Development, a \$130,000 Energy Impact Assistance Fund Grant, and a \$180,000 grant from Routt County. She noted that these funds were strategically secured to support both the design and engineering work for the wastewater treatment plant and the collection system, and emphasized that this new agreement allows the Town to integrate these funds into the USDA project and meet federal guidelines for design, construction, and engineering.

Trustee Montgomery inquired about the change in figures reflected in the agreement. Mary Alice explained that the original contract included various amounts tied to specific aspects of the project, such as \$130,000 and \$250,000 grants for construction and engineering work related to the collection system. She highlighted that the \$600,000 CDBG grant was utilized for design and engineering work on the wastewater treatment plant and will be used for the treatment plant construction. Additionally, she noted that the new USDA agreement requires the inclusion of a qualified project representative—an engineer—to oversee the construction phase, which is the primary change reflected in the updated figures. This engineering oversight is estimated at \$325,000 and aligns with USDA standards, which evaluate the project as a cohesive whole rather than its individual components.

Addressing Trustee Montgomery's question about previously spent funds, Mary Alice explained that while some funds have already been spent, they can still be included as part of the Town's match for the USDA funding. She emphasized

that this approach is highly advantageous for the Town, as it meets federal requirements for USDA-Rural Development funding and maximizes the financial contributions already made. Mary Alice reassured the Board that AquaWorks DBO's fees are not increasing; the funds in question represent costs already incurred and allocated within the scope of the project, and the engineering agreement formalizes these expenditures to satisfy federal matching requirements, ensuring the Town can fully leverage the USDA funding without additional costs.

**Motion**

Trustee Lewis made a motion to approve and authorize to sign an Agreement Between Owner and Engineer for Professional Services for the Wastewater Treatment Plan Final design & Construction Engineering Services by and between the town of Yampa and AquaWorks DBO, Inc. in the amount totaling \$877,000. Trustee Geanious seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

**8. Proclamations**

Administrator/Clerk Symons advised proclaiming April 2025 as Child Abuse Prevention Month, highlighting the importance of creating safe, nurturing environments for children to grow and thrive. With 357 reports of suspected child abuse and neglect in Routt County in 2024, the resolution emphasizes collective action to strengthen families and protect children. The Routt County Department of Human Services (DHS) collaborates with partners like Brighter World Child Advocacy Center and the Routt County Sheriff's Office to provide critical services and a coordinated response to child abuse cases. By investing in prevention, education, and awareness, the proclamation encourages all citizens to support efforts that foster strong families and safeguard the well-being of children in Yampa.

Adding to the previous proclamation summary, April 2025 is also recognized as the Month of the Young Child. This highlights the importance of early childhood development and safe, high-quality educational opportunities, fostering growth and resilience in Yampa's youngest citizens. Together, these proclamations emphasize the community's commitment to the well-being and future of its children.

**Motion**

Trustee Lewis made a motion to proclaim April 2025 as Child Abuse Prevention Month and Month of the Young Child in Yampa, Colorado. Trustee Geanious seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

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

John Bristol provided updates on the RCEDP, highlighting the 4H Extension Program and the High Country Accelerator Program. Residents interested in more information were encouraged to visit the RCEDP website at [www.rcedp.org](http://www.rcedp.org).

Treasurer/Planner Page-Allen shared that the Town has received a favorable recommendation for a \$27,720 grant for the Yampa Museum project, enabling the next steps in completing the final design and construction documents for its rehabilitation. The Town is collaborating with Mountain Architecture and Design, with funding sources for construction still under consideration.

Regarding the sign project, the Town will proceed with installing one monument sign at the South entry of Town and refurbishing the north end sign with new paint and plantings. Sustainable watering solutions are being explored to support vibrant landscaping. The County Commissioners passed a resolution permitting its placement. The project, funded by grants, is scheduled for completion by June 30, ensuring readiness before the 4th of July celebrations.

Clerk Symons provided updates on Routt County's hazard mitigation planning, requesting at least one representative attend a day-long training session on May 7 in Steamboat from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Updates on the post office reveal that the lease has been extended, and plans for purchasing the building are underway. Cluster box locations will remain unchanged until at least August. Additionally, a workshop on personnel policies is scheduled for May 21, and the Clerk noted she will attend two conferences and be out for two weeks in July, though her absence will not conflict with scheduled meetings.

Coffee with the Mayor is canceled for April and May, with a highway clean-up day scheduled for May 24 instead. Volunteers are also needed for Town clean-up day on June 7. Updates on the Routt County Economic Development Partnership (RCEDP) are on their website rcedp.org. Routt County Climate Action Plan. Residents can sign up for updates at routtclimateaction.com. Finally, the 457 and 401a plans have been finalized and will be implemented shortly. One-on-one scheduling remains flexible, and the Clerk encouraged everyone to reach out to set up a time.

Trustee Montgomery referred to a map from December 28, 1903, which identified Main Street and the west side of Yampa as "Main Street" in large text and "east side of County Road" in smaller text. Another section of the map appeared to label what is assumed to be Moffett Avenue as a County Road. Page-Allen noted that historical changes would likely be documented in the permit records but was uncertain about when the designation changed. Trustee Montgomery questioned whether the Town should continue spending money on Main Street maintenance if it was previously a County Road, suggesting it might be the County's responsibility.

Mayor Geilert recommended raising this issue with the County Commissioners at their upcoming meeting on May 7. Additionally, the Board agreed to relay other topics for discussion during the meeting, including affordable housing, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), and the medical center.

#### 10. Consent Agenda

##### **Motion**

Trustee Lewis made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, specifically the approval of the March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes and the approval of the draft December 2024 Financials. Trustee Geanious seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

#### 11. Scheduled Meeting/Work Sessions

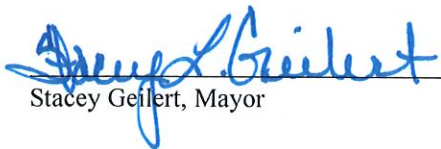
- a. Town Board and other requests for Agenda Items
  - i. April 23, 2025 @ 6:30 p.m. – Planning Commission Meeting
  - ii. May 7, 2025 @ 6:00 p.m. – Town Board Regular Meeting
  - iii. May 21, 2025 @ 6:00 p.m – Town Board Regular Meeting or Workshop

#### 12. Adjournment

##### **Motion**

Trustee Lewis made a motion for adjournment. Trustee Geanious seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Approved the 7th day of May, 2025.

  
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Stacey Geilert, Mayor

Attest:

  
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Sheila Symons, Town Administrator/Clerk



