

**TOWN OF YAMPA
TOWN BOARD MINUTES
May 7, 2025 – 6:00 pm**

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

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

AUDIENCE PRESENT:

In Person: Robert Citto, Joe Edwards, Dan Nielsen, Susi Crouner, Jo Parker, Ryan Parker, Kathryn Schlatter, Jonathan Cave, Melanie Cave, Margaret Chipman, Melina Bricker, Jay Harrington, Anjelica Salinas, Tim Redmond, Sonja Macys.
Via Zoom: Alicia Samuelson, Audria Herrera, Heather Noyes Gregg, John Bristol.

Prior to the meeting being called to order, the Town Board of Trustees interviewed Robb Citto for a Planning Commission Member position

1. Call to Order

- Mayor Geilert called the meeting to order at 6:12 pm
- The Pledge of Allegiance was recited
- Roll call was taken

2. Audience Participation

Jonathan Cave spoke, and emphasized the ethical responsibilities of trustees, including transparency, impartiality, and accountability. He voiced his concerns directly about Trustee Montgomery, particularly pointing out misleading information distribution and actions that burden the Town and residents with threats of unnecessary litigation over water tap issues. He also criticized Trustee Montgomery for receiving a significant Town grant while later opposing the idea of obtaining grants, arguing they were unnecessary, adding that he had personally heard Mrs. Montgomery state that they intended to return the funds to the Town. Mr. Cave highlighted instances of behind-the-scenes contact with the Town's auditor on an audit that is not completed which is a failure to act in the Town's best interests and not transparent. He shared personal experiences of making difficult decisions that prioritized the community over personal benefit and asked for Trustee Montgomery's resignation due to perceived ethical violations and misconduct.

Kathryn Schlatter, the District Manager for the South Routt Medical Center, introduced herself to the Town Board and audience.

Heather Noyes Gregg acknowledged the Board's full agenda, and noted that development, design, and historic preservation standards were not included in the discussion. She emphasized the ongoing work by community members and Historic Routt County to review and provide feedback on these drafts, with weekly meetings dedicated to refining them. She stressed the importance of these standards in guiding Yampa's growth while preserving its character, and though their efforts may not always be visible, she wanted to ensure the Board and attendees were aware of the ongoing commitment to shaping the Town's future.

3. Routt County Commissioners

Commissioners Sonja Macys, Angelica Salinas and Tim Redmond to discuss county updates and discussions with the Yampa Town Board. County Manager Jay Harrington and County Assistant Manager Melina Bricker were also in attendance.

Kathryn Schlatter provided an update on the South Routt Medical Center's expansion plans, highlighting the \$3.6 million in grants secured by her predecessor, Ken Rogers, to support the project. She discussed ongoing financial analysis and feasibility studies to assess community healthcare needs, the impact of coal mine transitions on revenues, and ways to improve both patient care and financial stability. Preliminary expansion plans aim to modernize facilities with OSHA and HIPAA-compliant upgrades while bringing new providers to the area, including behavioral health and cardiology specialists potentially. The potential expansion into the South Routt Community Center would allow for broader medical services to meet local needs. With uncertainty around federal funding, officials are exploring all possible options to move the project forward. Commissioners Redmond, Salinas, and Macys expressed support, recognizing the center's role as a major employer and healthcare provider. They emphasized the importance of securing replacement revenue for lost property taxes due to plant closures and ensuring South Routt is represented in the Excel Public Utility discussions.

Commissioner Redmond initiated a discussion on affordable housing, noting that while Yampa's residents were previously satisfied with their housing situation, the need for sustainable growth has become more pressing. He acknowledged that many communities struggle to provide housing for essential workers such as teachers and firefighters, and sought input from the board on their current priorities.

Mayor Geilert emphasized the importance of sustainable development, stating that while Yampa has limited space, there is room for controlled growth without compromising the town's character. She noted that housing challenges, particularly affordability for blue-collar workers, have been repeatedly addressed in Planning Commission meetings. High property taxes further complicate accessibility, making affordable housing a critical issue.

Mary Alice provided updates on housing initiatives, including the South Routt Housing Assessment. She discussed the recruitment of a Housing Innovation Manager, a regional position based in Oak Creek supported by a \$250,000 grant for two years noting that this role is crucial for managing housing needs and partnerships while ensuring the responsible development of publicly owned properties. She also mentioned ongoing discussions about creating a regional housing authority to support South Routt. She continued that Yampa has virtually no available housing inventory, with properties selling immediately upon entering the market, adding that public services, including fire and school districts, are factoring housing into their future plans to accommodate their employees. She stated that the Housing Innovation Manager will play a key role in coordinating these efforts, as individual entities lack the capacity to oversee housing projects effectively.

Commissioner Redmond also noted major funding cuts in the Energy Impact Assistance Program, which could affect housing initiatives. Mary Alice acknowledged federal funding uncertainties but remains committed to advancing housing projects in small, manageable steps. She shared that Yampa successfully secured a \$5.6 million USDA grant for wastewater improvements.

Commissioners praised Mary Alice for securing substantial grants for Yampa over the past three years. She credited community members for their willingness to fund local projects, highlighting their approval of a sales tax increase in November 2023 to help finance essential services.

Commissioner Macys opened the discussion by acknowledging Yampa's desire to maintain its small-town identity and avoid mirroring Steamboat Springs' rapid development. She reaffirmed her commitment to local control and advocacy for community-led decisions at both the municipality and county levels. Transitioning to transportation, she provided updates on the Five County Transportation Planning Region (NWTPR), which prioritizes infrastructure projects. She shared that Oak Creek Canyon, previously seen as too large to address, has now been broken into manageable sections and successfully added as the second priority on the regional transportation list. The highest priority remains the passing lanes on Highway 40 between Steamboat Springs and Craig. Macys emphasized that while transportation developments are slow-moving, getting onto the prioritization list is a crucial first step.

Macys also discussed the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), highlighting that all Routt County municipalities are now involved in the planning process. A countywide survey was recently conducted to gauge public interest in forming an RTA and funding it through a sales tax. Preliminary results indicate 66% support for establishing the authority, though financial backing through taxation received slightly lower support. She noted that tax-related ballot questions often receive less favorability due to their formal wording but emphasized ongoing discussions about funding mechanisms. A significant RTA meeting is scheduled for May 14-15, where officials will explore the formation of the transportation district before introducing a tax proposal. Macys mentioned the potential for corporate commitments, including \$1 million from Steamboat Ski Resort Corporation and possible funding from Xcel Energy, which could allow initial services to launch without an immediate tax increase. The board aims to ensure equal representation among participating communities, including Yampa, and is seeking input on transportation services residents wish to see in the plan.

Mayor Geilert confirmed that feedback from Yampa residents has been provided to RTA consultant Bill Ray, with key concerns brought to the planning committee's attention. She praised the productive discussions and engagement from Yampa in shaping transportation priorities.

Commissioner Macys also provided an update on the Mountain Rail Project, sharing the recent signing of the Tunnel Agreement between Union Pacific and the state. This agreement allows continued freight operations while introducing passenger rail service. Notably, the Yampa Valley was the only geographic region mentioned in Union Pacific's statements, signaling strong support for rail extension in the area. A key provision within the agreement prioritizes commuter rail development before the longer Denver-to-Craig tourist rail expansion. Engineering challenges between Bond and Phippsburg have further solidified this approach. Macys emphasized that these advancements are significant steps toward integrating local and regional rail transportation, though final details and funding structures remain in progress.

All commissioners thanked the community and the Yampa Town Board for being vocal and an integral spot in the county.

Commissioner Salinas followed up on discussions regarding Main Street ownership in Yampa. Trustee Montgomery previously referenced a 1903 map, which labeled the west side of Yampa as Main Street and the east side as county roads, raising questions about whether the Town should continue funding Main Street maintenance or if it was the county's responsibility. After researching with the County Manager and Public Works Director, Salinas confirmed that when Yampa was incorporated in February 1907, ownership of Main Street transferred to the Town. Additionally, Routt County does not receive Highway User Tax Funds (HUTF) for that section of road, reinforcing that maintenance responsibility lies with Yampa.

Trustee Montgomery asked why the county was involved in paving Main Street if the town owns it. Commissioner Salinas committed to investigating further, as it is unclear whether the county funded the paving.

Mary Alice emphasized the work with the Capital Improvement Plan and the importance of addressing underground infrastructure, such as the water system, before repaving streets. She explained that Main Street's water distribution system needs replacement, which is why patching has been the preferred approach until a full rebuild can be completed after underground utility infrastructure installation.

County Manager Jay Harrington offered the county's support in leveraging its buying power to assist smaller municipalities with infrastructure projects.

Trustee Lewis provided historical context, stating that the State rerouted traffic through Main Street during construction on Highway 131, leading to the initial paving. Trustee Montgomery clarified that his concern was regarding the second time Main Street was paved.

County Assistant Manager Melina Bricker referenced County Commissioner minutes from August 2005, which documented past county-municipality road maintenance and other road collaborations dating back to the 1960s.

Aaron Symons questioned why all Routt County voters cast ballots for all three county commissioners rather than only voting for the commissioner representing their specific area. He expressed concern that South Routt residents should elect their commissioner without influence from Steamboat Springs voters.

Commissioner Salinas explained that this system is dictated by state statute, unless a county adopts Home Rule, which Routt County has not. As a statutory county, election rules require that all residents vote for every commissioner. Additionally, district boundaries must be drawn to maintain equal population distribution, which is why each district includes a portion of Steamboat Springs. This ensures fair representation while complying with state requirements. Salinas further clarified that all commissioners vote on issues that impact the entire county, not just individual districts. Allowing all voters to elect all commissioners ensures that leadership reflects the collective interests of the community, rather than being limited to specific geographic areas.

The Yampa Town Board and County Commissioners agreed to hold two meetings per year, with the next one scheduled for September. The Commissioners expressed their continued support and willingness to attend town board meetings upon request, encouraging open communication. They noted their ongoing engagement with Yampa's developments and their efforts to join online meetings whenever possible. In closing, they praised the town staff for their involvement in various county projects, recognizing their valuable contributions to broader community efforts.

4. **Routt County Sheriff Department**

Sheriff Doug Scherar provided updates on law enforcement initiatives, staffing, and policy changes. He shared progress on the co-responder program, which has been in development for two years. After securing research grants, the department partnered with a consultant to assess Routt County's resources and determine the best approach for implementing the program. Since July 2023, they have been finalizing operational procedures and issuing RFPs for clinical personnel who will collaborate with deputies to respond to mental health-related calls. The program has received two responses and has officially partnered with a healthcare provider to fill key positions.

On staffing, Scherar reported that the patrol division is fully staffed, though detention deputy positions had been critically low six to nine months ago. The department has made progress in hiring, including bringing local recruits into law enforcement. He expressed pride in hiring community members who want to give back and highlighted a recent recruit who graduated from the POST Academy in Glenwood and is expected to transition to patrol soon.

Scherar also spoke about collaborations with local agencies, emphasizing efforts to work closely with law enforcement partners, fire districts, and community organizations. He detailed the county's progress in establishing a Child Advocacy

Center, which provides forensic interviews for adolescent victims instead of requiring them to travel to Glenwood or Frisco. The center, launched nearly four years ago, recently received national accreditation, marking a significant achievement in supporting victims and improving investigative procedures.

Turning to law enforcement contracts, Scherar addressed the cost increase in the town's contract for sheriff services, which initially was \$24–\$25 per hour in 2014 but has since risen to \$52.50 per hour. The new rate decided upon will be used in upcoming budget planning for 2026, and further details will be provided soon. Mary Alice explained that the current IGA was adopted via ordinance, meaning adjustments require formal repeal and adoption of a new ordinance. The town board instructed staff to move forward with ordinance updates to prepare for the 2026 budget, targeting a January 1, 2026 start date.

Trustee Montgomery inquired about Senate Bill 3, asking how new gun regulations would affect staffing. Scherar confirmed the bill goes into effect in August 2026 and anticipated the need for an additional full-time position to handle logistical requirements. Discussion included gun license renewals, high-capacity magazines, and concealed carry training, with the sheriff outlining initial permit and refresher training requirements. The new firearm purchase permit will be valid for five years, though renewal details are still under review. The Sheriff's Office will conduct background checks as part of the process, alongside multiple departments.

County Manager Jay Harrington provided updates on changes to the county's communications and dispatch funding model. Currently, dispatch services are funded through countywide property taxes, but officials are transitioning to a usage-based funding model determined by a three-year rolling average of call volume. Since South Routt has lower call volumes, the county aims to redistribute costs more fairly. Operating expenses continue to rise, with dispatch costs totaling approximately \$3.5–\$3.6 million annually, including state-of-the-art technology and IT support.

Harrington noted that discussions about creating a satellite dispatch center for South Routt are ongoing, though most staff currently reside in Craig or Hayden, so they are opening a satellite station in Hayden. Adjustments to staffing structures aim to improve retention and reduce long shifts or commutes after long shifts.

5. Consent Agenda

Trustee Montgomery requested Item D be removed from the Consent Agenda.

Motion

Trustee Lewis made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda items A, B and C specifically the approval of the April 16th, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes; and the Ratification of 2025 Renewal of Hotel and Restaurant Malt, Vinous and Spirituous Retail Liquor License for Antlers 2020 LLC; and the approval of the appointment of Robb Citto as an Alternate Planning Commission Member. Trustee Geanious seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Montgomery requested clarification on whether the alleys and streets listed for item letter D, the approval and authorization to sign the Northrop Lot Line Adjustment plat for 239-271 Moffat Avenue, Yampa as vacated were officially closed and no longer in use.

Mary Alice explained that the title report indicates no utility reservations, as these areas were vacated in the early 1900s when utility services were minimal. She confirmed that access to the property is via Moffat Avenue.

Trustee Montgomery inquired about past reference to Suzy Crowner's property, and Mary Alice clarified that discussion pertained to Tamara Floyd's property, this is regarding the Northrop property.

A question was raised about former Mayor Robert Symon's name being listed on the signing in 2025, given that he is no longer in office. Mary Alice explained that an update to the plat is required, as indicated by the red markings, ensuring that the mylar plat reflects the current mayor's signature.

Trustee Montgomery asked for confirmation that the process was finalized. Mary Alice stated that all necessary reviews, including administrative evaluations, staff reports, and redline adjustments, had been completed. The pending sale is contingent on the finalization of the lot line adjustment. Since all requirements have been met, the item was placed on the consent agenda for final approval of the mayor's signature on the plat.

Ken inquired whether the board had any decision-making role in the process, to which Mary Alice confirmed that lot line adjustments are handled administratively and that any appeal period to that administrative decision has lapsed.

Motion

Trustee Lewis made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda item D specifically the approval and authorization to sign Northrop Lot Line Adjustment plat for 239-271 Moffat Avenue, Yampa. Trustee Geanious seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

6. Staff and Board Member Reports/Updates/Requests

Mary Alice provided an update on the Tamara Floyd subdivision, which was originally supposed to be included in the agenda but was overlooked inadvertently. The board hearing for this matter is now scheduled for May 21st.

Sheila announced Trustee Kindsvater's resignation as a board member, effective May 30th, and noted that the town has 60 days to appoint a new trustee. Letters of intent are due by June 30, with interviews planned for early July and the appointment expected by the July 16 meeting. The announcement has been included in the town newsletter and billing notices.

The recent animal shot clinic saw great participation, with Dr. Dayna from Mountain Peaks Veterinary treating over 50 animals and the Town issued 29 pet licenses. In Public Works, Cannon has been working on-call duties and will take his first certification test by the end of the month. His initiative, along with Amanda's, helped identify solutions that eliminated the need for a lead pot holding requirement. Greg is transitioning out of handling dual roles, with Eric, Greg, and Scott Smith providing support to Cannon.

Mayor Geilert will attend the upcoming CML Outreach Meeting on May 28th.

The Bear River & Gardner Park Reservoir Meeting is scheduled for May 19 at 1:00 PM and Trustee Montgomery will attend.

Preparations for the Fourth of July Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser on May 15 are well underway, with generous donations from Blue Sage and strong volunteer participation.

Regarding the Ameresco solar project in Craig, the Town remains involved, with a slight decrease in production noted. Adjustments are being made, and credits are being received smoothly.

Mary Alice will be out for the first two weeks of June, while Sheila will be attending the Clerks Institute from July 14-18 and the CML Conference from June 23-27, after which she will receive her CMC certification.

Highway cleanup efforts are scheduled for May 17, replacing Coffee with the Mayor. Volunteers are encouraged to meet at Town Hall for supplies before helping clean along Highway 131.

Town Clean-Up Day is set for June 7, with volunteers needed for sorting items. Fees apply for certain disposals, as noted in the newsletter and Facebook posts. SRC will provide dumpsters after Twin Enviro raised rates by 35%, which impacted Fourth of July porta potty costs as well. However, a lower-cost alternative has been secured.

Board members are encouraged to complete CIRSA liability insurance training, with details forthcoming.

Upcoming agenda items include an update on the Climate Action Plan, a discussion on short-term rentals, and a review of personnel policies at the next board meeting.

7. Scheduled Meeting/Work Sessions

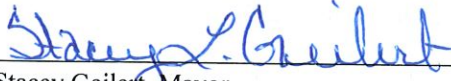
- a. Town Board and other requests for Agenda Items
 - i. May 19, 2025 @ 1:00 p.m. – Bear River Reservoir Annual Meeting – Ladies Aid Hall
 - ii. May 21, 2025 @ 6:00 p.m. – Town Board Regular Meeting/Workshop/Climate Action Plan Update
 - iii. June 4, 2025 @6:00 p.m. – Town Board Regular Meeting

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 7:57 pm.

Approved the 21st day of May, 2025.



Stacey Geilert, Mayor

Attest:


Sheila Symons, Town Administrator/Clerk

