

TOWN OF YAMPA
TOWN BOARD MINUTES
August 6, 2025 – 6:00 pm

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Trustee Lewis

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

AUDIENCE PRESENT:

In Person: Ben Beall, Emily Katzman, Drew Blanchard, Angelica Salinas

Online: Mark Huffstetler

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

3. South Routt Housing Manager – Introduction & Updates – Drew Blanchard

Drew Blanchard joined the meeting to provide an update on housing efforts in South Routt, where he recently began serving as the Housing Innovation Manager. This position was created in response to the regional Housing Needs Assessments (HNAs) and reflects a collaborative commitment to advancing affordable, attainable, and workforce housing solutions. The role is funded through a two-year partnership involving contributions from the State, Routt County, and the towns of Oak Creek and Yampa. Drew began in early July and, throughout the hiring process, dedicated significant time to familiarizing himself with South Routt’s unique character and understanding the broader housing challenges at the local, regional, and statewide levels. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that essential workers—such as firefighters, teachers, and service professionals—can find stable housing within the community. Though still early in his tenure, Drew’s efforts are already reflected in the Strategic Action Plan Summary (draft) included with the meeting materials. He also shared a personal connection to the area, noting that his sister is an elementary school teacher in South Routt, which has helped him begin to build meaningful ties and deepen his understanding of the community’s needs.

4. Housing Demand Study Presentation

Emily Katzman, Project Manager for the Yampa Valley Housing Authority, presented a comprehensive overview of the Housing Market and Demand Study, emphasizing the importance of aligning housing policy with actual community needs. Conducted in partnership with Economic & Planning Systems and RRC Associates, the study gathered over 2,700 household survey responses, offering valuable first-person insights into housing preferences, affordability challenges, and demographic shifts. Key findings revealed a growing disconnect between local wages and housing costs, with one-quarter of Routt County renters experiencing extreme cost burdens—spending over 50% of their income on housing. Homeowners, particularly those aging in place or living in mobile home parks, are also increasingly cost burdened due to rising property taxes and lot rents. The study identified a projected demand of approximately 3,200 housing units over the next decade, primarily near job centers like Steamboat Springs, with a mix of “catch-up” and “keep-up” needs. Emily stressed that this demand reflects a mismatch between market offerings and income levels—not a push to attract new residents, but a response to existing community members struggling to find sustainable housing. The presentation underscored the need for subsidies and creative financing strategies to make housing truly affordable, noting that affordability varies widely across demographics and should be defined in partnership with residents. The discussion concluded with a call for deeper engagement, clearer communication, and continued collaboration to ensure housing solutions reflect the lived realities of South Routt’s diverse population.

5. 2025 Aid to Agency Grant Agreement

The Board reviewed the 2025 Aid to Agency Grant Agreement between the Town of Yampa and the Town of Oak Creek in the amount of \$5,000. This funding supports the South Routt Housing Innovation Manager position,

currently held by Drew Blanchard, and serves as Yampa’s matching contribution toward the Local Planning Capacity (LPC) Grant. The LPC Grant was awarded through the State of Colorado, which contributes \$192,000. Routt County has committed \$30,000, and Oak Creek will contribute \$13,000. The shares were calculated based on population and was included in the 2025 budget under the public support and donations line item, though not as a standalone line item.

Mary Alice clarified that the \$5,000 is specifically tied to the LPC Grant match and does not impact other community support allocations. She noted that future community support applications will be reviewed, but the Board will not be able to consider additional funding until the 2026 budget cycle.

Trustee Montgomery expressed concern about allocating funds for external projects while internal needs—such as mag chloride application—face budget constraints. He cited frustration over the reduced coverage of mag chloride this summer despite rising costs. Staff clarified that the Town was able to complete the scheduled application for half the town, and although the cost was approximately 30% higher than the previous year, sufficient funds were available in the streets budget to complete the work. Trustee Montgomery acknowledged the clarification and referenced prior discussions about expanding coverage in 2026.

Motion

Trustee Geanious made a motion to sign the 2025 Aid to Agency Grant Agreement between the Town of Yampa and the Town of Oak Creek in the amount of \$5,000 to support the costs associated with the South Routt Housing Innovation Manager position. Trustee Shoptaugh seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Huffstetler Mobile Home Park Code Enforcement (Tabled from June 18, 2025)

Mark Huffstetler provided an update regarding ongoing issues with tenants on Lot 11 and Lot 6 both of whom have been served eviction notices with a 90-day timeline, set to expire toward the end of October. Mark expressed concern that the tenants are likely to abandon their mobile homes without properly vacating or cleaning the premises, as has occurred in previous cases. He plans to bring in a contractor to clean up the properties once they are vacated and has already hired someone to begin mowing and general cleanup in the area. Mark emphasized the importance of improving the appearance of the property, noting that its current condition negatively impacts the town’s image. He acknowledged the limitations of his authority in the eviction process, explaining that if the tenants clean up their lots and the Town deems them acceptable, he cannot legally force them to leave. He requested Town support in ensuring that the properties are not approved if they remain in poor condition, which would allow a judge to intervene. The Board discussed the possibility of coordinating nuisance enforcement with the judicial eviction process to expedite cleanup and support Mark’s efforts. Staff was directed to work with Mark and Amanda, and potentially involve the Town’s municipal judge, to develop a concurrent strategy that includes both judicial and code enforcement actions. Trustee Montgomery raised concerns about equitable enforcement, questioning why Mark was being held accountable for mowing while other properties in town were not. Staff clarified that it was a decision of the Board to have code enforcement is complaint-driven and that similar requests are made of all property owners. Mayor Geilert advised that names and addresses of non-compliant properties should be submitted to Sheila for follow-up. The Board agreed to have staff coordinate with Mark and aim for visible progress—particularly mowing and cleanup—by the next meeting on August 20th. Mark reiterated his willingness to cooperate and his hope that the process can be accelerated before winter.

7. Yampa Collection System Improvement Project Update -Adam Sommers, AquaWorks DBO Inc.

Ben Beall, working with AquaWorks DBO Inc., delivered an in-person update on the Yampa Collection System Improvement Project. In collaboration with AquaWorks, Ben has been overseeing the rehabilitation of the Town’s wastewater collection system. The project is funded through an Energy Impact Assistance Fund (EIAF) grant, which is set to expire on August 31, 2025 and a Colorado Rural Water & Power Development Authority grant/loan.

Ben reported that the majority of service repairs—specifically the installation of sleeves at individual service connections—have been completed and verified through post-construction camera inspections. A few remaining

punch list items are currently being addressed before the final retainage payment, totaling approximately 5% of the contract (just over \$100,000), is released. As part of the project, the contractor is also providing a safety tripod for Town staff to use during confined space entry.

The project has remained within budget, including contingency allocations, and all work was scaled to match available funding. Ben confirmed that the collection system is now in a rehabilitated and stable condition. While there has not been a significant reduction in overall flow to the treatment plant, improvements were observed during spring runoff. Cannon has been actively monitoring and responding to issues during the irrigation season. Ben noted that inflow and infiltration (I&I) challenges are ongoing and multifaceted, but the structural integrity of the system has markedly improved. Looking ahead, the Town will focus on identifying and mitigating unauthorized connections—such as sump pumps or floor drains—that may still be contributing excess flow. Ben proposed proactive strategies to locate these sources and committed to providing more detailed data later in the year, following a full season of post-repair flow monitoring.

8. Yampa Wastewater Treatment Plant Project – Bid Award & Contract

Ben Beall, working with AquaWorks DBO Inc., provided a detailed update on the Yampa Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Project, including bid results, contractor selection, water supply logistics, and long-term planning. Ben shared that six bids were received, several below the projected budget. The Town is currently conducting due diligence to confirm financial stability, capacity, and scheduling alignment before finalizing the contract. Ben emphasized the importance of thoroughly vetting the contractor, likening the relationship to a “professional arranged marriage,” given the long-term collaboration required during construction and startup.

Trustee Ken Montgomery asked when the bids were opened, noting that it used to be standard practice to open physical envelopes in front of the board. Ben explained that in today’s process, bids were submitted electronically through a secure portal by July 18. While the traditional envelope-opening method offered a sense of ceremony and transparency, electronic submittals are now the industry standard. They provide a timestamped digital record, ensure consistency, and reduce the risk of human error or tampering. Although the Board does not witness the opening in person, the portal maintains a full audit trail, and bid results are made public once a contractor is selected. Ben added that the electronic format is more efficient and widely accepted by contractors and funding agencies.

During the bidding process, the Town removed the dewatering scope—typically involving well installation around the foundation—to avoid inconsistent pricing and allow for direct negotiation post-award. This item is expected to be added back through a change order. Minor design adjustments are also underway to improve long-term plant functionality, and Ben noted that the project remains within budget, with contingency funds available to absorb these changes.

The construction sequence will begin with decommissioning the pond closest to the railroad tracks, redirecting flow to the second pond while the new concrete tank is built. Once operational, the new plant will treat wastewater before the remaining ponds are taken offline and regraded. The goal is to complete this work before winter weather sets in next year.

The total project cost is approximately \$6.75 million, which includes construction, financing, inspection, utility upgrades, and other ancillary expenses. Yampa Valley Electric will be extending three-phase power to the site, and additional costs are anticipated for permitting and infrastructure.

Trustee Montgomery raised questions about the well supplying water to the plant and whether it would require treatment. Ben clarified that the well water is classified as non-potable due to its proximity to the existing wastewater facility. While it won’t be used for drinking, it must meet quality standards for cooling UV lamps and other equipment. The Town will not be treating the water, but it must be of sufficient quality for operational use.

Ben explained that the Town will utilize its existing water rights through an augmentation plan facilitated by the Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District. This plan allows the Town to draw water from the well while accounting for its impact on the broader water system. The well is tied to water rights associated with drawdown, and its use is permitted because of its role in the system's overall water balance.

Trustee Montgomery suggested that it might be more cost-effective to change the point of diversion and pull water directly from the river, given the Town's water rights. He asked the Board for their opinion. Ben responded that while technically possible, diverting river water would require installing a catchment system, metering devices, and other infrastructure, which could complicate permitting and increase costs. He agreed to conduct a cost comparison between the well and river diversion options.

Trustee Geanious expressed confidence in Ben's expertise, noting that he is currently managing four major projects and has the experience to make sound decisions. He added he believes Ben is pursuing the most sensible path forward. Ben also clarified that the only reason the well water isn't classified as potable is due to its location adjacent to the wastewater plant. State regulations complicate potable classification in such proximity, even though the water could technically meet consumption standards.

Trustee Montgomery asked whether the new plant would have greater capacity than the existing facility. Ben confirmed that the permitted capacity remains at 105,000 gallons per day, allowing the Town to modify its existing general permit rather than apply for a new one. While the plant isn't increasing its permitted flow, it is being built with future growth in mind. The modular design allows for expansion, though the physical site limits scalability beyond a certain population threshold. Currently, the average daily flow is approximately 32,000 gallons, leaving ample room for anticipated development, including affordable housing.

Trustee Montgomery also asked whether the Town is currently out of compliance. Ben explained that while the permitted flow remains unchanged, the Town has experienced effluent violations during high-flow periods, particularly in spring runoff. These violations are not due to excessive volume but to the lagoon system's inability to adequately treat constituents under those conditions. The new plant—a membrane bioreactor system—will significantly improve effluent quality through advanced filtration and multiple screening stages.

Ben reiterated that questions can be submitted in advance of future meetings, allowing him to prepare more detailed responses and ensure clarity on technical aspects of the project.

Motion

Trustee Geanious made a motion to table the Yampa Wastewater Treatment Plant Project – Bid Award & Contract until the August 20, 2025, meeting. Trustee Shoptaugh seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Resolution 2025-09 – South Routt Library District Board Member Appointment – Vicki Hagen

Motion

Trustee Geanious made a motion to approve and authorize to sign Resolution 2025-09, A Resolution Appointing a Member to the South Routt Library District Board of Trustees – Vicki Hagen. Trustee Shoptaugh seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Consent Agenda

Motion

Trustee Geanious made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Specifically the approval the appointment of Rick Davey as an Alternative Planning Commission Member and Authorization of signature authority for Town Administrator/Clerk on Subdivision Participation and Release Form under National

Prescription Opiate Litigation – Direct Purdue Settlement. Trustee Shoptaugh seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

11. Staff and Board Member Reports/Updates/Requests

Mary Alice updated that the Monument Sign project the Business Improvement Grant project has officially concluded, with all subprojects completed within available funding. While the original scope for the signage component was broader, final pricing and specifications limited its execution. The Town will deobligate \$2,190 in unused grant funds to close out the award. The total grant allocation was \$213,600, which supported subgrants to local businesses and economic development staffing. A letter from Nancy Kramer of the Northwest Colorado Scenic Byway Committee praised the new gateway sign on Highway 131, calling it a “delight” and an exciting realization of the wayfinding plan. Nancy invited Town Board members to consider joining the Scenic Byway Committee; Trustee Hailey Shoptaugh expressed interest in participating.

Sheila reported that she has been approached into exploring the possibility of hosting a South Routt Art Show at Crossan’s Market and is coordinating with the Historical Society for input. She also noted that she will provide a full update when she has them.

Sheila shared that she is researching ADA compliance solutions for the Town’s website. A promising option may allow for full accessibility through a monthly subscription service, eliminating the need for manual formatting or additional staffing. While the Town currently qualifies for leniency under state guidelines by posting a contact statement, federal compliance will be mandatory within two years. Sheila emphasized the importance of planning ahead, citing examples from other municipalities like Hayden, which opted to invest in a \$30,000 annual program rather than hire a dedicated staff member. More details and pricing will be presented at future meetings.

Mary Alice provided a timeline for the 2026 budget process. Initial handouts will be distributed in September, followed by a work session later that month. The formal budget presentation will occur at the first October meeting, in accordance with state law requiring presentation by October 15, public hearing by November 15, and adoption by December 15. The wastewater treatment plant will be a major focus for 2026, and staff will assess whether supplemental adjustments to the 2025 budget are needed to support construction.

Mary Alice outlined and clarified the purpose of a recent letter signed by the Mayor to Governor Polis. The letter addressed a bureaucratic delay that threatened to trigger costly re-permitting of the wastewater plant. After escalating the issue in this matter after no response in the previous two weeks, the Town received a satisfactory resolution within 24 hours. Staff noted that the problem stemmed from personnel rather than process, and while such escalations are rare, this one was necessary and effective. The Board expressed support for the action taken.

12. Scheduled Meeting/Work Sessions


- a. Town Board and other requests for Agenda Items
 - i. August 13, 2025 @ 6:00 pm – Planning Commission Special Meeting (Land Development Code/Zoning Map)
 - ii. August 20, 2025 @ 6:00 pm - Yampa Town Board Meeting
 - iii. September 3, 2025 @ 6:00 pm – Yampa Town Board Meeting

13. **Adjournment**

Motion

Trustee Geanious made a motion for adjournment. Trustee Shoptaugh seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Approved the 20th day of August, 2025.



Stacey Geilert, Mayor

Attest:


Sheila Symons, Town Administrator/Clerk

