

Bluff Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes

September 17, 2024

Bluff Community Center at 4:00 p.m.

190 N 3rd East P.O. Box 324

435-672-9990

Regular meetings are held the first three Tuesdays of every month at 4:00 p.m. Requests to be on the agenda may be submitted in writing to Ann Leppanen (ann@townofbluff.org) at least 4 days before the meeting. Agendas and minutes are posted at:

townofbluff.org and audio, in addition, at the Utah Public Notic Website.

This meeting was held virtually and in person.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Mayor Ann K. Leppanen, Luanne Hook, Jennifer Davila, Linda Sosa, Brit Hornsby

Town Manager Erin Nelson

Notetaker Melanie Daniels

Approval of Bluff Town Council Work Session Minutes of September 10, 2024

Council Member Hornsby motioned to approve the minutes and Council Member Davila seconded. There was no discussion on the motion and Council Members Leppanen, Sosa, Hook, Davila, and Hornsby voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Bluff Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes of September 10, 2024

Council Member Hook made minor corrections and Council Member Hornsby motioned to approve the minutes with amendments. Council Member Davila seconded and there was no discussion on the motion. Council Members Hook, Sosa, Leppanen, Davila, and Hornsby voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Bluff Town Council and Utah Dine Bikeyah Joint Meeting Minutes of September 13, 2024

Council Member Hornsby motioned to approve the minutes and Council Member Davila seconded. There was no discussion on the motion and Council Members Hook, Hornsby, Davila, Sosa, and Leppanen voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Jim Sayers made a public comment regarding two points. One, he asked if the minutes for the Joint Meetings with Utah Dine Bikeyah could be more detailed so there is more knowledge about the issues and challenges facing the town. Two, Mr. Sayers responded to a comment made about the 2023 Town Council, where it was implied "nothing was getting done." He spoke to the evidence that there was a lot done that year and that it was a generally inconsiderate comment. He expressed his gratitude for all working in these positions as he knows how much work goes into being on the Council. Ultimately, he stated he realized the comment wasn't intentional and that he hopes there is more diligence in comments made publicly.

Unfinished Business:

1. Report on Town of Bluff and Utah Dine Bikeyah Joint Meeting on September 13, 2024

Mayor Leppanen gave a quick recap of what happened at the Friday meeting with Utah Dine Bikeyah and why that meeting ended so quickly.

2. Discussion and Vote on Acceptance of bids for Architectural Services for the Cooperative Cultural Center

The Council did not vote on this agenda item due to the Town's Attorney being unavailable, however, this agenda item will be added to the September 24th regular meeting for a vote. There were no objections to this action.

3. Discussion and Vote on Moving Forward with Mediation as Allowed in the 'Acquisition and Redevelopment Agreement' page 7 10a.

The Council agreed that the Town will need to continue with the mediation process, and although the Town's Attorney is ill, the Council voted to officially pursue mediation once he is able. Council Member Hornsby motioned for the Town lawyer to continue the mediation process and Council Member Hook seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion and Council Members Leppanen, Hook, Hornsby, Davila, and Sosa voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Report by Council Members of Monthly Progress on Tasks Assigned in the Strategic Plan

Each of the Council Members reported on what they have been able to accomplish since the last meeting. Mayor Leppanen has been working on the memorandum of understanding between the Town and Bears Ears Partnership concerning the dark skies application, and electronically mapping all of the Town's street signs. Council Member Sosa updated the Council on the transition of duties to the new Bookkeeper. Council Member Hornsby has been struggling to find technical support entities willing to support the town, but Town Manager Nelson was able to confirm a series of meetings with possible support groups. Council Member Hook reported there were no significant updates with fall planning and the trail project with UDOT but that they remain active. Council Member Davila encountered a UDOT official while at the Utah League of Cities and Towns Conference and could confirm there is a lot of interest in the river trail from Montezuma Creek to Monument Valley. Town Manager Nelson presented the progress the Town's administration was making towards documenting policies and procedures and will be sharing a packet with the Council for their review at some point in the future.

5. Report on Annual Conference on September 5 and 6, 2024 of Utah League of Cities and Towns

Council Member Davila elaborated on the brief report given last work session and gave more information on what she learned about the resources and initiatives Governor Cox has initiated for housing affordability. Most of the resources discussed at the conference were for cities and less for rural communities, however, she did get direction toward information for rural housing support. Additionally, Davila was able to learn about potential parks fundings that she will pass along to the parks committee. Council Member Sosa encouraged anyone available to attend and reported on advice given around enforcement policy development.

6. Discussion and Vote on Prioritization of Capital Improvements Projects

The Council considered the grant matching responsibilities of the Town and discussed how those could change with the shifting priorities of the Cooperative Cultural Center. The Council discussed possible Capital Projects list adjustments and what is required by the GOEO grant (Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity Rural Communities Grant). Nelson reported that a cash match of \$20,000 is required for the GOEO grant. Additionally, the pending USDA Portable Generator Grant requires a \$14,000 cash match. Both of these grants could require cash match funding within this fiscal year. The Council agreed that the Capital Projects list should include an increase to \$50,000 for the CCC building during fiscal years FY2025 and FY2026 to meet the matching requirements for the CCC grants and to convey the town's position that the building's renovation is a high priority. The council consented to the amendments proposed to the plan, and Council Member Hornsby motioned to adopt the prioritization of the capital improvement projects with the amendments just made for the increases. Council Member Hook seconded and there was no discussion on the motion. Council Members Hook, Davila, Sosa, Leppanen, and Hornsby voted in favor of the motion and it passed unanimously.

7. Report on Status of Bluff Fort's 911 Fundraiser on Saturday, September 21, 2024 for Bluff's Emergency Medical Responders and Bluff Volunteer Fire Department and Call for Volunteers

This Saturday, September 21, 2024 the Town will be supporting the pancake breakfast fundraiser for Bluff emergency responders from 8:00am to 10:00am. The Town is still looking for volunteers to help cook breakfast and clean up afterwards. Those interested in helping cook can meet at Bluff Fort at 7:15am to 7:30am Saturday. Council Members Hook, Davila, Sosa and Town Manager Nelson will be in attendance.

8. Report on Bears Ears Marathon (11/2/2024) Status and Meeting with Bluff Fort and Blanding Personnel on September 12, 2024 and Call for Volunteers

Town Manager Nelson relayed details from the meeting with the Town of Blanding and the Bluff Fort around this year's Bears Ears Marathon. There will be a Town of Bluff sponsored aid station and the Town will need volunteers to help man the aid station. Additionally, due to the race the entirety of Navajo Twins Drive, and portions of Black Locust Ave will be shut down. Shuttles will be in operation throughout the day and the Town is looking into possible options for supporting the shutdown of the canyon road closed for the safety of the race.

9. Report on Status of International Dark Sky Application and Possible Collaboration between Bears Ears Partnership BEP, the Town of Bluff, and Business Owners of Bluff on Future Programs/Events

Mayor Leppanen presented the timeline shared by Sarah Burak of Bears Ears Partnership and how there will hopefully be something to share with the committee by the end of the calendar year. The Council also heard plans of an offseason festival to help raise awareness of the Dark Skies initiative for the Town of Bluff. It is the Business Owners of Bluff desire to coordinate a time around the end of February to kick off the 2025 tourist season. There will be updates as plans are confirmed.

10. Discussion and Vote on Memorandum of Understanding Between Town of Bluff and Bears Ears Partnership for International Dark Sky Application

Mayor Leppanen discussed the specific obligations outlined in the memorandum of understanding with Bears Ears Partnership on the Dark Skies initiatives and the Council consented to the signing of the memorandum. Council Member Hornsby motioned for the town to adopt the memorandum of understanding with Bears Ears partnership for the international dark sky initiative and Council Member Hook seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion and Council Members Hook, Davila, Hornsby, Sosa and Leppanen voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Report on Roads Committee meeting on September 16, 2024

Council Member Hook relayed the business of the last roads committee meeting which focused on the work that needs to be done on Calf Canyon road and the funding sources of that project. There are several projects on the horizon that the Roads Committee is working on including a roads survey to see if there are other roads that could be considered Class C and updates to Black Locust Ave. Council Member Davila reported on information shared at the Utah League of Cities and Towns Conference considering a legislative change to the width requirements of certain roads. Unsure of the specific impact on the Town the Mayor confirmed she would be looking into the matter.

12. Notice of Public Hearing on Tuesday, September 24th at 4:00pm for USDA Portable Generator Grant + Town Council Meeting to Vote on Final Approval

The USDA notified the Town last minute of the requirement to hold a public hearing regarding the Portable Generator Grant and the Town Manager can confirm the requirements for the grant have been met. The Council discussed the details of the grant and management of the generator, finally consenting to the hearing. The public hearing will be Tuesday, September 24th at 4:00pm. There will be a Town Council Meeting following the public hearing to give final approval for solicitation of the grant.

New Business:

13. Discussion of Acronyms as Prepared by Utah League of Cities and Towns

Council Members agreed to use the list of acronym definitions provided by Mayor Leppanen.

14. Discussion of Utah League of Cities and Towns Webinar September 11, 2024 on the topic of 'Political Activities of Public Entities Act'

Mayor Leppanen attended a Utah League of Cities and Town webinar discussing the adoption of the Political Activities of Public Entities Act. She strongly recommends that all Council Members and Planning and Zoning Commissioners attend the next webinar on the topic, so they are aware of the potential penalties of violation of public positions. Council Member Hook will notice the Planning and Zoning Commission.

15. Report on Local Emergency Planning (LEPC) Meeting and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) on September 11, 2024

Town Manager Nelson summarized the county wide meeting with Tammy Gallegos and informed the Council there was an issued state of emergency by Governor Cox for all the flooding happening this summer. Nelson clarified that if the Town were to dip into those funding pools, they would need to diligently track all expenditures, including volunteer work, to appropriately report expenditures to the state. Mayor Leppanen hopes to have the emergency management plan finished by the end of the calendar year.

16. Report on Bluff Water Works Meeting on September 11, 2024

Council Members Sosa, Hornsby, and Davila attended the September 11, 2024 Bluff Water Works meeting and informed the Council the majority of the discussion centered around rate increases. There was no decision on changing the base rate for customers and will be further discussed in December. It was also reported that the delay in billing was due to QuickBooks not communicating with water meter reports.

17. Discussion of Bluff Water Works Strategic Plan and Addition of Jennifer Davila to the Committee

There was a request by Marx Powell to include Council Member Davila to the committee directing the development of the Bluff Water Works strategic plan. The Council considered the public meeting notice requirements of having 3 sitting Council Members on the planning committee and the possible conflicts of interest that may arise. The Council consented and Council Member Hook motioned to add Jennifer Davila to the Bluff Water Works strategy plan and Council Member Leppanen seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion and Council Members Hook, Hornsby, Sosa, and Leppanen voted in favor. Council Member Davila abstained and the motion passed.

18. Bluff Community Center Manager Report, Request to Partner with Bears Ears Partnership for Stewardship Day on September 29th at Bluff Community Center and Cooperative Cultural Center, Moving Forward on Tree Trimming at West Park and Cooperative Cultural Center, and Grading/Sand Donation/ Bluff Office Entrance

Bluff Community Center Manger Collins updated her request for Stewardship Day to October 14th and 15th. There is a conflict in the schedule and the updated dates would allow for the Stewardship Day to take place on

a holiday. Community Center Manager Collins hopes to have weeds pulled, fix playground equipment, and provide other services in preparation of the Bluff Arts festival. There is a donation of sand and the Council discussed how that would be delivered and used. The Council then discussed materials and logistics of the two day stewardship event. The Council agreed to the two-day stewardship event. Collins presented possible solutions to the ADA accessible door on the West entrance of the Town office complex and the Council agreed to spend an estimated \$100.00 for door rehangng to see if that solves the ADA accessibility issue. Collins will confirm the quotes solicited last year for tree trimming and bring those back to the Council when she has them. Mayor Leppanen acknowledged the lack of movement from the Cooperative Cultural Center partner and thinks the tree trimming needs to be approved regardless of that stall.

19. Discussion and Vote for the Final Roads Account Repayment of \$10,925.88 to the General Fund

Council Member Sosa informed the Council this is the third and final repayment from the Roads Fund to the General Fund based on the loan that was approved in 2021. Mayor Leppanen confirmed the General Fund had loaned the Roads Fund approximately \$33,000.00 to complete a larger project in 2021. The Roads department has been repaying that loan in increments and this is the final payment of that loan. Council Member Hornsby motioned to accept the final loan repayment of \$10,925.88 to the General Fund and Council Member Davila seconded. There was no discussion on the motion and Council Members Davila, Hook, Hornsby, Sosa, and Leppanen voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

20. Financial Report

The September financial report will be postponed to the October 1st meetings as the new bookkeeper is working to reformat the way expenses are approved and the timing of the approvals, so they are more understandable and comprehensive.

21. Other/ Adjourn

Mayor Leppanen reported on her involvement in the USU Civic Day in Blanding, Utah earlier in the day. She sat on a panel of elected officials and manned a booth for high school students from the county to converse with her. She hopes to attend again and thinks two people will need to attend and plan for treats for the students.

There was no other business and Council Member Hornsby motioned to adjourn. Council Member Davila seconded and there was no discussion on the motion. Council Members Hook, Davila, Hornsby, Sosa, and Leppanen voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:51 p.m.