

**FRUITA CITY COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 19, 2024
7:00 P.M.**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Breman called the regular meeting of the Fruita City Council to order at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held both in person and with virtual access provided through Zoom.

Present:

Mayor Matthew Breman
Mayor Pro Tem Aaron Hancey (virtual)
City Councilor James Williams
City Councilor Jeannine Purser
City Councilor Rich Parrish
City Councilor Andrea Downs
City Councilor Amy Miller

Excused Absent:

(None)

City staff present:

City Manager Mike Bennett
Assistant City Manager Shannon Vassen
Executive Assistant to the City Manager Kaydee Lucero
Communications & Engagement Manager Ciara Amann
City Clerk Deb Woods
Finance Director Joe Zaher
Planning & Development Director Dan Caris
City Planner Henry Hemphill
Engineering Project Manager John Vasey
Public Works Director Kimberly Bullen
City Attorney Mary Elizabeth Geiger (virtual)

Also present:

Members of the public (in-person and virtually)

2. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Breman called for a moment of silence for reflection. He then led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. AGENDA – ADOPT/AMEND

City Clerk Deb Woods relayed a request from staff that the order of the Executive Sessions at the end of the agenda be reversed.

Mayor Breman added a “special proclamation” for City Manager Mike Bennett, who resigned from the City of Fruita, as Item D. under Proclamations and Presentations.

- **COUNCILOR PURSER MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED. COUNCILOR MILLER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX YES VOTES.**

4. PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. PROCLAMATION – PROCLAIMING NOVEMBER 20 – 26, 2024 AS THE “7TH ANNUAL INTERFAITH AWARENESS WEEK” IN THE CITY OF FRUITA TO BE ACCEPTED BY REV. DR. CARLA RYAN, WEBMASTER OF GRAND VALLEY INTERFAITH NETWORK (GVIN)

Mayor Breman read the Proclamation, which was accepted by Rev. Dr. Carla Ryan on behalf of the Grand Valley Interfaith Network (GVIN). She noted that GVIN’s theme for this year’s Interfaith Awareness Week is focused on gathering. The group will celebrate by assembling at their ThanksGVIN service the following Tuesday night (November 26th) at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Grand Valley in Grand Junction. A photo was taken of Rev. Dr. Ryan with the Fruita City Council.

B. PRESENTATION – A PRESENTATION FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MUSEUMS OF WESTERN COLORADO

Museums of Western Colorado Executive Director Shenna Hayden provided a PowerPoint presentation consisting of a list of events that were held at Dinosaur Journey over the last year, as well as goals and plans for next year.

Ms. Hayden reviewed the number of admissions in 2024 (currently at approximately 31,000) and attendance numbers for Sensory Nights (approximately 100 this year), Dinos on the Rocks (63 attendees) and Dino Day, which resulted in record breaking revenue of \$10,000 and 950 attendees. Dinosaur Journey also held 33 Dino Dig Excursions in Rabbit Valley (213 people), for which a full-time lab manager was hired to help increase the program to the public and care for the collections and lab space at the museum.

Ms. Hayden’s presentation covered the following goals for 2025:

- 46 Dino Digs
- Increase K-12 program offerings
- Exploration for All Fund to cover the cost of free field trips to the museum
- Updating and replacing labels in the galleries
- Updating exhibits
- Updating HVAC system
- Remove barriers to visitation (free admission for families receiving SNAP benefits and discounted admissions for seniors and military members)

Councilor Williams asked how the MWC gets the word to the public about free admissions for those who receive SNAP benefits and Ms. Hayden said that the front desk staff are trained to ask patrons whether they are qualified for any discounts or they receive SNAP benefits. The information is also on the MWC’s website and they hope that in 2025, there will be additional funding to do more widespread marketing.

Councilor Purser commended the MWC for their programs to help SNAP recipients, seniors and military members and asked Ms. Hayden what her thoughts were about trying to raise money to cover those costs as well as free field trips for kids. She also asked what the City Council could do to help.

Ms. Hayden responded that right now, the MWC is working on their end-of-year fundraising campaign for the “Exploration for All” field trips and noted that the Council members would soon receive a letter from her concerning that. The goal is \$20,000, which will cover one year’s worth of field trips for students. The MWC is hoping to expand the program.

Councilor Downs asked Ms. Hayden to tell the Council and audience about the partnership that the MWC is developing with Colorado Mesa University (CMU). Ms. Hayden said the MWC is working on a membership proposal for CMU students because all three museums are such great resources for the students and the MWC has a lot of interns. Many CMU classes visit the museums for different purposes throughout the school year, so the membership program is being developed as part of student fees at a discount. Student will also receive free access to any of the MWC’s lecture series or other programming.

C. PRESENTATION – A PRESENTATION BY RACHEL PETERSON, TRANSPORTATION PLANNER FOR THE MESA COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING OFFICE (RTPO) ON THE MESA COUNTY SAFETY ACTION PLAN; AND

RESOLUTION 2024-37 – A REQUEST TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2024-37 – RECOMMENDING, SUPPORTING AND ADOPTING THE MESA COUNTY SAFETY ACTION PLAN

Transportation Planner for the Mesa County RTPO Rachel Peterson provided a PowerPoint presentation about the county’s Safety Action Plan, which looks at all of Mesa County including Fruita, Grand Junction, Palisade and rural areas surrounding them.

Ms. Peterson said Mesa County has many crashes and in 2022, surpassed the state average. She went over urban and rural crash trends. They received federal funding from a grant for Safe Roads for all. They worked with a lot of stakeholders to make the plan and got public input from all around Mesa County. There are four focus areas in the solution: Build Safe Streets, Protect Vulnerable Road Users, Address Dangerous Behaviors, and Create a Culture of Safety. They are pursuing additional funding. There are tools and resources available to communities.

- **COUNCILOR WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MESA COUNTY SAFETY ACTION PLAN. COUNCILOR PARRISH SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX YES VOTES.**

D. PRESENTATION – PRESENTATION TO CITY MANAGER MIKE BENNETT (ADDED TO THE AGENDA)

Mayor Breman said this was Mike’s last meeting and the last chance to say goodbye. Councilor Miller read a poem she wrote about his tenure at Fruita. The Council presented a framed version to Bennett.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND CONSENT AGENDA

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Gavin Brooke with Two Forks Ventures came to the podium and talked about the Launch PPP and

the process of the project. He shared the guiding principles that he came up with alongside Mayor Breman and Bennett. Brooke shared his hope that they could ratify the project soon.

Kim Coughlin with Indibuild came to the podium to say thank you to the Council and Bennett for all their help with the Fruita Mews. She shared the first people are moving in and will continue to over the next couple weeks.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- A. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING – A REQUEST TO APPROVE THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE FRUITA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**
- B. ORDINANCE 2024-21 – FIRST READING – AN INTRODUCTION OF AN ORDINANCE APPROVING A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH MUSEUMS OF WESTERN COLORADO AND AUTHORIZING THE INTERIM CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE THE AGREEMENT**
- C. FINANCIAL REPORTS – A REQUEST TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 2024 FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Mayor Breman opened the Consent Agenda to public comment. After hearing no comments from the public, Mayor Breman referred the Consent Agenda to the City Council.

- COUNCILOR MILLER MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED. COUNCILOR WILLIAMS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX YES VOTES.**

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ACTION ITEMS

There were no Quasi-Judicial or Legislative Public Hearings or Action Items on the agenda.

OPEN FRUITA HOUSING AUTHORITY MEETING

- COUNCILOR PURSER MOVED TO TEMPORARILY ADJOURN THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING. COUNCILOR MILLER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX YES VOTES.**
 - COUNCILOR MILLER MOVED TO OPEN THE FRUITA HOUSING AUTHORITY MEETING. COUNCILOR PURSER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX YES VOTES.**
- A. FRUITA HOUSING AUTHORITY 2025 BUDGET – PRESENTATION AND OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED 2025 FRUITA HOUSING AUTHORITY BUDGET**

Per the bylaws, the Housing Authority must formally recommend a budget to the City Council. Vassen went through the line items in the budget and explained each one. Staff recommends that the Authority recommends the budget to Council.

- **COMMISSIONER PURSER MOVED TO RECOMMEND THE BUDGET TO THE CITY COUNCIL. COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX YES VOTES.**

B. RESOLUTION FHA 2024-01 – A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE 2024 FRUITA HOUSING AUTHORITY BUDGET TO PROVIDE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS OF FUNDS FOR A PASS-THROUGH GRANT FOR THE FRUITA MEWS – *FRUITA CITY MANAGER AND FRUITA HOUSING AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MIKE BENNETT*

Assistant Executive Director Shannon Vassen presented Fruita Housing Authority Resolution number FHA 2024-01, which appropriates an additional \$1 million in grant funds that the Fruita Mews received from the Colorado Energy Office. The auditors recommended this resolution to put the funding in official records.

- **COMMISSIONER MILLER MOVED TO ADOPT RESOLUTION FHA 2024-01 - AMENDING THE 2024 FRUITA HOUSING AUTHORITY BUDGET TO PROVIDE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS OF FUNDS FOR A PASS-THROUGH GRANT FOR THE FRUITA MEWS. COMMISSIONER PARRISH SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX YES VOTES.**

C. RESOLUTION FHA 2024-02 – A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE FRUITA HOUSING AUTHORITY BECOMING A LIMITED PARTNER IN THE OWNER OF THE OAKS PROJECT – *PRESENTED BY DALTON KELLEY, SPECIAL COUNSEL*

Dalton Kelley with Butler Snow introduced the resolution that would allow the City to be a limited partner with the Oaks, which would redevelop 62 units of a former nursing home. If the project is owned by the Fruita Housing Authority or the Housing Authority has an ownership interest, that project is entitled to property/sales and use tax exemption for the duration of the project, which is a benefit to keep the project affordable.

The Fruita Housing Authority is also a limited partner with the Fruita Mews, which is a similar project. Chairman Breman asked about the percentage of ownership, Kelley said there is not an exact number yet, but most likely 0.1%. Commissioner Miller asked how the terms will be presented to City Council and Kelley said that all terms with redevelopment will be brought to Council.

- **COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION FHA 2024-02 OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE FRUITA HOUSING AUTHORITY CONCERNING BECOMING A LIMITED PARTNER IN THE OWNER OF THE OAKS PROJECT. COMMISSIONER MILLER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX YES VOTES.**

8. ADJOURN FROM THE FRUITA HOUSING AUTHORITY MEETING AND OPEN FRUITA REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

- **COUNCILOR MILLER MOVED TO RESUME THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING. COUNCILOR WILLIAMS SECONDED THE**

MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX YES VOTES.**9. ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA****A. 2025 ANNUAL BUDGET – PUBLIC HEARING AND PRESENTATIONS –
ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER SHANNON VASSEN**

Assistant City Manager Shannon Vassen reviewed the timeline for the budget adoption, which will officially take place on December 3rd. Budget presentations give the Mayor and City Council the opportunity to ask questions, provide feedback and potentially request changes to the draft budget. A new draft was published on the website this past Thursday. The Council had no directions for any desired changes. Councilor Purser asked why the increase for the Economic Development Fund was so large, Mr. Vassen explained that the budget is usually small, and the increase is due to one-time purchases. Councilor Hancey asked if the \$10.9 million in the General Fund is unrestricted or not, Mr. Vassen said some is restricted, but about \$7-8 million is not, and there is a self-imposed reserve for emergencies. Councilor Willaims, Mayor Breman, and Mr. Vassen discussed wood chips for the dog park, and there have been budgeted funds set aside to purchase those.

Public Works Director Kimberly Bullen presented a Facility Master Plan proposal as directed by Council. The investment grade audit alone came in at \$67,000 and the Facility Condition Assessment would be \$204,000. They are looking for guidance from Council on if we should assess all City facilities or not. City Manager Mike Bennett said that this discussion stemmed from previous ones about how to grow as an organization. Mayor Breman said we need to consider what it would take to facilitate future growth and how to look forward. Mrs. Bullen said this audit would help to determine if we should renovate certain facilities and determine if they would have the capacity for future growth. The Council directed staff to come with a Supplemental or Contingency Budget in the new year and not include it in the 2025 budget.

A copy of the proposed budget has been added to the City of Fruita's website here: [Fruita Municipal Budgets](#).

Mr. Vassen answered a couple of questions from the Council and showed them where to access the draft 2025 Budget on the City's website.

- **COUNCILOR PARRISH MOTIONED TO CONTINUE THE PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2025 BUDGET UNTIL THE DECEMBER 3, 2024 COUNCIL MEETING. COUNCILOR WILLIAMS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX YES VOTES.**

10. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Bennett said working for the City of Fruita has been the highlight of his career and he appreciates that the Council is dynamic and unafraid to have tough discussions and take risks. He said it has been an honor to work with the staff and he will dearly miss everyone, though he is excited for the next steps in his career.

He also noted that staff was adding a third executive session and that City Attorney Mary Elizabeth Geiger would help with language for the motion to convene into Executive Session.

11. COUNCIL REPORTS AND ACTIONS

COUNCILOR AMY WILLIAMS

Amy said she heard Mike present to the Assisted Members of Growth and Development and he did a great job at that.

COUNCILOR JEANNINE PURSER

Jeannine asked if the City was going to have its own road study and what the time frame would be. Mr. Bennett said that Planning and Development Director Dan Caris said it would be the beginning of 2025. She then asked about the special events/block part trailer idea that was brought up and if the City would be continuing that project. Finally, she asked if the February concert was being planned, and Councilor Williams said he is working on it.

Jeannine observed the Fruita Youth Action Council and said they are doing really great things and act as an extension to the Community Center and help support events. She noted Small Business Saturday and the lighting event will be happening soon.

COUNCILOR JAMES WILLIAMS

James reported that the door latch at the dog park is broken and has been for a few weeks.

MAYOR MATTHEW BREMAN

Mayor Breman said tomorrow is the Chamber Retreat to develop a 3–5-year Strategic Plan.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSIONS – IF REQUESTED

- A. COUNCILOR PURSER MOVED TO CONVENE IN EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO C.R.S. SECTION 24-6-402(4)(B) FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECEIVING LEGAL ADVICE FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY AND SPECIAL COUNSEL FOR THE CITY AND PURSUANT TO C.R.S. SECTION 24-6-402(4)(E) TO DEVELOP STRATEGY FOR NEGOTIATIONS AND INFORMING NEGOTIATORS WITH REGARD TO THE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CITY OF FRUITA AND 2 FORKS VENTURES FOR “THE LAUNCH” PROPERTY. COUNCILOR PARRISH SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX YES VOTES.**

MAYOR BREMAN INVITED FRUITA CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS, CITY MANAGER MIKE BENNETT, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER SHANNON VASSEN, CITY ATTORNEY MARY ELIZABETH GEIGER, SPECIAL COUNSEL DALTON KELLEY AND PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR DAN CARIS TO ATTEND THE EXECUTIVE SESSION.

The Fruita City Council convened in Executive Session at 9:23 p.m. The Regular meeting of the City Council resumed Open Session at 9:53 p.m.

- B. (ADDED TO THE AGENDA BY THE CITY ATTORNEY) COUNCILOR PARRISH MOVED TO CONVENE IN EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO C.R.S. SECTION 24-6-402(4)(B) FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECEIVING LEGAL ADVICE FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY WITH REGARD TO MESA COUNTY DISTRICT COURT CASE NO. 24CV62. COUNCILOR HANCE SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX YES VOTES.**

MAYOR BREMAN INVITED THE FRUITA CITY COUNCIL, CITY MANAGER MIKE BENNETT, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER SHANNON VASSEN, CITY ATTORNEY MARY ELIZABETH GEIGER AND PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR DAN CARIS TO ATTEND THE EXECUTIVE SESSION.

The Fruita City Council convened in Executive Session at 9:54 p.m. The Regular meeting of the City Council resumed Open Session at 10:00 p.m.

- C. COUNCILOR PARRISH MOVED TO CONVENE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO CRS SECTION 24-6-402(4)(B) FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECEIVING LEGAL ADVICE FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY AND PURSUANT TO CRS 24-6-402(4)(E) TO DEVELOP STRATEGY FOR NEGOTIATIONS AND INFORMING NEGOTIATORS REGARDING THE 19 RD PROJECT. COUNCILOR PURSER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX YES VOTES.**

MAYOR BREMAN INVITED THE FRUITA CITY COUNCIL, CITY MANAGER MIKE BENNETT, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER SHANNON VASSEN, ATTORNEY MARY ELIZABETH GEIGER AND PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR DAN CARIS TO ATTEND THE EXECUTIVE SESSION.

The Fruita City Council convened in Executive Session at 10:01 p.m. The Regular meeting of the City Council resumed Open Session at 10:52 p.m.

12. ADJOURN

With no further business before the Council, Mayor Breman adjourned the meeting at 10:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Woods
City Clerk

Kaydee Lucero
Executive Assistant to the City Manager