



TOWN OF JEROME

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MINUTES

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING OF THE TOWN OF JEROME COUNCIL CHAMBERS, JEROME TOWN HALL 600 CLARK STREET, JEROME, ARIZONA

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2025, AT 5:30 PM

5:30PM (0:28) 1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor/Chairperson to call meeting to order
Town Clerk to call and record the roll.

Present were Mayor Alex Barber, Vice Mayor Jane Moore, and Council members Dr. Jack Dillenberg, Sonia Sheffield and Issam "Izzy" Sharif.

Staff Present included Town Manager Brett Klein, Zoning Administrator Will Blodgett, Head Librarian Kathleen Jarvis and Deputy Clerk Kristen Muenz.

5:30PM (0:39) 2. NEW BUSINESS

Discussion/Possible Action

A. Consideration of an Agreement for Library Support Services Between Yavapai County Free Library District and the Town of Jerome Public Library

Council will consider and may approve the agreement.

Mayor Barber introduced the item for consideration.

Councilmember Dillenberg made the motion to approve the agreement.

Vice Mayor Moore seconded the motion.

Mayor Barber asked for an overview from Mr. Klein.

Mr. Klein explained that this agreement was essentially the same as the affiliate agreement approved two months earlier, detailing responsibilities of each party in a 24-page document. He said while it seemed lengthy and perhaps excessive, it had been reviewed by legal counsel and was necessary for continued participation in the county library system.

Ms. Jarvis expressed full support, noting that membership was vital for the Jerome library.

Mayor Barber also highlighted the library's importance to the community, particularly for residents who rely on library computers because they lack internet at home.

Ms. Jarvis confirmed on a daily basis, five to six people typically use the library's internet services, which was considered significant for a town of Jerome's size.

Mayor Barber acknowledged the motion and the second. She called the question and by unanimous vote the motion passed.

Motion to approve Agreement for Library Support Services.

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER			X			
DILLENBERG	X		X			
MOORE		X	X			
SHARIF			X			
SHEFFIELD			X			

5:32PM (2:45) 3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Discussion/Possible Action

A. Consider Removing from the Table and Continued Discussion and Possible Staff Direction / Action Regarding the Issuance of an RFQ / Invitation for Bids for Advanced Automatic Metering Infrastructure for Water Meters

Council will discuss and may provide staff direction through a motion.

Mayor Barber introduced the item sharing that a couple council members wanted to remove from the table and continue discussion on the RFQ for water meters and was the main reason for the special meeting.

Councilmember Sheffield made the motion to remove the item from the table to continue discussion.

Councilmember Sharif seconded the motion.

By unanimous vote the item was removed from the table for discussion.

Motion to remove item from the table.

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER			X			
DILLENBERG			X			
MOORE			X			
SHARIF		X	X			
SHEFFIELD	X		X			

Councilmember Sheffield led with detailed remarks about the Water Infrastructure Finance Authority of Arizona (WIFA), established in 1989 to finance water infrastructure projects. According to her research WIFA had previously funded several Jerome projects, including \$188,000 for the Mescal Siphon Line and School Street pressure regulators, and over \$130,000 for improvements to the Verde Central Line and Deception water system (note: later determined to be \$1.4M for the former and \$1.55M for the latter). She stated that pursuing an RFQ would provide Jerome with relevant information on new water meter technology, fulfill due diligence responsibilities, and maintain good standing with WIFA, which has been a key supporter of Jerome's infrastructure. She then made comparison with APS (Arizona Public Service), which introduced smart electric meters in Jerome in 2014. At that time, customers could opt out for a \$50 setup fee plus \$5 per month. Ten years later, only 31 residents, or 6% of Jerome customers, had opted out. She emphasized that gathering information does not commit the town to implementation but empowers both council and community to do their due diligence and make informed decisions. She is quoted as saying, "Obtaining information, I believe, is our responsibility as elected representatives of the community. I do believe that it is our due diligence to follow through, obtain this information, not only so that we can make the best decision possible, but also to stay in the good graces of WIFA, being as they are a major supporter of the very necessary projects here in Jerome. I make the motion to move forward with the RFQ."

Councilmember Dillenberg seconded the motion.

Mayor Barber asked for Councilmember Sharif's input.

Councilmember Sharif voiced agreement, saying Councilmember Sheffield had already covered the key points. He admitted that in the previous meeting he had voted in haste out of exhaustion but supports moving forward with the RFQ. He stressed the importance of gathering information so the council and community could evaluate options, since many questions remain unanswered about costs, feasibility, and technology. He acknowledged concerns about technology but suggested that options and alternatives may exist. He remarked, "We have a lot of questions. And if we don't say yes to this, we have no answers."

Vice Mayor Moore questioned, "Let's suppose the request for proposals comes back and, well, we have some problem areas in town. Do you think WIFA would give us a grant for analog meters as well?"

Mr. Klein responded that the grant was intended for conservation-oriented smart meters (AMI/AMR) and that while AMR meters may reduce staff labor, full AMI systems might prove unfeasible in Jerome's mountainous terrain. If that were the case, the town simply would not receive the grant.

Vice Mayor Moore then questioned whether the town's crew should be expected to maintain physical fitness for meter reading, due to the difficult areas some meters are located.

Mayor Barber expressed her agreement that the crew need to be in shape to take care of their job, adding that she's all for conservation and isn't trying to stress the guys out. She noted Councilmember Sheffield touched on upcoming grant projects that will take place in difficult situations. She then briefly touched on the broader issue of the heavy water use demands from data centers. She then clarified with Mr. Klein that the grant operates on a reimbursement basis, meaning Jerome would not spend or owe any money unless the project moved forward. If the study showed the system was unfeasible, the town would not be required to repay funds it never used. This was seen as a way to remain in WIFA's good graces for additional support for future projects like wastewater treatment.

Concerns were raised about hidden costs, such as annual licensing and maintenance fees, and about how long the town might be locked into a particular system. These were cited as critical questions that could only be answered through the RFQ process. The council emphasized again that gathering this information was essential to making the best decision for the community.

Mayor Barber then opened the floor to questions and commentary from residents in attendance. Those in attendance who spoke in favor of proceeding with the RFQ were Eric Jurisin, and Leslie Mouriquand. Both provided personal experience and examples of cost saving, property protection, and water conservation measures involving smart meters. Those in attendance who had questions and spoke against the issuance of the RFP were Mary Beth Barr, Windy Jones, and Jera Peterson. These concerns centered around battery cost and life, hidden costs, accuracy, and studies that have indicated failures. Attendees who had general questions they sought answers for were Jay Kinsella and Rainbow Bernheim.

The remainder of the meeting focused on exploring benefits, technical functionality, and public concerns of smart water meters. Residents questioned how smart meters could help detect leaks, conserve water, and improve operational efficiency by providing real-time usage data. Councilmember Sharif gave a brief explanation of some different meter systems, including short-range, long-range, and cloud-based systems. He also explained that not all systems would be suited for different parts of the town's terrain and topography. Residents also raised concerns about radiation exposure, continuous signaling, cybersecurity risks, and the environmental impact of additional battery waste. Staff explained that the meters transmit signals similar to common household devices, and cannot remotely shut off water flow, including in the event of a power outage.

Questions were also raised about grant funding and costs, with staff clarifying that the town had received an 80% matching, reimbursable grant to cover installation and that the grant required an RFP to identify suitable vendors. There were additional questions and concerns brought up about historic preservation, the town's unique infrastructure, and the potential need to relocate existing meters.

Council members and residents discussed the limitations of current water monitoring, including shared meters in multi-unit buildings, and the challenge of tracking production from local springs.

Mr. Klein and staff confirmed that the proposed RFP process would provide detailed information on feasibility, costs, and implementation, allowing the council to make an informed decision before any installation occurs.

Mayor Barber recounted the motion on the floor to move forward, and the second. Calling the question, Councilmembers Dillenberg, Sheffield and Sharif voted in favor of the motion, with Mayor Barber and Vice Mayor Moore voting nay. With 3 ayes and 2 nays the motion carried.

Motion to move forward with the RFQ.

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER				X		
DILLENBERG		X	X			
MOORE				X		
SHARIF			X			
SHEFFIELD	X		X			

6:39PM (1:08:26) 4. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Barber noted that the meeting had reached adjournment.

Councilmember Dillenberg moved to adjourn the meeting.

Mayor Barber seconded the motion, called the question and the meeting adjourned by unanimous vote at 6:39 p.m.

Motion to adjourn at 6:39 p.m.

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER		X	X			
DILLENBERG	X		X			
MOORE			X			
SHARIF			X			
SHEFFIELD			X			

APPROVE:

ATTEST:

Alex Barber, Mayor

Brett Klein, Town Manager