



TOWN OF JEROME

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MINUTES

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

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 09, 2025, AT 7:00 PM

7:00PM (0:26) 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 were Town Manager, Brett Klein, Zoning Administrator Will Blodgett, Public Works Director Martin Boland and Deputy Clerk/Finance Director Kristen Muenz.

7:00PM (0:36) 2. PROCLAMATIONS

A. Proclamation: Proclaiming September as Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

Mayor Barber will read or summarize / paraphrase the proclamation.

Mayor Barber introduced the proclamation provided a summary of the proclamation aloud. She then presented Vice Mayor Moore with a Distinguished Service Award received from the League of Arizona Cities and Towns for 20 years of service.

Mayor Barber rearranged items in the agenda to accommodate audience members present for specific agenda items. Items 8B, 10B, 10C and 10D were addressed prior to proceeding on to the financial reports.

7:23PM (22:44) 3. FINANCIAL REPORTS

Discussion/Possible Action

A. Financial Report and Detail Invoice Register Report for August 2025

Council will consider and may approve the financial reports for month ending August 2025.

Mayor Barber introduced item 3, asking if anyone had any questions. There were none.

Vice Mayor Moore made the motion to approve the financial reports.

Councilmember Sheffield seconded the motion.

Mayor Barber called the question, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Motion to approve financial reports for August 2025.

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

7:23PM (23:10) 4. STAFF AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Discussion/Possible Action

A. Reports by the Town Manager / Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Utilities Clerk, Accounting Clerk, Public Works Director, Building Inspector, Library Director, Municipal Magistrate, Police Chief, Fire Chief and Council Members, which in the Case of Council Member's Reports will be Limited to a Summary of Current Events and will Involve no Action

Council will consider and may approve the staff reports.

Mayor Barber introduced staff and Council reports, deferring to Mr. Klein for additional introduction.

Mr. Klein said in addition to his written report a few things have happened. First, there was a meeting regarding an old retirement plan that there are no current employees on. He informed council of the plan to roll it over to the current retirement plan, adding that no financial consultant he's spoken with has ever seen anything set up in the way our old plan is set up and requires significant staff work. He further explained when those people want their money it has to go through him and that means driving to Prescott to find an available banker to provide a value guarantee. He then shared that a notice of intent to sell / invitation for bids will be published to receive proposals for 655 Holly. He reiterated that nothing would happen without coming before council first, and the intent is to use it as a community land trust for workforce housing. He said the Deception Waterline project has been stalled a bit, adding that it's a CDBG-funded project. He said the project was submitted with only the width of trenching and that we would pave the road after we tore it up, leaving it in much better condition than it is currently, and since it is new piping, the casing wouldn't need to be put in, however ADOT won't allow it. He said they want to have the whole width of the northbound lane repaved as well as casing in the pipes which basically doubles the cost of the project. He said we asked for a special exception, and they said no to that as well. Instead, they want us to go across 89A, with a couple of 90-degree bends then cross the street again, which is contrary to best practices and not ideal. He shared that this was a topic that was brought up to the governor when she was discussing issues with all the communities, and he will make her staff aware of this, but likely to get the project done it will have to be completed within ADOT's requirements. Finally, the garbage truck as we know has had some issues which has caused us to think about our options, adding that he is aware that Council member Sharif has been trying to line up some funding for it. He said the cost of a waste hauling truck is high at \$300,000, adding with the sale of 655 Holly we could potentially fund this, but that could be a year, to a year and a half, out. He said he and the Public Works Director have discussed other options that will potentially be more cost effective, such as outsourcing the dumpsters, which is currently the requirement for what we need on the chassis for the garbage truck. With outsourcing dumpsters, we could do a much lighter garbage run for just the residents. He said they will bring forward other ideas during the budget process in the next coming months for further discussion.

Mayor Barber asked if he meant having one of the Cottonwood companies come up and do the dumpsters but not drive up and down all of our streets.

Mr. Klein answered, correct, just the dumpsters on Main Street.

Mayor Barber said that it is an interesting idea.

Mr. Klein said we don't know pricing yet, it could be cost effective or cost prohibitive, but we'll bring that to you when the information is ready.

Mayor Barber congratulated Carl Whiting, Assistant Fire Chief, for 5 years of service as of September 1st, Janice Pontious, Police Department Aide for 8 years of service as of September 7th, Kristen Muenz, Finance Director for 6 years of service effective September 10th and to Kelly Randazzo, seasonal Library help, for one year of service as of September 23rd. She asked if there were any reports from Council.

Councilmember Sharif shared that he went to the League of Arizona Cities and Towns (LACT) conference, adding if he has the opportunity to attend next year, he would love to see the Town participate in the parade of Flags. He said he met a lot of wonderful people and had the chance to speak up a little bit about the short-term rental situation going on. He said Mr. Klein hinted at it, but he made some connections with Waste Management and Republic Waste to see if they have funding or other means of potentially helping with the garbage truck situation. He hopes to have more information to come but he's doing whatever he can, especially when attending conferences, to make those connections to help our little town.

Mayor Barber thanked him for his update adding that she saw that Senator Mark Fincham put up a total repeal of SB1350 as a resolution. She continued for the record that Jerome short term rental housing units are now up to 25 or 26 and if we had two people that lived in those 25 or 26 vacation rentals, we could add 50 more people to the residents that live here in Jerome. She said according to the census we are down to 329 people, that's a hard pill to swallow, adding if we had mom and pop and 2 kids that could add 100 people to the 329. She finished by saying it's sad to see the Town turn into a bunch of hotels and not actually neighbors. She made a motion to approve the staff and council reports.

Vice Mayor Moore seconded the motion.

Mayor Barber called the question, and the motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve staff and council reports.

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

7:32PM (32:52) 5. ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT/PLANNING & ZONING AND DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MINUTES

Information/Council Review

A. Report Provided by the Zoning Administrator. Minutes are Provided for Information Only and do Not Require any Action

Mayor Barber introduced item 5.

Mr. Blodgett said we had an incredibly busy August. He continued that we have a lot of projects being readied for fall and winter, and that the changing rules, he's happy to say, won't have any significant impact on us (Jerome) in terms of our planning process. He said we continue forward with a number of building enforcement issues, some of which are longstanding ones. He's been working on the Haunted House figuring out timing and how to do it, as well as interesting oddball things popping up. He said he'd be happy to answer any specific questions if council had any.

Vice Mayor Moore said she listened to the audio and wanted to address one of the agenda items. She asked Mr. Blodgett if he was referring to 505 or 515 Main on the agenda item.

Mr. Blodgett answered it was for 515 Main.

Vice Mayor Moore said she had other questions for him later.

Mayor Barber reiterated that these minutes are for information and require no action. She asked if anyone else had questions. There were none. She recapped House Bill 2447 sharing that it was causing stress by removing some of the public review. She said when a state does an overreaching bill like this, they usually include a population limit and we are always under it, or they include if we're a historic district or landmark. She said what Mr. Blodgett talked about is that a section was added that amends HB 2447, for historic districts and we are the only National Historic Landmark that is a whole town in Arizona.

7:36PM (36:04) 6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Discussion/Possible Action

A. Consider Approval of August 12th, 2025, Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Council will consider and may approve August 12th, Regular Council Meeting minutes.

Mayor Barber introduced the meeting minutes. She asked if there were any questions or corrections.

Councilmember Dillenberg made the motion to approve the minutes.

Mayor Barber seconded the motion.

Vice Mayor Moore said she had already spoken with Ms. Muenz about a minor correction.

Ms. Muenz confirmed it was a sentence that was slightly confusing on page 94.

Mayor Barber called the question and the meeting minutes for August 12th were approved with the minor correction.

Motion to approve August 12th, 2025, Regular Council Meeting Minutes with a minor correction.

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

7. PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no petitions from the public.

8. ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Discussion/Possible Action

7:37PM (37:19) A. Consider Resolution No. 682; A Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Town of Jerome, Yavapai County, Arizona, Amending and Adopting User Fees and Charges for Permits, Licenses, Development Related Services and Other Town Services

Council will consider and may adopt Resolution No. 682.

Mayor Barber introduced the item, recounting that this was seen on last month's agenda. It amends the user fees and charges for permits, licenses and development-related services. She asked if anyone had anything they'd like to see changed. The general consensus was no. She said there were only a couple items being changed., one was scheduled police escort traffic control and other one is pay to park. She asked if there was any further discussion. There was none. She made the motion to adopt Resolution No. 682.

Councilmember Sharif seconded the motion.

Vice Mayor Moore clarified that it's raising the parking fees to \$7 a day and asked if we're still ok with that. Mayor Barber said yes. She added if you look at the other two places, Jerome is the third most visited place in Arizona at this point. The number one is Grand Canyon where paid parking is much higher than here, and the second is Sedona where you pay for parking by the hour. She said this is something that subsidizes our water, sewer and sanitation so that the tourists are paying instead of the people that live here. She said you are encouraged to use the town shuttle, if you want to go uptown on a weekend and don't want to pay to park you can call the shuttle, adding that it's not just here for tourism it is here to help us too.

Vice Mayor Moore said she wondered if we could earn some of the money for the trash truck. She knows it goes to streets, water, sewer, police and fire and has seen people stopping in town looking around and using the trash cans they can find to dump their trash from Prescott and Cottonwood.

Mayor Barber clarified if Vice Mayor Moore meant whole trash bags or all the takeout/to-go containers from fast food places we don't have here. She then asked Mr. Klein if we can earmark the couple extra dollars for that use.

Mr. Klein confirmed it can be directed during the budget process, adding that we have no formally restricted funds currently.

Vice Mayor Moore reconfirmed that it is set during the budget process.

Mr. Klein confirmed she was correct.

Mayor Barber asked for a reminder when the budget process started.

Mr. Klein said they would start in Late November or early December.

Mayor Barber acknowledged the motion and the second on the floor. She called the question, and the motion to adopt Resolution No. 682 was approved.

Motion to approve Resolution No. 682.

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

7:02PM (2:48) B. Consideration of Resolution No. 683; A Resolution Accepting Grant Funding from the Gila River Indian Community 2025 Grant Cycle for the Sole Purpose of Purchasing a Fire Department Command Vehicle (\$40,000)

Council will consider and may approve Resolution No. 683.

Mayor Barber introduced the item for consideration. She congratulated the fire department on being awarded the grant for a new Fire Department command vehicle.

Councilmember Dillenberg made the motion to approve Resolution No. 683.

Vice Mayor Moore seconded the motion.

Mayor Barber called the question and resolution No. 683 passed by unanimous vote.

Motion to approve Resolution No. 683.

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

After the vote the meeting moved to item 10B.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Discussion/Possible Action

There was no unfinished business.

10. NEW BUSINESS

Discussion/Possible Action

7:41PM (41:32) A. Consider Board of Adjustment Appointment of Jeff Kopplemaa Effective Immediately to Fill the Open Board Seat Which Expires February 28, 2027

Council will consider and may appoint Jeff Kopplemaa to the Board of Adjustment.

Mayor Barber introduced item 10A seeking appointment of Jeff Koppelman to the Board of Adjustment. She said he was not here for the meeting and had let everyone know that he wouldn't be, but with his qualifications and as long as he's

lived in town, she didn't need to ask him any questions. She made the motion to seat him on the Board of Adjustment. Councilmember Sharif seconded the motion. Mayor Barber called the question, and the motion to seat Jeff Koppelman to the Board of Adjustment effective immediately was approved unanimously.

Motion to approve seating Jeff Koppelman to the Board of Adjustment effective immediately.

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

7:03PM (3:44) B. Consideration of a Request to Amend / Add to the Special Event Permit Application for Jerome Chamber's 2025 Music Festival and Art in the Park, Adding Stages to the Upper and Middle Park

Council will consider and may approve the requested amendments / additions.

Mayor Barber introduced the item for consideration. She shared this amendment is to add stages to the upper and middle parks. She recounted the past approvals for the event and asked if anyone had any questions regarding the stages. There were no other questions from council.

Councilmember Dillenberg made the motion to approve adding the stages to the Special Event Permit.

Councilmember Sharif seconded the motion.

Mayor Barber called the question, and the motion was passed unanimously.

Motion to approve amendments adding stairs to Special Event Permit for Music & Arts Festival

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

After the vote the meeting continued to 10C.

7:05PM (4:57) C. Consideration of the Jerome Historical Society Sponsored Mariachi Band Special Event Permit Application

Council will consider and may approve the special event permit.

Mayor Barber introduced the item, adding that this is an event that happens every year. She asked Mr. Hudson if the band had increased their fee this year.

Mr. Hudson answered that they had tried to increase it last year and honored the lower price, however this year the price did go up.

Mayor Barber advised Mr. Hudson to work with the Town Manager regarding splitting the cost for the band. She then made the motion to approve the special event permit.

Councilmember Sharif seconded the motion.

Prior to calling the question, Councilmember Sheffield said she would abstain from the vote.

Mayor Barber called the question, and with 4 ayes and 1 abstention the motion passed.

Motion to approve Jerome Historical Society sponsored Mariachi Band Special Event Permit.

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

After the vote the meeting continued to 10D.

7:06PM (6:38) D. Consideration of a Request for a Seasonal Haunted House at 240 Hull Avenue from Terror in Tolleson and Tenant / Chamber of Commerce President Angela Arnt

Council will consider and may approve the use.

Mayor Barber introduced item D.

Mr. Blodgett gave a brief introduction and some background on what he's been doing with the applicant(s) to try and work out the proper way to permit this. He shared that the Fire Department has been involved in setting up occupancy limits

and that the primary hours of operation would be after 4 p.m., taking advantage of the shared parking. He said he thought this would be a great experiment to see what unanticipated problems pop up, but overall thought it had more positivity for the community than potential problems.

Mayor Barber asked what the dates would be.

Mr. Blodgett answered they could get the applicant on the phone to answer any questions.

Vice Mayor Moore asked the same question about what dates it would take place on.

Angie Arndt, Chamber of Commerce President, asked if she could interject with some answers. She shared that the original idea was to be a weekend exhibition that would operate between the hours of 5p.m. and 10p.m. and would start the first weekend after Ghost Walk. She added that it would also not be running the night of the Fireman's Ball. She shared that Chief Blair had walked through the building already to make sure everything's safe. She offered specific dates if the Council members wanted them. They did, so she shared the intended dates of operation would be Friday October 10th, Saturday the 11th and Sunday the 12th. Friday October 17th, Saturday the 18th and Sunday the 19th, Friday October 24th, Sunday the 26th and finally Friday October 31st, Saturday November 1st and Sunday November 2nd.

Councilmember Sharif commented that we need to look at capacity because there is also something going at the Spirit Room on Halloween. He said with a band at the Spirit Room plus this, he thought the parking lots would be open but wasn't sure what was going to happen.

Mr. Blodgett said the intention should it be approved would be to make the applicant acquire a business license and do all the typical checks and inspections we would do for that.

Vice Mayor Moore said she wondered if there were issues that were noticed the first or second weekend could we work with them to adjust.

Mr. Blodgett answered that he sees this as an experiment to see how we make things like this work.

Mr. Klein shared that there is a council meeting after the first weekend.

Mayor Barber asked if there were any other questions.

Vice Mayor Moore asked if that should be part of the motion.

Mr. Klein further elaborated that they could make the motion with a review at the next council meeting, but also to check with zoning, police and fire to make sure there were no issues.

Councilmember Sheffield said it doesn't seem like we have an actual application.

Mayor Barber answered we do not, we have some information.

Mr. Blodgett said this is sort of a one-off and highlighted the need to craft a temporary use or special use permit for a wider range of things. He said that is something he would start working on this week.

Vice Mayor Moore said it kind of falls under the special event.

Mr. Blodgett answered yes and no. It does fall under the special event, but he also felt that this covers a wider time frame than the special event permit is intended to cover. He said if council decides that's the way they want to go then we can count this sort of stuff as special event in the future.

Vice Mayor Moore said we do have special events that have gone on for several days.

Mr. Blodgett agreed that was true, adding he's trying to figure this one out.

Vice Mayor Moore said it is on private property, not unlike Spook Hall.

Mayor Barber asked if this is something the council feels like they want them to fill out a special event permit for and we would want to see this?

Councilmember Sheffield said she feels like having more information on how many shows per night and how many people they expect per show, whether it is going to be ticket-based or walk-in, would give them a better idea of what's going on.

Ms. Arndt said she'd love to speak about some of those questions. She shared that they let only a certain number of people in per haunt, and that they don't expect more than 30-50 people an hour. She confirmed they won't be pushing any kind of occupancy issues, safety issues, it's alcohol free and a family friendly event. She added if council was inclined to get the applicant on the phone they would see they are quite a professional company. She said they have 6 different exhibitions around Phoenix and have been on the news several times. She then shared that she's been speaking with them about this since Spring and they initiated the idea to make this event a fundraiser for the Chamber of Commerce, with 30% of the ticket sales being donated to the Chamber. She reiterated again if council wanted to get them on the phone, they are a family-owned business out of Phoenix and available to answer questions and provide information on their background.

Councilmember Sharif said, going back to what the mayor said he agreed to having them fill out a special event permit, to build the documentation of what they anticipate. He said he's been to a lot of haunted houses, and they normally draw a major crowd. He said he's not disregarding it but is asking if the Police Department is prepared. He said he envisions it will be awesome and a monetary benefit to the Chamber of Commerce and to Town, he just wants to make sure they're covering everything. He said if there is documentation for this like a special event, have them fill it out with information. Whether we use it or not we have the information in black and white and could use this as an exercise.

Mr. Blodgett said we would absolutely have information, including their insurance, all the basic things we would need for a business license. He continued that we would have to fill out the same information as we would for any special event, but we wouldn't have any appropriate application for this type of thing.

Councilmember Sharif said he's not trying to sound difficult but having everything in black in white where we can see it and know what's on it.

Mr. Blodgett said this is one where he needs the council to solve a problem and solve this.

Mr. Klein added we have the 60-day requirement for the special event, so if you want to use the special event application to capture the temporary uses, which we do not have in our code, we can do that. He continued it would be more like 30 days for the temporary use permit, but he wasn't sure with everything that was recently codified, with the special event permit, what this would qualify for. He said the point of getting literature documentation for a temporary use permit would look somewhat similar to special event permitting. He said for now, should council choose to approve this, the first weekend of the event does come before the next council meeting.

Vice Mayor Moore said it does have a couple of items though, like if you're expecting 125 people or more, and parking issues were a big reason we changed the special event permitting. She said in some respects it does quality.

Mr. Klein said it doesn't sound like it.

Vice Mayor Moore asked if, he was sure.

Mr. Klein said 125 people in one night, he's not sure.

Ms. Arndt interjected sharing they don't expect more than 75. She said the number of hours that they're going to have each day to open and how many people they can put in per hour they don't expect more than 75 per night. She continued that they have already discussed a game plan for standing in line, which is not going to happen either. She shared that they would operate similarly to Haunted Hamburger, ticket holders will check in and receive a text when it's time for their entry, so the sidewalk won't be clogged up with people waiting to get in. She said for tickets sold at the door there will still be timed entry.

Vice Mayor Moore said it is nice to have all of that information documented.

Councilmember Sharif made the motion to approve, on the condition that the necessary data and documentation be provided to staff. He further explained that he wants to make sure they have the data for decisions like this so that they can make the most educated decision and doesn't want to see anything like what happened last time with special events.

Mr. Blodgett said perhaps the approval should be tied to the requirement of a business license and to appear before council.

Councilmember Sharif agreed to that revision.

Vice Mayor Moore asked if there was a legal opinion.

Town Attorney Jon Gaylord answered that he thinks Mr. Blodgett put it really well. He looked at what the requirements are applicable, and it sounds like he didn't think it fit within the special event box but brought it to Council to get input. He said he thinks this is a little open and that staff is seeking general guidance and direction and will follow up. He finished by saying that because this isn't a formal approval they are okay to give staff the direction they need to go forward and do their staff thing.

Mayor Barber sought clarification asking so instead of filling out the special event permit they would fill out the temporary use permit.

Mr. Klein answered in the future when we have that developed.

Vice Mayor Moore asked if this could be put on next month's agenda for review and assessment of how it's going.

Mr. Klein answered yes, they can do that.

Mayor Barber acknowledged the motion from Councilmember Sharif.

Councilmember Dillenberg seconded the motion.

Mayor Barber called the question, and the motion was approved.

Motion to approve with the condition that necessary data and information is provided to staff.

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

After the vote the meeting moved back to Financial Reports, item 3, and continued in the order of the remaining items on the agenda.

7:42PM (42:31) E. Consider Approval of a Town Shuttle Policy

Council will consider and may approve the policy.

Mayor Barber introduced the item and asked for clarity if we didn't have any kind of policy until we put this in place.

Mr. Klein confirmed she was correct.

Mayor Barber then clarified that there was no job description either.

Mr. Klein confirmed that we couldn't draft a job description without having a general policy on the shuttle program and the shuttle driver. He said this is one step of something that we need to continue to work on. He said last month it was brought up and there weren't any substantive changes, only organizational changes.

Vice Mayor Moore questioned if there was a better place for shuttle stop number 2 on Clark St.

Councilmember Sheffield commented that it is at the loading zone in front of the Historical Society.

Vice Mayor Moore confirmed the location and asked if that's ok.

Mayor Barber said the loading zone doesn't usually have a lot of people in it and it seems to be used most after business hours by people parking in it to go to the restaurant across the street. She asked members of the historical society present in the room if they had a problem with the stop in front of their building. The response was that they did not have a problem with it. She then pointed out where it says residents are allowed and encouraged to make use of the shuttle. She asked if the Shuttle driver liked the different things put into the policy.

Mr. Klein confirmed he had reviewed it and approved of it.

Councilmember Dillenberg remarked he's never heard him mention anything negative about it.

Mr. Klein continued that there was one item brought up today that needs to be added to the policy in regard to tipping. He said we have to have some kind of formal policy on tipping the driver and have thought about a few things but need to talk to legal about it before adding that section.

Mayor Barber said to please make it so that he can continue to get his tips. The other council members all spoke up in agreement to her statement.

Mr. Klein said it would be stated clearly, and that it would be entirely voluntary.

Mayor Barber noted the section regarding emergencies and asked if there had been any medical emergencies or emergencies while he was driving. Or was that part to make sure that if there ever is one, we have a procedure?

Mr. Klein confirmed that he wasn't aware of any, at least not in the last few years but it's there in case something does happen.

Mayor Barber asked if it was the same regarding physical aggression?

Mr. Klein confirmed it is the same.

Mayor Barber thanked him and remarked that she's glad that we haven't had anyone physically aggressive on the shuttle.

Councilmember Dillenberg made the motion to approve the policy.

Councilmember Sharif seconded the motion.

Mayor Barber called the question and the motion to approve passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the Town Shuttle Policy.

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

7:46PM (45:59 – 1:59:54) F. Discussion and Possible Staff Direction 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.

Mayor Barber introduced the item, questioning whether to issue an RFQ for advanced automatic water metering infrastructure ("smart meters"). Mayor Barber said there were concerns raised that many residents oppose smart meters, as reflected in a letter from a Jerome resident. She said questions came up about who is pushing the project, to which she answered the Sonoran Institute and Growing Water Smart. She questioned whether outreach has been sufficient, suggesting using community surveys via the Jerome Lowdown or Bulletin Board to gauge public opinion before moving forward, cautioning against pursuing the project if most residents are against it.

Mr. Klein noted that other towns, like Clarkdale, initially faced opposition to smart meters but residents later supported them after seeing benefits such as real-time leak detection and cost savings. He emphasized that utilities generally view these systems very positively. For Jerome, the project aligns with goals of efficiency, conservation, resiliency, and sustainability, consistent with objectives set at the Growing Water Smart Conference attended by council and staff. He explained that staff researched the issue, secured grant funding through the Water Infrastructure Finance Authority so costs wouldn't fall on property owners, and brought it to council for consideration. The agenda item was intended to address concerns, share information, and begin community dialogue early in the process.

A lengthy discussion continued on the proposal to pursue smart water meters. Staff explained that many of the current meters date back nearly twenty (20) years, with increasing failures and replacements. Concerns were raised about affordability for residents, battery life, durability, and whether the technology had been tested long enough to prove reliable. Vice Mayor Moore said about the analog meter she has, "...everybody can do this. If you open your meter box, you can see it turning and the gallons that it reads. So, I know if I don't have anything on at my house and it's turning, I have a leak somewhere." Some fear smart meters could eventually lead to billing by the gallon, while emphasizing that water is owned by Freeport-McMoRan and Jerome's role is limited to infrastructure and billing.

Councilmembers weighed potential impacts on staffing, since manual meter reading provides a local job but also takes significant time and physical effort. Council members in support noted that smart meters could free up staff time for other critical work and also improve early leak detection, while those in opposition cautioned about data storage, privacy, and the loss of Jerome's "Old West" character and charm, with Mayor Barber adding "We're the best old west history example left in the whole state. We don't have to do what everyone else is doing just because everyone else is doing it."

Residents also voiced concerns about cost, accuracy, fire risks, interference, and whether the timing was right given other

major infrastructure expenses. Local residents present who spoke in opposition to issuing the RFQ and going through this process were: Dominic Castillo, Caleb Conlin, Wendy Olson and Mairi Ross.

Much of the conversation and debate centered on cost and risk. Mayor Barber said, "pairing a 30-year smart meter with a 10-year battery is hard to cost justify since it could result in higher volume meter change-outs." The Town has secured a \$206,000 conservation grant to offset expenses, however members worried that overruns could mirror the wastewater treatment plant project, which has now ballooned far beyond its original estimate. They also pointed out that some meters were in inaccessible locations or under ADOT roads, making installation potentially complicated and expensive.

Councilmember Sheffield pointed out, "...there are opt-out options that other municipalities have incorporated when they've decided to move to this."

Staff clarified that the agenda item was not approval of installation but authorization to seek bids through an RFQ, which would provide detailed cost and feasibility information without obligating the Town. Some Councilmembers supported this as a way to gather facts, while others preferred to delay until more long-term results could be seen from neighboring towns already using smart meters. Vice Mayor Moore added, "I'm uncomfortable making a decision with so many people in town unaware of this, and I just really feel like everybody in town should be aware of it." In the end, Mayor Barber made the motion to table the matter with Councilmember Dillenberg providing the second to that motion.

Mayor Barber called the question to table the item. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting moved on to adjournment.

Motion to table until next meeting.

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

11. TO AND FROM THE COUNCIL

Council may direct staff regarding items to be placed on a future agenda.

There was no to and from the council discussion.

9:00PM (2:00:00) 12. ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Dillenberg made the motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mayor Barber acknowledged that there is normally a to and from the council, but she is ok with not doing it. She then seconded the motion to adjourn. After calling the question, the meeting adjourned at 9:00p.m.

Motion to adjourn at 9:00p.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