

Voter Information Pamphlet

For Proposition #9

2026 General Election
Tuesday, November 3, 2026





UINTAH COUNTY
OFFICIAL VOTER INFORMATION PAMPHLET
PROPOSED CHANGE IN FORM OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT
General Election – Tuesday, November 3, 2026

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Ballot Question

PROPOSITION #9

Shall Uintah County adopt the alternate form of government known as the Council-Manager Form of Government as recommended in the proposed optional plan?

For

Against

Impartial Summary

Shall Uintah County change its form of government to a Council-Manager form of government with a five-member County Council exercising legislative powers and a County Manager serving as chief administrative officer who exercises executive duties? County-Council members will be elected from five single-member districts. The County Council will appoint the County Manager, who will serve at the Council's discretion, and will set the Manager's compensation. The office of the County Commissioner will be eliminated when the new form of government becomes effective. County officers, as required by Utah law, will continue to be elected. The initial County Council election will occur during the 2028 general election, and the new form of government will become effective January 1, 2029.

Loren . W. Anderson

Deputy Uintah County Civil Attorney



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Initial Fiscal and Legal Impact Statement

RE: Proposition #9 - Change in Form of Government

This statement has been created in conjunction with legal counsel pursuant to Utah Code Ann. §20A-7-502.5, that addresses subsections Utah Code Ann. §20A-7-502.5 (2)&(3).

(2)(a)(vii)(A)

Vested Property Rights: No significant effects determined at this time.

(2)(a)(vii)(B)

County Laws/Ordinances: No significant effects on other Uintah County laws or ordinances at this time.

(2)(a)(vii)(C)

Legal Liability: No significant legal liability incurred by Uintah County determined at this time.

(2)(a)(vii)(D)

Other Legal Impacts: No other significant legal impact determined by the county budget officer and legal counsel at this time.

(2)(a)(viii)

The Clerk-Auditor estimates that the law proposed by this initiative would result in a total annual fiscal expense of \$560,000, which includes a property tax increase of \$560,000 and a \$0 increase in public debt. This amount is only the average total wages with estimated benefits of the County Manager and Assistant County Manager of the three comparable Council-Manager forms of government. There would be no issuance or change in bonds, notes or other debt instruments, or any cost savings.

(3)

Estimated cost of printing and distribution of voter information pamphlet: \$10,000.00

Michael W. Wilkins, Clerk-Auditor

Loren W. Anderson, Deputy Civil Uintah County Attorney



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Written Arguments For and Against

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WRITTEN ARGUMENT FOR

A New Structure for Uintah County Government

The Council-Manager form of county government is a Utah state-approved form of government. The plan is available at the county and on their website. Summit, Tooele, and Wasatch counties are all using this form of government.

Under this form of government, there are 5 council members versus 3 commissioners, who receive limited compensation but no additional benefits, similar to our State Representatives and Senators.

The county manager is hired by the council, is “at will”, and serves under the direction of the county council.

Clear Responsibilities

The county council is accountable to the voters. They hold the legislative authority meaning they make, change and cancel laws and ordinances.

The county manager serves at the will of the elected council and has executive authority meaning they manage and direct the day-to-day administration of the county. Having a county manager allows the council to focus on the legislative responsibilities of the county.

Better Representation

A five-member council provides more local representation by dividing the county into 5 districts. Every area of Uintah County will have its own elected council member who lives in the district they are elected to represent. They are elected by and directly accountable to the residents of that district. More council members means more voices at the table and better representation for the entire county. The issue isn't simply replacing three commissioners with five council members—it is distributing legislative power among more elected representatives while assigning the day-to-day executive administration to the county manager.

A Proven System

The council-manager form of government has been successfully used by cities, counties and school districts across the country for decades. Many Utah entities and water boards already operate under this model because it combines



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elected leadership with professional administration.

This is a non-partisan, citizen-led initiative that allows the voters of Uintah county to have a choice in how our local government works for you.

Brian Gorum
Dan Dilsaver
Jo Gardner
Nolan Jackson
Anna Billings
234 S. 3290 W., Vernal, UT 84078
Voter Information Packet Submission

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WRITTEN ARGUMENT AGAINST

Changing Uintah County from a three-member Commission to a five-member district-based Council with an appointed Manager would give voters less direct influence over county government, not more.

More seats do not necessarily mean more representation. Currently, every Uintah County voter can vote in the election for each Commission seat. Under the proposed system, you would vote for one Council member representing your district. The other four would make decisions affecting your taxes, roads, public lands and county services, but you would have no vote in choosing them.

District elections also narrow the candidate pool available to each voter. Candidates are not required to have experience managing employees, overseeing large budgets, working with state or federal agencies, or understanding complex issues such as public lands or energy development.

That matters when a district has only one candidate. If only one person files in your district, that may be your only choice—even if a candidate you believe is better qualified lives just across the district line. Today, voters can evaluate candidates for all three Commission seats. Under the proposed system, your choices would be limited to candidates within your district.

Would anything be gained by transferring executive authority from three elected Commissioners to one appointed County Manager? The Council would make policy, but the Manager would be the administrative head of county government, exercise executive authority and become an important source of information and recommendations to the Council. The problem isn't that a Manager would intentionally provide biased information. The concern is the accumulation of authority into one unelected, powerful individual who, as a human, has unintentional biases.

Currently, three independently elected Commissioners can research an issue, hear directly from departments and stakeholders, ask different questions and reach different conclusions. One may recognize an economic-development concern, another a public-lands issue and another an impact to taxpayers or county services. That may sometimes be less efficient, but those different perspectives can also produce a more robust and holistic understanding before decisions are made.



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Representation doesn't stop at the county line. At a recent public meeting, several other elected officials noted that they had attended the Utah Legislature. Their involvement is important, but those officials advocate for the responsibilities of their respective offices. County Commissioners advocate for the interests of the county as a whole.

Utah's General Legislative Session lasts 45 days. Decisions made during that short window affect energy, agriculture, water, public lands, transportation, taxation and local government authority. Having elected Commissioners who can divide that workload, build relationships and advocate directly for our varied community isn't a distraction from county government. It is part of the job.

Diluting Uintah County Voter influence by giving up three countywide votes for one district vote while transferring executive authority to an appointed manager creates more distance between voters and their county government. We encourage you to vote **against** the Change in County Government Proposition.

Mike Mckee 10849 North 7750 East, Tridell, UT 84078
Kevin Van Tassell 2675 West 1500 North, Vernal, UT 84078
Jeff Merrell 140 East 2500 South, Vernal, UT 84078
Darlene Burns 457 East 700 South, Vernal, UT 84078
Kim McDonald 702 North 500 East, Vernal, UT 84078



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WRITTEN REBUTTAL ARGUMENT AGAINST PROPOSITION #9

REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT AGAINST PROPOSITION 9

The opposition argues that Proposition 9 would reduce voter influence. In reality, it gives every area of Uintah County a dedicated elected representative, rather than having three commissioners elected countywide.

Today, three commissioners make decisions affecting every community, even when a particular area has no commissioner that lives there. Proposition 9 creates five districts ensuring every part of the county has a voice at the table.

The opposition attacks the county manager as an “unelected, powerful individual”. That misrepresents the proposal. The county manager would be hired, supervised, and removable by the elected council members. The council-not the manager-would establish county policy, while the Manager provides professional administration. Ultimately, the council and the manager are accountable to us, the citizens of Uintah County.

Four of the five people opposing Proposition 9 are former elected officials. Their experience deserves respect, but their experience with the existing system does not mean that as a county we wouldn’t benefit from a different form of government. They cannot speak from experience about how a five-member Council and a professional County Manager would serve Uintah County.

Most importantly, Proposition 9 is about accountability and representation. Five district elected Council members means residents know exactly who represents their area and who they can hold accountable.

The real question is simple: Is the current system working for all of Uintah County? Prop 9 gives every area of Uintah County a seat at the table.

Vote FOR Prop 9.

Anna Billings - Designated Contact Sponsor
234 S 3290 W, Vernal, UT 84078, 757-416-8717

Brian Gorum – Sponsor
Dan Dilsaver – Sponsor
Jo Gardner – Sponsor
Nolan Jackson - Sponsor



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WRITTEN REBUTTAL AGAINST ARGUMENT FOR PROPOSITION #9

The proposed council-manager form promises “clear responsibilities, “better representation,” and a “proven system.” None is guaranteed.

Utah law prohibits an optional plan from setting elected officials’ pay, benefits, or schedules. Those are governing-board decisions and cannot be guaranteed as limited. All three Utah counties that adopted this change saw costs rise.

“At will” does not mean accountable to voters. The manager answers only to the council, not the public. Voters cannot remove the manager; only the council can.

The division of responsibilities may be clear, but the benefit is not. The proposal does not simply “allow” council members to focus on legislation; it restricts their authority over administration while giving executive authority to an appointed manager. Voters elect representatives with less authority over the government they represent.

Currently, Uintah County voters have a voice in electing all three commissioners. Under this proposal, each voter elects one of five council members. Five people may sit at the bench, but each voter chooses just one.

Proponents acknowledge the difficulty of comparing Uintah County with communities having different incomes, home values and economies. Yet they point to Summit, Tooele and Wasatch as models. Only three of Utah’s 29 counties use this form. Uintah County’s rural geography and economy shaped by energy, agriculture, public lands and natural resources, require elected leaders engaged with legislators, agencies, and industries affecting our community.

We do not believe this proposal benefits Uintah County to justify reducing voters’ influence and transferring executive authority to an appointed manager.

Mike Mckee
Kevin Van Tassell
Jeff Merrell
Darlene Burns
Kim McDonald



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[Proposed Optional Plan to Adopt a Council-Manager Form of Government for Uintah County, Utah](#)

To learn more or request a delivery of a Voter Information Pamphlet by mail or carrier:

County website: www.uintah.gov Public hearing recordings/minutes: www.uintah.gov County Clerk-Auditor contact:
Michael W. Wilkins, 435-781-5360, clerk-auditor@uintah.utah.gov

Prepared and certified by:

County Clerk/Auditor: Michael W. Wilkins

Date: Sept. 21st 2026

