

MINUTES of the work session of the Uintah County Commission held **May 22, 2023** in the large Commission Conference Room of the Uintah County Building at 152 East 100 North, Vernal, Utah. Meeting commenced at 9:05 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS: Commissioners Brad Horrocks, Sonja Norton, and John Laursen.

ATTENDANCE: Mike Wilkins, Melanie Silcox, Brenda McDonald, Tracie Smuin, Wendi Long, Rick May, Zeke Atwood, Jon Stearmer, Tegan Troutner, Gabby Blackburn, Willis LeFevre, Jess Hermann, Derrick Jaramillo, Travis Campbell, Leshia Coltharp, Sam Passey, Matt Cazier, Ryan Mattson, and Steve Labrum. Minutes recorded by Tai Duncan.

WELCOME: Commissioner Horrocks welcomed everyone.

1. **UTAH EDUCATION AND TELEHEALTH AGREEMENT** – Sam Passey, Library, noted we have been participating in the Utah Education Network for years. This federal program pays for our internet at the Library if we can certify the connection is sufficient with filters and a firewall to keep the bad stuff out. This contract will pay 100% of the Library fiber internet connection for five years; approximately \$60,000. This will be on tomorrow's agenda for approval. IT will have to provide documentation that the connection meets requirements.

2. James Blair Johnson **APPEAL OF NOTICE AND ORDER** issued at 1642 East 1500 North, Vernal; serial number 05:119:0112; for an outbuilding constructed without a permit – Matt Cazier, Community Development added their office doesn't usually know about such things unless they hear a complaint or the Assessor's office informs them. The building was posted with a notice that it needed a permit. The property owner did not respond and the Notice and Order was recorded on the property. The owner is now appealing. He will be attending the meeting tomorrow. The building needs a permit and it does not meet the front setback requirements. It was built in front of another garage. Once the Notice and Order is recorded, Community Development does not take it further. If the owner were to sell or refinance, it would have to be permitted at that point. In response to Commissioner Norton's question, Jon Stearmer, Deputy County-Attorney, stated there are times when cases are brought to court due to a violation of the County Code as it is a misdemeanor. Matt agreed but also noted their policy has been not to take it that far unless it is life threatening or a home someone is living in. In the past, a judge may determine the individual is guilty but they don't enforce the permit or hold them accountable so it hasn't been successful.

3. **SURVIVING SPOUSE** – Steve Labrum, Sheriff, indicated this agreement was approved years ago. If a deputy dies in the line of duty, their spouse and dependents, up to age 26, continue to be insured and the State reimburses the County for the premium through the State Trust Fund. Mike Wilkins, Clerk-Auditor, noted the agreement was backdated but the reimbursement started with the approval of the agreement. Jon added this will be on the agenda tomorrow but more as a declaration or acknowledgment as the agreement has already been signed. We have to inform the State how many individuals are included. This is required by Statute and is part of the Sheriff's budget in the benefits line.

4. **INTERN CONTRACT FORM** – Tonya Craven, Human Resources, was unable to attend. Jon noted it is a simple contract with the Department of Workforce Services to use their intern program. It will be on the agenda tomorrow.

5. **UINTAH TRANSPORTATION SPECIAL SERVICE DISTRICT SNOW REMOVAL EQUIPMENT PAYMENTS 2016-2019** discussion – Mike Wilkins, Clerk-Auditor, noted the County has received money from the FAA for the snow removal equipment. The Uintah Transportation SSD billed the County for \$247,000 for the years they operated the airport, 2016-2019. The agreement appears to state that they should be reimbursed because they were the operating entity at the time. Commissioner Norton feels they should be reimbursed and Jon agreed, unless a contract states otherwise. This will be processed as a normal expenditure.

6. PURCHASING POLICY discussion – Zeke Atwood, Purchasing and Grants, began the discussion. It would be extremely helpful if the Commission would determine the purchase order limits. The current policy is any purchase over \$500 requires a purchase order, PO. A survey was sent out requesting the preferred limit. The average response from department heads was \$1600 and the average response from elected officials was \$2500; the combined average of the two groups is \$1800. Mike noted the purpose of purchase orders is to ensure the County knows what is encumbered, not to tie anyone's hands. A PO shows the vendor the funds are there and they will get paid. He would like to see the limit raised to \$1000. Commissioner Norton asked if we compared other entities. Zeke noted we are the lowest in the state at \$500 and the State itself is at \$5,000. Commissioner Norton thought that they had decided on \$2500 and Commissioner Horrocks thought they had decided on \$1500. Currently at \$500, we process around 1,210 PO's per year at \$7,920,803. There are around 680 POs greater than \$1500 totaling \$7,441,279. There are only 454 POs greater than \$2500 and total \$7,012,996. If the limit were raised from \$500 to \$2500 we would be doing a third as many. Mike noted reducing the number of POs that much would make the purchasing agent unnecessary for that purpose and POs could be done in the Clerk-Auditor's office. Commissioner Norton understands his concerns but also noted Zeke does a lot with grants and that is increasing quite a bit, which is good for the County. She also feels doing these purchasing items in one office will decrease the possibility for duplication. She also expressed the trust the Commissioners have in the departments. The department heads and elected officials have budgets and they are responsible for said budgets. The Commission merely wants to be aware of issues and items outside of budgets. Not everyone in each department needs to have access to \$2500. Matt noted that the PO limit is not as important if the process of obtaining the PO is easier. POs make it easier to track budgets as you are aware of encumbrances even if billing takes a little time to complete. Commissioner Norton agreed with making the process as easy as possible and making it all electronic; automatically going to the appropriate individual to review and approve. All the details would be available through each process and save paper. Rick added a PO would not be processed if there wasn't enough funding available, which may save a step. Matt said that would be a great way to track budgets and would be greatly appreciated.

Purchasing cards could be set at the same limit or a different limit. Those that have to travel or attend training know that \$500 is not sufficient. Brenda McDonald, Recorder, would like to see that limit changed. She recently attended a large conference and had to use a personal card because the pcard was not sufficient for hotel, travel, meals, etc. Steve agreed, it can become a problem. Commissioner Laursen agreed with separating and suggested a limit of \$1500 for POs and \$2500 for pcards. Mike clarified the pcards have a monthly limit as well as a single purchase limit. The suggested \$2500 would be for a single purchase. Sam asked if something could be included in the system to address purchases less than the PO limit to help departments track budgets. Rick noted any purchase over the limit, currently \$500, would require a PO, even if using the pcard. Sam will talk to Rick more about his thoughts for purchases less than the PO limit another time. Commissioner Laursen asked if \$2500 was sufficient for a pcard and everyone agreed it was. Steve added that as long as the total monthly limit is more, it should suffice for training and travel. Commissioner Norton asked if there was a monthly limit as well. Mike noted the department heads and elected officials set it when the employee applies for and receives their pcard, the policy doesn't specify. It is flexible and adjustments can be made as needed; which is the purpose. For example, the County Fair has several smaller budgets and that budget is placed on the pcard and when it is spent, the budget is spent. He likes the flexibility for the departments to manage their employees and pcards. Not every employee has one. Leshia Coltharp, Travel and Tourism, recently did a PO for \$10,000 to US Bank. The ATV Jamboree and Rock Rally are coming up in the next two weeks. She will have to buy \$10,000 worth of prizes from businesses throughout the County so she will use her pcard. The money is encumbered but she has the flexibility to spend it as needed. This leeway is instrumental for her department. She is the only one in her department with this freedom as she is responsible for the budget. A single purchase limit of \$2500 works just fine for her. Commissioner Norton would like to keep the numbers consistent. Zeke agreed with keeping the two limits the same. If they are not, more people will be likely to use the pcard rather than go through the process of obtaining a PO. Commissioner Laursen indicated it would be on their shoulders to follow the policy. Jon indicated he would prefer using the pcard. He does the majority of his purchases online and the pcard is preferred for most vendors. Most travel expenses are done online, and the pcard is simply more convenient. Most

employees are looking for the easiest transaction. Commissioner Norton felt \$2500 for both limits would be sufficient and if we find there is an issue, we can change it. Commissioner Laursen and Commissioner Horrocks agreed with changing both limits to \$2500.

Zeke also asked at what limit the Commissioners would like to get involved; currently they sign off approval for any purchases over \$5,000. It has been suggested to raise that to \$10,000. Jon cautioned the Commissioner to keep the executive and legislative actions separate. There is a difference between department heads and elected officials. Departments report directly to the Commission. Legislatively, the Commission works with the elected officials to determine budgets and then the elected official manages their budget. If there is an issue, the Commission would get involved as a legislative body. Commissioners have more say over the department heads' budgets as the executive authority but that authority does not pertain to elected officials. Commissioner Laursen also noted that any single item purchased for \$1,000 or more must be inventoried. These items are tracked by the Clerk-Auditor's office but can sometimes be missed when a pcard is used and not coded to the correct budget line. Communication is necessary. Commissioner Laursen added it is nice to know what is going on with the elected officials' budgets as well and that is accomplished by receiving the budget reports and warrants. Commission should not need to approve an expenditure for expenses within the budget but would want to if outside a budget. A budget opener requires legislative action as money is moving among budgets. Jess Hermann, Facilities, asked for clarification regarding the capital outlay budget. Jess takes care of the expenses for the Facilities department but always gets Commissioner signatures on capital outlay expenses. That is correct as the Commissioners are technically responsible for that budget. The Commission approval limit will be changed to \$10,000. Commissioner Norton asked about changing the threshold to start the RFP process from \$20,000 to \$30,000.

7. IT DISCUSSION – Rick May, IT, wanted to ensure the Commissioners were aware of the status of updating the Oracle database. We are trying to upgrade through OnBase which requires a newer version of Oracle and a new version will break some connections so they are trying to figure out how to upgrade and keep the older version working on the older database until the upgrade is complete. There has been some discussion regarding the State housing our database, however, Brenda found in the State Code where it must be housed locally; 17-21-1 says the Recorder is the custodian of all recorded documents. Rick added the files will stay in-house regardless of where the database is. The indexing is how the documents are found after being recorded. That is housed in the database. There is concern with the upgrade as the Oracle licensing has not been updated since 1997. They expect, at most, the new licensing will be approximately \$100,000 and a new machine at \$12,000. This should be a high estimate - worst case scenario. It would keep the database and everything local and we would have access to it. Brenda reiterated the documents and indexes must be kept in house to follow code. Additionally, if it were to be sent to the State, the Recorder's office would have to create 903 red books full of documents and 100 index books besides the man hours needed to index all the documents that have been recorded over the last 18 years. It would be a massive, nearly impossible, and expensive undertaking. Commissioner Norton is not in favor of going to the State but was curious about the cost difference. Ryan Mattson, IT, provided some additional figures though he did note they do not have all the quotes and the figures are not exact. The first-year cost if we changed to the State would be \$60,000. Keeping it all on site will be about \$112,000. Over a six-year period, total costs would be approximately \$200,000 changing to the State and \$311,000 on-site. Commissioner Laursen expressed his concern with the unreliability of the State; it goes down often and cannot be trusted. He doesn't feel it is worth it for saving approximately \$100,000 over six years. Rick is hopeful, once he begins discussion with Oracle, that the cost will ultimately be less but he wanted to be prepared and ensure that was the route the Commissioners wanted to go. Oracle may be willing to negotiate the actual licensing costs considering our longevity with the program. The Commissioners told him to move forward.

8. POLICY 810, SOCIAL MEDIA – Sonja Norton, Commissioner
This item will be placed on the next work session agenda.

9. SALARIED EMPLOYEE PTO discussion – Sonja Norton, Commissioner
This item will be placed on the next work session agenda.

10. ELECTRIC CHARGING STATION LOCATION IDEAS – Sonja Norton, Commissioner, stated the State has funding for stations. The County should review where these stations might be best and plan on using State funding while it is available rather than waiting until it is a necessity and then have to pay for it with County funds. They are expensive to put up and maintain, especially what is needed for users to pay to charge their vehicle. Gabby Blackburn, Vernal City, suggested the County and City work together to plan stations as the City has incorporated them in the Vernal City development plan.

11. T-MOBILE SITE ADDITION – Melanie Silcox, Western Park, brought this to work session about four weeks ago. T-Mobile has requested an additional 112 square feet at the existing cell tower owned by Strata at the Western Park. Melanie had been asked to work with Barbara Simper, Assessor, to determine a fair rental amount. The original contract indicated an additional \$100 per month. Barbara has been trying to reach out to others for more information. Melanie spoke with the T-Mobile individual and they said they typically pay \$3 per square foot, which would be \$336 and he was comfortable with an additional \$350 per month. Barbara agreed that would be a fair amount and suggested the contract include a 2% increase each year. The Strata contract is currently at \$5,000 per year with a 2% increase. Rick suggested Strata have to pay the same amount per square foot. The Commissioners agreed it should be the same for each carrier. Melanie will work with Jon and Strata to see if the contract can be negotiated and come up with a fair amount.

12. CLOSED SESSION for the purpose of discussing the character, professional, or physical or mental health of an individual

13. CLOSED SESSION for the purpose of discussing pending or imminent litigation

Commissioner Laursen, at 10:04 am, moved to recess to go into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing the character, professional, or physical or mental health of an individual, convene into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing pending or imminent litigation, reconvene and adjourn work session when discussions are complete. Commissioner Norton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Closed Session attendance: Commissioner Horrocks, Commissioner Norton, Tegan Troutner, Jon Stearmer, and Mike Wilkins. At 10:25 am Johnnie Miller, Korby Siggard, and Kristin VanOrman joined. At 11:10 am, Barbara Simper and Wendi Long joined.

ADJOURN: The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:22 am.


BRAD HORROCKS, CHAIR


MICHAEL W. WILKINS, CLERK – AUDITOR

