

MINUTES of the work session of the Uintah County Commission held **April 22, 2024** in the large Commission Conference Room of the Uintah County Building at 152 East 100 North, Vernal, Utah. Meeting commenced at 9:04 a.m.

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

ATTENDANCE: Mike Wilkins, Caleb Hall, Tonya Craven, Willis LeFevre, JC Brewer, Jon Stearmer, Jess Hermann, Troy Slaugh, Paul Chacon, Brian Fletcher, Melanie Silcox, Greg Jensen, Wendi Long, Travis Campbell, Matt Cazier, Deanna Nyberg, Brenda McDonald, Ryan Mattson, Crystal Clark, Derrick Jaramillo, and Barbara Simper.

Minutes recorded by Tai Duncan.

WELCOME: Commissioner Laursen welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. WESTERN STATES TRIBAL NATIONS County Membership – Travis Campbell, Economic Development

This is an advocacy group that is currently working on a natural gas initiative to increase exports with a focus on Asian markets. This group came together years ago during an Energy Summit panel discussion. They are discussing a port out of Canada or Mexico. Andrew Browning, President, is completely capable, accessible, and knowledgeable. This is a great group to be a part of. Travis urged the Commissioners to continue membership, dues are \$5,000, to keep our voice in the group. The dues have been paid half out of Economic Development and the other half out of the Commission budget. He would like to simplify this and keep it all in the Economic Development budget. Commissioner Horrocks agreed we should be a member. Travis noted other members include Duchesne County, the 7 County Infrastructure Coalition, other States such as New Mexico and many other Counties, including several in Colorado. Jon Stearmer, Deputy County Attorney, also noted the Ute Tribe, Apache Tribe, and others are also members. They are a big partner in the rail litigation as well. The current fight regarding our railroad line is with a county in Colorado and the Western States Tribal Nations has taken a stand and made their position heard. Commissioner Norton asked if the dues have increased and Travis responded they have not. Mike Wilkins, Clerk-Auditor, noted a line item transfer can be done within the Economic Development budget and then at the end of the year, if his budget is lacking, the Commission can transfer as needed.

2. 2024 TAX EXEMPT PROPERTIES – Mike Wilkins, Clerk-Auditor

This is the annual list of all private organizations, like Ashley Valley Sewer Management, and religious organizations that own property but are tax exempt. The list is the same as last year except one property has been removed and one has been added. The Spanish Christian Church at approximately 4000 South and 1500 East, serial number 06:051:0015, will be added. They have provided the documentation and meet all the qualifications. The Kingsbury Community Church owned a condo the Minister was living in but it has been sold. It will be removed from the tax exempt list and taxed going forward under the new owner. Commissioner Horrocks asked Mike if he had any concerns with any of the properties. Mike responded he did not, they have all been reviewed.

3. ORDINANCE #04-22-2024 O1: Amendments to Chapter 17.30 – Site Plan Regulations: changes to landscaping requirements and other minor changes – Matt Cazier, Community Development

The changes to this chapter are minor and include grammatical or spelling errors as well as correcting the code references. Only one has a significant change. 17.30.060, paragraph A, will remove "60% of landscaped areas shall have vegetative cover when vegetation reaches maturity", leaving the first sentence "10% of the area for the use shall be landscaped". They felt like this was a small way to help with the water issues we are faced with in the Basin and across the State. Planning Commission held a public hearing and heard no comments. They recommended approval unanimously.

4. COUNTY FAIR CONCERT CONTRACT(S) DISCUSSION - Melanie Silcox, Western Park

After the contract was approved last week, Melanie began to rethink what would be best. She would prefer to pay Evans Family Media up to \$46,000 and allow him to initiate the contract with the act. It complicates things to have him initiate contracts but have said contracts approved by the County. The projected losses are high estimates at \$9,162.50 she felt \$6,000 would be more accurate. She also noted Commissioner Laursen and Commissioner Norton had questioned sponsorships. They didn't feel it was appropriate for Evans Family Media to pursue sponsorships on behalf of the County if the County were paying for the event and the sponsorships were not actually going to the County. Jon addressed their concern. Evans Family Media would be representing the County, basically a booking agent. The County can choose to do a contract where the County is as involved as we want to be. We can pay Evans Family Media the budgeted \$46,000 and tell him to book the act or give him a budget to work with, as the contract is currently written. Melanie noted the County would collect the revenue and then pay Evans Family Media as per the receipts he brings forward for reimbursement, not to exceed the budget of \$46,000. This budget includes the stage crew, lighting, sound etc., everything needed for the event. She also noted many of the stage crew and security are volunteers. Commissioner Laursen and Commissioner Norton agreed this sounds like a good plan. Commissioner Norton agrees with Evans Family Media making a little money on the event as it is a business; she just wants to ensure it is clarified the sponsorships are part of the advertising that he would be doing, which paragraph 13 refers to. Mike noted this is a specific line item in the County Fair budget.

5. TIER 2 RETIREMENT AND 401K DISCUSSION

Mike presented more information regarding the costs as a follow-up to the discussion from last week. Currently, the County has 119 of 248 employees who contribute to their 401K. The County currently has budgeted \$290,207.48 to match all employees 401K. If all of the County employees participated, at a 2.14% match it would cost the County \$45,804.32 considering the amortization decrease of \$133,192.62. The cost would be \$102,329.67 at 2.5%. At the current participation at almost half, the 2.5% match would save the County \$101,852.96. Projected participation of 75% employees, all contributing 2.5% and the County matching, would cost \$4,195.38.

Jon asked for clarification on the match amount and how much an employee would have to participate to receive the match. All employees will receive the option to contribute to their 401K with the County matching whatever percentage up to a maximum of 2.5%. For example, if an employee contributes 1% the County will match with 1% and so on up to 2.5%. There are a few exceptions. Public employees in tier 2 are required to contribute 0.7% in their pension. The County would match that 0.7% in the 401K for that individual. Tier 2 public safety employees are required to contribute 2.14%. As per statute, the County can choose to pick up this cost for the employee whereas the County cannot for tier 2 public employees. Previously, when the percentage for public safety increased, the County chose to take on that burden. If the County chooses to contribute the 2.14% for tier 2 public safety, the employee will have to contribute 0.36% to achieve the 2.5%. Tier 1 employees would receive the same option to match their 401K contributions. 2.5% is being used as the maximum for calculating purposes as per the discussion last week. Mike asked the Commission to come to a decision as soon as possible as the changes go into effect July 1st and we want to ensure the employee has ample time to plan.

The State is doing a salary enhancement for those employees affected by the required 0.7%. It was agreed during work session last week that a salary enhancement would increase the wage compression issue; tier 1 employees would not receive an enhancement. The presented proposal was intended to be fair for all employees and the match adjustable to accommodate what individual employees can afford. In tier 1, 41 out of 91 employees contribute to their 401K; in the tier 2 hybrid system, 64 out of 133 employees contribute; in tier 2 defined contribution, 14 out of 24 employees. Derrick Jaramillo, Conference Center, asked if Mike knew how many of the 31 out of the 67 in tier 1 public employees opted out of contributing when the County chose not to contribute to the employees 401K. Mike responded he did not look into that statistic but could if necessary. He also explained tier 1 employees were hired, or in the URS system, before July 1, 2011. Matt commented the match option was fair between all the employees and would not add to the compression issue. It is the most equitable.

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

At 9:35 am Commissioner Norton moved to go into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing pending or imminent litigation in the Commission small conference room and when discussion is complete, adjourn and reconvene Commission meeting in order to adjourn. Commissioner Horrocks seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Closed Session Attendance: Mike Wilkins, Jon Stearmer, Barbara Simper, and Wendi Long.

ADJOURN: The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:16 am.



JOHN LAURSEN, CHAIR



MICHAEL W. WILKINS, CLERK - AUDITOR

