

**IRON COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING  
APRIL 22, 2024**

Minutes of the Iron County Commission meeting convened at 9:00 a.m. April 22, 2024 in Commission Chambers at the Iron County Courthouse, Parowan, Utah.

Officers in attendance included:

Michael Bleak	Commission Chair
Paul Cozzens	Commissioner
Marilyn Wood	Commissioner
Jonathan T. Whittaker	County Clerk

Also present:

Karsten Reed	County Assessor
Luke Little	County Auditor
Terry Palmer	County Building & Zoning
Richard Wilson	County Chief Engineer
Sam Woodall	County Deputy Attorney
Jennifer Bradbury	County HR Director
Jared Wilson	County I.T. Director
Carri Jeffries	County Recorder
Nicole Rosenberg	County Treasurer

Others in attendance:

Carol Barker	Maile Wilson-Edwards	Ken Robinson
Susan Sepe	Bruce Washburn	

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## **INVOCATION**

An invocation was offered by Michael Bleak.

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Those assembled were led in the pledge of allegiance by Marilyn Wood.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Marilyn Wood made a motion to approve the minutes of the Iron County Commission meeting held on April 8, 2024. Second by Paul Cozzens. Voting: Michael Bleak, Aye; Paul Cozzens, Aye; Marilyn Wood, Aye.

## **APPROVAL OF CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT**

Paul Cozzens made a motion to approve Claims for Payment from April 8, 2024 to April 21, 2024. Second by Marilyn Wood. Voting: Michael Bleak, Aye; Paul Cozzens, Aye; Marilyn Wood, Aye.

## **DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

**Karsten Reed, Iron County Assessor**, reported that he had originally invited Dr. Evan Johnson for a presentation, but Dr. Johnson could not attend. Karsten noted that one of the challenges his office faced was that the governor received a tremendous amount of pressure from taxpayers because of a tax shift that was transferring tax burden to residential home owners which then became a ripple effect down to county assessors. He reported that Class 3 counties and higher (Iron County is currently a Class 3 County) had to have a Statistical Model. Each county had to create a model and hire a modeling team. This was a financial challenge for rural counties. We want to keep government small and not have to add \$1M just because the governor put pressure on the Utah State Tax Commission (USTC). Karsten reported that the USTC was already adding requirements for Assessor's Offices. Educational requirements had increased and would affect the budget in travel, motels, and class costs. He noted that he had been trying to find a way for Iron County to build this model without spending \$1M. Karsten reported that he contacted Dr. Evan Johnson who was the Director of the Data Science Center in the United States. Dr. Johnson had a degree from Harvard and had received over \$30M in research grants. He had taught at Harvard, Boston University, and recently teaches at Rutgers School of Medicine and was a resident of Enterprise, Utah. Karsten reached out to Dr. Johnson and explained the \$1M model project need and the potential \$1M expense he was facing. Karsten asked Dr. Johnson if he could help Iron County create a model and lend the expertise to build it. Dr. Johnson agreed to build the model for Iron County and to train the Assessor's Office staff on how to apply the model. Dr. Johnson was doing a conference this summer, and he invited students from ivy league universities, as well as Southern Utah University (SUU). They would all assist in building the Iron County Statistical Model during the convention. It was nice to have a local resource that was the leading data modeler in the United States. Karsten expressed his appreciation to Dr. Johnson for helping him with this project. After the model was made, Iron County would have the most effective and accurate model in the state, and fortunately Iron County would not have to pay for it. Karsten reported that his office was restructuring their Policies and Procedures Manual and hoped to have it completed by the end of the summer. He noted that Trevor Mattson, Lead Statistical/Data Services, had been working diligently to clean all the sales and have the tax roll completed by May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Karsten reported that his office had been holding a Public Engagement Series for an assessment overview class open to the public, Real Estate Brokers, and Mortgage Companies. It had been well attended and everyone had been thankful for the opportunity to interact and have discussions to understand their assessments better. Karsten closed by stating his office was still in desperate need of an additional Commercial Appraiser. The State Tax Commission directed him to get another Commercial Appraiser as soon as possible.

**Jared Wilson, Iron County Information Technology (IT) Director**, reported that the IT Department had averaged 352 work orders in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024, which was 50 more per month than 2023. The budget was on track at 33% spent. Jared noted that there were 3 major projects that IT was working on. The first was getting the new Children's Justice Center (CJC) building prepared for their IT equipment. He reported that IT had been working on the process to move the email systems to ".gov." Last year the State Legislature mandated that all local governments move to the .gov domain. Iron County would change from ironcounty.net to ironcountyut.gov. The legislature mandated this change to improve security and confidence in local government emails and domains. However, in reality it would now place a bigger target on all of our emails. Employees would need to be more vigilant with what emails were opened and links were clicked on. Jared explained that this change would be done one department at a time and IT would give notice of exactly when that would be. All old emails would stay in employees' account histories. All new emails would be forwarded to the ironcountyut.gov account even if someone used the old ironcounty.net address. The last project was the migration from the Tyler/Eagle server to a new server. They would be pulling new images from the database so it would run a lot quicker. They were approximately three weeks from beginning that project. Marilyn Wood reported that the Fair Department was not listed on the Iron County Website under Departments. Jared replied that he would get that corrected. Commissioner Bleak informed Jared that there was a contract from the Attorney General's Office of an additional \$41K to cover I.T. costs on the CJC building that needed to be signed. Mike explained the CJC program and how the facility benefited victims and their families. He noted that there had been great care taken in the new design to meet the current and future needs of children in Iron County.

**Carri Jeffries, Iron County Recorder**, reported that Total Documents recorded during the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter were 3,132, 1,220 Transfer Recordings, and 14 Subdivision Plats. Total revenue was \$122,680 and the budget was on track with 21% spent. Carri noted that the Recorder's Office continued to work towards the "Property Watch," program which should be implemented when IT completed the server upgrade in 3-4 weeks. This program would be a great, free service, for the public. She reported that the intent of Property Watch was to allow a property owner to sign up for the program and be notified anytime anything was recorded against their property.

**Nicole Rosenberg, Iron County Treasurer**, reported Product sales collected since January 2024 was \$3,730,316.38. Pooled cash was \$65,831,139.48. Nicole noted that since the beginning of January 2024 interest collected from the Public Treasures Investment Fund (PTIF) was \$635K. The interest was holding steady at 5.44%. Nicole reported that the May Tax Sale would be held next month with 71 properties remaining on the list. There was only one home listed which was a deferral from 2023. The owner was working hard to get it paid. There was \$500 still due and he would have that before the tax sale. She was hoping to talk with the owner to begin making monthly payments to help keep his payments manageable. Nicole reported that the Treasurer's Office was working with IT and the landfill for new software and merchant for credit card payments at the landfill. They were in discussions with Clover Connect to help get it up and running. She noted that Iron County was taking over the Drug Court collections so she was working with IT to get them set up with a merchant to begin collecting payments. Nicole reported that the outside auditor would be at the Parowan Courthouse the week of May 13<sup>th</sup>. She reminded everyone that they might be coming into the different offices to check receipts. She noted that the Treasurer budget was on track. Nicole expressed her appreciation to her staff for all the hard work they do.

**Paul Cozzens, Iron County Commissioner**, reported that 2300 West was renamed "Happy Factory Lane" and he expressed his appreciation to the Iron County Sign Department for donating the signs. He attended the National Council for Mental Health and Wellbeing (NatCon) Convention and was able to listen to some great speakers. Paul reported that the "988" Suicide and Crisis Lifeline was now used nationwide. He noted that suicide was becoming rampant with 10% of the population contemplating suicide. One of the key speakers at NatCon was Kevin Hines, a survivor having attempted to take his own life by jumping off the San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge. Kevin spoke of living in squalor with his twin brother. Both of his parents struggled

with drug addiction and often left him and his brother abandoned. Child Protective Services intervened but could not keep the brothers together. Kevin eventually found a loving adoptive family, but tragedy struck when his brother died from bronchitis. Kevin struggled with depression and battled suicidal thoughts. At the age of 19, he made the worst decision of his life and jumped off the Golden Gate Bridge. During his rapid 4 second descent, Hines recalled an instantaneous feeling of regret as he prayed to himself, "God, I don't want to die. Please help me." As he came out of the water from the fall, a sea lion positioned itself beneath him, keeping him afloat long enough for the Coast Guard to arrive. Meanwhile, on the bridge above, a compassionate woman witnessed the jump and dialed for help. Even in life's darkest moments, there is help available and conversations can bring about meaningful change. Paul reported that another topic that was covered was Mental Health Counselors were beginning to use AI software. This software could listen to an interview then write a report, which would then leave more time for the counselor to spend with patients and less time working on reports. It was a great convention and was well worth the trip.

**Marilyn Wood, Iron County Commissioner**, reported that on the 17<sup>th</sup> she, along with Commissioner Bleak, participated in a video interview for the Utah Inland Port Authority (UIPA) and BZI. Danny Stewart, former Iron County Economic Developer, was working with UIPA and they were thrilled to have him on board. UIPA held an open house that evening at Festival Hall and it was valuable to visit with UIPA personnel. On the afternoon of the 17<sup>th</sup>, she drove to the Iron County Shooting Range for a meeting with Maria Twitchell, Bruce Anderson, Bryce Williams, Sheriff Carpenter, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to discuss solutions regarding the BLM Paintball Range being located next to the shooting range. Marilyn reported that on the 18<sup>th</sup>, meetings resumed regarding the new jail. It was nice to be moving forward once again. On the 18<sup>th</sup> she attended the Weed Board meeting and discussed spraying for the Scotch Thistle to keep them from spreading. She noted that if someone had questions or concerns with weeds on their property they could call the Weed Department and they would come, evaluate the weeds and discuss what could be done. The weed department could spray them for a small fee. Commissioner Wood reported that planning for the Iron County Fair was in full swing. Registration was now open for the Color Country OHV Jamboree being held September 25<sup>th</sup> through the 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Michael Bleak, Iron County Commissioner**, noted that he attended the monthly Cedar City Airport Board meeting. Mike explained that the airport was planning an expansion of the preflight waiting area. This expansion would accommodate larger airlines, larger crowds, and more flights in the future. He reported that there was a Cedar Airport Master Plan public meeting, which was held once a year. Cedar City was in the middle of the Master Plan for the airport. This meeting was to update airport projects. Some of the projects discussed were the runway development, the National Guard's plans to bring in a helicopter base at the airport next year, additional hangars for private use, and enhancing economic development opportunities at the airport, specific to aerospace companies. Mike reported that he attended the ribbon cutting for the Appaloosa Solar project off Lund Hwy. This was the first solar project that was now creating power. He participated in a video shoot with the Inland Port as previously reported by Commissioner Wood. Commissioner Bleak reported that he attended a meeting with Nova-Tech Engineering at BZI with Rob Cottle and Ed Deffner regarding the new jail and using local companies as much as possible.

Paul Cozzens reported that he had texted Rob Cottle, Babcock Design, earlier today regarding a sewer easement from the planned jail project, under the railroad tracks, near the IFA Railroad Easement alignment.

Terry Palmer, Iron County Planning/Building & Zoning Administrator, reported that he had received three bids for a remodel of the Exhibit Hall fair building. The three bids were \$200K-\$233K, \$240K, and \$258K. The funds would come out of the Tourism fund. Terry noted that he wanted to inform the commissioners what the bids were at this time. He would like the commissioners to discuss how they wanted to proceed. Tiger Grimshaw Jr. was the low bid. Tom Braun and Travis Larson were the other bidders. He noted that all three were good contractors, and each of them had done work for Iron County before. Terry noted that he needed direction

from the commission on when they wanted this to be on the commission agenda for action and approval, and there was no budget for the project at this time. Marilyn Wood reported that the funds would come out of Tourism, the same as the barn budget. Jon Whittaker noted that the next commission meeting was May 13<sup>th</sup>. Terry reported that the project should be completed by August 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Carol Barker, a citizen of Iron County, noted that she was curious if any of the commissioners gave any thought to her challenge of a definition of "Public Safety." She re-read HB488 to fund the new jail, and public safety was not included in the tax code. It did address roads and things. Carol stated that she performed an internet search for the definition of public safety. Public safety went beyond "policing and protection of physical personal body and possessions. It encompassed access to food, health care, jobs, education, affordable housing, environmental disasters, and racial and gender issues." She once again challenged the commissioners to come up with a definition because this was a can of worms. We have two candidates who were running for commissioner and one of them would be joining the commission next year. They might not share the same view as the present commission that public safety meant paying for a jail. Carol noted that she was for good, transparent, and accountable government. If there was a definition of public safety, it would protect the county from someone coming in the future and challenged what was public safety and the funds should not be spent on the jail.

Commissioner Michael Bleak reported that the commissioners work with the state on a definition of public safety. We could be a little more restrictive than the state, but not less restrictive. Michael noted that they had spoken with Senator Evan Vickers on this issue. It would be looked at when the legislature met in interim.

### **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF A CONTRACT FOR ASPHALT AT THE IRON COUNTY CHILDRENS JUSTICE CENTER (CJC)**

Richard Wilson, Iron County Chief Engineer, presented a view of the CJC and reported that a Request for Proposal (RFP) was sent out and he received 2 bids back. There was discussion on how to reduce the overall expense to what was proposed, rather than reducing the parking lot area and the driveway. Richard noted that it was a challenge to get a clear response back. There was quite a bit of "A" curbing cut out, which was more expensive than "L" curbing. Richard explained the curb cut and the cross channel. He reported that he did cut L curb on the back side of parking lot on the east, and left all the curbing around the CJC building where people would pull in to park. Richard reported that he received a bid from Sunroc and Mel Clark. He explained that the bids for Curb & Sidewalk were both high, Sunroc was \$75,040 and Mel Clark was \$55,252. There was only approximately 160 feet of sidewalk and 1,100 feet of curb. Richard noted that he cut the curb in half. If he had not cut the curbing it would have been approximately \$150K rather than \$75K or \$55K. Richard reported that Sunroc's bid was \$314,243.65 and Mel Clark was \$229,101.70. Discussion continued on the type of asphalt.

Marilyn Wood made a motion to approve a contract for asphalt at the Iron County CJC parking lot awarded to Mel Clark for \$229,101.70. Second by Paul Cozzens. Voting: Michael Bleak, Aye; Paul Cozzens. Aye; Marilyn Wood, Aye.

### **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF INTERLOCAL AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER ENTITIES FOR RESIDENTIAL BUILDING INSPECTIONS SERVICES DUE TO SB185**

Terry Palmer, Iron County Planning/Building & Zoning Administrator, explained that this Interlocal Agreement typed above was not correct. He received a call from the attorney on Thursday or Friday with changes they wanted to do. Terry reported that this issue goes back to Senate Bill (SB) 185 which he reported on at a March commission meeting, regarding residential billing, and building inspection amendments. He read from SB185 "If a city cannot provide a building inspection within three days after the day on which the city receives the request for

inspection, the building permit applicant may engage a third party inspection firm from the third-party inspection firm list that we have come up with.” Terry noted that he had met with Senator Vickers and Taz Biesinger, liaison for the legislature, last Thursday at the Home Builders Association meeting and asked for more clarification on the bill. He explained that if there was no inspection within 3 days then on the 4<sup>th</sup> day the contractor could hire a third party inspector. Terry reported that with him being the building official, he had to approve the third-party list. This agreement was between Iron County, Enoch City, Garfield County, Brian Head, Beaver County, and Cedar City. As a 3<sup>rd</sup> Class County, Iron County was required to provide a list of three inspectors. Terry also met with the building officials within the area last week. The building officials had not signed the Agreement because he sent the new form to him this morning for them to review the new form. Sam Woodall, Iron County Deputy Attorney, reviewed it, and Justin Wayment, of Wayment and Jones Law. There was one bullet point that said Iron County could charge up to \$80 for the service, but Justin, Sam, and Terry were not comfortable with that bullet point and removed it from the agreement. Sam Woodall explained that Jonny Miller, UCIP, mentioned that there were some changes to insurance issues. As far as indemnification, Jonny gave some verbiage clarifying that it was necessary to call out self-insured and that we would only indemnify those who were statutorily obligated to indemnify. Iron County should submit a claim if it feels one of the parties committed a wrong and then go through the proper process for filing a claim. Terry reported that the five jurisdictions that he previously spoken with were working with their City and Town Councils this week to approve of the Interlocal Agreements. Under SB 185, he had to have something in place and posted by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Terry noted that he would post it in his office. He reported that in his 29 years of service, the building inspections had never taken more than one day from the day of request.

Paul Cozzens made a motion to approve the Interlocal Agreements with other entities for Residential Building Inspection Services due to SB185. Second by Marilyn Wood. Voting: Michael Bleak, Aye; Paul Cozzens. Aye; Marilyn Wood, Aye.

#### **REVIEW AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF THE 2023 FRAUD RISK ASSESSMENT**

Lucas Little, Iron County Auditor, noted that this was in preparation for the upcoming external audit, three weeks from today. The Fraud Risk Assessment was required by the state auditor to be reviewed and then be uploaded to the State Auditor’s website. Luke explained that there was a question that he was not quite sure of. He discussed the issue with Jennifer Bradbury, HR Director. Luke read from item number 5, “Are employees and elected officials required to annually commit in writing to abide by a statement of ethical behavior.” He noted that he was unclear if this was something Iron County did. Jennifer explained that Iron County did do this every year when they review with employees was done and she sent it out. Luke reported that Iron County scored 375 out of 395, which was low on the Fraud Risk. He noted that Iron County did have a fraud hotline located on the Iron County website under the Auditor, and that citizens could report fraud there. Luke relayed an explanation regarding the separation of duties. If the building department had an invoice that needed to be paid, Chelsea would have the invoice, Terry Palmer would sign it, and Chelsea would then send it to the Auditor’s Office-Accounts Payable, McKayla, would review it to make sure everything was correct, then prepare the check and send it to the Treasurer’s Office where they print the checks and then Nicole Rosenberg reviews the check. There were 4 to 5 employees who see the invoice and approve a payment, which make a separation of duties. The same goes with mail. Luke reported that this was a yearly assessment and there were a few videos located on the state auditor’s website that he would be reviewing within the next year and possibly send them out to the appropriate personnel to review.

Marilyn Wood made a motion to approve the 2023 Fraud Risk Assessments as presented by Lucas Little. Second by Paul Cozzens. Voting: Michael Bleak, Aye; Paul Cozzens, Aye; Marilyn Wood, Aye.

**PERSONNEL**

Jennifer Bradbury, Iron County Human Resource (HR) Director, presented the following HR changes. In the Sheriff’s Office – Corrections: the promotions of Roberto Leiva from a Full Time K9 Deputy 2 to a Full Time Deputy 3, effective May 12, 2024; the promotions of Mitchell Quartz and Zakkary Coons from a Full Time Deputy 2 to a Full Time Deputy 3, effective April 28, 2024. In the Sheriff’s Office – Patrol: the promotions of Skyler Davis and Sam Ward from a Full-Time Deputy 1 to a Full-Time Deputy 2, effective April 28, 2024, the backfill new hire of Savannah Gardner as a Full-Time Grant Funded Victim Advocate, effective May 13, 2024. In Council of Aging (COA): the backfill new hire of Cindy Roa-Heaton as a Part-Time Outreach Coordinator, effective April 29, 2024. In the Weed Department: the new hire backfill of Hunter White as a Part-Time Seasonal Weed Sprayer, effective April 22, 2024; and the new hire backfill of Jaden Parkinson as a Full Time Seasonal Weed Sprayer, effective April 29, 2024. In Natural Resources: the new hire backfill of Charlie Stevenson as a Seasonal OHV Trail Maintenance Technician, effective April 22, 2024. Children’s Justice Center: the backfill new hire of Jessica Brindley as a Part-Time Victim Services Specialist, effective April 15, 2024. Fleet Department: Administrative Assistant position to transition from Part-Time to Full-Time benefited status, effective April 28, 2024; the transition of Kathy Chatwin from a Part-Time status to Full-Time status, effective April 28, 2024. Engineer Department: the promotion/transfer for Garrett Bastian from a Road Maintenance 2 Technician to a Full-Time Engineer Excavator Operator/Inspector, effective April 28, 2024.

Paul Cozzens reported that he had spoken with Wade Adams, Iron County Fleet Supervisor. Wade was overloaded right now and he was having to take care of the sign issue because the employee left. He was also helping out in the Weed Department

Paul Cozzens made a motion to approve the personnel changes as presented by Jennifer Bradbury. Second by Marilyn Wood. Voting: Michael Bleak, Aye; Paul Cozzens, Aye; Marilyn Wood, Aye.

**NON-DELEGATED ITEMS**

No Non-Delegated items were shared.

**DISCUSSION REGARDING ONGOING LITIGATION, THIS PORTION OF THE MEETING MAY BE CLOSED PURSUANT TO UCA 52-4-205(1) (c), “STRATEGY SESSIONS TO DISCUSS PENDING OR REASONABLY IMMINENT LITIGATION”**

Marilyn Wood made a motion to move into a closed session pursuant to UCA §52-4-205 (1) – “Strategy Sessions to discuss pending or reasonably imminent litigation.” Second by Paul Cozzens. Voting: Michael Bleak, Aye; Paul Cozzens, Aye; Marilyn Wood, Aye.

STATE OF UTAH        )  
  ) s.s.  
COUNTY OF IRON    )

I, Michael Bleak, Chairman of the Iron County Utah Commission, hereby certify that the purpose of the closed session convened was conducted in accordance with UCA § 52-4-205(c) for discussing regarding ongoing litigation.

  
Signed: Michael Bleak, Chairman

  
Attest: Jonathan Whittaker, County Clerk



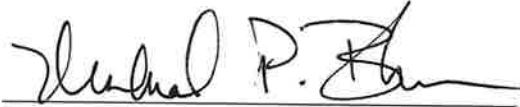
April 22, 2024

**END OF CLOSED SESSION**

Michael Bleak, Iron County Commission Chair, declared the closed session ended and the return to the open Iron County Commission meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Michael Bleak, Iron County Commission Chair, declared adjournment.



Signed: Michael P. Bleak, Chair



Attest: Jonathan T. Whittaker, County Clerk

