

**IRON COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING
FEBRUARY 24, 2025**

Minutes of the Iron County Commission meeting convened at 9:00 a.m. February 24, 2025 in Commission Chambers at the Iron County Courthouse, Parowan, Utah.

Officers in attendance included:

Paul Cozzens	Commission Chair
Michael Bleak	Commissioner
Kenneth Robinson	Commissioner
Jonathan T. Whittaker	County Clerk
Sam Woodall	County Deputy Attorney

Also present:

Ken Carpenter	County Sheriff
Nicole Rosenberg	County Treasurer
David Johnson	Economic Development (via Phone)
George Colson	Emergency Manager
Jennifer Bradbury	County HR Director
Candace Reid	County Public Defender

Others in attendance:

Carol Barker	Linda Hahne	James Harmon
Mike Hilleger	Cindy Laffoon	Bert Mitchell
Bruce Washburn		

SYNOPSIS

ADJOURNMENT	5
APPROVAL OF CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT	2
APPROVAL OF MINUTES	2
DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS.....	4
INVOCATION	1
NON-DELEGATED ITEMS.....	5
PERSONNEL	5
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.....	2
PUBLIC COMMENTS	4
PRESENTAION OF THE ANNUAL PILT PAYMENT	4
RATIFICATION OF A BLM COMMUNICATIONS SITE RELEASE.....	4

INVOCATION

An invocation was offered by Carol Barker.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Those assembled were led in the Pledge of Allegiance by G'Ne Bartholomew.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Michael Bleak made a motion to approve the minutes of the Iron County Commission meeting held on February 12, 2024. Second by Kenneth Robinson. Voting: Michael Bleak, Aye; Paul Cozzens, Aye; Kenneth Robinson, Aye.

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT

Kenneth Robinson made a motion to approve Claims for Payment from February 10, 2025, to February 23, 2025. Second by Michael Bleak. Voting: Michael Bleak, Aye; Paul Cozzens, Aye; Kenneth Robinson, Aye.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

George Colson Iron County Emergency Management Manager, reported he attended 22 meetings and 1 exercise in the last quarter. George noted that in November 2024, the state sent a letter to Emergency Managers (EM) that a mitigation grant was available. He sent a letter of intent and Iron County was accepted for the grant. He and Richard Wilson, Iron County Chief Engineer, had been working on the application since December 2024. On February 15th he submitted the grant application. George reported that he had asked for \$200K for a retention pond, and FEMA and the state approved \$834K. He noted that in Long-term Forecasting, the next 5 years would have smaller snow packs and more monsoonal activity. George reported that the budget was on track. Mike Bleak expressed his appreciation to George for all that he does for Iron County.

Jonathan Whittaker, Iron County Clerk, reported that the General Election, which was held last year took up most of the budget. This year it was a Municipal Election and would not use as much of the budget. Jon was grateful for the opportunity to attend training sessions. He was preparing for promotions that would begin in 2026. Jon reported on statistics from the Clerks' Office in 2024. There were 484 Marriage licenses and \$14,520 for the year, 453 new/renewal Business Licenses for \$35K, 363 Pass Port Applications and 395 Pictures for \$4K Pictures, and 54 Sewer Impact Fees for \$40,500. Forty-three of the 54 impact fees had a life or battle connection that Iron County reimbursed the city for \$14K. Jon reported that the budget was on track. He noted that he and Luke Little, Iron County Auditor, participated in a tour of the jail site. There were 12 out of 34 cell walls poured. Jon explained some of the projects that were happening around the jail site. He reported that he met with Commissioner Bleak this morning who signed an agreement with ESCI, a firm that Iron County engaged to conduct a study of the feasibility of fire district/districts in Iron County. Ryan Riddle, former Fire Warden, was instrumental for moving this forward. Jon explained the feasibility for the program. He noted that ESCI was a company out of California and was highly recommended from the Five-County Association.

Wade Adams, Iron County Fleet Manager, reported that the budget was on track. Vehicle procurement was on track with 23 vehicles ordered and 20 were currently in the procurement process. There were several minor modifications completed, one full upfit completed for the Sheriff's Office, and 2 nearing completion for the Weed Department. Efforts were underway to set up shop tooling and part storage to make upfitting more efficient and parts were being salvaged from vehicles to maximize reuse. H noted that fleet maintenance remained highly active and a new fleet management program system for vehicles offered improved capabilities at half the cost of the previous program. Cody Murray was hired to serve as the primary upfitter. Additional training and certifications were being pursued specifically for the BluePrint system in vehicle programming. Wade reported that auction prices remain decent, although the car market is trending downward. Challenges persist in auctioning new vehicles due

to the \$10 premium fee imposed on buyers. He noted that an alternative sales strategy was employed by selling the vehicles to a dealership. Wade reported that he was exploring alternative sales methods and avoiding auction premium fees.

Jennifer Bradbury, Iron County Human Resource (HR) Director, noted that the 2024 budget ended at 20% remaining. She would discuss with Information Technology (IT) regarding a new system to streamline our employee files to a digital format. Jennifer reported that since the last HR report, there had been 13 posted, interviewed, and hired positions, 15 internal promotions/transfers, and was in the process of recruiting, interviewing, or promoting 21 full-time positions and three part-time positions. She noted that the present employee turnover for 2024 ended at 22.58%, which equated to 56 positions. Jennifer explained the Workman's Compensation Experience Modification Rate (Emod). There would be an Accident Committee meeting sometime this quarter to discuss the 25 remaining claims. She expressed her appreciation to Bloomquist Health, the employee assistance program that assists with the mental health needs of employees and explained the programs Bloomquist Health provided. She reported on the milestone employee anniversaries. Celebrating 5 Years of service were Dave McIntyre with the Sheriff's Office-Patrol, Wyatt Cox with the Sheriff's Office-Corrections, Braden Beaumont in the Assessor's Office, and Jennifer Bradbury in HR. Celebrating 10 years of service was Lori Eichelberger in the Justice Court, and Marcia Smith in the Recorder's Office. Celebrating 15 years of Service was Jessica Cramer in the Attorney's Office, and celebrating 20 years of service was Carrie Christiansen in the Auditor's Office, Carrie Jeffries in the Recorder's Office, Amber Bennett in the Tourism, Dave Avila and Doug Johnson in the Sheriff's Office-Corrections.

Candace Reid, Iron County Public Defense Attorney, Michael Bleak noted that Candace would report via telephone. Candace reported that Public Defense was doing well. The two new public defenders were working and moving forward with trial settings. The budget was on track. She noted that they were prepping for applications for continued IDC grant funding.

David Johnson, Iron County Economic Development Director, Michael Bleak noted that David would report via telephone. David reported that the annual rebates for the solar projects would be submitted before the commission soon. David noted that recently, there were approximately half a dozen site tours for manufacturers. In the last few months, there have been extremely promising projects with the BZI Innovation Park, Silver Hills Industrial, and Port 15. He was grateful for Southwest Tech, SUU, Shakespeare Festival, as well as these industrial partners in Iron County who graciously hosted these site visits.

Kenneth Robinson, Iron County Commissioner, reported that he had met with the Children's Justice Center (CJC) and had a tour of the new facility. It was a good introduction to what was involved with the CJC. He had the opportunity to visit Martin Olaya at the Road Shed. Martin was working on a sign to post at the old CJC building that informed the citizens the CJC had moved to the new location. Ken reported that he attended the Farm Bureau meeting. There was a gentleman at the meeting who proposed piping water out of the canyon to a reservoir above the Second East Restaurant and building a dam. On Friday, he spent the day at the Capital with the Farm Bureau where Congresswoman Celeste Maloy presented. He attended the Iron County Cattleman's Association meeting and Celeste was asked to speak. She commented that everyone needed to be patient with changes that were coming.

Michael Bleak, Iron County Commissioner, explained that he met with an individual who wanted to use the Iron County Firearms Range for a personal business opportunity, which was a conflict with using Iron County property. The meeting was to resolve that conflict and it went well. They committed to continue to help him with solutions and find an alternate property, or other people to partner with. The business was a training company that worked with veterans and law enforcement. Mike would put him in contact with Southern Utah Veterans Association. He had the opportunity to take part in a site visit with Project Peabody representatives who might move a facility here. He met with Maria Twitchell, Iron County Tourism/Parks and Recreation, with representatives from SUU regarding expanding their athletic programs, which would allow more opportunities for High School Championships and other areas that were proven economic drivers into the Transient Room Tax (TRT) and Tourism, Recreation, Culture, and Convention

Tax (TRCC) funds. The TRT and TRCC Advisory Board would be meeting soon to discuss the programs and look at the feasibility of participating with SUU in the mentioned project. Mike reported that he had the opportunity to meet with the Honorable Sela Tukia, Consulate General of Tonga, and welcomed her to the community. Other dignitaries from Tonga were here for a conference at SUU with the Polynesian student group. He met with the Airport Board last week and discussed lease rates, and equitable and fairness to attract businesses to the airport. Commissioner Bleak reported that SUU Aviation was working to expand its operations. He noted that SUU Aviation had an economic impact of approximately \$80M a year and this project would benefit the community, SUU, and the airport. Mike explained the Cedar City/Iron County Fire Department coverage and budget. Mike reported that he attended a ribbon cutting with the Chamber of Commerce for “Beans and Brews” a new coffee house in Cedar City

Paul Cozzens, Iron County Commissioner, reported that he attended the 5 County Board meeting with the Board of Health and Human Services. He noted that Derek Morton had stepped down as the community representative on the board and they were looking for a replacement. Paul explained how the Human Services worked. The weekly meeting regarding the new Sheriff’s Complex continued and Cornerstone was pouring one cell a day. He noted that Ed Deffner from Layton Construction contacted him regarding the early purchase of all the copper wire for the Sheriff’s Complex before the prices jumped. This would save Iron County approximately \$60K. The Legislature was in full swing and he was watching a Tire bill. Paul explained the tire bill. Commissioner Cozzens took a minute to address a personal issue in his family life.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments were offered

PRESENTATION OF THE ANNUAL PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES (PILT) PAYMENT FROM THE STATE OF UTAH

Kevin Bunnell, Regional Utah Department of Wildlife Resource Services (UDWRS), extended his congratulations to Commissioner Robinson as the new Iron County Commissioner. Kevin presented a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) for \$2,505 to the commissioners for the land that the DWR owned in Iron County. He reported that the DWR had a new director, Riley Peck. Riley had been their legislative liaison for the last six years with great support inside and outside the agency. Kevin expressed his appreciation to Reed Erickson, Iron County Planner, and Mike Worthen, Iron County Natural Resource Director working closely with the DWR regarding the Utah Prairie Dog (UPD). He reported that the path toward delisting the UPD was moving forward and the Fish and Wildlife Service had told them that they would begin a “Species Status Review” which was the first step toward a recommendation for them to delist the UPD and explained the review process. The DWR had completed over 16K acres of habitat work in cooperation with federal agencies and private landowners under the Watershed Restoration Initiative. He noted that, just like others, the DWR was concerned about the lack of moisture in this part of the state. We are hopeful that March would bring more moisture. Kevin reported that he met with Mike Worthen regarding turkeys (30) in the Buena Vista Subdivision and was trying to come up with a solution to get them moved.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RATIFICATION OF A BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM) COMMUNICATIONS SITE LEASE WITH THE BLM ON 0.10 ACRES IN HAMLIN VALLEY, SECTION 19, T31S, R17W, SLB&M

Corporal Michael Hilleger, Iron County Sheriff’s Office, explained that the site lease was for a 10-foot repeater to be put out in the Hamblin Valley to have safe communications. Currently, that was the one area that had zero communication and they were making that change effective as soon as they could. Corporal Hilleger reported that there was no radio or cell phone service in the area. This affects the Sheriff’s Office, first responder radios, BLM, Forest Service and Search and Rescue. They were looking to place fencing and security around the tower. He

reported that this was strictly to ensure that reporting requirements were met. Discussion continued regarding costs and security.

Michael Bleak made a motion to approve the ratification of the BLM Communications Site Lease as presented. Second by Kenneth Robinson. Voting: Michael Bleak, Aye; Paul Cozzens, Aye; Kenneth Robinson, Aye.

PERSONNEL

Jennifer Bradbury, Iron County Human Resource (HR) Director, presented the new hire of Joseph Massey as a Full-Time Attorney, effective March 3rd. This was a backfill of a vacant position; the new hire of Presley Lewis as a Part-Time Seasonal Weed Sprayer, effective April 1st, Amy Bentley as a full-Time Seasonal Weed Sprayer, effective March 3rd, Zachary Hatch and Kevin Tippetts as Full-Time Seasonal Weed Sprayers in the Weed Department-Corrections, effective March 17th. These were backfills of vacant positions; the new hire of J.D. Allen as a Full-Time Deputy 1 in the Sheriff's Department-Corrections, effective February 23rd. This was a backfill of a vacant position; the promotion of Jared O'Mealy from Deputy 2 to Deputy 3 in the Sheriff's Department-Patrol, effective March 2nd; the new hire of Josh Carver as a Part-Time Reserve Deputy 1, in the Sheriff's Department-Patrol, effective March 3rd. This was a backfill of a vacant position.

Kenneth Robinson made a motion to approve the personnel changes and policy updates as presented by Jennifer Bradbury. Second by. Voting: Michael Bleak, Aye; Paul Cozzens, Aye; Kenneth Robinson, Aye.

Jennifer reported that this was a discussion on a promotion for an employee who was not yet eligible for the promotion. She read the policy from the Iron County Policies and Procedure Manual Section 16 - Promotions and then turned the time to Bruce Anderson.

Bruce Anderson, Iron County Public Works Director, reported that he had 15 employees on his roster and it should be 20, which placed him down 8 employees. He noted that 21 employees had quit the Road Department in the last 2 years. His schedule included himself, a master mechanic, a road supervisor, and 8 equipment operators. Bruce reported that Trevor had been doing the operator work. Seven subdivisions, (Bridle Path, Monarch Meadows, Cross Hollow Hills, Peak View, Thorley, Monte Vista, and Buena Vista) need road work done and have not been touched in years. Bruce continued to report on roads that needed work done and they could barely keep main roads and dirt roads going. Bruce reported that the last time the roster was open there were 7 who applied, three of them showed up to be interviewed 2 came to interview and one was via video. Two of them were offered jobs and only one accepted. He noted that this was more of a backfill than a promotion and needed help.

Michael Bleak was concerned that if Jeremy was given this promotion before he was eligible would open the doors for other departments to ask for the same treatment. Discussion continued regarding the promotion.

Kenneth Robinson made a motion to approve and the promotion of Trevor Johnson from Road Worker to Road Worker 3/Operator in the Road Department, effective March 2nd. Second by Paul Cozzens. Voting: Michael Bleak, Nay; Paul Cozzens, Aye; Kenneth Robinson, Aye.

NON-DELEGATED ITEMS

No Non-Delegated items were discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

Paul Cozzens, Iron County Commission Chair, declared adjournment.



Signed: Paul Cozzens, Chair



Jonathan T. Whittaker, County Clerk



