



GRAND COUNTY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

**Grand County Commission Chambers
Hybrid virtual participation on Zoom
Moab, Utah**

WATCH ON YOUTUBE - search for: "GRAND COUNTY UTAH GOVERNMENT"

MINUTES 18 March 2025

The Grand County Commission met in a regular meeting on March 18th, 2025. The meeting was held in-person in the Grand County Commission Chambers, with hybrid virtual participation also available via Zoom. It was also broadcast and saved on YouTube. Attending the meeting in-person were, Commission Vice-Chair Melodie McCandless and Commissioners Jacques Hadler, Brian Martinez, Mary McGann, Trisha Hedin, Mike McCurdy. Also attending in-person were Commission Administrator Mark Tyner, Associate Commission Administrator Quinn Hall, County Attorney Stephen Stocks and Clerk/Auditor Gabriel Woytek. Commission Chair Bill Winfield was in attendance virtually.

2:30 p.m. Workshop: Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity (GOEO) Training

Presentation

James Dixon, Director of Community Grants at the GOEO, offered guidance specifically regarding the Rural County Grant (RCG) and the Rural Communities Opportunity Grant (RCOG) administered by this office. Members of the Grand County Economic Opportunity Advisory Board (EOAB) were also in attendance for the training.

Topics of the training included guidance regarding board formation of Community Economic Opportunity (CEO) Boards. County Commissioners are not recommended to serve as the 'County representative', and caution was advised regarding potential conflicts of interest. CEO Board membership terms were outlined, along with conduct of business and voting procedures, OPMA compliance, Rural Grants and CEO Board responsibilities, which include specific advisory responsibility for the Rural County Grant and the Rural Communities Opportunity Grant. Overview given of the two grant programs, including required qualifying criteria.

Examples given of ideal types of programs, with specific examples, targeted for these funding sources. Program types include workforce training and development, business recruitment, development, and expansion, infrastructure, industrial building development, and capital facilities improvements for business development. Dixon gave an explanation, using hypothetical scenarios, of the key differences between Community Development and Economic Development. Direction given that applications for this funding for recreation economy assets prevalent in Grand County would likely be channeled towards the Department of Natural Resources and the Utah Office of Tourism. Frequently asked questions presented and discussed. Clarification given regarding funding of K-12 programming (not to be school-based) as well as availability of RCOG grants on an annual basis, which is unlikely given that funds must be fully expended on an existing awarded grant before a new grant is awarded.

3:30 p.m. Call to Order the Regular Meeting

Closed Session

At 3:40 p.m., Motion by Commissioner Hadler to enter closed session for the purposes of discussing pending or reasonably imminent litigation

Motion seconded by Commissioner McCurdy

Motion passes 6-0, Hedin absent

At 4:11 p.m., Motion by Commissioner Hadler to exit closed session

Motion seconded by Commissioner McCurdy

Motion passes 6-0, McGann absent

At 4:11 p.m., Vice-Chair McCandless called a recess

At 4:15 p.m., Vice-Chair McCandless reconvened and called to order the regular meeting

Pledge of Allegiance

Citizens to Be Heard

Local trauma surgeon Dr. Deidre Flanagan spoke in support of Grand County EMS and its skilled team, and highlighted what she considers a highly successful and professional agency, despite challenges to operating in a rural community.

Department Reports (none scheduled)

Commission Member Disclosures

Commissioner McCurdy disclosed that his wife works at the Grand County Sheriff's Office. Attorney Stocks stated that no current Commissioner have a restricted conflict in regards to Action Item 11. Commissioner Hadler disclosed that he is part owner of a business that does work in Arches National Park. Commissioner Martinez disclosed that he is a concessionaire at Arches National Park.

General Commission Reports and Future Considerations

Jacques Hadler

- Museum Board Meeting, new U92 exhibit launched, annual gala upcoming
- Attended Kane Creek Preliminary Municipality Hearing
- Washington D.C. lobbying trip regarding UMTRA project completion, hopeful for legislation conveying UMTRA site property to locals
- Meeting regarding Mud Springs trail building oversight and acceleration

Trisha Hedin

- Meeting with Colorado Dark Skies Cooperative

- Attended Kane Creek Preliminary Municipality Hearing
- GWSSA meeting regarding water conservation strategies
- Planning Commission meeting, review for subdivision in Thompson
- County Fair Board meeting, assignment of duties
- Future considerations: develop clarified and consistent process for interviewing for department heads and administration staff, clarification and definition needed of roles and responsibilities of County Commissioners, especially as it relates to interaction with department heads

Bill Winfield

- Attended Airport Operator's Conference, discussion with Lochner for future improvement plans, including paving terminal parking lots, taxiway

Brian Martinez

- Travel Council subcommittee meeting
- Washington D.C. lobbying trip, meetings with Director of Bureau of Land Management regarding right of way issue in Cisco, Director of National Parks regarding digital pass system, Department of Energy regarding Green River pipeline
- TCAB board meeting (now Moab Travel Advisory Board)
- Colorado River Authority board meeting, St George water conservation efforts presented, upper and lower basin states remain in disagreement

Mary McGann

- Homeless Coordinating Council meeting, funds still available through April for winter housing, San Juan County now has a homeless advocate on staff
- Future Consideration: update requested on SV MUP and OSTA pickleball courts

Mike McCurdy

- Transportation Special Service District, Jackson Street Phase Two to go back out to bid, Holyoak curb, gutter and sidewalk project upcoming
- Washington D.C. lobbying trip
- Future Consideration: funding partnership with Recreation Special Service District regarding cattle panel order

Melodie McCandless

- Attended Kane Creek Preliminary Municipality Hearing
- Attended BEACON advocacy group meeting, fundraising opportunities discussed
- EMS SSD meeting
- Attend Chamber of Commerce luncheon
- Upcoming guest speaker at Star Hall put on by the Children's Justice Center

Elected Official Reports

Clerk/Auditor Gabriel Woytek

- Finance Director Steven Vowles to give quarterly financial report at 4/1 Commission Meeting

County Attorney Stephen Stocks

- Attended Kane Creek Preliminary Municipality Hearing
- Several trainings planned for various critical topics for County operations

Commission Administrator Mark Tyner

- Meeting regarding detail on specs for bathroom remodel at MIC
- Several vacant positions at Grand County

Presentations

Grand County EMS Funding Request

EMS Director Andy Smith described lower than expected tax revenues and billing revenues in early 2025 which has resulted in financial difficulties, with the EMS district currently only having funds to carry business forward into April without severe cuts which would greatly hamper services, and which is why he is approaching the Commission at this time for funding assistance. Commissioners inquired about the EMS Districts financial planning efforts for confronting these challenges. Smith explained that the district has hired two different consultants to help identify efficiencies and a healthy financial plan moving forward. Smith described a three-pronged approach: address short-term funding shortages, address ongoing medium-term challenges until the rural healthcare sales tax can be increased, and develop strategies for long term equilibrium with sustainable funding. Discussion regarding recent TRT reform which will allow access to funding from the state for EMS, funding which will take time to become available. Discussion regarding seeking funding assistance from other entities, including Moab City. Commissioner Martinez stressed that EMS was an essential service that required any assistance possible.

General Business - Action Items, Discussion and Consideration of:

3. Consideration of funding request from Grand County EMS (Vice-Chair McCandless)

Presentation

(Discussion from presentation brought forth into General Business)

Motion by Commissioner Winfield to approve supporting contribution EMS with full \$355,338 amount requested

Motion Seconded by Commissioner McCurdy

Discussion

Commissioner Hedin suggested a contribution of 75% of the total request, as a way of leveraging financial support with other entities such as Moab City and San Juan County. Commissioner McCurdy stated that he would like statistics regarding calls responded to in San Juan County, Moab City, and Green River, in order to effectively seek support from those entities. Commissioner Martinez stated that essential services should be prioritized in any budgeting decisions, and supported the idea of seeking assistance from other entities. Commissioner Winfield agreed that the County Commission has the responsibility to negotiate funding assistance with other entities and not necessarily the EMS Director. Commissioner Hadler stated that it is hard to make holistic budget decisions with such large one-time requests, and that they would be best made in the context of a wider budgeting process. Commissioner Hedin stressed that many entities will be coming to the Commission for funding requests in order to address widespread budget challenges across the community. Commissioner McCurdy asked whether an increase to 1% of the Healthcare Sales Tax would make up the current budget shortfalls. Smith stated that such an increase would cover an additional ten years. Attorney Stocks suggested the possibility of a partial contribution at this point, which would allow for a reconsideration of the full amount at a later point in the year, and allow for consideration of other funding requests that might be received. Commissioner Winfield stressed that accountability would be needed to monitor this contribution and the potential for the return of funds if any excess resulted.

Motion passes 6-0, Hadler abstaining

4. Award 2025 Commercial Property Appraisal Contract for 2025 (Assessor Swasey)

Presentation

Bids received as part of a Request for Qualifications, published according to procurement policy. The RFQ was put out to bid for the 2025 Commercial property appraisal reviews, audits and new growth. The county received two bids, one from The Appraiser's Inc of Provo, Utah and the second from The Cook Group of Holladay, Utah. After a committee review of the bids and scopes of work it was recommended that the bid be awarded to The Appraiser's Inc of Provo, Utah. Two bids received were included in the agenda packet. Commissioner Hadler confirmed that the recommended contractor was the same as has been used in years past. Commissioner Winfield expressed support for the higher cost bid given complaints and issues raised by the recommended appraisal contractor. Assessor Swasey explained the cost difference between the two contractors submitting bids, with one having a cost-approach which involved a still uncertain total resulting cost. Commissioner McGann also expressed concerns regarding the performance of the current contracted appraiser. Assessor Swasey expressed the timeliness of the current needed contract, and stated that contractor staff which had problems with the community will not be the ones on the ground. Commissioner Winfield stated that he would like to receive more information regarding the bids and reconsider at the next meeting. Attorney Stocks stated that more clarification would be needed in order to consider the alternate bid, given cost uncertainties.

Motion by Commissioner McGann to accept the bid from The Appraisers Inc. in the amount of \$70,950.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Hedin

Discussion

Commissioner Hadler asked whether this contract would go out to bid on an annual basis. Assessor Swasey confirmed that this contract would only be effective through 2025.

Motion passes 7-0

6pm Citizens to be Heard (none at this time)

5. Moab Community Childcare Grant Contract Amended Agreement (Attorney Stocks)

Presentation

Attorney Stocks explained that the Grand County Rural County Grant and Subcontract was awarded to Moab Community Childcare during a regular meeting of the Grand County Commission on February 4, 2025. Rob Walker ("Grantee") has requested some amendments to the contract, specifically related to time and payment. Grantee is requesting additional time because the grant funds are being used for the construction of a new building, and one year is a tight turnaround. As to the payment, historically, this grant has been fully paid out on the effective date. However, implementing a 90/10 split for grant distribution is an effective way to ensure that the funds are being spent appropriately while also promoting accountability and compliance with the grantee. Moab Community Childcare has been a stable community partner and has received this grant for at least the past three years.

Motion by Commissioner Martinez to amend the Rural County Subgrant contract as follows:

1. Section 3. CONTRACT PERIOD. Will be amended to a two-year term
The amendment will be drafted by the GCAO and executed accordingly.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Winfield

Substitute motion by Commissioner McGann to amend the Rural County Subgrant contract as follows:

1. Section 3. CONTRACT PERIOD. Will be amended to a two-year term
 2. Section 4 CONTRACT AMOUNT. Will be amended to a one-time payment.
- The amendment will be drafted by the GCAO and executed accordingly.

Substitute motion seconded by Commissioner Hadler

Discussion

Commissioner McCurdy confirmed that reporting requirements would remain unchanged with a one-time payment. Commissioner Martinez confirmed that GOEO was comfortable with both proposed amendments, and suggested that a 10% security asked for in the original motion would not be too much to ask.

Substitute motion passes 5-2, Winfield and Martinez opposed

6. America250 Resolution (Vice Chair McCandless)

Presentation

Vice-Chair McCandless explained that this action was in response to a request for participation received from this coordinated effort which was presented at a previous Commission meeting.

Motion by Commissioner Hedin to approve the America250 Resolution as presented

Motion Seconded by Commissioner McCurdy

Discussion

Vice-Chair McCandless stated that she plans to approach the Chamber of Commerce for their involvement, and Commissioners suggested incorporation into the Grand County Fair.

Motion passes 6-0, McGann absent

6pm Citizens to be Heard (none at this time)

Randy Day expressed concern regarding the Arches Time Entry system and what he feels has been its negative impact on the local economy. Day stated that he would like to see Grand County maximize its use of TRT funds to promote visitation. National Parks are single use commercial properties that should pay their fair share of taxes.

Pete Gross stated that while he does not prefer having to use reservation systems, but he understands how critical permit, lottery, and reservation systems are to effective land management.

Superintendent of the National Park System Southeast Lena Pace stated that an independent study had already been completed regarding the socioeconomic impacts of the arches timed entry system, a study that is publicly available. The contractor that prepared this study can be made available for any questions or concerns that may exist. Pace stated that several adjustments had been made to the current pilot which incorporate community feedback.

Vice-Chair McCandless moved action item 11 up, without objection

11. Request for a study on Arches N.P. Reservation System impacts on Grand County (Commissioner Martinez)

Presentation

Commissioner Martinez prepared the following statement, presented for the record verbatim:

I, and many in our community, are concerned with the continued downturn in our economy. When elected last year, I promised to do everything I could to restore Grand County to economic strength. I, and this community, need to understand what's causing this local, economic downturn. Many people, including me, are concerned that the Arches Reservation System is having an unacceptable economic impact.

The comprehensive analysis in the packet raises concerns for me. It tells a coherent story that meshes with the economic reality we've all been experiencing since the reservation system was first introduced 3 years ago. It draws on the latest data from multiple sources, over multiple time frames, and it shows:

- 1. There has been a significant drop in visitation at Arches national park since the reservation system was introduced, especially during the months when reservations are required.*
- 2. The visitation decline is much greater than that seen in parks across the state, the region, and the nation. In fact, over the last 3-years, Arches NP has been the third largest decline of any national park in the country.*
- 3. And this is coming at considerable cost to our community - to our tax base, to local workers, and our local businesses.*

Adjusted for inflation, Grand County's tax revenues have now declined for 3 straight years. This should concern all of us because it's unsustainable. The County and the City cannot continue to raise taxes to make up the shortfall. There has been considerable discussion and disagreement about the cause of the local tourism decline in Grand County, from gas prices, to inflation, to COVID, to the political climate.

But based on the data and analysis presented here, I can no longer accept that the decline in visitation at Arches is being caused by all things EXCEPT the one thing that was specifically put in place to limit visitation at the park. None of this should come as a surprise, because this was predicted in the Economic Impact analysis commissioned and published by the National Park Service back in 2018, which forecast back then that the reservation system would cost approximately \$22 million a year in lost spending; which adjusted for inflation, is approximately \$30 million today. We're now seeing impacts greater than that, with Kem C Gardner publishing data that says we have seen a decline in visitor spending since 2021 of almost \$100 million a year. That is unsustainable. The University of Utah's Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute is Utah's premier economic and public policy research body, which the State of Utah and the National Park Service rely on for quality research to inform good policy. In an email in November last year, the NPS wrote:

"For looking at county-level trends in visitor spending, the University of Utah Tourism dashboard is a better source than our annual Visitor Spending Effects estimates."

Given the size and scale of these economic impacts, I think it's essential we ask the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute to review and expand upon this work, so we are all fully aware of the economic impact the reservation system is having on our community. The timed-entry reservation system has long-term implications for our tourism-dependent economy, so it is essential that we have independent, up-to-date, high quality, reputable research to provide evidence-based guidance.

Commissioner Winfield stated that in his informal discussions with the Kem C. Gardner Institute, they expressed enthusiasm for looking deeper and performing a study into the matter.

At 6:20 p.m., an unexpected countywide power outage caused the General Business section of the meeting to be postponed for a later date.

Closed Session

At 6:45 p.m., Motion by Commissioner McGann to enter closed session for the purposes of discussing pending or reasonably imminent litigation and the character and professional competence of an individual

Motion seconded by Commissioner Hedin

Motion passes 7-0

At 7:37 p.m., Motion by Commissioner McCurdy to exit closed session

Motion seconded by Commissioner Martinez

Motion passes 7-0

Vice-Chair McCandless adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m. The rest of the agenda was postponed due to the continued countywide power outage.

Bill Winfield

Bill Winfield
Chair, Grand County Commission

ATTEST:

Gabriel Woytek

Gabriel Woytek
Grand County Clerk/Auditor

Audit trail

Details

FILE NAME 3.18.25 REG GCC MINUTES Approved.pdf - 4/2/25, 11:05 AM

STATUS ● Signed

STATUS TIMESTAMP 2025/04/02
23:54:11 UTC

Activity



SENT

dvanhorn@grandcountyutah.net **sent** a signature request to:

- Gabriel Woytek (gwoytek@grandcountyutah.net)
- Bill Winfield (bwinfield@grandcountyutah.net)

2025/04/02
17:05:42 UTC



SIGNED

Signed by Bill Winfield (bwinfield@grandcountyutah.net)

2025/04/02
23:54:11 UTC



SIGNED

Signed by Gabriel Woytek (gwoytek@grandcountyutah.net)

2025/04/02
17:13:02 UTC



COMPLETED

This document has been signed by all signers and is **complete**

2025/04/02
23:54:11 UTC

The email address indicated above for each signer may be associated with a Google account, and may either be the primary email address or secondary email address associated with that account.