

**IRON COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING
OCTOBER 27, 2025**

Minutes of the Iron County Commission meeting convened at 9:00 a.m. October 27, 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

Also present:

Chad Dotson	County Attorney
Kenneth Carpenter	County Sheriff
Nick Hulet	CJC
Sam Woodall	Deputy Attorney
Jennifer Bradbury	HR Director
Lori Eichelberger	Justice Court
Brennen Wood	SWATC
Jaden Thomas	Victim Advocate

Others present:

Kate Richardson (via phone)

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INVOCATION

An invocation was offered by Brennan Wood.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Those assembled were led in the Pledge of Allegiance by Lori Eichelberger.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Kenneth Robinson made a motion to approve the minutes of the Iron County Commission meeting held on October 13, 2025. Second by Michael Bleak. Voting: Michael Bleak, Aye; Paul Cozzens, Aye; Kenneth Robinson, Aye.

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT

Michael Bleak made a motion to approve Claims for Payment from October 13, 2025 to October 26, 2025. Second by Kenneth Robinson. Voting: Michael Bleak, Aye; Paul Cozzens, Aye; Kenneth Robinson, Aye.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Chad Dotson, Iron County Attorney, noted that the Attorney's Department was under budget, he had no concerns of going over the budget, the department was fully staffed, and the new attorney, Joseph Shaha, began in September. Chad reported that since January 1st, the Attorney's Office had reviewed 1,737 Criminal Cases, compared to 1,495 in 2024. From those 1,737 cases, there were 668 District Court cases filed, 709 Justice Court cases filed, 76 Juvenile Delinquency Cases, 381 cases were assigned to the Victim Advocate, and 115 Civil Case assignments. There were 255 drug cases, 54 theft/burglary related, 103 assaults/domestic violence, 57 stalking/protective order violations, 30 fraud, 128 DUIs, 38 child abuse/child endangerment, 40 sex offenses of adult and child, 2 arson, 2 homicide (4 total cases), 30 Drug Court participants, and 5 Jury Trials. Chad gave an update on the Jury Trials. Robert Hart was convicted of child sex abuse and sent to prison. Isaac Wall was convicted of a first-degree felony of kidnapping and aggravated assault and sent to prison. In the Kaylee Dutton homicide case, the shooter and driver in those cases have been sentenced to prison, and one co-defendant was remaining in that case. He noted that there was a four-day jury trial that ended with a verdict of not guilty on sex offenses because there was no cooperative evidence. Seven of the eight jurors stayed after the trial and talked to the prosecutors, and gave them some good feedback. There was a discussion on issues with the Group Homes and Chrysalis Homes.

Nick Hulet, Children's Justice Center (CJC) Director, noted that the budget was on track. The CJC was in the first quarter of the grant cycle. Nick reported that there were 22 Interviews conducted, 2 Medical exams, and 42 Contracted Therapy sessions. He noted that in the years 2021-2024, the Interview's monthly average was 18.6; thus far in 2025, the average was 24.2. In 2024, there was a total of 226 interviews, and the CJC was on track to go over 300 interviews in 2025. The Medical exams' monthly average from 2021-2024 was 4.45 and 5.2 in 2025. There was a discussion regarding the possible cause of the increase in numbers. Nick reported that many of the CJC clients were taking advantage of the therapeutic services that they provided. In the last four quarters, the sessions went from 144 to 161. In the last quarter, the CJC paid for 166 sessions for clients that were able to get some mental health services a result of the grant they have. Nick expressed his appreciation to the amazing Iron County community. In the last month the CJC had received either in-kind or financial contributions from the Leavitt Group, Mountain America Credit Union, Clearway Energy, and Fiddler's Canyon and the Willowwood LDS Wards activity days. They received quilts and blankets for children. It was wonderful to be supported by the community.

Lori Eichelberger, Iron County Justice Court Administrator, reported that Ginny Bettisch was the new Judicial Assistant and was doing well, and Lori Neighbors was the Senior Judicial Assistant. Lori expressed her appreciation to her staff for all their help doing extra work. She noted that one position remained open, and she would open that position after the last employee was trained. The budget was under up to September 30th at 62.45%. Lori reported on the Justice Court Monthly recap from January to September in comparison to 2024. DUIs, Driver's License Violations, Moving violations, Controlled Substance/Narcotics, Domestic Violence, and other miscellaneous misdemeanors/infractions were all up, and Impaired Driving DUIs, Non-Moving Violations, Assaults, and Theft had decreased in numbers. Small Claims and appeals were both down. She reported that Revenue Collected was up by \$41,337, Revenue

Disbursed was up by \$23,313, and Revenue Retained by Iron County was up by \$18,024. Citation comparison for Cedar City Police was up by 41 from 2024, SUU Police was down by 19, Iron County Sheriff's Office was up by 62, and the Utah Highway Patrol was up by 142.

Jaden Thomas, Iron County Victim Advocate Services Program Manager, noted that the Victim Advocate services were primarily funded by two grants, and they were within the ranges of those grants. Jaden reported that there were 196 clients served from July 1st to September 16th, an increase from 148 clients from the previous quarter. 16 of those clients had more than one victimization, and of those 196 clients, the most common victimizations were domestic violence, child sexual assault, and adult sexual assaults. He noted that the Utah Office for Victims of Crime (UOVC) completed its site visit, and the grant audit was complete, with no issues found. They did applaud the Iron County program for good record-keeping and effective delivery of services. Jaden reported on an advocate/case of a vehicle recovery that was stolen by the client's partner, along with all of her financial cards, money, and he drained her bank accounts. The victim was a Home Health nurse, so having a vehicle was crucial to her being able to work. He noted that her vehicle was recovered in Colorado, and he utilized emergency funds to get the victim a plane ticket, retrieve her car from the tow yard, and get her safely back to Cedar City. Jaden reported that Savannah Gardner, Cedar City Police Victim Advocate, received a Hero award from Canyon Creek Services at their latest Awards Banquet. Jaden read the letter that was given at the banquet.

Brennen Wood, Southwest Applied Technical College (SWATC) President, noted that the SWATC mission was, "Empowering individuals through innovative, hands-on technical education to build careers and strengthen communities." There was a 93% Full-time fall-to-fall to fall retention rate, which was 13 points above the average of Utah Technical Colleges, and a 93% Graduation rate, which was 25 points above comparison groups. SWATC's service region included Beaver (64 students), Garfield (32 students), Kane (144 students), and Iron (1,647 students) Counties. Because of the dual enrollment with SUU, students come from across Utah, including 23 out of 29 counties, 60 students from out-of-state, 3 International students, and 580 students have completed the program. Brennen reported that the Council on Occupational Education (COE) had a 70% placement rate benchmark for all accredited programs, and SWATC was above the threshold of 70% in all of the programs. He noted that in Dual Enrollment, there were 1,728 STECH students, 824 SUU credits, 4,690 Credits awarded, which was a \$1,711,148 value of credits awarded. Brennen explained the national study from the NCHEMS report to the Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee and the Financial Aid for FY24. He explained the application process for SWATC. Brennen reported that SWATC was going to be the first responder training hub for Southern Utah through their Southwest Tech Training Advancement Center (STAC), and the ribbon-cutting for the center would be sometime next spring. STAC was a purpose-built training environment designed to prepare first responders, emergency personnel, and public safety students for the complex and high-pressure challenges they would encounter in the field. STAC would play a vital role in enhancing the region's capacity to respond to emergencies, meet workforce demands, and support economic development through hands-on, industry-aligned training. The Master Plan for the center included training in mass casualty, crash rescue, fire trainer, rubble trainer, high-angle rescue, hazmat, an urban response complex, a trench trainer, a future first responder memorial, and a future trainer bay. He explained each of the training areas and what was involved at each station. There was a discussion on the budget and sponsorships. He noted that 85% of the SWATC operating budget came from the State of Utah. Utah supported Technical Colleges extremely well. Jon Whittaker, Iron County Clerk, asked Brennen to explain how the Life Skills program worked. Brennen explained that the Life Skills program was called "Empower You." The program was initiated last year to help students learn life skills that included a bit of each program, and included budgeting. SWATC had created a student Navigation (NAV) Center where students could go to get resources.

Kenneth Robinson, Iron County Commissioner, reported that he continued receiving calls from Kanarraville and Bumblebee residents regarding flooding issues. Budget hearings were held and went well. Ken noted that he participated in a Zoom meeting regarding HB48, and he wanted to know what this bill was solving, but didn't get the chance to ask it. Commissioner

Cozzens noted that HB48 Wildland Urban Interface Modifications was sponsored by Casey Snider and Michael McKell, and there was another Zoom call scheduled for tomorrow. Ken noted that he would ask the question because he had not found any answers. Paul Cozzens noted that it was to raise money for the state. Commissioner Robinson reported that he participated in the Livestock & Heritage Festival Parade, and it was incredible to see how many people attended the parade. He estimated that there were at least 10K along the route. He reported that there was an issue with a stock trail that was locked in the Kanarraville area.

Michael Bleak, Iron County Commissioner, reported that he attended the Iron County budget hearings and the ribbon-cutting for the Grand Opening of Johnny Mac's on October 17th with Maria Twitchell. It was a great restaurant, and would be instrumental in bringing residents to the north end of town. Commissioner Robinson reported that he tried to go on Saturday night, but the lines were long, and the wait time was over an hour. Mike noted that he attended the America250 Committee meeting, and there was access to the calendar for the celebration events. Residents can visit the website www.visitcedarcity.com/america250. Reed Erickson, Iron County Planner, reported that Scott Phillips was involved with America250 and was on the committee that was helping design a roundabout for a new Hamilton Fort Interchange, a project that they would like to be a part of the America250 Celebration to help with funding. Reed explained the project. Commissioner Bleak reported that next year it would be Iron County's 175th Birthday as well, in conjunction with America250. He noted that the Transient Room Tax (TRT) and Tourism, Recreation, Culture, & Convention (TRCC) Tax had received their grant application presentations, and he met with Maria Twitchell to review the applications and the recommendations from the committee. Those recommendations would be presented to the commission before the end of the year. Mike reported that he also attended the Livestock & Heritage Festival Parade, and was an emcee with KSUB radio. Commissioner Bleak noted that the Dancing with the Community Stars CJC fundraiser would be held on November 18th at 7:00 p.m., and that Chad Dotson, Iron County Attorney, was one of the contestants. He encouraged everyone to attend and donate to support the CJC.

Paul Cozzens, Iron County Commissioner, reported that he attended the Livestock & Heritage Festival Parade with his grandsons, which was always a highlight for them. He met with Ed Deffner, Layton Construction, and Taylor Parkin, Axex Financial, regarding budget and change orders with the new Sheriff's Complex, which continued to move forward. Commissioner Cozzens noted that, as Commissioner Robinson mentioned, there would be a Zoom call regarding HB48 at 9:00 and invited anyone who was interested could join in the call.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No Public Comments were offered.

PRESENTATION FROM THE DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES (DWR) ABOUT A PROPOSED LAND ACQUISITION IN IRON COUNTY FOR EXPANSION OF THE PAROWAN VALLEY WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA, AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF A LETTER OF SUPPORT

Kate Richardson, USU Extension Entomologist, participated via telephone. Kate explained that the proposed land acquisition, by code, had to be reviewed by the Iron County Commission. This was a 20-acre parcel adjacent to the existing Parowan Wildlife Management Area, northwest of Parowan City. The private land owner had passed away, and a lawyer reached out to see if the DWR was interested in the parcel, which they were because of the location. She reported that the Utah Prairie Dog (UPD) was a federally threatened species that was only in southwestern Utah, and the property had a very large colony of them. Purchasing this property would increase some of that habitat connectivity for other colonies and increase the number of UPD for other species that rely on the UPD colonies and burrows. Kate explained the importance of this expansion. Once the UPD colony numbers were high enough, they eventually hoped to delist the UPD, which would mean a lot for Iron County in terms of development and the mitigation fees that had to be paid. Commissioner Robinson asked Kate how this would protect the adjacent farmers from the continued devastation of their crops. He stated that the DWR had

not followed their previous contract for the Parowan Wildlife Management Plan to maintain the UPD, and they needed to be held accountable. The UPD had devastated crops over the last 20 years, which was unacceptable. There was a discussion regarding the maintenance of the UPD, mitigation costs to remove the UPD, UPD-take by land owners, and a boundary fence. Kate reported that she worked with the lands team and, as far as management, she would meet with the regional staff about the UPD issues. She noted that she appreciated the feedback and suggestions from the commissioners. Jon Whittaker was assigned to include the commissioners' concerns to the draft letter of support.

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF A CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES WITH WATSON ENGINEERING FOR MATERIALS AND SPECIAL INSPECTION SERVICES IN SUPPORT OF THE IRON COUNTY JAIL CONSTRUCTION

Jon Whittaker, Iron County Clerk, explained that this contract was for professional services for special inspections for the new Sheriff's Complex. Tim Watson, President of Watson Engineering, had been handling this on an on-call basis, and this contract would formalize that work. Jon asked Sam Woodall, Iron County Deputy Attorney, to report on this agenda item. Sam reported that he had reviewed Tim's proposed contract. There was some boilerplate language that was added. He noted that there was an addendum to the contract, which Tim agreed to sign, that addressed indemnification that Iron County was self-insured. Sam reported that Watson Engineering added Iron County as an insured on their policy, which not only streamlines any claims that we may have, but was also cost-effective for adding that additional layer of comfort if anything does go wrong. Sam noted that he would encourage the Iron County Commission to sign off on the contract, so we can move forward in getting that additional insured endorsement.

Kenneth Robinson made a motion to approve the Contract for Professional Services with Watson Engineering for materials and special inspection services in support of the new Sheriff's Complex, as presented. Second by Michael Bleak. Voting: Michael Bleak, Aye; Paul Cozzens, Aye; Kenneth Robinson, Aye.

REVIEW OR REQUIREMENTS UNDER UCA §63A-19 incl, UTAH GOVERNMENT DATA PRIVACY ACT. PRESENTATION OF PRIVACY PRACTICES SELF-EVALUATION. ALSO, POSSIBLE DESIGNATION OF A CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE PRIVACY OFFICER

Jon Whittaker, Iron County Clerk, explained the Privacy Governmental Entities – Iron County, which was a new requirement for governmental entities. Jon reported that he, Jennifer Bradbury, and Sam Woodall had met and had received several trainings. They developed a simple plan to move forward. HB 491 required government entities to, 1. Initiate a privacy program by December 31; 2. Preparation phase: A. Designated a Chief Administrative Officer for Privacy (CAO), B. CAO appoints Records Officers, C. GRAMA trained, D. Privacy awareness training; 3. Planning and Assessment Phase: A. ID, draft, formalize practices, B. Maturity assessment, C. ID and prioritize strategies; and 4. Execution and monitoring Phase: A. Implement prioritized strategies, B. Privacy impact assessments (PIA). Jon noted that Iron County was very zealous to guard the information that we collect and temporarily keep. He explained the Privacy Chart that was prepared by the state based on the categories: Government, Identify, Control, Communicate, and Protect. Jon noted that he was willing to serve as Chief Administrator Privacy Officer (CAO).

Michael Bleak made a motion to appoint Jon Whittaker as the Chief Administrative Privacy Officer. 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 promotion of Brittany Hafdahl from Full-time Deputy 1 to Full-Time Deputy 2 in the Sheriff's Office-Corrections, effective October 26th, and the re-hire of Shawn Coston as a Part-Time Bailiff for the Sheriff's Office-Patrol, effective October 27th. This was a backfill of a vacant position.

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


NON-DELEGATED ITEMS

No Non-Delegated items to discuss.

ADJOURNMENT

Paul Cozzens, Iron County Commission Chair, declared adjournment.


Signed: Paul Cozzens, Chair


Attest: Jonathan T. Whittaker, County Clerk

