

Davis County Budget Committee

Meeting Minutes

October 27, 2025

The Budget Committee of Davis County met on October 27, 2025, at 7:30 a.m. in room 306 of the Davis County Administration Building, 61 South Main Street, Farmington, UT. Notice of this meeting was given under the requirements of Utah Code Annotated §52-4-202.

Disclaimer: The meeting was an open dialogue. Agenda items appear in bold and are only briefly summarized. The reader may refer to the audio recording and the attachments for further content clarification. Timestamps may have been noted in the minutes to facilitate locating discussion points in the audio recording. The audio recording is available based on the County's current retention schedule.

Note: The Budget Committee is not a governing body but makes recommendations. These recommendations must then go through the Commission for formal action.

The meeting commenced at 7:31 a.m.

I. Opening Roll Call

Committee members present were Scott Parke, Controller; Commissioner John Crofts; Commissioner Lorene Kamalu; Commissioner Bob Stevenson; Marina Brito, Interim Director of Human Resources; and Jeff Hassett, Director of Information Systems. Shairise Bills, Deputy Controller, recorded the minutes of the meeting. There was no public attendance.

Approval of Budget Meeting Minutes for 9/26, 9/29, 9/30, 10/1, 10/10, and 10/13/2025

The first three meetings (September 26th, 29th, 30th) had been previously tabled; Commissioner Crofts reviewed them and confirmed they were satisfactory without changes.

Controller Parke suggested one correction to the October 1st meeting minutes regarding a misspelled name, which has been corrected but not yet resent to the group.

The Committee voted to approve:

MEMBER	MOTIONED	SECONDED	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
Commissioner Crofts	X		X			
Commissioner Kamalu		X	X			
Commissioner Stevenson			X			
Scott Parke			X			
Jeff Hassett			X			
Marina Brito			X			

II. 2026 Tentative Budget Discussion

Controller Parke provided a brief update on the budget status, sought guidance on remaining issues, and discussed upcoming open houses.

A. Draft Tentative Budget Document

Controller Parke provided a 103-page PDF document containing the draft tentative budget, which includes the budgets of every department and all revenues, organized by organizational number.

- The draft budget is currently short **\$13.9 million** without any tax increase, reduced to **\$12 million** after updated payroll numbers from Marina were used, equating to a 28% tax increase. Salaries and wages were collapsed into one number to condense the report, but detailed information is available.

Action Item: Controller Parke will email the 103-page PDF document to all attendees.

B. Pending Budget Decisions (Minute 03:03)

Several pending financial questions and decisions included in the draft budget were discussed:

Item	Details / Context	Decision / Status
West Law Increase	A contractually obligated \$7,000 increase for Westlaw (legal law library access for the attorney's office) had been previously missed and marked as "no".	Approved. The Commissioners agreed to fund this contractual increase.
Davis Behavioral Health (DBH)	Funding (\$53,200) for DBH staff working in the jail to support re-entry and reduce recidivism. Discussion centered on funding from the Opioid Fund versus the General Fund.	Status Quo for General Fund. The item remains listed as a "no" in the General Fund. The Opioid Fund plan is still being worked on, but funding DBH jail staff helps avoid using General Fund money. Commissioner Crofts was not in favor of funding out of either fund.
USU Contribution Increase	A request for nearly \$6,400, seeking additional funding on top of what USU is already receiving (for annual/merit increases for employees partially paid by the County).	Not Approved. Commissioner Kamalu suggested denying it, as it offered "less specific benefit to the taxpayers" compared to items like recidivism. The Commissioners agreed.

C. Sheriff's Office Requests & Budget Tools *(Minute 08:25)*

1. **Uniform Allowance:** The Sheriff's number one priority was an increase to the uniform allowance, which has not increased in over 10 years. It hits four separate lines, including Sheriff, Corrections, 911 (not General Fund), and Inmate Services.

- **Decision (Suggestion):** Commissioner Stevenson suggested reducing the requested increase to 10%.

2. **Two New Deputies:** The Sheriff's second priority was to have two new deputies needed to manage the State Hospital contract (competency restoration unit). Controller Parke proposed funding one position, with the second position covered by anticipated attrition savings (a budget tool). The Sheriff requested written assurance that he would not be held accountable for being over budget if he hired both and the attrition savings did not materialize.

- **Decision:** Controller Parke will put one new deputy position in the tentative budget. Adjustments can be made later if needed, potentially if the Sheriff follows up with the Commission.

3. **Inmate Re-entry Specialist:** Funding for a re-entry specialist. Controller Parke confirmed with attorneys that this can be funded using the Inmate Services Fund (profits from inmate commissary items and telephone charges), as it aligns with the existing policy of benefiting inmates.

- **Decision:** Fund the Re-Entry Specialist using the Inmate Services Fund, avoiding Opioid or General Funds.

4. **Crime Lab Design:** The Sheriff and Mitch (Buildings and Grounds West) are okay with postponing the design phase funding for the specialized evidence storage/crime lab space. Concerns were raised regarding the high cost of the design (\$1 million).

- **Decision:** Postpone the discussion, bring it back after the current budget cycle, and potentially review the high cost estimate.

D. Tax Increase Scenarios and Strategy *(Minute 19:00)*

After updating payroll numbers and factoring in anticipated savings, the shortfall was reduced to \$12 million. To reduce the required tax increase below 28%, Controller Parke presented three main scenarios, each requiring specific service cuts or fund transfers:

1. Scenario 1: 25% Tax Increase

- **Cutting all SLFRF Positions:** Although some of these are contracts, this cut would affect seven actual employees. These positions were previously funded using temporary State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF).

2. Scenario 2: 20% Tax Increase

To achieve a 20% tax increase, the budget would require the cuts from the 25% scenario, plus an additional significant adjustment:

- **Cutting all SLFRF Positions:** Eliminate the SLFRF positions (contracts/seven employees).
- **Transferring Capital Funds:** Take \$1.8 million from the Western Sports Park lease (which is designated for capital projects) and use it instead for operations.
 - This move was noted to be a "short-term gain, long-term loss". This type of decision is typically criticized because it uses savings intended for capital projects to cover debt service for other projects.

3. Scenario 3: 15% Tax Increase

To achieve a 15% tax increase, the budget would require all the cuts from the 20% scenario, plus an impact on employee compensation:

- **Cutting SLFRF Positions:** Eliminate the SLFRF positions.
- **Transferring Capital Funds:** Take the \$1.8 million lease revenue from the Western Sports Park capital projects.
- **Halting Compensation Increases:** Do not provide a COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) or merit increase for employees this year.

4. Additional Scenario (Zero Tax Increase)

Although the query asked for the three scenarios aimed at addressing the \$12 million shortfall, the discussion also covered the drastic option of having no tax increase at all:

- This option would require all the cuts listed in the 15% scenario (SLFRF cuts, taking capital funds, and no COLA/merit increase).
- *PLUS* an additional cut of 45 FTEs (Full-Time Equivalents).
 - If these 45 FTEs were cut in the same proportion as FTEs across the General Fund, 26 or 27 of them would come from the public safety or criminal justice sector. Cuts would also affect IT (three positions), the Controller's office (one position), and HR (one position).

The intention of presenting these scenarios during the tentative budget discussion was to show citizens the scope of services that would need to be cut to balance the budget without a tax increase, providing a basis for discussion at the open houses.

The projected fund balance as of December 31st is approximately \$30 million. State law requires the County to maintain a fund balance of at least 5%; the ideal range is two to four months of operating expenses.

- **Commissioner Stevenson's Proposal (Staggered Approach):** *(Minute 21:38)*

Commissioner Stevenson proposed a 10% tax increase (bringing in ~\$4.2 million) for 2026. This would require drawing \$8 million from the fund balance, reducing it to around \$22 million initially (or \$25 million with estimated carryover). This approach eases the public burden and gives the Controller time to optimize the budget. He suggested the County may need another increase next year. Commissioner Stevenson noted that the public may question why the County is raising taxes 29% while holding \$30 million in the fund balance. He also emphasized that each of the Commissioners needs to be united in whatever decision is made and said he will go along with whatever the other two Commissioners decide, but only if they can agree.

Commissioner Stevenson left the meeting at 8:41 a.m.

- **Controller Parke (Split Increase):**

Controller Parke asked if Commissioner Stevenson would consider a 15% increase for 2026 (which would expend approximately \$6 million from the General Fund balance) and a 10% increase for 2027 to spread the pain over two years. After which, they could reevaluate the need for an additional 5%.

- **Commissioner Crofts** strongly opposed cutting attorneys, arguing they are essential for public safety and criminal justice.

- **Commissioner Kamalu** stated that the message to departments was that there would be no reduction-in-force (RIF) of positions. She wanted to take a thoughtful approach to the merit discussion and has openness to it, but not right now. Commissioner Kamalu does not want to implement a tax increase two years in a row and would rather address it this year.

- **Communication:** Commissioners agreed that communication needs to improve, especially concerning the size of the County's tax portion (one quarter of the total tax bill) and translating the percentage increase into monthly dollar amounts for the average resident (a full 30% increase means \$100/year or under \$9/month for an average \$600k home).

(See Attachments A1-A2.)

Decision on Tentative Budget Publication: The Controller will proceed with presenting all scenarios in the tentative budget document and message. This approach provides flexibility, allowing taxpayers to provide feedback during open houses.

E. Compensation Philosophy

The committee discussed revisiting the compensation strategy for the 2027 budget cycle.

- **2026 Plan:** It was confirmed that the 2026 compensation plan (4.5% total compensation increase plus a 2% shift from 401k) cannot be changed, as it has already been decided and communicated to employees.
- **Future Changes:** The committee agreed on the need for greater flexibility to reward star performers and address equity concerns (e.g., departments receiving funds to distribute based on need, not just broad-brush increases). The policy should focus on mechanisms and processes, not specific dollar amounts.

F. Corridor Preservation Fee

The committee discussed eliminating the \$3 million Corridor Preservation fee.

- The fee is approximately \$10 per vehicle annually. Commissioners Kamalu and Crofts are 100% in favor of eliminating the fee, noting the corridor is finished and this provides an ongoing benefit to taxpayers.

Action Item: The Controller will incorporate the elimination of the Corridor Preservation Fee into the tentative budget message and cut the corresponding budget in half for the first year.

G. Open House Structure

Controller Parke presented a proposed structure for the upcoming open houses. The proposal includes:

- A one-page handout summarizing the proposal and reasons for the increase.
- Stations addressing specific topics: I.E. Property Tax (Treasurer), Budgets (Scott), Public Safety/Criminal Justice, and Cost Controls/Corridor Preservation (Commissioners).

Action Item: The Controller will email the proposed open house structure to the Commissioners for feedback.

III. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:34 a.m..

Acknowledgement of Controller Scott Parke: Commissioner Crofts thanked the Controller for his hard work, including working weekends, jumping into the role during an "inopportune moment," and being transparent with the financial data. Controller Parke was credited with helping him understand the County's finances much better than before.

All documents associated with this meeting are listed as follows:

A1-A2 Budget Cut Scenarios and Variance Report Analytics

Minutes prepared by:

Shairise Bills

Deputy Controller

Minutes approved on: 11/10/2025

/s/ Scott Parke

Scott Parke

Controller— Budget Officer