

MINUTES of the public meeting of the Uintah County Commission held **November 18, 2025** in the Commission Chambers of the Uintah County Building at 147 East Main, Vernal, Utah. The meeting commenced at 3:00 pm.

PARTICIPANTS: Commissioners John Laursen, Sonja Norton and Willis LeFevre.

ATTENDANCE: Miles Hanberg, Caleb Hall, Mike Wilkins, Tai Duncan, Steve Labrum, Wendi Long, Karen England, Tonya Craven, Danette Brooks, Angela Hawkins, Matt Cazier, Travis Caldwell, Ryan Mattson, Crystal Clark, Jess Hermann, Loren Anderson, Terry Cox.
Minutes by Sheri Allen.

WELCOME: Commissioner Laursen, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

PRAYER by Matt Cazier.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE by Tonya Craven.

1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** October 28, 2025, October 29, 2025, and November 5, 2025, also Special Meetings November 6, 2025, and November 12, 2025.

Commissioner Norton moved to approve the minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

2. **APPROVAL OF WARRANTS** – Mike Wilkins, Clerk-Auditor
Warrants dated October 31, 2025 in the amount of \$900,998.79. Payments of note are \$88,134.89 to Kimley-Horn for a grant, and regular payroll.
Warrants dated November 6, 2025 in the amount of \$526,449.83. Payments of note are \$98,500.00 to Green River Construction for the 4-H remodel, and \$41,696.39 to Atkinson Sound for Uintah Conference Center screen and projector.
Warrants dated November 14, 2025 in the amount of \$383,327.86.

Commissioner LeFevre moved to approve the warrants as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

3. **TAX MATTERS**

Mike Wilkins, Clerk- Auditor, requested an abatement of 2025 taxes for the Uintah Basin Association of Governments. UBAOG owns lots in Lucky Acres that have not been purchased. Total abatement amount is \$4,046.61.

Commissioner Norton moved to approve the tax abatement for UBAOG as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Wendi Long, Treasurer, requested an abatement for 2025 tax year for Leavitt Investment of Vernal LLC in the amount of \$5,481.94. This property was purchased from Ashley Valley Water and Sewer in June, 2025. Ashley Valley Water and Sewer is a tax exempt entity and as owners January to May, the taxes for that portion of the year need to be abated.

Commissioner LeFevre moved to approve the tax abatement for Leavitt Investment as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Danette Brooks, Assessor, requested a property tax adjustment for the 2025 tax year for Linda L Murray Successor Trustee for the property with serial #05:129:0053, located in Tax District 14. The tax adjusted is \$6,323.78. This adjustment will result in a revised total tax due of \$839.85. The reason for tax adjustment results from an issue during the transfer process between the CAMA system and the Oracle system. Specifically, the system pushed the property's valuation to the

Commercial tax line instead of the Greenbelt tax line. This error has resulted in the property being taxed at the higher Commercial value rather than the applicable Greenbelt value. She is also requesting a tax refund for the tax year 2024 in the amount of \$5,691.58 on serial #05:129:0053, Tax District 14, to Linda L Murray Successor Trustee.

Danette is requesting a property tax adjustment for the 2025 tax year in the amount of \$260.60 on serial #17:045:0048 to Phase One Properties LLC. This property was previously owned by Roosevelt City Corporation which is a tax exempt entity. The taxes were prorated starting from the time the deed transferred until the end of the current year. This parcel, serial #14:045:0048, is being moved from Tax District 95 to Tax District 12.

Commissioner Norton moved to approve the tax matters as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

4. PRESENTATION OF PILT PAYMENT - Miles Hanberg, DWR

Miles Hanberg, Division of Wildlife Resources, is presenting a check in the amount of \$9,673.88. This is for the 2025 year for the contractual in-lieu tax payment on land the Division of Wildlife Resources owns in Uintah County. This payment comes largely from hunters and anglers in the county and across the state.

5. 2026 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING - Mike Wilkins, Clerk-Auditor

Mike Wilkins, Clerk-Auditor, thanked Caleb Hall for helping put this presentation together. "We are pleased to submit the proposed Uintah County Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 for your review. This budget is the result of a careful review of all departmental and elected official requests, first presented to the Commission on September 12, 2025. It reflects our ongoing commitment to fiscal responsibility while ensuring the continued delivery of essential services to our citizens. The 2026 Tentative Budget proposes balanced revenues and expenditures of \$92,627,300 representing a \$14,627,500 decrease from the 2025 Approved Budget of \$107,254,800. This decrease is attributed to a significant reduction in external grant funding. In 2025, the budget included \$20,003,300 in grants from the General Fund, whereas the 2026 budget anticipates \$6,349,200 from the General Fund. This \$13,654,100 reduction in grant revenue accounts for the majority total budget decrease.

Key Fund Summaries

- General Fund
- Proposed Expenditures: \$39,426,900
- Decrease from 2025: \$12,684,600 (from \$52,111,500)
- Key Note: The General Fund is balanced with projected revenues without utilizing the existing fund balance.

- Municipal Services Fund
- Proposed Expenditures: \$8,814,700
- Increase from 2025: \$410,200 (from \$8,404,500)
- Key Note: To balance this fund, the budget proposes using \$570,800 from the Municipal Services Fund's existing fund balance.

Budget Highlights & Assumptions

Personnel & Benefits

- Health Insurance: There will be no premium increase for employees or the County. Our self-funding model for medical, vision, and dental claims has successfully contained costs, and the current revenues is sufficient to support this.
- Compensation: The budget includes a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for all employees (based on the August 2025 CPI of 2.9%). There will also be an additional 2% increase (Total of 5% Overall) for all sworn Law Enforcement employees.
- New Positions: The County is planning to add 9 new Full Time Employees (FTE's) in the

upcoming year.

Revenue Projections

- **Property Tax:** There is no increase to the property tax revenue beyond estimated new growth.
- **Sales Tax:** Sales tax revenues are currently at a historic high over the last several years. We are budgeting conservatively, anticipating revenues to be stable but with a potential for a slight decrease.
- **Interest Income:** While interest income is also high, we anticipate lower returns as Public Treasurer Investment Fund (PTIF) rates are trending downward.

Operational Changes

- **Criminal Justice Services:** This department's budget has been moved from the General Fund to a Special Revenue Fund. This department is funded by state grants and service revenues, which doesn't use any General Fund resources.

Major Capital & Equipment Requests

The five largest equipment requests for 2026 are:

- \$771,400: 11 new patrol trucks (\$70,125 each) - Sheriff's Department will have an expected trade-in of current vehicles of \$474,000 of revenue to offset expense.
- \$385,000: Weed Mower - Road Department
- \$200,000: Lay Down Machine - Road Department
- \$195,000: 3 new trucks (\$65,000 each) - Road Department
- \$152,000: 20 new landfill litter fences (\$7,600 each) - Landfill Department

These five items total \$1,703,400 and account for approximately 56% of all equipment purchases proposed in the 2026 budget.

The Commission is continuing to work with all departments to identify potential cost savings from these initial requests. We have meticulously worked to absorb increases and new initiatives through efficiency gains and strategic reallocation where possible.

We are confident this budget allows the County to continue delivering high-quality services while adapting to evolving demands. We are available to discuss this proposal in detail, answer any questions, and provide any further information required.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued partnership."

Commissioner Laursen opened the public hearing for comment.

Steve Labrum, Uintah County Sheriff, is requesting that his wage maintenance chart be updated to show the current percentages so that he can stay consistent with his hiring and promotions. Commissioner Laursen confirmed with Sheriff Labrum that the wage maintenance plan shows the 5% for LEOs (Law Enforcement Officers) and 3% for civilians. Sheriff Labrum confirmed that it is for reference only and to be seen on the Uintah County website. Mike announced that the Budget Adoption will be held on December 16, 2025.

Seeing no further public comments, Commissioner Laursen closed the Public Hearing.

6. MOU BOOKMOBILE OUTREACH PROGRAM HOST SITES - Karen England, Library
Karen England, Library, requested the Commission approve the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Uintah County Library Bookmobile Outreach Program. The MOU has been reviewed by Civil Attorney Loren Anderson, who confirmed its readiness for approval. It currently outlines agreements with six locations serviced by the bookmobile, with an additional location anticipated in January.

Commissioner Norton moved to approve the MOU as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

7. MOA OCLC LIBRARY RECORDS MANAGER - Karen England, Library

Karen requested approval for the 2026 Memorandum of Agreement with the Utah State Library for data management services. These services cover records the Library might not possess. The proposed cost is \$0.79 per record, which could increase to \$3.02 if the requested amount is exceeded. For 2026, Karen is requesting 100 records. This is a reduction from the 300 records requested in 2025, of which only 78 have been used this year.

Commissioner Norton moved to approve the MOA as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

8. BUILDING PERMIT FEE REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST BY SAMATHA ATWOOD - Matt Cazier, Community Development

Matt Cazier, Community Development, asked for approval for a building permit reimbursement. This was discussed in the work session on November 5. The total building permit fee was \$4,432.00; 80% is \$3,545.60 minus \$300.00 for the two inspections, for a total refund of \$3,245.60.

Commissioner LeFevre moved to approve the building permit reimbursement as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

9. BUSINESS LICENSE FEE WAIVER REQUEST BY PROJECT ALLEY RECOVERY FOUNDATION, INC - Matt Cazier Community Development

The item is to be removed from the agenda because a community member paid the business license fee. The Commissioners and Matt want to express their sincere gratitude to this generous individual.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT- none

11. CLOSED SESSION to discuss pending or imminent litigation in accordance with Utah Code 52-4-205 (1)(c)

At 3:33 pm, Commissioner Norton moved to go into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing pending or imminent litigation in the small Commission Conference Room and when discussion is complete, adjourn, and reconvene Commission meeting in order to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.

Closed Session began at 3:45 pm with the three Commissioners, Mike Wilkins, Loren Anderson in attendance and Jessie Trentadue, legal counsel, on the phone.

Closed Session adjourned at 4:05 pm.

ADJOURN: The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:05 pm.


JOHN LAURSEN, CHAIR


MICHAEL W. WILKINS, CLERK – AUDITOR

