MINUTES of the public meeting of the Uintah County Commission held **December 2, 2025** in the Commission Chambers of the Uintah County Building at 147 East Main, Vernal, Utah. The meeting commenced at 3:01 pm.

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

ATTENDANCE: Ron Richards, Matt Wilber, Mike Wilkins, Angela Hawkins, Travis Campbell, Matthew Gerhing, Matt Cazier, Deanna Nyberg, Craig Nebeker, Brenda McDonald, Dannette Brooks, Crystal Clark, Joel Brown, Scott Hardman, Ryan Mattsen.
Minutes by Sheri Allen.

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

PRAYER by Mike Wilkins.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE by Sheri Allen.

1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** November 25, 2025 and November 26, 2025.

Commissioner LeFevre moved to approve the minutes for November 25 & 26, 2025 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

2. **APPROVAL OF WARRANTS –** Mike Wilkins, Clerk-Auditor

Warrants dated November 26, 2025 in the amount of $1,674,680.36. Payments of note are $40,758.99 for Caterpillar lease for the road department, $60,000.00 to Civico Chip & Seal, $20,250.00 Ridgeline Motorsports for the Sheriff's office, and $558,690.60 to Tri County Health.

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

3. **TAX MATTERS:**

Mike Wilkins, Clerk - Auditor, requested an abatement of 2025 taxes for Uintah Basin Association of Governments (UBAOG). UBAOG purchased this property, serial #05:047:0060, on November 3, 2025 for an industrial lot for the BTA buses. The total abatement amount is $2,884.93.

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

Mike also requested a tax refund for Mid America Pipeline, stemming from property tax appeal number 18-1322, covering the years 2018 through 2025. This appeal affects three specific properties: serial #50:010:1203, 50:050:1203, and 50:248:2884. The total tax refund requested is $1,372,795.93. Centrally assessed property is valued by the State Tax Commission's State Property Tax Division. For example, in 2018, the original value reported to the State, and subsequently used to calculate our share of the tax, was $88,962,009.70. Mid America Pipeline appealed this valuation, seeking to be assessed as a utility company (similar to Enbridge or Utah Power), arguing that the value of the gas transported through their lines should be a factor. The company has been disputing its valuation since 2018, following earlier appeals for the years 2012, 2015, 2016, and 2017, which have already been resolved. The current appeal has been dragging on since 2018. It is critical to note that these tax monies were already budgeted by all affected taxing entities. We are now obligated to refund these funds to the taxpayer. We have received the Final Order of Approval from the State Tax Commission.This appeal involves five counties: Grand County, Duchesne County, Daggett County, a portion of Summit County, and Uintah County. Grand County was the most impacted county (with a projected refund of $2 to $2.5 million), and Uintah County is the second largest. The only remaining recourse for the counties would be to challenge the order in District Court. However, all five counties have decided it is more practical to accept the settlement and conclude the matter. Commissioner Norton stated that they have been working with our legislators and the State Tax Commission to try and remedy this ongoing problem with centrally assessed property valuations.

Commissioner LeFevre moved to approve the tax refund for Mid America Pipeline as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Danette Brooks, Assessor, requested a tax refund to Strata Networks for the 2023 tax year, totaling $43,475.81. The refund is necessary because an audit conducted by MCAT (Multi-County Appraisal Trust Fund), which is run by the state, revealed errors in the classification tables for certain assets belonging to Strata Networks. Telecom business personal property is self-reported to MCAT. The audit, triggered by the self-reporting, led to the reclassification of assets and generated this refund amount. The refund involves multiple accounts and tax districts. The total amount will be paid to the property owner of record, Strata Networks. At the county level, the role in telecom taxation is limited to collecting the payments billed by MCAT. Commissioner Laursen clarified that this refund pertains only to the 2023 tax year; no information has been received regarding 2024.

Commissioner Norton moved to approve the tax refund for Strata Networks as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

4. **INTEREST TO LEASE CERTAIN OIL, GAS, AND ASSOCIATED HYDROCARBONS on County property QUARTERLY DISPOSITION AUCTION:**
   a. Township 2 South, Range 1 East, USM
      Section 13: Stone Subdivision Lot 5, LESS a 12.5-inch perimeter around Stone Subdivision Lot
      Containing 2.4655 gross acres, more or less
   b. Township 2 South, Range 1 East, USM
      Section 17:
      1) A strip of land 100' wide on the left side of the center of the State Road beginning at Engineers Station 192-00 which point is more particularly described as 15' north and 300' west of the SW/4;thence S89°36' E 325 feet to Station 195-30.
      2) A strip of land on the left side of the centerline of the State Road, beginning at a point 35' north of the southwest corner of the SE/4 of Section 17, thence S 89°36' E 1320'; thence north 18'; thence west 370'; thence north 50'; thence west 950'; thence south 68' to the point of beginning.
      3) A strip of land on the left side of the State Road, beginning at a point 1320 feet east and 30 feet north of the southwest corner of the SE/4 of Section 17; thence east 300'; thence north 20'; thence west 300'; thence south 20' to the point of beginning.
      4) A strip of land on the left side of the State Road,
      beginning at a point 1320 feet east and 30 feet north of the southwest corner of the SE/4 of Section 17; thence east 300'; thence north 20'; thence west 300'; thence south 20' to the point beginning. (containing 1.83 gross acres, more or less.)

No action was taken, removed for rebid.

5. **CONSIDERATION FOR ACCEPTANCE OF AGREEMENT WITH SPRINGBUK INC.** to provide self-funded health insurance analytics - Mike Wilkins, Clerk-Auditor

The agreement with Springbuk Inc. is essential for our self-insurance plan. Springbuk handles analytics, receives data from our claims processor and provides recommendations. This agreement is necessary for them to receive the claims information. It was in place last year, and the agreement for the current '26 year has been reviewed by the Attorney's office. It's important to note that this agreement results in no cost to us. In fact, their claims analytics actually generate savings for us.

Commissioner Norton moved to approve the Agreement with Springbuk Inc. as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

6. **ACCEPTANCE OF RIGHT-OF-WAY GRANT UTUT106718721 FROM THE BLM-** This right-of-way is for a parking lot for accessing County owned property in Ashley Gorge- Matt Cazier, Community Development

Matt Cazier, Community Development reported that the county has received a right-of-way grant from the BLM for a parking area. This area will provide access to the county's Ashley Springs/Ashley Gorge property. The grant is for 1.5 acres. The property is located near the Ashley Valley Water Treatment Plant, where the county's property starts up Ashley Gorge. Approximately a half-acre of 90-degree parking will be developed along the Ashley Springs Road. An improved turnaround will be created at the end of the road section to prevent drivers from pulling onto the Ashley Water District property. The remaining one acre is located further back, specifically on the south side of the green trees (in the area of the dead, burned trees). Development will begin with the 90-degree parking along the road and a half-acre of parking, and the remaining half-acre of the one-acre section will be developed as needed. Two copies of the grant, which require signature, were sent by the BLM. Signatures are needed from the County Commission Chair and Jerry Kenczka from the BLM.

Commissioner Norton moved to approve the Right-of-Way Grant with BLM as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

7. **REZONE REQUEST:** Jolley Orthodontics – Requesting a rezone from RA-1 to C-1 on a portion of property owned by Raymond & Heather Pease located at 267 N 2500 W, Vernal UT, Serial Number 04:126:0044.- Deanna Nyberg, Community Development

Deanna Nyberg, Community Development, requested a rezone for Jolley Orthodontics for a one-acre portion of property, owned by Raymond and Heather Pease, located at 267 North 2500 West (serial number 04:126:0044). The specific area is the northeast corner of the property along Aggie Boulevard. Jolley Orthodontics plans to purchase this portion to construct an office, necessitating a rezone from RA-1 to C-1. This application was first discussed at a County Commission work session on October 22. At that time, the Commission requested confirmation that the property owner approves of the application, which has since been obtained. The Planning Commission reviewed the application at a public hearing on October 15 and unanimously recommended approval of the rezone. A single public comment was received from the property owner to the north, expressing concern over whether the current shared access would be adequate for commercial use. The Road Department's Jared Kaufman confirmed the current access is sufficient. However, the applicant is considering installing an alternative access point. While the current zoning is RA-1, the Future Land Use plan designates this area as "Institutional," which encompasses uses related to higher education or those supporting it. The Planning Commission determined that a C-1 commercial zone is appropriate for this specific parcel.

Commissioner LeFevre moved to approve the rezone of property #04:126:0044 from RA-1 to C-1 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

8. **ORDINANCE #10-29-2025 O1:** Policy for Locked Gates -Scott Hardman, Road Department
Scott Hardman, Road Department, requested approval for Ordinance #10-29-2025 O1, which had been previously introduced during the work session. This ordinance integrates existing state codes 72-7-105 and 72-7-106, prohibiting the placement of a locked gate on a county road or right-of-way. Loren Anderson, Civil Attorney, confirmed that he has reviewed the ordinance and state requirements, noting that the ordinance addresses enforcement and permitting for county D roads where such placements are anticipated.

Commissioner Norton moved to approve the Ordinance #10-29-2025 O1 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

9. **RESOLUTION 11-26-2025, R1- AMENDMENTS TO THE UINTAH COUNTY GENERAL PLAN-** Amending the Economic Development section- Travis Campbell, Economic Development

Travis Campbell, Economic Development, proposed changes to the Uintah County General Plan to focus on updating facts and figures related to housing, employment, and income. More importantly, the language in the action plan section has been revised to clearly define Uintah County's focus and direction for economic development, creating a strategic plan for the next 5, 10, or 15 years. Travis stressed that this document should be considered a "living document"—changeable and adaptable to global and local developments, allowing the county to make progress and respond to external factors. This flexibility will guide current efforts and serve as a reference point for future review. The amendment focuses on five key areas: Economic diversification, Workforce development, Infrastructure improvements, Support for small businesses, and Regional coordination. Commissioner Norton commended Travis Campbell's diligent efforts to keep the county's economic development "vibrant and alive," noting his work in the community to assist individuals. She specifically appreciated his work on the general plan update, particularly the inclusion of updated graphs and visuals, which make the document easier to understand.

Commissioner Norton moved to approve the Resolution 11-26-2025 R1 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

10. RESOLUTION 11-26-2025, R2- AMENDMENTS TO THE UINTAH COUNTY GENERAL PLAN- Adding a Water Use and Preservation element- Matt Cazier, Community Development

Matt Cazier, Community Development, requested approval of Resolution #11-26-2025 R2 which amends the General Plan by incorporating a new Water Use and Preservation Element. This amendment was mandated by the State of Utah, and while the intent remains the same, a few changes were necessary following a review by the state to ensure compliance with their standards and to secure necessary grant funding. Policy 1.1.3: We added a requirement to "coordinate with districts and cities to develop a plan to protect the water delivery systems and public health." Although we already planned to coordinate with water districts and cities, the state specifically requested inclusion of language addressing delivery systems and public health. Goal 7 and Following Policies/Objectives focuses on irrigation: "support and promote efficient irrigation practices in order to meet regional water conservation goals." Initially, the state indicated the focus was primarily on culinary water. However, during their review, they requested provisions related to irrigation practices and how the county would support improvements. The county's control over irrigation is minimal, limited mainly to the shares it owns. Therefore, the strategy is to work with and support irrigators—for instance, by promoting resources like grants to help them transition from flood irrigation to more efficient sprinkler systems. Item 5: We had to list the properties currently designated as Agricultural Protection Areas. These approved parcels within the county are primarily protected for grazing and hay production, with a few exceptions (such as a small orchard). These additions do not alter the fundamental intent of this section of the General Plan. Instead, they strengthen the plan and ensure it complies with state law, which is a prerequisite for receiving grant funding. We appreciate the state's review in helping us achieve full compliance.

Commissioner LeFevre moved to approve the Resolution #11-26-2025 R2 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ADJOURN: The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:35pm.

John E Laursen

JOHN LAURSEN, CHAIR

Michael W. Wilkins

MICHAEL W. WILKINS, CLERK – AUDITOR

UINTAH COUNTY, UTAH CLERK-AUDITOR