

**MINUTES** of the public meeting of the Uintah County Commission held **January 13, 2026** 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:** Paige Christensen, Bill Lewis, Shad Shelly, Matt Hooper, Matthew Gehring, Loren Anderson, Mike Wilkins, Brian Fletcher, Trinna Gardner, Gennie Bird, Danette Brooks, Carney Pace, Angela Hawkins, Wendi Long, Brenda McDonald, Matt Cazier.

Minutes by Sheri Allen.

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

**PRAYER** by Matt Cazier.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** by Gennie Bird.

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** January 6, 2026 and January 7, 2026.

*Commissioner Norton moved to approve the minutes for January 6 and January 7, 2026. Motion passed unanimously.*

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

Warrants dated January 8, 2026 in the amount of \$1,774,490.91. Payments of note are \$1,000,000.00 to Capital projects, \$409,600.00 to Vernal Cemetery, and \$121,233.48 to the County insurance.

*Commissioner LeFevre moved to approve the warrants as presented by Mike Wilkins. Motion passed unanimously.*

**3. TAX MATTERS:None**

**4. COMMISSION ASSIGNMENTS**

Commissioner Laursen will be assigned to: the Animal Control Special Service District (SSD) Board, Emergency Management and Flood Control, Facilities and Cemeteries, Health Special Service District including the Uintah Care Center and Golden Age Center, Human Resources (HR), Indigent Defense, Information Technology (IT), Justice Court, Municipal Building Authority (MBA) Secretary, Public Safety including the Narcotics Strike Force and Children's Justice Center, Purchasing & Grants, Tri-County Health Board and the Commission Chair. State boards include Joint Highway and Public Lands. Regional boards include: Eastern Utah TV, Revitalization, State Scenic By Way Committee, and the Uintah Basin Association of Governments (UBAOG).

Commissioner Norton will be assigned to: Airport, Chamber of Commerce Board, Community Development including Uintah County Boundary Commission and Planning Commission, Economic Development, Public Information Officer (PIO), Library, Historic Preservation & Museum Board, Mental Health-North Eastern Board, Municipal Building Authority (MBA) Chair, Trails, Uintah Basin Ozone Working Group (OBOWG), and Uintah Transportation Special Service District (UTSSD). State boards include Air Quality Board, Public Lands, Seven County Infrastructure Coalition Board (SCIC), and Workforce Services. Regional boards include Uintah Basin Association of Governments (UBAOG).

Commissioner LeFevre will be assigned to: Uintah Conference Center, Fire Suppression Special Service District (FSSSD), Landfill, Mosquito Abatement, Utah State University Extension, Uintah Special Service District 1 (USSD1), Weed Board, Western Park, Road Department, Buckskin Hills, and Tourism & Events. State boards include Permanent Community Impact Fund Board (CIB), Farm

Service Agency (FSA), and Public Lands. Regional boards include Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Department of Wildlife Resources (RAC), and Uintah Basin Association of Governments (UBAOG).

Nationally, all three Commissioners are assigned to the Western States and National Association of Counties (NACO).

**5. STATE OF UTAH CONTRACT**, Division of Outdoor Recreation, Utah Children's Outdoor Recreation & Education Grant: Uintah County 4H Program (UC4HP) - Gennie Bird, Purchasing & Grants

Gennie Bird, Purchasing & Grants, requested approval for the Utah State Division of Outdoor Recreation, Utah Children's Outdoor Recreation & Education Grant in the amount of \$8,717.50. This funding will support the Uintah County 4-H Program in providing hands-on outdoor recreation and educational opportunities for youth through two key clubs. The grant will help sustain the Lapoint Afterschool Club, which offers engaging lessons in agriculture, nutrition, relationships, and overall youth development. In addition, the funding will launch a new Outdoor Recreation Club, providing guided hikes, fishing education, water safety, and environmental stewardship. The Uintah County Grants Department worked closely with Paige Christensen at USU Extension, Uintah County. She developed this project concept, led the application process, and is going to serve as the project manager for this initiative. The County's total match is \$4,433.75. This is mostly in-kind and that includes participants, volunteers, and fly tying material. \$200.00 is a cash match from the County and this will cover the costs of the fuel for transporting the youth to these activities. The overall project total is \$13,151.25. This program will serve 65 youth. There's a \$10.00 registration fee for 4-H and we have been awarded \$300.00 to cover the registration of 30 youth participants with financial constraints. The project will begin this year in late spring.

*Commissioner Norton moved to approve the Division of Outdoor Recreation, Utah Children's Outdoor Recreation & Education Grant as presented by Gennie Bird. Motion passed unanimously.*

**6. ASHLEY CREEK PROPERTIES LLC LETTER AGREEMENT** - Matt Cazier, Community Development

Matt Cazier, Community Development, requested approval for the Ashley Creek Properties, LLC Agreement. Ashley Creek Properties LLC, holds a mining lease on the School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) property located east of Ashley Gorge. The County is working with SITLA to install a walking trail that crosses the far western edge of this leased property. Ashley Creek Properties LLC requested the agreement to ensure they are not held liable for any injuries that may occur on the trust lands or the leased property due to the trail's existence. The agreement contains two main stipulations, allowing the trail project to move forward: the County agrees to hold Ashley Creek Properties harmless and indemnify them against any liability should someone be injured on the property, and not to use the existence or operation of the trail to hinder the development or operation of Ashley Creek Properties' mining lease. Loren Anderson, Civil Attorney, has reviewed this agreement and stated that the commitment to not use the Via Ferrata as the sole basis to oppose the development of their resources was explicitly conveyed and understood. However, it was also made clear that opposition for other reasons such as concerns about water quality remains permissible.

*Commissioner LeFevre moved to approve the Ashley Creek Properties Agreement presented by Matt Cazier. Motion passed unanimously.*

**7. NEARMAP 2026 AGREEMENT RENEWAL** - Trinna Gardner, Purchasing & Grants

Trinna Gardner, Purchasing & Grants, requested approval for a one year service agreement with Nearmap, an aerial technology company that provides high-resolution, angled imagery. This imagery allows the Assessor's Office to remotely view building sides and verify features such as stories, additions, and rooflines, improving assessment accuracy and supporting fair property valuations. The Assessor's Office has successfully used Nearmap for the past four years, demonstrating its value in

enhancing accuracy, efficiency, and visual documentation, along with employee safety by reducing the need for on-site property inspections while still maintaining reliable visual records. \$17,385.50 is the total cost for a one year service agreement.

*Commissioner LeFevre moved to approve the Nearmap Service Agreement as presented by Trinna Gardner. Motion passed unanimously.*

**8. ORDINANCE #01-13-2026 O1: TRANSPORTATION MAP CODIFICATION** - Matthew Gehring, G.I.S

Matthew Gehring, GIS, presented Ordinance #01-13-2026 O1, which serves to codify the current transportation map. This updated map incorporates all changes made during 2025 and will replace the previous version in all future county maps, including the interactive map available on the county website.

*Commissioner Norton moved to approve the Transportation Map Ordinance #01-13-2026 O1 as presented by Matthew Gehring. Motion passed unanimously.*

**9. WAIVER FOR GUN AND KNIFE SHOW**

Matt Hooper, Uintah County Search and Rescue, requested a waiver of the facility fee for the 2026 Gun and Knife show being held at Uintah Conference Center. This event is a vital fundraiser for Search and Rescue (SAR), with 100% of the proceeds dedicated to supporting the life-saving services they provide within the county. As the department's annual budget is only \$20,000, they rely heavily on fundraising and donations for essential training, equipment, and maintenance. Granting the fee waiver will significantly aid their efforts. The Commissioners expressed strong appreciation and support for the Uintah County Search and Rescue team.

*Commissioner Norton moved to approve the fee waiver for the Gun and Knife Show as presented by Matt Hooper. Motion passed unanimously.*

**10. SUBDIVISION AMENDMENT** - Request to add trail easement and retention basin easement to Lucky Acres Subdivision located at 1353 S 1600 W, Vernal, Utah. - Deanna Nyberg, Community Development

Deanna Nyberg, Community Development, presented an application for a subdivision amendment in the Lucky Acres subdivision, located near 1600 West and 1400 South. The amendment affects the three parcels in the subdivision's northeast corner (Lots 23A, 24A, and 25A). The only changes to the recorded plat are: Adding an easement for a retention basin on Lot 23A. Previously, water collection was managed by an under-road system, which this change replaces. Adding a canal and trail easement along the east side of Lots 23A, 24A, and 25A. The canal is already in place, and the new trail is planned to run atop the canal. Scott Hardman from the Road Department reviewed the proposal. He initially had concerns but met with the engineer and is now satisfied, having signed off on the plan.

*Commissioner Norton moved to approve the subdivision amendment to Lucky Acres as presented by Deanna Nyberg. Motion passed unanimously.*

**11. RECESS FOR MUNICIPAL BUILDING AUTHORITY**

*Commissioner Laursen made a motion to recess for Municipal Building Authority (MBA). Motion passed unanimously at 3:26pm.*

**12. APPOINTMENT OF MBA CHAIR AND SECRETARY**

*Commissioner LeFevre moved to appoint Commissioner Sonja Norton as Chair and Commissioner John Laursen as the Secretary of the Municipal Building Authority (MBA). Motion passed unanimously.*

**13. & 14. RATIFICATION OF THE CIB GRANT AGREEMENT** – Western Park Master Plan, Buckskin Hills Master Plan - Gennie Bird, Purchasing & Grants

Gennie Bird, Purchasing & Grants, stated the Municipal Building Authority (MBA) received two grants from the Permanent Community Impact Board (CIB) to help fund the master plans for Western Park and Buckskin Hills. Each grant will fund up to 50% of the cost of its respective master plan, with a maximum of \$35,000 per grant. The grant contracts were previously signed by Commissioner Norton on August 14. Loren's office has since reviewed and approved the contracts, and the Commission is now requested to ratify them: Buckskin Hills Grant Contract #26-DWS-0213 and Western Park Grant Contract #26-DWS-0214. \$70,000.00 is the project total for each project with the CIB Grant of \$35,000.00 and the Uintah County cash match of \$35,000.00. Loren noted the Municipal Building Authority adheres to the Uintah County purchasing policy. This point is noted for the record, as the MBA does not have its own separate policy.

*Commissioner LeFevre motioned to ratify the CIB Grants for Western Park, #26-DWS-0214, and Buckskill Hills, #26-DWS-0213. Motion passed unanimously.*

**15. ADJOURN MBA and RECONVENE COMMISSION MEETING**

*Commissioner Laursen motioned to adjourn the Municipal Building Authority meeting and reconvene the commission meeting. Motion passed unanimously.*

**16. BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

Commissioner Norton recommended that Hannah Glass finish Christine Cooper's term, who resigned from the Historic Preservation and Museum Advisory Board. The term will end on December 31, 2027.

*Commissioner Norton moved to approve the board appointment as presented. Motion passed unanimously.*

**17. PUBLIC COMMENT: None**

**ADJOURN:** The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:31pm.

  
JOHN LAURSEN, CHAIR

  
MICHAEL W. WILKINS, CLERK – AUDITOR

