

SANPETE COUNTY COMMISSION WORK MEETING

May 12, 2026, 7:00 PM

Sanpete County Courthouse, 160 North Main, Suite 101, Manti, Utah

Present are: Commissioners Mike Bennett and Jim Cheney (joins later in the meeting). County Clerk Linda Christiansen.

Meeting is called to order by Commissioner Mike Bennett.

DISCUSSION WITH NEIL JOHNSON IN REGARDS TO E911.

Commissioner Bennett recognizes the individuals that are present for the meeting which include Neil Johnson, Auditor Stacey Lyon, County Clerk Linda Christiansen and he mentions Commissioner Cheney will be late. Two members of the public are present; Jen and Gerald Christiansen. Neil Johnson explains he received a couple of requests when they met with the mayors; one request was an MOU (memorandum of understanding). Mr. Johnson has drafted the document and it states there will be an advisory committee but any final decision lies with the County Commission. Mr. Johnson will forward the draft MOU to Kevin Daniels for review. One question Commissioner Bennett addressed with the Sheriff recently is regarding a possible tax. Mr. Johnson explains he had discussed this with Stacey Lyon; most of the property taxes collected go to the school district and the portion that the county does receive is intended for the unincorporated areas because each city receives their portion. It does not seem feasible to charge County residents an additional fee when they are already paying their portion with property taxes collected by the County. If the cities don't want to use the money they are collecting for taxes to pay a fee for E911, they may have to charge an additional fee to their residents. Meters can't be used to add a fee for this purpose. Commissioner Bennett does not see how a fee could be assessed to each building on a parcel of land because some residents own multiple parcels. Mr. Johnson states there are only three ways that can pay for E911; property tax, sales tax or charge the municipalities. Ms. Lyon explains the fire district had looked at doing a taxing entity but they could not get it high enough to generate a million dollars. If the County chose to create a special service sales tax; they would still need to find a second funding source because it would not meet the amount needed. The sales tax would generate approximately \$600,000 where a million dollars is needed to cover the costs for E911. Mr. Johnson mentions the possibility of a Rural County Health Tax; which Sevier will be presenting to their voters this year. The tax would be added to prepared foods (not including groceries); Mr. Johnson does not know how much the tax could bring in to the County. He believes around two-million. Ms. Lyon states the County already has a sales and use tax, which is also at a 1% rate, which the County collected \$961,000.00 in 2025. Due to the restriction of groceries, the amount the Rural Health tax may generate would be considerably lower. Ms. Lyon explains, if the County chose to implement a Rural Health tax this year, it would need to be posted in the paper by next week in order to meet the deadlines required by code. County Clerk Linda Christiansen explains there will need to be a public hearing that is posted in the paper, 30 days prior. Once the public hearing has taken place, the County would have 45 days to adopt a Resolution; which needs to happen 75 days before the election. The deadlines are tight. Ms. Lyon states, if the tax were to pass, it will need to be re-addressed in ten years. It is a possible avenue but the deadlines are tight and fast approaching. Mr. Johnson would like to proceed with charging the cities. Mr. Johnson explains this issue came

to light when they made the decision to start billing the cities for dispatch services; a couple mayors felt it was double taxation. The consensus of the mayors is to agree on the MOU and then decide how to pay for the services. Discussion ensues regarding the advisory board and how to determine the number of members. Mr. Johnson would like to have mayors from the cities that have police departments. If the police department had more than one town in the jurisdiction, they would choose one to represent them. In addition to the mayors on the board, there would be one representative from ambulance, one from fire, one from the Sheriff's department, Neil and one Commissioner. Mr. Johnson explains the advisory board would not have many duties because the majority of the decisions in regards to E911 is already determined due to mandated requirements. Commissioner Bennett likes the idea of adding the members discussed. Commissioner Bennett questions the amount of calls that dispatch receives from unincorporated areas versus cities with a police department. The cities with police departments receive the majority of the calls. Some cities looked at contracting with another dispatch entity and the proposed amount a city would pay is still cheaper to stay with Sanpete dispatch. Mr. Johnson states, if North Valley Police Department chose to receive dispatch services from Utah Valley, they would have to ask the mayors in those towns to pay the cost. If some of the cities went with another County, it would not reduce the amount of money needed. Discussion ensues regarding the slight discount to the County for less users on a system but it would not drastically decrease the cost. Discussion ensues regarding the value of keeping the dispatch services with the County; if a city or police department chooses to leave and sign a contract with another entity, they will not only be paying a higher price but they will have to purchase new equipment and radios. Commissioner Bennett expresses frustration because they are trying to compromise and work with the cities. The police chiefs are on board. Mr. Johnson explains the offer made to the cities to implement the new fees. The County would pay for the CAD system the first two years, buy all of the storage and then charge 20% a year to eventually increase to the full charge of 100%, after five years. In order to implement the new fees over time. For an example, Mr. Johnson states, Gunnison City's 100% cost would be \$33,000.00; which includes dispatch and CAD. If the city were to buy the CAD on their own, it would cost \$35,000.00 for a year. Ms. Lyon states, she understands why the cities would agree to the County raising taxes to pay for dispatch to take the black eye but it would be no different for the cities to explain the need to their tax payers to implement a fee. It would appear to be more transparent if a fee was paid based on the exact amount each city owes rather than implementing a tax. Commissioner Cheney arrives in the meeting. Everyone agrees that both sides have legitimate arguments. The County offered to pay 40% of the total cost, leaving 60% to be divided amongst the cities. Commissioner Bennett explains the sales and use tax to Commissioner Cheney; the Rural Health Tax that was previously discussed. The consensus is to charge the municipalities; Sanpete is the only County that does not charge the cities. Commissioner Bennett readdresses the advisory committee conversation; agreeing to all of the mayors on the Board will be counterproductive. Commissioner Bennett indicates a fear of the cities is that the County will approve this fee and it will continue to increase. Mr. Johnson states the need for the fee is based on the budget and the budget is determined by legislative requirements. Sevier County hired a consulting firm for \$15,000.00 to determine whether a sales tax will generate enough money to sustain the ambulance services budget. Mr. Johnson states it is a matter of time and the next discussion will be paying for ambulance services in Sanpete. The MOU needs to be revised to state the representatives as discussed earlier. Discussion ensues regarding the unfunded mandates that sparked this conversation. Mr. Johnson will be in meetings all day tomorrow but Ms.

Christiansen can make any changes needed. The County Attorney will need to review the document. Mr. Johnson explains the issue with the cities not wanting to pay a fee for the service and expecting the County to raise taxes, then doubles the taxes for county taxpayers. Commissioner Bennett addresses the option of going back to the original plan of charging the cities or charge the cities with police departments. If a fee is assessed to each parcel with structures, those with multiple parcels will pay more than those with only one. Commissioner Bennett speaks on meter fees and how that would be similar in penalizing the farmers but Ms. Lyon explains the fire district implemented an exemption waiver for this case scenario. Commissioner Bennett is in favor of the advisory board but every city does not need to be involved. Commissioner Cheney questions whether or not the County Assessor could identify how much the unincorporated and municipalities pay in taxes. Ms. Lyon's states the Treasurer can show that amount with her distributions. Commissioner Cheney feels that would be a way to determine if the cities or county is paying more and establish a cost based on the difference. Mr. Johnson expresses frustration with the situation based on the fact that nationwide, cities are paying into the 911 system. Commissioner Bennett will make sure that the County Attorney reviews the document. He will also respond to the mayor's email, stating the draft document will be sent tomorrow.

Motion is made by Commissioner Bennett to adjourn. The motion is seconded by Commissioner Cheney, and the motion passes.

The meeting is adjourned at 7:44 P.M.

ATTEST:



Linda Christiansen
Sanpete County Clerk

APPROVED:



Scott Bartholomew
Commission Chair