

SANPETE COUNTY COMMISSION WORK MEETING

May 28, 2026, 7:00 PM

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

Present are: Commission Chair Scott Bartholomew and Commissioner Mike Bennett. County Attorney Kevin Daniels (joins at 7:15 pm) and County Clerk Linda Christiansen. Commissioner Jim Cheney is excused.

DISCUSSION WITH NEIL JOHNSON, MAYORS, AND ELECTED OFFICIALS IN REGARDS TO E911.

Commissioner Bennett welcomes everyone to the work meeting and asks that everyone state their name for the record. Those present are: Stacey Lyon, County Auditor; Greg Knight, Sanpete Messenger; Mary Pipes, Manti City Council; Sheila Bringham, County Landfill; Neil Johnson, E911; Travis Good, Mayfield Town; Mike Wanner, Gunnison City; Mike Olsen, Mt. Pleasant City; Brad Welch, Fairview City; Mary Wintch, Manti City; Ashley Grundy, Moroni City Clerk. Commissioner Bennett identifies himself, Commissioner Bartholomew and County Clerk Linda Christiansen that are also present. Travis Leatherwood, Centerfield City's Mayor arrives. Commissioner Bennett states the public hearing in regards to a sales and use tax for E911 services has been posted in the paper for June 30th in the new Commission Chambers of the Courthouse. The purpose of the work meeting is to establish a plan of action going forward. They would like to hold some town meetings and discuss bullet points that can be used to educate the public. Mayor Leatherwood asks for a rundown of the process in order to implement the tax. Commissioner Bennett states the notice for the public hearing has to be posted for 30 days. County Clerk Linda Christiansen then explains after the public hearing is held, a resolution will need to be adopted and that has to happen no less than 75 days before the general election. If the resolution is passed by the County Commissioners, it will then be sent to the State Tax Commission and Lieutenant Governor's office for review. If the tax proposal is put on the ballot and it passes, the tax will go into effect on January 1st, 2027. The tax would be imposed on multiple items according to Mayor Leatherwood. Ms. Lyon states it basically applies to anything except prepared food. Mayor Leatherwood brought his laptop with a ZOOM link for mayor's that could not attend. Zeb Wignall, Sterling Town Mayor is on the call. Mayor Leatherwood has a printed document that hits some highlights of the rural tax that he wanted to share. Discussion ensues regarding the services that could be funded with the tax. Emergency services is the main focus but it could be used for the landfill as well. Mayor Leatherwood states, in Utah, the Rural County Health Care Facilities Tax is a local option sales and use tax of up to 1%. He believes the County would be missing out if they didn't go for the full amount. He proceeds to read, that eligible counties can impose to fund local emergency medical services, clinics and health care centers, which is the broad view. Sanpete County is a fourth class county, which qualifies for the tax. To implement or increase this tax, the County legislative body must typically obtain approval from the majority of the County's registered voters on an opinion question (Utah Code 59-12-802). Cities are also permitted to impose a parallel tax because the majority of the tax base is within city limits. Ms. Lyon states there are businesses located in the unincorporated area but agrees the majority are within city limits. On his handout he listed four examples of how the tax would be captured. Those items are; standard groceries, separate food and non-food items, bundled transactions and promotional corporate bundles. Mayor Leatherwood distributed a document

which came from the Utah State Tax Commission website that illustrates the distribution of Sales and Use Taxes for Sanpete County in 2025 and a few months in 2026. The total collected is roughly five million dollars in that period of time. It is understood that the proposed tax will not be one percent of five million but the potential of the tax is promising. Mayor Brad Welch did a simple Google Gemini search by asking, if Sanpete County fully implemented the one-percent Rural County Health Tax in 2025, how much would qualify and it responded that it would tax approximately 4.5 million of the 5 million that was collected. Mayor Leatherwood addresses the current County budget. The communications budget is \$857,155.00. The new CAD system cost of \$175,000.00 is essentially a subscription cost and will have to be paid every year. The initial cost for the CAD system could be \$900,000.00 but the County chose to go the subscription route. Neil Johnson explains the \$175,000 will be locked in for ten years but will increase after that. The increases will not exceed 7% but will usually be around 3%. Mr. Johnson explains the first year, the County would pay \$175,000.00, the servers will be an additional \$220,000.00, plus the additional \$70,000.00 to move the data to the new CAD. The County agreed to pay the costs the first two years. Commissioner Bennett believes after the first two years; those using the CAD should pay for their share. Mayor Leatherwood believes the tax should pay for everything. Commissioner Bennett does not understand why the County's budget should pay for a city's police departments CAD. Mayor Leatherwood wants to see how you would separate what a city resident pays versus a county resident and how that money goes to the CAD system only. Commissioner Bennett questions why a resident that does not benefit from a city police department should pay for a CAD in a city that has a police department. Mayor Leatherwood believes that county resident is paying into the Sheriff's CAD. Commissioner Bennett points out that each city with a police department currently pays for their CAD. His suggestion is to continue doing so after the two years. He also states this conversation can be revisited once they have an idea of the amount of revenue the tax may generate. Mayor Mike Olsen questions why a city resident would pay as much as a county resident for the Sheriff's Department; he feels they would be double taxed. Neil Johnson tries to explain it is not the CAD system but the RMS system is what the cities would be paying for. Commissioner Bennett clarifies he is not suggesting the cities pay for the whole \$175,000.00 payment. Mayor Travis Good states the cities with police departments do benefit from a revenue with the PD and he can see both sides of the discussion. Neil Johnson tries to redirect the conversation because the point is being missed; if the County stays on the current CAD system, it will cost millions to function properly. Mayor Brad Welch asks for clarification on the CAD and RMS terms. Neil Johnson explains, EForce is a computer aided dispatch (CAD) software that some cities are on but they are looking at Spillman, which is required now in order to communicate with other agencies. Mayor Brad Welch clarifies they are not just replacing CAD, he feels better paying into it, knowing this will cover the entire law enforcement system. Discussion ensues regarding the current communications budget and how the number of calls to 911 affect it. Mayor Leatherwood believes the money generated for the General Fund of the County is from taxes. Stacey Lyon states it comes from property and sales tax, paid by all residents in the county, as well as visitors. Mayor Leatherwood is optimistic that the proposed tax will be a true County tax that benefits everyone. He also states the understanding is the tax needs to cover the emergency funds but if there is an overage, the County has the guidelines of how the funds can be used. One of the areas that the tax can be used for is solid waste disposal; in other words, the landfill. Stacey Lyon explains it is a restricted fund, and generally speaking they would look at a five year average. If they are unable to use the money collected in that

time they could make adjustments to the rate. Commissioner Bennett believes there will be no problem using the money for E911. Neil Johnson states it will not be long before the conversation will be regarding ambulance services because of the lack of volunteers and new state mandates. Mayor Mike Olsen suggests keeping the tax where it is; he would like to see it go strictly to emergency services. Stacey Lyon clarifies that the tax can be rolled over and saved but they just don't want the amount saved to be excessive. Mayor Brad Welch mentions the estimate of the amount that he stated earlier also revealed that an estimated 15-22 percent of the Rural County Health Care Facilities Tax would be paid by non-residents. Kevin Daniels comments that the non-residents use the E911 system; they get lost or hurt but also benefit from emergency systems. Commissioner Bennett suggests scheduling some town hall meetings prior to the public hearing on June 30th. Kevin Daniels suggests having a bullet point list of the benefits of the tax. Discussion ensues regarding scheduling of the meetings. Mayor Mike Wanner offers to host the first town hall meeting on Monday, June 8th at 7 pm, in Gunnison. Mt. Pleasant will host the town hall meeting on June 15th. The public hearing has already been noticed for June 30th at 6 pm. Stacey Lyon expresses concern in regards to scheduling of the meetings so soon; she feels it should be closer to the election. Linda Christiansen states the November ballots will drop on the 13th of October. Mayor Mary Wintch feels it is beneficial to get the word out now and continue to educate. Ms. Christiansen states the resolution in regards to the tax will be addressed in August. After discussion, it is decided to have town hall meetings now and closer to the general election in November. At a later time, they will schedule town hall meetings in the north, south and central areas of the County in September. Linda Christiansen suggested, rather than pay additional money on a mailer, the cities could mention the proposed tax in their newsletters or utility bills. Commissioner Bennett will work with the mayor's on the town hall presentations. County Attorney Kevin Daniels is close to completing the resolution that will be presented to the Commissioners in August. Mayor Brad Welch comments that Channel 10 will donate air time for an ad. Greg Knight from the Sanpete Messenger will be running an article next week. Commissioner Bennett requests that each mayor come up with a bullet point and he will create a flyer. Discussion ensues regarding the bullet points that need to be highlighted in the flyer. Mayor Mary Wintch inquires to the County Clerk on her prediction of voter turnout for the general election. Linda Christiansen responds that she looked at past County elections that did not include the presidential race; the primary will most likely have a 50 % voter turnout and the general may be closer to 65-70 %.

The meeting is adjourned at 7:51 P.M.

ATTEST: 
Linda Christiansen
Sanpete County Clerk

APPROVED: 
Scott Bartholomew
Commission Chair