

**MINUTES** of the work session of the Uintah County Commission held **August 5, 2026** in the large Commission conference room of the Uintah County Building at 152 East 100 North, Vernal, Utah. The meeting commenced at 10:00 a.m.

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

**ATTENDANCE:** Mike Wilkins, Steve Labrum, Leasha Williams, Margie Shewell, Melissa Yergensen, Gennie Bird, Angela Hawkins, Wendi Long, Brenda McDonald, Danette Brooks, Karina Valencia, Loren Anderson, Matt Cazier, Crystal Clark, Ryan Mattson.  
Minutes by Sheri Allen

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

#### **1. COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA POLICY -**

Mike Wilkins, Clerk-Auditor, provided an update on the Commission Agenda Policy; which has been discussed previously in the July 22nd and July 8th work sessions. The County is currently awaiting further information from Civic Plus regarding their agenda platform, as the current system, OnBase, is phasing out its agenda component. Gennie Bird, Purchasing and Grants, noted that Ryan Mattson, IT, had contacted Civic Plus over a week ago but has not yet received a response; in the interim, the team continues to review the draft policy language and checklists. Loren Anderson, Civil Attorney, explained that the policy aims to standardize commission meetings and ensure timely preparation of documents to avoid last-minute rushes. Commissioner Norton expressed support, noting that the policy will help mitigate issues with frequently occurring "emergency" items.

#### **2. AMENDMENT TO POLICY 700 - EMPLOYEE TRAVEL -** Loren Anderson, Civil Attorney and Melissa Yergensen, Human Resources

Melissa presented several changes to the travel policy. Overnight travel will continue to require department head approval, however, beyond a certain threshold, Commission approval will also be required. GSA (US General Services Administration) rates are currently being used for per diem and hotel costs. GSA rates will continue to be used for hotel rates with a buffer of 20%, the plan is to ensure we are not spending excessively on hotels even if they are more convenient. If a County fleet vehicle is available, employees should be utilizing the fleet for travel rather than their own. She proposed employees not receiving any reimbursement for using their personal vehicle if a fleet vehicle is available. If a vehicle is not available, an employee may receive mileage reimbursement for one way and must provide proof a vehicle is not available. She also proposed employees utilize a purchasing card or receive reimbursement for expenses when they return rather than receiving per diem before travel. However, she has concerns with p-card use as the current system does not provide adequate transparency and descriptions for purchases. This is a concern that is being addressed with IT and the Clerk-Auditor's office. With the system upgrade, this is something that will be corrected but it will take time to build and put into place. Others addressed a concern with employees not having a p-card. Many do not have a p-card and it is not necessary for them to have one; per diem is more appropriate. This is also the case with non-employees that may be traveling for county business. In this case, the employee or individual would keep track of all receipts and be reimbursed for actual costs. However, they would only be reimbursed up to the GSA rate. It was also noted that travel expenses are not part of the procurement process and the Purchasing Department does not need to be included.

Melissa noted FLSA, Fair Labor Standards Act, any per diem not actually spent on travel becomes a taxable income. For example, if an employee receives per diem of \$10 for a particular meal but only spends \$5 on that meal, they retain the remainder and that would be taxable income and part of overtime calculations. This becomes a nightmare for payroll. To work around this nightmare, employees can use p-cards or save receipts. However, they cannot go beyond the GSA rates; any excess and they will have to pay for it themselves. Mike disagreed, it is not taxable income. An employee traveling for work may receive per diem at the GSA rate and choose how it is spent; they can select cheaper restaurants or more expense. The County cannot reimburse beyond the GSA rate. This will need to be

researched further and determine exactly what the law states. Employees will need to continue submitting itineraries so it is clear where and why they are traveling and what meals may or may not be provided by the conference or training, etc.

**3. CONSIDERATION OF COUNTY SOLE SIGNATORY AUTHORITY POLICY** - Loren Anderson, Civil Attorney and Melissa Yergensen, Human Resources

Loren Anderson presented the draft Sole Signatory Authority Policy, intended to address unauthorized contract execution and mitigate personal liability risks. Key discussion points included:

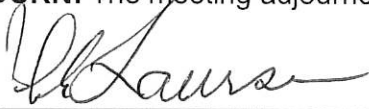
- Establishing that only designated individuals have the authority to sign contracts, following Commission authorization.
- Creating a master contract list to track renewal dates and facilitate timely Legal and IT review.
- Leveraging Oracle Apex to digitize forms, signatures, and payments.
- Requiring re-approval for any modifications to previously approved templates, regardless of how minor.
- Emphasizing that prior approval does not grant indefinite authorization; all renewals or re-use of old agreements must be re-submitted for review.

**4. CENTRALLY ASSESSED APPEALS** - Mike Wilkins, Clerk- Auditor

Mike Wilkins provided an update on centrally assessed appeals. The County needs to pass a resolution at next week's meeting to authorize cross-appeals for Mid-America Pipeline and Ramsey Hill, which were filed correctly with the Auditor's office and the State Tax Commission. Two additional appeals were filed incorrectly with the Assessor's office; the Clerk-Auditor will forward these to the Utah Association of Counties (UAC) for processing. The County is participating in the UAC-led joint effort for centrally assessed appeals, which leverages various legal resources across participating counties.

Commissioner Laursen announced that Heather Barnes will begin as the new Commission Secretary on Monday. Additionally, Nicole will be transitioning to the role of Manager of the Transportation District.

**ADJOURN:** The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:37am.



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JOHN LAURSEN, CHAIR



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MICHAEL W. WILKINS, CLERK – AUDITOR