

Voter Information Pamphlet

For Proposition #9

2026 General Election
Tuesday, November 3, 2026





UINTAH COUNTY
OFFICIAL VOTER INFORMATION PAMPHLET
PROPOSED CHANGE IN FORM OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT
General Election – Tuesday, November 3, 2026

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Ballot Question

PROPOSITION #9

Shall Uintah County adopt the alternate form of government known as the Council-Manager Form of Government as recommended in the proposed optional plan?

For

Against

Impartial Summary

Shall Uintah County change its form of government to a Council-Manager form of government with a five-member County Council exercising legislative powers and a County Manager serving as chief administrative officer who exercises executive duties? County-Council members will be elected from five single-member districts. The County Council will appoint the County Manager, who will serve at the Council's discretion, and will set the Manager's compensation. The office of the County Commissioner will be eliminated when the new form of government becomes effective. County officers, as required by Utah law, will continue to be elected. The initial County Council election will occur during the 2028 general election, and the new form of government will become effective January 1, 2029.

Loren . W. Anderson

Deputy Uintah County Civil Attorney



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Initial Fiscal and Legal Impact Statement

RE: Proposition #9 - Change in Form of Government

This statement has been created in conjunction with legal counsel pursuant to Utah Code Ann. §20A-7-502.5, that addresses subsections Utah Code Ann. §20A-7-502.5 (2)&(3).

(2)(a)(vii)(A)

Vested Property Rights: No significant effects determined at this time.

(2)(a)(vii)(B)

County Laws/Ordinances: No significant effects on other Uintah County laws or ordinances at this time.

(2)(a)(vii)(C)

Legal Liability: No significant legal liability incurred by Uintah County determined at this time.

(2)(a)(vii)(D)

Other Legal Impacts: No other significant legal impact determined by the county budget officer and legal counsel at this time.

(2)(a)(viii)

The Clerk-Auditor estimates that the law proposed by this initiative would result in a total annual fiscal expense of \$560,000, which includes a property tax increase of \$560,000 and a \$0 increase in public debt. This amount is only the average total wages with estimated benefits of the County Manager and Assistant County Manager of the three comparable Council-Manager forms of government. There would be no issuance or change in bonds, notes or other debt instruments, or any cost savings.

(3)

Estimated cost of printing and distribution of voter information pamphlet: \$10,000.00

Michael W. Wilkins, Clerk-Auditor

Loren W. Anderson, Deputy Civil Uintah County Attorney



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Written Arguments For and Against

The arguments for or against this proposition are the opinions of the authors and have not been edited by Uintah County.

WRITTEN ARGUMENT FOR

A New Structure for Uintah County Government

The Council-Manager form of county government is a Utah state-approved form of government. The plan is available at the county and on their website. Summit, Tooele, and Wasatch counties are all using this form of government.

Under this form of government, there are 5 council members versus 3 commissioners, who receive limited compensation but no additional benefits, similar to our State Representatives and Senators.

The county manager is hired by the council, is “at will”, and serves under the direction of the county council.

Clear Responsibilities

The county council is accountable to the voters. They hold the legislative authority meaning they make, change and cancel laws and ordinances.

The county manager serves at the will of the elected council and has executive authority meaning they manage and direct the day-to-day administration of the county. Having a county manager allows the council to focus on the legislative responsibilities of the county.

Better Representation

A five-member council provides more local representation by dividing the county into 5 districts. Every area of Uintah County will have its own elected council member who lives in the district they are elected to represent. They are elected by and directly accountable to the residents of that district. More council members means more voices at the table and better representation for the entire county. The issue isn't simply replacing three commissioners with five council members—it is distributing legislative power among more elected representatives while assigning the day-to-day executive administration to the county manager.

A Proven System

The council-manager form of government has been successfully used by cities, counties and school districts across the country for decades. Many Utah entities and water boards already operate under this model because it combines



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elected leadership with professional administration.

This is a non-partisan, citizen-led initiative that allows the voters of Uintah county to have a choice in how our local government works for you.

Brian Gorum
Dan Dilsaver
Jo Gardner
Nolan Jackson
Anna Billings
234 S. 3290 W., Vernal, UT 84078
Voter Information Packet Submission

Anna Billings
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abill757@yahoo.com
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WRITTEN ARGUMENT AGAINST

Changing Uintah County from a three-member Commission to a five-member district-based Council with an appointed Manager would give voters less direct influence over county government, not more.

More seats do not necessarily mean more representation. Currently, every Uintah County voter can vote in the election for each Commission seat. Under the proposed system, you would vote for one Council member representing your district. The other four would make decisions affecting your taxes, roads, public lands and county services, but you would have no vote in choosing them.

District elections also narrow the candidate pool available to each voter. Candidates are not required to have experience managing employees, overseeing large budgets, working with state or federal agencies, or understanding complex issues such as public lands or energy development.

That matters when a district has only one candidate. If only one person files in your district, that may be your only choice—even if a candidate you believe is better qualified lives just across the district line. Today, voters can evaluate candidates for all three Commission seats. Under the proposed system, your choices would be limited to candidates within your district.

Would anything be gained by transferring executive authority from three elected Commissioners to one appointed County Manager? The Council would make policy, but the Manager would be the administrative head of county government, exercise executive authority and become an important source of information and recommendations to the Council. The problem isn't that a Manager would intentionally provide biased information. The concern is the accumulation of authority into one unelected, powerful individual who, as a human, has unintentional biases.

Currently, three independently elected Commissioners can research an issue, hear directly from departments and stakeholders, ask different questions and reach different conclusions. One may recognize an economic-development concern, another a public-lands issue and another an impact to taxpayers or county services. That may sometimes be less efficient, but those different perspectives can also produce a more robust and holistic understanding before decisions are made.



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Representation doesn't stop at the county line. At a recent public meeting, several other elected officials noted that they had attended the Utah Legislature. Their involvement is important, but those officials advocate for the responsibilities of their respective offices. County Commissioners advocate for the interests of the county as a whole.

Utah's General Legislative Session lasts 45 days. Decisions made during that short window affect energy, agriculture, water, public lands, transportation, taxation and local government authority. Having elected Commissioners who can divide that workload, build relationships and advocate directly for our varied community isn't a distraction from county government. It is part of the job.

Diluting Uintah County Voter influence by giving up three countywide votes for one district vote while transferring executive authority to an appointed manager creates more distance between voters and their county government. We encourage you to vote **against** the Change in County Government Proposition.

Mike Mckee 10849 North 7750 East, Tridell, UT 84078
Kevin Van Tassell 2675 West 1500 North, Vernal, UT 84078
Jeff Merrell 140 East 2500 South, Vernal, UT 84078
Darlene Burns 457 East 700 South, Vernal, UT 84078
Kim McDonald 702 North 500 East, Vernal, UT 84078



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WRITTEN REBUTTAL ARGUMENT AGAINST PROPOSITION #9

REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT AGAINST PROPOSITION 9

The opposition argues that Proposition 9 would reduce voter influence. In reality, it gives every area of Uintah County a dedicated elected representative, rather than having three commissioners elected countywide.

Today, three commissioners make decisions affecting every community, even when a particular area has no commissioner that lives there. Proposition 9 creates five districts ensuring every part of the county has a voice at the table.

The opposition attacks the county manager as an “unelected, powerful individual”. That misrepresents the proposal. The county manager would be hired, supervised, and removable by the elected council members. The council-not the manager-would establish county policy, while the Manager provides professional administration. Ultimately, the council and the manager are accountable to us, the citizens of Uintah County.

Four of the five people opposing Proposition 9 are former elected officials. Their experience deserves respect, but their experience with the existing system does not mean that as a county we wouldn't benefit from a different form of government. They cannot speak from experience about how a five-member Council and a professional County Manager would serve Uintah County.

Most importantly, Proposition 9 is about accountability and representation. Five district elected Council members means residents know exactly who represents their area and who they can hold accountable.

The real question is simple: Is the current system working for all of Uintah County? Prop 9 gives every area of Uintah County a seat at the table.

Vote FOR Prop 9.

Anna Billings - Designated Contact Sponsor
234 S 3290 W, Vernal, UT 84078, 757-416-8717

Brian Gorum – Sponsor
Dan Dilsaver – Sponsor
Jo Gardner – Sponsor
Nolan Jackson – Sponsor



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WRITTEN REBUTTAL AGAINST ARGUMENT FOR PROPOSITION #9

The proposed council-manager form promises "clear responsibilities, "better representation," and a "proven system." None is guaranteed.

Utah law prohibits an optional plan from setting elected officials' pay, benefits, or schedules. Those are governing-board decisions and cannot be guaranteed as limited. All three Utah counties that adopted this change saw costs rise.

"At will" does not mean accountable to voters. The manager answers only to the council, not the public. Voters cannot remove the manager; only the council can.

The division of responsibilities may be clear, but the benefit is not. The proposal does not simply "allow" council members to focus on legislation; it restricts their authority over administration while giving executive authority to an appointed manager. Voters elect representatives with less authority over the government they represent.

Currently, Uintah County voters have a voice in electing all three commissioners. Under this proposal, each voter elects one of five council members. Five people may sit at the bench, but each voter chooses just one.

Proponents acknowledge the difficulty of comparing Uintah County with communities having different incomes, home values and economies. Yet they point to Summit, Tooele and Wasatch as models. Only three of Utah's 29 counties use this form. Uintah County's rural geography and economy shaped by energy, agriculture, public lands and natural resources, require elected leaders engaged with legislators, agencies, and industries affecting our community.

We do not believe this proposal benefits Uintah County to justify reducing voters' influence and transferring executive authority to an appointed manager.

Mike Mckee
Kevin Van Tassell
Jeff Merrell
Darlene Burns
Kim McDonald



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[Proposed Optional Plan to Adopt a Council-Manager Form of Government for Uintah County, Utah](#)

To learn more or request a delivery of a Voter Information Pamphlet by mail or carrier:

County website: www.uintah.gov Public hearing recordings/minutes: www.uintah.gov County Clerk-Auditor contact:
Michael W. Wilkins, 435-781-5360, clerk-auditor@uintah.utah.gov

Prepared and certified by:

County Clerk/Auditor: Michael W. Wilkins

Date: Sept. 21st 2026

**PROPOSED OPTIONAL PLAN
TO ADOPT A COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT
FOR UINTAH COUNTY, UTAH**

Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. §§ 17-62-303, 17-62-403, and 17-62-404

**ARTICLE 1
TITLE, AUTHORITY, AND PURPOSE**

1.1 Title.

This document shall be known as the “Proposed Optional Plan to Adopt a Council-Manager Form of Government for Uintah County, Utah” or, throughout this document, as simply the “Proposed Optional Plan.”

1.2 Authority.

This Proposed Optional Plan is proposed pursuant to Utah Code Ann. §§ 17-62-303, 17-62-403, and 17-62-404.

1.3 Purpose.

The purpose of this Proposed Optional Plan is to change the form of county government in Uintah County from its existing form to the council-manager form authorized by Utah Code Ann. § 17-62-204.

1.4 Effective Date.

If adopted by the voters, the Proposed Optional Plan shall become effective on the first day of January following the election of County Council members under the new plan (i.e., January 1, 2029).

**ARTICLE 2
FORM OF GOVERNMENT**

2.1 New Form of Government.

Upon approval by the voters of Uintah County, Uintah County shall operate under the council-manager form of government under Utah Code Ann. § 17-62-204, with a county council serving as the county legislative body and a county manager serving in the executive administrative role as provided by Utah law and this Proposed Optional Plan.

2.2 Existing Form Superseded.

Upon the effective date of this Proposed Optional Plan, the county’s prior form of government shall be superseded to the extent provided herein and as otherwise required by Utah law.

ARTICLE 3 COUNTY COUNCIL

3.1 Legislative Body.

The county legislative body shall be the Uintah County Council (the “**County Council**”).

3.2 Number of Council Members.

The County Council shall consist of five members.

3.3 Method of Election.

County Council members shall be elected from single-member districts. Each council member shall represent only the district in which such member resides and be elected by a majority vote of the voters residing within the district. It is recommended that the five district boundaries initially be the same as the Uintah School District school board districts; however, nothing in this document shall be construed as an attempt establish, divide, abolish, alter, change, or otherwise attempt to draw boundaries of election districts or impair the duties of the county legislative body as described in Utah Code Ann. § 17-62-503. County Council member elections shall be partisan.

3.4 Qualifications.

Each County Council member shall meet the qualifications required by Utah law, including that the council member shall reside in the district the member represents.

3.5 Terms of Office.

County Council members shall serve four-year terms except as described in section 3.6 below.

3.6 Staggering of Terms.

The terms of office for County Council members shall be staggered. To effectuate this, the initial terms for council members elected to represent Districts 1 and 2 shall be two years, and the initial terms for council members elected to represent Districts 3, 4, and 5 shall be four years, such that two council members' terms expire two years before the remaining three. Thereafter, all terms shall be four years and shall commence at noon on the first Monday in January following the respective election.

3.7 Vacancies.

A vacancy on the County Council shall be filled in accordance with Utah law, including Utah Code Ann. § 20A-1-508.

3.8 Powers of the County Council.

The County Council shall exercise the legislative powers of the county and any other powers conferred by Utah law upon the legislative body of a county operating under the council-manager form of government.

3.9 County Council Chair.

The County Council shall elect one of its members to serve as Chair, whose duties shall be to preside at meetings, execute documents on behalf of the county, and serve as the ceremonial head of the county government. The Chair shall not exercise independent authority.

3.10 Council-Manager Relations; Prohibited Conduct.

- (a) Separation of Functions. The County Council shall exercise legislative authority and shall not interfere with the administrative functions of the county manager except as permitted by law.
- (b) Prohibited Conduct. Except as otherwise permitted by law, an individual member of the County Council may not, directly or indirectly, by suggestion or otherwise:
 - (i) attempt to influence or coerce the county manager in:
 - (A) making any appointment;
 - (B) removing any officer or employee; or
 - (C) purchasing supplies;
 - (ii) attempt to exact any promise relative to any appointment from any candidate for county manager; or
 - (iii) discuss, directly or indirectly, with the county manager the matter of specific appointments to any county office or employment.
- (c) Permitted Communications. Nothing in this Section prohibits the County Council, or any member thereof, from fully and freely discussing with or making general recommendations to the county manager regarding county affairs or the interests of the county, provided that such communications do not address specific personnel decisions in violation of this section.
- (d) Enforcement. A violation of this section shall be governed by applicable Utah law, including provisions requiring forfeiture of office where applicable.
- (e) Implementation. The County Council may adopt ordinances, policies, or procedures consistent with this section and Utah law to:
 - (i) provide for the receipt and review of complaints alleging a violation;
 - (ii) provide for investigation by the county attorney or other appropriate authority; and
 - (iii) ensure notice and an opportunity to be heard before any determination of a violation.
- (f) Advisory Guidance. A member of the County Council or the county manager may request guidance from the county attorney regarding compliance with this section.

ARTICLE 4 COUNTY MANAGER

4.1 County Manager Office Established.

The office of the county manager for Uintah County shall be established.

4.2 Appointment.

Subject to Utah Code Ann. § 17-62-204(7) and (8), the county manager shall be appointed by the majority vote of the County Council.

4.3 Role of County Manager.

The county manager shall serve as the chief administrative officer of the county and shall exercise those administrative and executive duties assigned by Utah law, this Proposed Optional Plan, and ordinances lawfully adopted by the County Council, except the county manager may not veto ordinances enacted by the County Council.

4.4 Qualifications of County Manager.

The county manager shall possess the qualifications required by Utah law and any additional qualifications established by ordinance, resolution, or lawful hiring process of the County Council. Appointment shall be based solely on professional administrative qualifications. The county manager need not be a resident of the county at the time of appointment but must reside within the county within a reasonable time after appointment (as determined by the County Council).

4.5 Term of Office and Compensation.

The county manager shall serve at the pleasure of the County Council and have no fixed term. Compensation shall be set by the County Council by ordinance or resolution.

4.6 Removal.

The county manager may be removed by a majority vote of the County Council at any time, with or without cause, after reasonable notice and an opportunity to be heard (if requested).

4.7 Political Activity of County Manager.

The county manager may not take part in securing or contributing any money toward the nomination or election of any candidate for a county office.

ARTICLE 5 OTHER COUNTY OFFICERS

5.1 Elected Officers.

The county officers who are required by Utah law to be elected shall continue to be elected unless changed by lawful authority consistent with this Proposed Optional Plan and Utah law.

5.2 Appointed Officers and Employees.

County departments, officers, employees, and administrative functions shall continue except as lawfully modified during implementation of this Proposed Optional Plan.

5.3 Continuation Pending Transition.

Until modified pursuant to law or this Proposed Optional Plan, all county officers, employees, departments, boards, and functions existing on the effective date of this Proposed Optional Plan shall continue in existence to the extent necessary to ensure continuity of county government.

ARTICLE 6 TRANSITION PROVISIONS

6.1 Initial Election of County Council Members.

The initial election of County Council members under this Proposed Optional Plan shall occur during the 2028 general election in accordance with this Proposed Optional Plan and state statute. The ballot, candidate filing process, and election administration shall be conducted in accordance with applicable Utah election law. Following the election and qualification of the initial County Council members, the County Council may begin to meet, organize, and begin exercising its authority as provided by law as soon as noon on the first Monday in January following the respective election (i.e., January 1, 2029).

6.2 Initial Appointment of County Manager.

As soon as reasonably practicable after the initial County Council is seated, the County Council shall appoint a county manager in accordance with Utah law and this Proposed Optional Plan.

6.3 Retention, Elimination, or Combination of Existing Offices.

The following existing offices shall be retained: all county offices as presently constituted on the effective date of this Proposed Optional Plan. The following offices shall be eliminated or combined, effective as of the effective date of this Proposed Optional Plan: the offices of county commissioner. If any office is eliminated, the duties of that office shall be performed by the County Council, to the extent consistent with Utah law and the council-manager form of government.

6.4 Continuity of Ordinances and Regulations.

All county ordinances, rules, regulations, policies, and resolutions in effect on the effective date of this Proposed Optional Plan shall remain in effect unless and until amended or repealed by lawful authority.

6.5 Continuation of Pending Proceedings.

All pending legislative, administrative, judicial, and other governmental proceedings shall continue notwithstanding adoption of this Proposed Optional Plan, and no such proceeding shall abate solely because of the adoption or implementation of this Proposed Optional Plan.

6.6 Interim and Temporary Appointments.

Interim and temporary appointments may be made as necessary and as authorized by law to ensure the uninterrupted operation of county government during the transition to the council-manager form of government.

6.7 Property, Records, and Personnel.

All county property, records, equipment, funds, obligations, and personnel shall continue under county ownership, custody, or control, subject to lawful reassignment, transfer, or administration during implementation of this Proposed Optional Plan.

6.8 Budget and Fiscal Transition.

Any appropriations, transfers, budget amendments, or other fiscal actions reasonably necessary to implement this Proposed Optional Plan may be made as provided by law.

6.9 Budget Responsibilities Under the New Form of Government.

Under the council-manager form of government: (a) the county manager, as the chief administrative officer of the county, shall prepare and present a proposed budget to the county council in the manner required by law, and may designate county staff to assist in or carry out this function; and (b) the County Council shall adopt the final budget as required by law.

ARTICLE 7 IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 Implementation by Ordinance or Resolution.

The county may adopt ordinances, resolutions, and administrative measures consistent with this Proposed Optional Plan and Utah law to carry out and implement this Proposed Optional Plan.

7.2 Severability.

If any provision of this Proposed Optional Plan is held invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain effective to the fullest extent permitted by law.

7.3 Construction.

This Proposed Optional Plan shall be construed to comply with the Utah Constitution and Utah Code. Any provision determined to conflict with controlling law shall be interpreted, modified by lawful implementation, or severed to preserve the remainder of this Proposed Optional Plan to the fullest extent permitted by law.

ARTICLE 8 SUBMISSION TO THE VOTERS

8.1 Election.

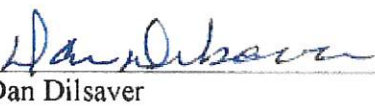
Upon certification of the petition and satisfaction of statutory review requirements, the question of whether Uintah County shall adopt this Proposed Optional Plan shall be submitted to the voters as provided by law.

DATED this 20th day of April, 2026.

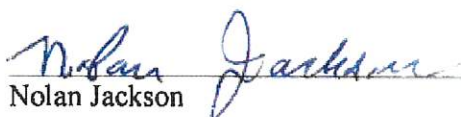
SPONSORS:


Anna Billings


Brian Gorum


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Nolan Jackson

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