

MINUTES of the public meeting of the Uintah County Commission **March 15, 2021** in the Commission Chambers of the County Building at 147 East Main, Vernal, Utah. Meeting commenced at 11:00 am.

PARTICIPANTS: Commissioners Bill Stringer, Brad Horrocks, and Bart Haslem.

ATTENDANCE: Michael Wilkins, Ben Kettle, Derek Hopper, Sonja Norton, Nathan Belliston, Wendi Long, Robin O'Driscoll, Matt Cazier, Sam Passey, Tonya Craven, Steve Labrum, Barbara Simper, Wayne Simper, Brenda McDonald

Minutes recorded by Karina Valencia

PRAYER offered by Michael Wilkins

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE led by Nate Belliston

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: March 8, 2021

APPROVAL OF WARRANTS: dated March 11, 2021 in the amount of \$542,993.40

Michael pointed out a check in the amount of \$313,643.75 to CIGNA insurance for the monthly premium. Commissioner Haslem noted there is a reimbursement check to himself for travel.

CEMETERY CERTIFICATES: Michael Wilkins

Kerry and Terryl Speers Block P38 Lot 1 Spaces 5&6 located in the Vernal Memorial Park Cemetery.

Lori Widner Lot 261 Spaces 21&22 located in the Vernal Memorial Park Cemetery.

Commissioner Haslem moved to approve the cemetery certificates as presented. Commissioner Stringer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

TAX MATTERS: Michael Wilkins

A one year delinquent property tax deferral was requested for two homes that would be on this year's May tax sale, they are both primary residences. One of the requests was for a deferral of \$1,658.56 on serial number 12:019:0019. The second request was for a deferral of \$4,818 on serial number 04:121:0002.

Commissioner Stringer moved to approve the property tax deferral for both properties as presented. Commissioner Haslem seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

A refund was requested in the amount of \$334,002.22 for Simplot Phosphates. This was ordered by the Utah State Tax Commission. The company appealed the value and it was determined the property was overvalued in 2020. Uintah County assessed the property's value at \$138,431,378 and after the appeals process it was revaluated at \$110,750,107. Jon pointed out this was a 28 million dollar mistake from the State Tax Commission on their valuation. They used metric tons instead of our standard ton.

Commissioner Haslem moved to approve the refund in the amount as presented. Commissioner Stringer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

BUSINESS LICENSES: Ross Watkins

Burnt Fork Bow Company is owned by Troy Sadlier located at 2653 S 500 W in the RA-1 zone in Vernal. This is a home based business selling archery equipment from the shop on the property. He does do delivery; most of the work takes place in the shop. Approval of the business license was recommended so long as all home based business rules are followed.

Wild Things Boutique is owned by Chelsie Perez located at 1605 S 3050 W in Vernal. This is a home based business selling quality affordable children's clothing. It is an in home boutique; they are a retailer for Pete and Lucy. The sales are

mostly online but some people will come to the home. Approval of the business license was recommended so long as all home based business rules are followed.

Bruce Hardman Handyman Services is owned by Bruce Hardman located at 3688 S 1600 W in Vernal. This is a home based handyman business performing minor repairs and maintenance. He does have a handyman exemption from the state. Approval of the business license was recommended with the condition that all state regulations be followed.

Commissioner Stringer moved to approve the home based business licenses with conditions and recommendations as presented. Commissioner Haslem seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

ADDENDUM TO UDOT CONTRACT WITH WEED DEPARTMENT: Nate Belliston

This addendum is to increase the annual amount to \$8,950. This increases the amount available for weed spraying on UDOT right of ways. This agreement will end in 2022. Nate was asked if they allow him to choose which areas to go to. Nate responded yes they have. He noted he mainly tries to do the areas closest to the municipalities before the money runs out, and has avoided Hwy 40 due to safety issues.

Commissioner Haslem moved to amend the contract as presented with authorization of signatures. Commissioner Stringer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

2021 CHILDREN AND TEEN BOOK ENHANCEMENT GRANT: Sam Passey

This is a \$3,000 grant that does not require a match, which is to be used to purchase children's books. Sam asked for approval of the grant and authorization of signatures. He noted the contract will be sent electronically for digital signatures.

Commissioner Stringer moved to approve the grant as presented with authorization of signatures. Commissioner Haslem seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

CH4-FINLEY – REQUESTING AN EXCEPTION TO BUILD A BIOREMEDIATION FACILITY WITHIN TWO MILES OF RESIDENCES: Ross Watkins

A request was received for an exception to the county code. As currently stated in county code 17.33.020(26)(b) Locations. Must be located a minimum of two miles from any state or federal highway (as determined by the Uintah County Transportation System Map) city, town, or residence as determined by Uintah County Tax rolls). Exceptions to this rule must be approved by the county commission. Ross noted the applicant has submitted a conditional use permit application to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission cannot move forward with the conditional use permit until the exception is approved by the County Commission. Letters were sent to all homes within two miles. One phone call was received; the call was informational as they wanted to know what was going on and did not have any concerns as they were not upwind. Ross noted the letters sent out were as a courtesy, but they were not required to do so. This property had a rezone a few weeks ago. Most homes are north of this and are separated topographically with hills.

Ben Kettle, a home owner that lives down the draw from this area just barely outside of the 2 mile radius took a moment to voice his concerns. He explained this is a natural drainage and they need to do more mediation than what they have proposed and if this leaks into the water system the EPA will be all over us and it would be a mess. He also mentioned a neighbor of his asked him to also let the commission know if something happens to their property they would not be happy. Matt Cazier noted this was looked at and permitted through DOGM. DOGM has approved it, but it was done out of order as they should have received approval from the county first. There was discussion regarding land farming and what would be dumped into this pit. If the county were to approve this, the liability would not fall back onto the county but to CH4-Finely. Jon pointed out the commission has the option to approve this but does not have to as this would be an exception to what is normally allowed. Ross noted that if the commission were to approve the exception this would not approve the details of the land farm. Commissioner Haslem noted there are wells a lot closer to farms and homes and while he understands the concerns he felt it is a good idea to have one central location to contain everything rather than it being spread out. Ben Kettle noted there is already another active facility in Ouray where things are currently being dumped into. It was previously in Bluebell then moved to Ouray as people were complaining about the smell. Ross noted that for the CUP there will not be a two mile notification when going to the Planning Commission. They only need to go 1,000 feet around the property, but as a courtesy they will go farther than the 1,000 feet and try to get enough people in the area notified. The property is approximately 221 acres and the land farm takes up less than 25% percent of it. Ross

noted the Planning Commission can impose further restrictions on the CUP. Matt mentioned they will be flying a drone over the areas to get current photos of the property. Commissioner Horrocks mentioned he would like to know more statistics regarding other land farms nearby and the area drainage.

This item was tabled and will be brought back to another meeting for further discussion.

DISCUSSION OF AND AMENDMENTS TO POLICY 260-RETIREMENT INCENTIVE: Tonya Craven

This item was previously discussed at last week's meeting and tabled for further discussion. Tonya noted she put together a table to see if the commission was interested in doing the amount based off years of service going in 5 year increments up to 20+ years, as previously suggested. Currently it is just based off supervisor approval; everyone gets 36K regardless of years of service. Michael Wilkins suggested tiering it based on years of service and dividing it up yearly up through 20 years of service, giving \$1,800 per year of service and the full 36K at 20 years of service. He mentioned the last time this was available there were employees with less than 5-6 years with the county that left with 36K dollars, the same amount as other employees who had more than 20 years of service. He felt that this needs to be a retirement incentive with criteria for eligibility similar to what URS has and that it would have to be consecutive years of service. He felt that as the commission is the one who sets the policy they should remove themselves from the policy itself and not decide who can be approved. He mentioned the issues with the 65% rate as some employees were replaced at a higher rate than this while other departments had to hire under the current pay grade for the position. Commissioner Horrocks felt this was a cost effective, program that needs to be done away with, maybe not immediately and felt it served its purpose too. Brenda McDonald did not feel it was a good program, as this leaves the supervisor with a grievance on them if they do not approve it. She mentioned there were employees who took advantage of this policy last time that were not eligible to retire through URS guidelines. She noted she went 4 ½ months trying to fill a position in her office at the 65% rate. Every time she tried to hire someone they would get another job or were offered a better wage elsewhere or just not show up for the interview at all. She mentioned some of the people who declined the job were being offered more money to work at a gas station, Walmart, and McDonald's. She felt it was pretty sad that our wages were coming in lower than some of these places. Commissioner Stringer mentioned benefits should also be taken into consideration for total compensation not just wage. Brenda noted this is a retirement incentive not an incentive to quit the county and go somewhere else. Commissioner Haslem addressed the issue with it being called a retirement incentive. He mentioned this is a tool and if it is confusing to call it a retirement incentive then we need to change the name. He understood where Michael was coming from with the retirement and meeting eligibility. The idea was to bring the average wage of Uintah County down as when he currently went into office the median wage was 69K and this was much higher than other places. Now with the program in place it is down to 49K. He mentioned the savings this has been to the county and this is a tool to get us back down to the average wage and to save taxpayers money. Wendi Long who lost 2/3 of her staff to this policy also mentioned how difficult it is to try and hire someone with accounting experience at \$13 per hour. She mentioned the current pay grades as set in the compensation plan. Tonya noted current pay grade system in place that has not been adjusted for the downturn in the economy. The pay grades are adjusted based off of evaluations. Commissioner Stringer also mentioned when he first came into office Uintah County was the highest salary. He felt when the average comes down to match the local economy then they could look back and start adjusting salary to inflation. He was against adding to the current above average wage. He also noted this has been a tool to bring this average down, rather than letting people go or cutting wages. Commissioner Horrocks agreed that this has been a good tool to reach the average wage without letting people go or doing pay cuts. He also addressed possibly changing the name from being a retirement incentive.

This item was tabled and will be brought back to a future meeting.

AMENDMENT TO ORDINANCE NO. 01-27-2020 O3- INSURANCE REBATE PROGRAM:

Jon Stearmer addressed this item. It was not on the agenda but under the emergency authority the commission is able to act upon this and ratify due to a deadline. Currently the ordinance regarding the insurance rebate program has a March 15th deadline to notify HR how the employee would like to receive their rebate if there is any money coming back to the county from CIGNA if they are a qualified employee. He mentioned the notice was just sent out to the employees on Friday March 12th to choose how they would like to receive the rebate. The options to receive the rebate are payroll, 401k or HSA. He mentioned the issues with the deadline when they still do not know the amount that will be received. He felt the employees should know the amount they will receive back to determine where they would like the money to go. As reads in the ordinance if there was an overpayment the county would receive 33% and CIGNA would keep 67%. Commissioner Haslem mentioned he thought the numbers were reversed and the county would receive the 67% and

CIGNA 33%. Jon proposed eliminating the March 15th deadline. Qualified employees had to be on the insurance plan from January 1st – December 31st of the previous year. Michael mentioned that they also add in that the employee must also still be employed with the county at the time the rebate is disbursed, as it would be hard to try and go back and pay employees no longer with the county. Matt suggested taking away the deadline and just adding in that the employee upon notice must notify HR within a certain timeframe how they would like to receive the rebate.

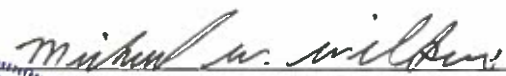
Commissioner Haslem moved to amend the ordinance that within 10 days of finding out from CIGNA what the rebate amount will be, the Clerk-Auditors office will communicate to HR and HR will then send out an email to the qualified employees and within 15 days of the email being sent out, the employee must notify HR which option they would like to choose, if nothing is chosen it will default to payroll. Commissioner Stringer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Tonya noted Tri-County Health has opened up to those 18 and older the ability to walk in and receive a COVID vaccine at the Conference Center.

ADJOURN: meeting adjourned at 12:40pm


BRAD HORROCKS, CHAIR


MICHAEL W. WILKINS, CLERK-AUDITOR

