

IRON COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING

March 9, 2015

Minutes of the Iron County Commission meeting convened at 9:00 a.m. March 9th, 2015 in Commission Chambers at the Iron County Courthouse, Parowan, Utah.

Officers in attendance included:

Dale M. Brinkerhoff	Commission Chair
David J. Miller	Commissioner
G. Michael Edwards	Deputy County Attorney
Jonathan T. Whittaker	County Clerk

Officer not in attendance:

Alma A. Adams	Commissioner (excused)
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Also present:

Mark W. Gower	County Sherrif
H. Eugene Adams	County Auditor
Cindy W. Bulloch	County Assessor
Nicole B. Rosenberg	County Treasurer
Leslie Bishop	Human Resources Director

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PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Those assembled were led in the pledge of allegiance by Mike Phillips.

INVOCATION

An invocation was offered by Jon Whittaker.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Maria Twitchell, Tourism and Parks and Recreation Director, reported that Tourism exceeded their goal of \$1 million in 2014, reflecting a 9% increase in their collections. Maria reported that their efforts resulted in increased skier-days, and hotel stays. Brian Head had reported a 3% increase in occupancy. Maria noted that group tours and the “Mighty Five,” or regional national parks, continue to bring interest to the area. She pointed out that Iron County benefits greatly as a “spillover area,” for the “Mighty Five” campaign. Maria also reported that they were scheduled to make a marketing trip to Canada later that year. She noted that Canada represents the largest foreign market for Iron County tourism, with roughly one out of 10 foreign tourists being Canadian. Maria reported that Brand USA, a nationwide marketing effort, was filming to produce materials specifically for the Chinese population. She noted that these videos would be in the Chinese language. Maria reported on Tourism initiatives, outlining priorities for the next 10 years. Maria identified night sky, trail development, community access & signage as priorities.

Maria Twitchell reported that their new hire, Kenzie Lundberg had brought a whole new perspective to their staff. Kenzie is in charge of communications, social media and public relations. Maria expressed excitement at having Kenzie aboard.

David Miller asked Maria Twitchell for an update on the Trails Initiative. Maria Twitchell reported that progress had been made, especially in regard to Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV). Maria explained that there are many facets to improving OHV trails including federal agencies, Iron County IT, GIS specialists, and of course the end-users of OHV trails. She noted that the different agencies and individuals involved were working on identifying the main trails and loops that are to be in the OHV trail network. Maria explained that after identifying the main trails, the next step would be establishing trailheads and placing kiosks. Maria reported that other outdoor initiatives included mountain bike trails and the development of disc golf.

Maria Twitchell then reported on outdoor recreation. She began by describing several complaints that had been received regarding the shooting range. She noted that some users had not been observing cease-fire safety. The reports were that people were shooting even though other people were downrange. Maria reported that they had ordered signs that reiterate the rules for shooting range safety, but asked the commission whether citable fines should be implemented. She noted that several groups had expressed desire to meet with Iron County officials to discuss ideas and possible direction to provide a better shooting range that is safe. She asked whether the commissioners would be willing to meet with those individuals. David Miller said that would be a good idea and that Sheriff Gower should be invited as well. Maria Twitchell then explained that there were grants available to improve the shooting range but that private clubs needed to apply for them, which would make including the local groups all the more important.

Maria Twitchell described a new competition disc golf course being constructed on BLM property adjacent to the Three Peaks Recreation Area. Maria explained that Iron County had been requested to install disc golf baskets on Iron County property. She explained that the baskets cost about \$300 each. Maria noted that disc golf is a growing sport that is inexpensive and low-impact, and would be another addition to the recreational aspect of the Three Peaks Recreation Area.

Ken Richards, GIS specialist, reported on behalf of the Information Technology (IT) department. Ken noted that he had been participating with Maria Twitchell and others in support of the OHV aspect of the Trails Initiative. He explained that they were in the process of collecting data to be included on the trails map, and that the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) had been conducting studies. Ken then reported that he had recently updated the Iron County Addressing map.

David Miller expressed that he was glad to see the rollout of the new version of the Iron County website (www.ironcounty.net). David expressed that the site looked good and was an improvement. He requested that those involved make County ordinances more readily accessible on the Iron County website.

Mark Gower, Iron County Sheriff, reported that later in the month the Sheriff's department would be taking possession of the new patrol vehicles purchased for 2015. Sheriff Gower reported that each of the detectives had caseload of about 18 cases each. He reported that the patrol division had pulled 600 cases so far in 2015. This was in line with 2014. Sheriff Gower reported that on the patrol side, his department was at full staff. He noted that he might be making some reassignments in order to provide a resident deputy for the west desert area.

Sheriff Gower explained that, in regard to training, another group of employees had finished Emergency Medical Response (EMR) training. He explained that with this most recent group, about 90% of Sheriff Department staff had completed EMR training. Sheriff Gower noted that with EMR training deputies, who typically arrived first on scene, would be able to provide emergency assistance until more advanced care arrives.

Sheriff Gower reported that they had retired the K-9 officer Duke, whose handler was Sergeant Malcolm. He reported that a new K-9 officer, Heinz, had just come online. Sheriff Gower noted that Deputy Peterson is the handler for Heinz, who had recently completed his first phase of narcotics training, making them certified to do narcotics work in Iron County.

Sheriff Gower explained that the Sheriff's department was gearing up for the summer tourist season. He noted that with the influx of tourists the Sheriff's Department workload increases. Sheriff Gower expressed gratitude for the Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) program.

Sheriff Gower reported that overall, most types of crime within the county had remained about the same. He noted that the drug task force was an exception with a marked increase in drug-related crimes. Sheriff Gower reported that in 2013 the drug task force made 68 felony drug arrests. In 2014 that number jumped to 145, an increase of 47%.

Sheriff Gower expressed that he felt that the VIPS program was an ongoing success. In particular, he expressed gratitude at those VIPS volunteers that were able to help patrol, but were also willing and able to perform repairs on vehicles, thereby saving Iron County a significant amount of money. Specifically, Sheriff Gower recognized Bill Summers. Dale Brinkerhoff expressed a desire to participate in recognizing those VIPS volunteers.

Sheriff Gower then expressed gratitude for those individuals that volunteer with the Iron County Search and Rescue program. He noted that they sacrifice a great deal of time to train, prepare, and ultimately help finding rescue individuals when called upon. Sheriff Gower noted that Iron County Search and Rescue volunteers perform a vital service.

Dale Brinkerhoff reported that the planned Public Safety Building had been relocated from the front or West side of the jail building, to the East or rear of the jail building, between the sheriff's impound and the ambulance garage. Dale reported that he had discussed both the impound yard and a storage area with Sheriff Gower. He then questioned whether the communications tower associated with the ambulance building would need to be moved. Linda Petty, Manager of the Cedar Communications Center, explained that the tower would indeed need to be relocated, owing to the need to have the tower within 300 feet of the communications center.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

After noting several corrections, David Miller made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2015 Iron County Commission Meeting subject to the noted

corrections. Second by Dale Brinkerhoff. Voting: David Miller, Aye; Dale Brinkerhoff, Aye.

NON-DELEGATED ITEMS

David Miller, Iron County Commissioner reported that many solar projects are either planned or in progress in Iron County. David explained that these projects will bring a tremendous amount of energy production, as well as an increase to the tax base. He noted that there are plans for an additional 500 MW of solar power in Iron County.

David Miller reiterated the progress made in terms of trails, and their effect on tourism. He noted improvements in many types of trails including OHV, mountain bike and snowmobile trails. David reported on an interactive electronic map in progress that will be located on the Iron County website (www.ironcounty.net). He expressed hope that these improvements will give tourists a reason to visit, and spend money in Iron County.

David Miller reported on his recent trip to the National Association of Counties (NACO) legislative conference, in Washington DC. David reported that he was able to visit with each of the lawmakers representing Utah. He expressed the critical nature of Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) monies to Iron County's budget. David reported that the PILT was approved by Congress. He explained that there was a caveat, in that the PILT monies were tied to Secure Rural Schools (SRS) funding. In a worst-case scenario Iron County could lose 40% of the \$3.1 million annually received through PILT funding.

David Miller reported on new rules from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), entitled, "Waters of the US." David explained that these rules are extremely strict and affect how water is used or redirected. He reported that there had been some success in challenging the new rules.

David Miller reported that the three forests in our region (the Dixie, the Fishlake, and the Manti-LaSal) had been working with Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) outside of the regular processes to create an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), that would effectively shut down the grazing industry. David reported that regional county commissioners were able to find out about the unusual and unbiased process, as well as the NGO involvement. After filing several Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, they were able to ascertain the biased intentions of the EIS. David reported that he was able to meet with the national head of the US Forest Service, Tom Tidwell while on his trip to Washington DC and the NACO conference, and that the three forest review and the EIS were to be restarted in a less biased manner.

David Miller then reported on some of the legislative activity that had been going on. He noted that the State of Utah anticipates being short \$13 billion over 25 years for road maintenance. Because of this, the legislature had been in discussions to increase the gasoline tax. David Miller described several proposals being put forth, the first was from Senator Van Tassell who recommends an additional 6 cents per gallon increase in the gas tax for gasoline, increasing to a total of 9 cents per gallon total increase over four years. For diesel fuel, Senator Van Tassell's proposal is an additional 2 cents per gallon, increasing to a total of 6 cents per gallon increase over four years. Another proposal put forth recommends a 10% sales tax on gasoline. This proposal by Representative Anderson seeks to increase revenue through a fixed percentage. David Miller noted that given the currently low gas prices, Representative Anderson's proposal would actually be a tax decrease. David then explained that if gas prices were to increase greatly, this proposal would greatly increase the fuel taxes paid in Utah. Another feature of representative Anderson's proposal would be a local option sales tax, which would increase the sales tax on everything sold in smaller counties. This would be a tax instituted by local counties and cities to help fund smaller, non-primary road maintenance. Were this to be implemented it would represent a 2.5% increase in the local sales tax, with 1% going to towns and cities and 1.5% going to counties.

David Miller then reported on a bill being put forth by Representative Christopherson regarding the catastrophic fire conditions that exist. David explained that

under a “Nuisance Abatement Request,” local entities would be able to detail their concern and give notice of the need to abate fire conditions causing health and/or safety concerns. The bill would allow for local remediation if federal authorities fail to act. The bill would provide an opportunity to mitigate threats before any damage occurs.

David Miller also reported on various legislative activities including bolstering the Natural Resource Plan, approval of the Wildlife Board, and appropriations for the Utah Summer Games.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were offered.

MOTION TO REDIRECT THE INCREASE BUDGETED FOR ADMINISTRATION SALARY TOWARD OTHER COUNTY NEEDS

David Miller explained that during the previous budget cycle salary increases were apportioned for the Iron County Commissioners. David explained further that those budgeted salary increases were never implemented. David Miller made a motion to redirect the budgeted monies that would have gone toward a salary increase for the Iron County Commissioners toward other County needs. Second by Dale Brinkerhoff. Voting: Dale Brinkerhoff, Aye; David Miller, Aye.

PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE SALE OF REAL PROPERTY

Dale Brinkerhoff explained that 3 companies had made offers to purchase the Iron County Ambulance assets; Color Country Ambulance, Gold Cross, and Classic Air Medical. Dale explained further that they had received responses from two of those companies; Color Country Ambulance and Gold Cross. Dale Brinkerhoff explained that the commissioners had carefully considered the economics, liability, and level of service involved in the privatization of ambulance services. Dale explained that it had been an emotional process and that the commissioners were anxious to receive assurances that existing Iron County Ambulance personnel would have the opportunity to continue serving emergency medical services. At that point, the public hearing was opened for public comments.

Dan Nagy, a Cedar City resident, expressed that he was against the sale of Iron County Ambulance assets. Dan explained that when you dial 911, you expect emergency personnel to show up. Dan explained further that the Sheriff’s Department was not a moneymaking enterprise, nor was it expected to be. He questioned why the Sheriff’s department was supported with taxes with no expectation of gaining a profit or even breaking even, while the Iron County Ambulance was an enterprise fund and therefore was expected to be self-sustaining. Dan elaborated, noting that every department in Iron County operates at a loss and is only sustained through taxes. He expressed that a private ambulance service operating in Iron County would, of necessity, need to cut back services in order to break even financially. Dan concluded by saying his idea would be to leave the service the way it is, explaining that is the reason we pay taxes.

Bob Whitelaw, a resident of Parowan, explained that he had been trained as an EMT in 1995, but after responding to one accident he realized emergency medical services was not for him. Bob expressed gratitude to all of the EMTs assembled that day for their service to the community. He explained that he had family members spread throughout Iron County and that he operated a business in Brian Head that serviced hundreds if not thousands of guests. Bob expressed that he was against the sale of Iron County Ambulance assets. He continued, saying that the health, welfare, and safety of the citizens of Iron County should come first. Bob explained that he had many friends in Parowan who were concerned about response times and level of care they would receive from a privatized ambulance service. Bob Whitelaw concluded by reiterating that his family was well represented in Iron County, and that he felt the sale of Iron County

Ambulance assets was a mistake. He expressed that as a taxpayer he would be happy to pay a little extra to support the Iron County Ambulance service.

Evan Ludwig, a resident of Cedar City, expressed that his desire was for Iron County to divest itself of the ambulance service. Evan recalled that there were days when television service was government-sponsored. Evan expressed that he did not believe that anyone would die due to the sale of Iron County Ambulance assets. He explained that he had witnessed various examples of privatization that were successful. Evan expressed that the ire directed at the Iron County Commissioners would be better spent on the federal government and Medicare. He explained that Medicare's billing reduces the amount billed and the actual remittance ends up being even smaller, thus causing shortfalls like the one plaguing the Iron County Ambulance department. Evan expressed that the Iron County Ambulance department boosts the resume of the Sheriff. He addressed those assembled and said he was sympathetic to them losing their job, but that life marches on. Evan expressed the need for emergency medical services to become financially viable. Evan encouraged the Iron County Commissioners to not let their job be the determining factor in their vote and to fight against big government.

Thomas Cluff, representing the Beryl Fire Department, thanked the Iron County Commissioners for the concern they had shown to western Iron County. Thomas explained that there were two EMTs that lived in the Beryl area, and although he was not an EMT he personally responded to about 80% of the calls received. He expressed that the Beryl emergency medical services were severely understaffed, and that people have indeed suffered due to understaffing. Thomas explained that there have been times when no crew was available, and response times were unnecessarily long. He explained that generally the Beryl Fire Department was against the sale of Iron County Ambulance assets. Thomas explained that their main objection was the process by which the decision to sell the Iron County Ambulance assets was reached. He then posed 2 questions. The first had to do with billing. Thomas noted that Gold Cross has been doing the ambulance billing for years. His question on behalf of the Beryl Fire Department, was how is it not a conflict of interest for Gold Cross to bid on the Iron County Ambulance assets when it has been doing the billing for years. He then noted that the Iron County Ambulance, with Gold Cross doing the billing was only collecting 48.7% of the total charged. The second question Thomas Cluff asked was how would a private company be able to turn a profit without diminishing services to the outlying areas. Thomas noted that in a prior meeting the representatives from Gold Cross had committed to not taking away the ambulance dedicated to the Beryl/New Castle area. Further, Thomas explained that the local residents had done the legwork to get that grant and they were very concerned that with the privatization of ambulance services they would be at risk of losing that valuable asset. Thomas concluded that he contributes to emergency medical services not for the pay but for his neighbors, and he could see no way for the service to be able to continue under a private company.

Blaine Nay, a resident of Cedar City, expressed that there seemed to be a prevailing sentiment that important things need to be done by government or that private businesses could not be trusted to do important things. Blaine explained that if a person serves as an EMT for government that person's service won't be any worse if he serves as an EMT for a private business. He noted that the requirements to serve in emergency medical services are the same for both government and private. Blaine expressed that he could not see how the service would be diminished through privatization. He said he was in favor of selling the Iron County Ambulance assets.

Clay Allred, expressed that the ambulance service deals with peoples' lives. Clay explained that, in his service, he is seen multiple calls at once. He expressed the concern that by reducing the number of ambulances from 4 to 2, someone would eventually die. Clay mentioned the gloom and doom spoken of in St. George, and said it was very real. He said he knew city council members in St. George who were still trying to get rid of the privatized ambulance service. Clay also expressed concern that while a

contract can be written with strong language, once Iron County signs over control to a third party they no longer have control over the ambulance service. Clay counseled those present not to confuse what's going on in the federal government with local services that enhance quality of life. He expressed gratitude that the Iron County Commission voted to forgo their raises in light of tight budgets. Clay Allred concluded by stating he was against the sale of the Iron County Ambulance assets.

Wendell Shallenberger spoke in support of selling the Iron County Ambulance assets. Wendell explained that although some present had said taxes were paying for Iron County Ambulance Services, he felt that was not true. He explained that the Iron County Ambulance Department was an enterprise fund and therefore responsible to be self-sustaining. He explained that the Ambulance Department had been losing money and that the money needed to be repaid. Wendell concluded by saying that the tax monies used to keep the Iron County Ambulance Department solvent was essentially a loan.

Harsh Kansagra, an advanced EMT student at SUU, stated that everyone seemed to be in agreement that emergency medical services is for saving lives. Harsh stated that everyone also seemed to be in agreement that the best service was being provided. He stated that the problem seemed to be a \$2 million debt, that as he understood it was accrued over a period of 10 to 15 years, with two of those years falling under the control of Sheriff Gower. Harsh expressed that two years to improve the budget was simply not enough time. He expressed further that if the service were subpar it would be more understandable. Harsh stated he thought that they were working on the budget shortfalls. One example that he gave was an ambulance purchased in Las Vegas that they were able to acquire for half the expected cost due to diligent price comparison. Harsh posed the question, why change a good thing for a potential risk? He concluded by stating that he was against the sale of the Iron County Ambulance Department.

Don Young stated that much had been said by the commissioners and by ambulance personnel but that he was speaking on behalf of the taxpayers. Don reflected on a letter from the Utah State auditor's office that stated that unlike private accounting which measures profitability, enterprise funds in government, which is what the ambulance service is, aim to measure accountability. Don continued noting that the ambulance service was \$2.1 million in debt and climbing. He expressed that state statutes and accounting principles had not been followed, and independent audits showing cost overruns and violations have not been acted upon for over 10 years. Don stated that Sheriff Gower had expressed that he would not save a dollar if it impacts public safety. Don questioned whose dollars Sheriff Gower was referring to. His? Or the taxpayers? He explained that the deficit for 2013 and 2014 combined was \$687,000. Don noted that the commissioners had given the mayors an opportunity to retire the debt incurred in the ambulance department. He explained that the mayors unanimously rejected that offer, explaining that they were willing to help fund the surface moving forward, but not pay for the accrued debt. Don continued by expressing how troubling he found that the mayors and the Sheriff's Department had resorted to fear mongering. Don reported that the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services has stated that privatization does not affect the level of service whatsoever. He explained that in Utah's 29 counties there are 193 emergency medical services providers. Referring to some of the negative comments made about Washington County's privatized services, Don explained that there were 17 licensed emergency medical service providers in Washington County, of which only two were Gold Cross, the disparaged provider. He expressed that the common solution in local government was to raise taxes, "just a little." Don expressed further, that the problem was not a lack of revenue but a lack of accountability. He suggested that the elected officials reflect on what had happened in Enoch, referring to the rejection of a tax increase referendum. He concluded by stating that he supported the privatization of Iron County Ambulance Department, not because of poor service but because the managers have mismanaged the service at the taxpayers' expense.

Scott Holyoak, a resident of Parowan, thanked the commissioners for the opportunity to speak. He stated that in government, the apparent policy was to have less work and more people to do it. He also stated that he was for free enterprise, free from government interference. Scott reflected that in 1972 the hospital was owned by the County but that the decision was made to sell it to Intermountain Healthcare. He said there didn't seem to be any complaints about that privatization. Scott concluded by stating that he was in favor of privatizing the Iron County Ambulance assets.

Ethan Bunker stated that he was a concerned citizen. Ethan explained that in 1991 he became an EMT. He noted that, in his opinion, the service was mismanaged then and that mismanagement had continued for years. He expressed that he was in favor of privatization of the Iron County Ambulance service. Ethan gave three reasons for his opinion. First, there has not been the fiscal responsibility or accountability. Second, the level of care is not as good as it should be. Third, we need to address not only the current need for emergency medical services, but to ensure that those services will exist in the future. He explained that he had gone on to receive a nursing degree, and that he had worked in various emergency rooms in Utah. Ethan noted that while working in the emergency room in St. George, some were pleased with Gold Cross, but not all. He also explained that he had worked in an emergency room in the Salt Lake City area, and that Gold Cross had performed well by his estimate. Ethan expressed that the level of care had increased primarily because of increased accountability. Ethan concluded by addressing the topic of various marital infidelities that had occurred in and around the Iron County Ambulance department. He noted that they had just lost an emergency room physician because of what had been happening. Ethan expressed that they might be wrecking more families than they are saving, and that personnel needed to put their lives in order.

Heather Abbott stated that she was against selling the Iron County Ambulance assets. Heather explained that she had attended the meeting where her city had discussed paying for the ambulance service and its debt. She stated that the mayors were in favor of helping to supplement the service, but not to pay for the accrued debt. Heather explained that the reason was that the taxpayers had already paid that debt by way of their property taxes. She noted that the monies spent to keep the ambulance service solvent came from the general fund, which is supported by the taxpayers. Essentially, by paying back the accrued debt, the taxpayers would be paying for it twice. Heather noted that for many of the EMTs, the issue of privatization was not about keeping or losing their jobs, but about maintaining the quality of service. She noted that for ambulance personnel to hire on with Gold Cross, due to insurance and other costs, the full-time EMTs would essentially receive a pay cut. Heather noted that this would induce a trade-off, lowering the quality of personnel. She concluded by saying that her primary concern was that the quality of care would decrease due to the loss of experienced personnel.

Deputy Doug Twitchell, of the Utah Highway Patrol reflected on what a privilege it is to be able to offer public comments at a hearing like this. He noted that he had been a highway patrolman for 35 years, and that as he was waiting for a tow truck to come in his cruiser on I-15 the previous Monday, he listened to the radio. Deputy Twitchell noted that in that 20 minute time period, there were four ambulance calls, each one a Delta or critical response. He explained that he contemplated what would happen if there were four ambulances for all of Iron County, what would that dispatcher have to say to the next person that called 911? Deputy Twitchell then described hearing on the radio that to use the argument, "What if it's your family?" is really a scare tactic. He mentioned that waiting too long for emergency medical services would be a reality for someone. Deputy Twitchell reported that in his career he had performed CPR six times. He explained that it was the most physically and emotionally demanding thing that he had ever done. He described performing CPR for 13 minutes while waiting for emergency medical services. Deputy Twitchell stated that his greatest concern was whether or not we are giving you enough time. He asked whether the cities and councils could solve this, and whether was really necessary to take this action right now.

Helena Mortensen, a resident of Parowan, relayed a story about the previous weekend and her elderly parents. Because of the weather, the power had gone out in Escalante. Helena's sister works for the ambulance department there and was unable to help their parents. Helena's father requires oxygen, and the local fire department actually knocked on their door and set up a generator so that he could have oxygen. She lamented that, in Iron County, we were not as unified in our emergency medical services. Helena stated that the commissioners needed to consider those people that lived further away from Cedar City, and that having to wait for service would not be acceptable for those people. Helena concluded by pleading with the commissioners to think about the residents that live outside of the population centers.

Linda Petty, manager of the Cedar Communications Center, stated that she had no opinion as to whether or not Iron County privatized its ambulance service. Linda relayed a concern that had been expressed by her dispatchers about the plan Gold Cross had put forth. Specifically, that Gold Cross had committed to maintain two ambulances in Cedar City and one in Parowan. Linda related that in the past two weeks there had been several circumstances where three and four ambulances were called out, with a 20 minute wait. Furthermore, she noted that there are times when the ambulances are busy transporting a patient, therefore reducing the ambulance fleet would have the potential to increase response times. Linda concluded by relaying the question her dispatchers had posed which was, what would they tell the citizens when they are out of ambulances.

Brandon Franta, a resident of Cedar City, stated that he was for the free market. Brandon noted that the privatization of the Iron County ambulance service is simply trading one monopoly for another. He explained that currently we have a monopoly but that we can appeal to our elected officials whereas if the service were sold we wouldn't have any say in the affairs of a private business. Brandon concluded by expressing that we should be fixing the problem not abandoning it.

Jay Hunt, a resident of Enoch, saluted the commissioners for looking out for the taxpayers. He expressed his appreciation for the commissioners efforts in this regard. Jay noted that he had some health problems and the provider insisted on transporting him, but he refused. Jay concluded by stating that there are times when the ambulance service is an overpriced taxi service.

With no more public comments offered, Dale Brinkerhoff, Iron County Commission Chair declared the public hearing closed. Dale thanked everyone for their thoughtful comments and efforts. The Chair then reviewed the options that had been discussed and reviewed by the Iron County Commissioners and the Mayors. The first was to create a 9 member board that would oversee the Iron County Ambulance Department through October. Dale noted that the governing board would be composed of 9 members; 6 would be representatives of the each municipality in Iron County, 1 would represent the unincorporated areas, 1 would represent the medical community and the final board member would represent the county as a whole. The board would oversee the Iron County Ambulance and choose a new director. After October, the books would be closed, and, allowing for the lag in federal payments, the municipalities would be billed for the difference between revenues and expenses.

Dale Brinkerhoff emphasized that the Iron County Commission did not state that the cities would have to repay the ambulance debt, rather the requirement was that Iron County would have to be made whole regarding the deficit between revenue and expense. The plan was to apportion the expense either on a per capita basis or on a per run basis. This would have allowed the cities to budget for the additional expense of supporting the ambulance service. Dale noted that all of the cities and towns in Iron County with the exception of Kanarrville rejected this proposal. He noted that in 2014 the ambulance deficit was \$361,504. Dale stated that, as the Iron County Commission, the commissioners have a fiduciary responsibility to maintain an enterprise fund which means that the expenses cannot exceed the revenues. Dale reiterated that the Iron County

Commission had required only that the towns and cities make the County whole in this regard.

Dale Brinkerhoff then described the second option that had been discussed which would have been to abandon the county ambulance service in favor of a municipal ambulance service, much like Washington County. Dale noted that the third option was to privatize the now governmental, county administered ambulance service. He emphasized that the ongoing budget shortfall and growing deficit were the driving forces behind the impetus to do something different with the Iron County Ambulance Department.

David Miller then read a statement written by Commissioner Alma Adams who was absent due to his attendance at a risk pool conference as part of his duties as commissioner. The first part was the same statement that Alma himself had read during the February 23rd Iron County Commission meeting. David Miller then read a new statement written by Commissioner Alma Adams for this the March 9th meeting. In those comments, Alma Adams declared that his vote was for the sale of the ambulance assets to one company who will continue to provide emergency medical services to Iron County. Further, Alma declared that his choice of bidder was Gold Cross Ambulance. He stated that Gold Cross had been very professional in their presentations and that he felt they had the resources, infrastructure, personnel, and organizational structure necessary to provide a high quality of emergency medical services to the people of Iron County. Furthermore, Alma noted that Gold Cross had been in business for 47 years and had been honored by Sandy City as business partner of the year in 2014 for exceeding expectations of service. He then noted that Uintah County is in a similar situation to Iron County, in that they have many citizens living in outlying areas and that Gold Cross provides their ambulance service. Alma explained that he had visited with Mark Raymond and Mike McKee, Uintah County commissioners, who stated that they had been served very well by Gold Cross. He had also spoken with a private citizen of Uintah County who spoke positively of Gold Cross. Alma also stated that he had spoken with Guy Dansie, Bureau of Emergency Medical Services Program Manager for the State of Utah, who told Alma that Gold Cross was managed by professional people, people who were innovators who possessed the highest skill sets in the state. In particular Mr. Dansie expressed that Gold Cross excelled at handling newborn and premature birth situations. Furthermore, he told Alma that Gold Cross provided very high quality service and performed quality assurance reviews, and that they were the largest ambulance provider in the State of Utah.

In his written statement, Alma explained that he found the Gold Cross Ambulance offer to be straightforward, comprehensive, and clearly stated. Gold Cross had offered to pay the greater of the appraised value of the two ambulance buildings, or the bank appraised value at the time of purchase. Gold Cross had also provided a purchase price of the best estimate of the physical assets. Alma noted that he was impressed with the principals of Color Country Ambulance and that they appeared to have a great knowledge of ambulance services. However, Alma felt that they did not have the existing organizational structure or past experience with operations for him to choose them. In conclusion, Alma stated that he felt that the Gold Cross offer was the most comprehensive and best offer received to purchase the Iron County Ambulance assets. This concluded the written statement from Commissioner Alma Adams.

David Miller then spoke to several questions that had been raised during the public hearing. The first thing David spoke to was the question of a potential conflict of interest for Gold Cross to have been taking care of the billing for the Iron County Ambulance department and to now be in a position to purchase the Iron County Ambulance assets. He mentioned that about a year and a half ago, Iron County had considered moving the ambulance billing from Gold Cross back in house. David reported that after analysis, that plan was judged not to be advantageous. He reported that by providing the service of billing for the Iron County Ambulance department, Gold Cross in no way received any preference in the bidding process to purchase the ambulance

assets. David concluded that he did not feel that there was a conflict of interest in this regard.

David Miller addressed the questions regarding service to outlying areas. David mentioned that he and the other commissioners felt strongly that whomever were to purchase the ambulance assets and take over emergency medical services in Iron County, must maintain a high degree of service to those outlying areas. He noted that many questions have been asked regarding such service, and that it was the commissioners' desire that the ambulance that serves the Escalante Valley be maintained. David explained that the ambulance license is administered by the Utah State Bureau of Emergency Medical Services. He explained that, counties do not dictate the level of service, the state does.

On the question of monopolies, David Miller stated frankly that Iron County does, indeed have a monopoly on emergency medical services. David noted that if the service were privatized that would also be a monopoly, but it is that way by state statute. He noted that it was through extensive experience that the State of Utah set it up that way.

Regarding the timing of the sale, David Miller noted that the commissioners learned of the ambulance situation through an independent audit. Because the financial situation was dire, there was no luxury to "kick the can down the road." David noted that one requirement the commissioners demanded from the outset was that the service must be solvent. He noted that many municipalities are in bankruptcy and that he was opposed to government subsidies. David noted that he was in favor of fair taxation that provides essential services, but he made the point that if government doesn't have to be involved in a particular service that it should not be. He noted that there may have been some benefit to having a county run ambulance service, but that Iron County now found itself in a dire situation. David expressed his appreciation for those that serve in the Iron County Ambulance Department. He wanted those present to understand that the decision that would be made did not mean that the commissioners do not appreciate the service of the ambulance department employees, but rather it reflected a financially defunct enterprise. David then reviewed the three proposals discussed with the cities. The first being that the cities would contribute financially to any cost overruns and the ambulance department. The second was for the cities to take over the service. The third was privatization. David noted that the cities in Iron County rejected the first and second options which left privatization. He explained that his preference was Gold Cross.

David Miller made a motion to accept the proposal offered by Gold Cross, subject to finalizing negotiations regarding the sale of ambulance real property, also subject to working out transition details. Part of this motion was to state that this decision was made in the interests of the health, safety, and welfare of the people of Iron County, in particular in regard to relieving the debt burden. Second by Dale Brinkerhoff. Dale Brinkerhoff noted that although Commissioner Alma Adams' opinion was clear based on his written statement, they would only count the votes of the commissioners present. Voting: Dale Brinkerhoff, Aye; David Miller, Aye.

CONVENE AS THE IRON COUNTY BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

David Miller made a motion to convene as the Iron County Board of Equalization. Second by Dale Brinkerhoff. Voting: Dale Brinkerhoff, Aye; David Miller, Aye.

REVIEW SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS REQUESTING TAX EXEMPT STATUS FOR THE 2015 TAX YEAR

Christine Lowder presented the list of applications requesting continued and first time tax-exempt status for religious, charitable, or educational entities for the 2015 tax year. Various groups were discussed. Not all groups had submitted their application for tax exempt status. It was agreed that Christine Lowder would write a letter to those individuals reminding them of the need to apply. David Miller made a motion to approve

the applications that had been submitted for the 2015 tax year, with noted follow-up letters and exceptions. Second by Dale Brinkerhoff. Voting: Dale Brinkerhoff, Aye; David Miller, Aye.

REVIEW VETERAN'S PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT

The commissioners reviewed a property tax abatement for Jonathan B. Nobles, retroactive for tax year 2014. Christine explained that the Auditor's office granted Mr. Nobles the abatement as if he had applied in 2014. David Miller made a motion to retroactively grant the veteran's property tax abatement for Jonathan B. Nobles for tax year 2014 as explained. Second by Dale Brinkerhoff. Voting: Dale Brinkerhoff, Aye; David Miller, Aye.

RECONVENE AS THE IRON COUNTY COMMISSION

David Miller made a motion to Reconvene as the Iron County Commission. Second by Dale Brinkerhoff. Voting: Dale Brinkerhoff, Aye; David Miller, Aye.

USDA PREDATOR CONTROL CONTRACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

David Miller explained that the predator control program is ran by the State of Utah, and is used to mitigate excess coyotes that kill many mule deer fauns each year. David explained that the predator control contract provides a \$50.00 bounty for the taking of coyotes. He noted that the state hopes that those individuals that take coyotes do so in areas that will have the greatest benefit to the mule deer populations. Gene Adams, Iron County Auditor asked whether Iron County still administers that program. Jon Whittaker, Iron County Clerk, replied that the state now takes care of the bounties. David Miller made a motion to approve the predator control contract for fiscal year 2015, participating in the amount of \$11,500 annual contribution. Second by Dale Brinkerhoff. Voting: Dale Brinkerhoff, Aye; David Miller, Aye.

UPPER LIMIT AVIATION LANDING OPPORTUNITIES IN IRON COUNTY

Scott Jolly, Community Relations and Business Director for Upper Limit Aviation, proposed that Upper Limit Aviation be allowed to lease 1.2 miles of County Road near Desert Mound. This is a roadway that has been out of use for many years and was associated with the iron mines in the past. Scott explained that this particular section of roadway is ideal because it follows prevailing winds. Scott explained that as the students increase, the Cedar City airport will no longer have sufficient capacity for their training. He also explained that granting this lease would help with noise abatement for populated areas. Scott explained that Upper Limit Aviation would pave both running strips and landing pads within the roadway for Upper Limit Aviation's use. He noted that the running strips and the landing pads would not impede vehicle traffic.

Scott Jolly noted that Upper Limit Aviation would bear the cost of construction and of signage. Scott explained that he had visited with Sheriff Gower regarding the Public Safety aspect of this proposal and that Sheriff Gower was in favor of it. Scott explained that the proposed lease would be \$2,500 annually and that Upper Limit Aviation would pay in advance. He noted that Upper Limit Aviation would bear the annual maintenance cost which was estimated at \$10,000 per year. There was some question as to whether Iron County actually owned the property in question. Dale Brinkerhoff asked Debbie Johnson, Iron County Recorder, whether she could clarify the ownership question. Debbie replied that she was unable to find any conclusive evidence that Iron County actually owned the property in question. David Miller made a motion to move the discussion to a later meeting subject to receiving more conclusive information regarding the property ownership. Second by Dale Brinkerhoff. Voting: Dale Brinkerhoff, Aye; David Miller, Aye.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE CODE

Ted Black, Chief Deputy Utah State Fire Marshal, presented proposed changes to the Wildland-Urban Interface Code. Ted explained that problems had arisen for smaller counties in Utah regarding the Urban Interface Code. After investigation the Utah State Fire Marshal’s office found that the problems were related not to the building code or fire code as much as they were with the Urban Interface Code.

Ted Black explained that the document he had prepared were proposed changes to Iron County’s Wildland-Urban Interface Ordinance. Ted explained that the proposed changes may make the code more usable for the citizens of Iron County. He noted that many changes had to do with how the code was referenced and didn’t change anything.

Ted Black then discussed some of the definitions in the Urban Interface Code. For example, Ted discussed the term “rancher line shack.” The state fire marshal’s office had discussed this at length and decided to use the same verbiage as a fruit shack. The question being at what point is a stop being a shack and become a cabin? Ted then discussed improving an existing shack. At what point does a shack become a cabin? Ted explained that an addition of no more than 25% of the original structure constitutes it remaining a shack. He also explained that approval for any construction would fall to the “authority having jurisdiction.”

Ted Black discussed what an approved road with in a Wildland-Urban Interface might be. He noted that an approved road would be any road that accommodates normal firefighting equipment. Ted explained that water supply was up to local jurisdictions. Ted explained that there were exceptions in the code for shacks. He explained that driveways were similar to approve roads, in that they simply needed to accommodate normal firefighting equipment. Ted explained that he had removed the wording, “all weather surface,” from fire apparatus access roads. He noted that an all weather road would not make sense if the road were under snow six months of the year. Ted explained that as long as the road met Iron County’s needs, then it could be an approved road. Finally, Ted said that if the road in question is a state or federal road, it is exempt.

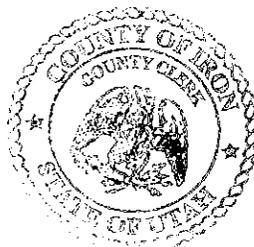
Ted Black discussed what should constitute a Wildland-Urban Interface. He noted that areas where a wildfire would significantly impact watershed, the economy of the jurisdiction, or the natural beauty of the area would be severely impacted or destroyed by a wildfire should be considered for Wildland-Urban Interface. Also, areas in close proximity to national or state forests or other forested areas may also be considered as part of the Wildland-Urban Interface. Areas where fire is a regular part of the ecosystem, that burn almost annually, and areas were a fire would have little impact on the community, and would not impact the economy or the watershed should not be considered part of the Wildland-Urban Interface.

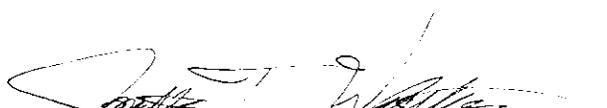
Ted Black explained that the law states that counties must have a Wildland-Urban Interface. Ted also noted that the rule states that counties should adopt a Wildland-Urban Interface. He concluded by noting that that gives the counties flexibility.

ADJOURNMENT

David Miller made a motion to adjourn. Second by Dale Brinkerhoff. Voting: Dale Brinkerhoff, Aye; David Miller, Aye.


Signed: Dale M. Brinkerhoff, Chairman




Attest: Jonathan T. Whittaker, County Clerk

