

**MINUTES
OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF WEBER COUNTY**

Tuesday, November 29, 2016 - 5:30 p.m.
Commission Chambers, 2380 Washington Blvd., Ogden, Utah

In accordance with the requirements of Utah Code Annotated Section 52-4-203, the County Clerk records in the minutes the names of all persons who appear and speak at a County Commission meeting and the substance "in brief" of their comments. Such statements may include opinion or purported facts. The County does not verify the accuracy or truth of any statement but includes it as part of the record pursuant to State law.

WEBER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: Matthew G Bell, Chair; Kerry W. Gibson; and James Ebert

OTHER STAFF PRESENT: Ricky D. Hatch, County Clerk/Auditor; David C. Wilson, Deputy County Attorney; and Fátima Fernelius, of the Clerk/Auditor's Office, who took minutes

A. WELCOME – Chair Bell

B. INVOCATION – Commissioner Ebert

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Shelly Halacy

D. THOUGHT OF THE DAY – Commissioner Gibson

E. CONSENT ITEMS:

1. Ratify warrants #411227 - #411507 in the amount of \$3,757,676.34 dated November 22, 2016
 2. Warrants #411508-#411774 in the amount of \$311,128.99
 3. Purchase orders in the amount of \$180,608.36
 4. Minutes for the meetings held on November 15 and 22, 2016
 5. New business licenses
 6. Declaration of Surplus Property (Parcel #05-060-0058)
 7. Set public hearing for December 13, 2016 to consider potential projects for which funding may be applied for under CDBG program for 2017
 8. Request from Sheriff's Office/Emergency Management to approve Amendment 1 extending performance period for 60 days for previously signed grant for work on Weber & Ogden Rivers, Project #5084
 9. Request from County Planning Department to approve termination of easement for a ski lift over Summit Pass
- Commissioner Ebert moved to approve the consent items; Commissioner Gibson seconded.
Commissioner Gibson – aye; Commissioner Ebert – aye; Chair Bell – aye

F. ACTION ITEMS:

1. **RESOLUTION RATIFYING THE APPOINTMENTS OF MAYORS TOBY MILESKI AND BRENT TAYLOR AS MEMBERS OF THE WEBER COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH – RESOLUTION 35-2016**

Commissioner Ebert moved to adopt Resolution 35-2016 ratifying the appointments of Mayors Toby Mileski and Brent Taylor as members of the Weber County Board of Health through 12/31/2017; Commissioner Gibson seconded.
Commissioner Gibson – aye; Commissioner Ebert – aye; Chair Bell – aye

G. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Begin at 6:00 p.m.)

1. Commissioner Gibson moved to adjourn the public meeting and convene the public hearing for item G.2; Commissioner Ebert seconded.
Commissioner Gibson – aye; Commissioner Ebert – aye; Chair Bell – aye
2. **PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR SERVICE FOR PARKS AND RECREATION IN THE UNINCORPORATED COUNTY**

Bryan Baron, Deputy County Attorney, stated that the county received a request by unincorporated area residents to provide park and recreation services for West Weber and Taylor. Commissioner Gibson explained that the process for creating a district is mandated by statute, including petitioning the county to see if it is a service district it wants to provide. If the county does not, residents can gather signatures to put the issue on an election ballot. This is not a service that the county generally provides. Chair Bell invited public comments and following is a summary.

Keith Hipwell, of West Weber, opposes the proposed services. He was on a committee years ago and said that there was no money then or now for this. He said that the county already has parks at the Fairgrounds that are available with various fields and that every ward has a park. Taylor, West Weber and Warren have parks. He walked around the block and about 56% are quite older retirees. To provide services the county has to raise taxes, retirees have not received a raise in two years and water shares are expensive and watering the park is a concern.

Brent Fowers, of West Weber, a sponsor of the petition, feels that parks are needed for children, that they are important to keep them busy doing recreational activities and the land will not always be available.

Commissioner Gibson moved to adjourn the public hearing and reconvene the public meeting; Commissioner Ebert seconded.
Commissioner Gibson – aye; Commissioner Ebert – aye; Chair Bell – aye

ACTION ON PUBLIC HEARING: G.2-REQUEST FOR SERVICE FOR PARKS AND RECREATION

Commissioner Gibson moved to decline to provide the service for parks and recreation in the unincorporated county; Commissioner Ebert seconded.
Commissioner Gibson – aye; Commissioner Ebert – aye; Chair Bell – aye

Commissioner Gibson moved to adjourn the public meeting and reconvene the public hearing; Commissioner Ebert seconded.
Commissioner Gibson – aye; Commissioner Ebert – aye; Chair Bell – aye

G.3-PUBLIC HEARING TO TAKE INPUT ON THE WEBER COUNTY 2017 TENTATIVE BUDGET

Scott Parke, County Comptroller, showed a video explaining how property taxes work. A public hearing was held in August regarding the proposed 25% tax increase (\$8.1 million) to fund employee compensation and key capital projects. The Commission had delayed making a decision to address citizen concerns regarding the size of the increase. A lot of feedback has been heard. The county's efforts to reduce the tax increase included re-evaluating fee schedules to ensure those receiving services are paying for them and not being subsidized, implementing a plan to eliminate the General Fund subsidies to the Park and Recreation Department by 2020, maintaining a 1% cut across the board on all county budgets, revamping employee benefits by eliminating the amount of money contributed to health insurance, phasing out the 5-years of health insurance offered to retiring employees and capping sick leave. These changes alone will help the county save millions of dollars, with significant savings starting in about year 7 and to reduce the proposed tax increase to 22%. The Commission heard much public comment today and in the end decreased the proposed tax increase amount to 21%.

The Commission does not control about half of the county's budget due to various regulations. Mr. Parke said that the last time the county had a tax increase was in 2005 and there has been 23.7% inflation and health insurance costs have increased 47.2%. There are about \$21.3 million worth of infrastructure needs (including a failing parking structure) and currently this has been funded only at about \$500,000/year. He showed the Utah Tax Payers Association's statement of non opposition to the tax increase recognizing that over the course of time property taxes need to be raised for inflation, and that the county has made extraordinary efforts to minimize this increase.

Commissioner Gibson said that Commission's primary focus is to invest in economic growth; it is the best way to fund government. The Commission held meetings recently in the community to receive input about people's desires for their community. Commissioner Ebert noted that the Commission has started working on community development with the goal to reduce expenditures. He said that one of the reasons for the Tax Payers Association's favorable letter is due to the county's system's approach and vision regarding economic and community development. Chair Bell invited public comments and following is a summary.

Keith Hipwell, of West Weber, asked if the proposed 22% tax increase covers the whole county and Chair Bell responded that was correct. Mr. Hipwell said that most cities have their own law enforcement and asked if the county really needs as many deputy Sheriffs as it has.

Niven Turner, of Roy, said that the commissioners are grossly overpaid, that civil servants are underpaid, and he feels that county employees should be unionized. Roy City just increased its taxes 38%, and with the county's 22%, it is 60% cumulative and difficult for those on fixed incomes. Commissioner Gibson said that the Commission is very cognizant of the impact of this tax increase. He emphasized that the taxpayers' input does matter.

Carl Swan, of Roy, said that Roy raised its taxes considerably, but in his area they have a beautiful new library, elementary school, and great services. Cost of living increases are not covered without a tax increase. He commended the commissioners for taking on a tax increase.

Rodney Egan, of Uintah Highlands, said that for the last four years his property valuation increased four times and asked why the county says it reviews property every four years. He protested the increase but did not hear back. In the August hearing the people were told there would be \$1.25 million put in a fund for capital improvements and the highest cost on the priority list at that time was the Ice Sheet roof, now it is \$750,000 higher. He asked why not bond for all of the needs at once so that at the end residents are not stuck paying two million extra dollars a year to a slush fund. Commissioner Gibson said that the old parking structure is a huge safety risk. Bonding will be part of the solution for the larger capital improvements. John Ulibarri, County Assessor, said that by statute the county is required to re-value property yearly. Ricky Hatch, County Clerk/Auditor, said that property tax appeals are handled by his office, about 1,400 appeals were received this year, and they are working to respond as quickly as possible. David Wilson, Deputy County Attorney, noted that bonds may only be issued for the capital projects.

David Flitton, of South Ogden, agrees with discontinuing health care benefits for retiring employees and asked why it will take five years to phase that out. He said it is important to hold employees to the merit system. Chair Bell said that long term employees were given that benefit when they were hired, many will be still be affected but the county wants to minimize the impact. Mr. Hatch said that it allows them to plan because it is a drastic change in benefits. Commissioner Ebert noted that the county continues to work on the merit/evaluation system and longevity bonuses are no longer given. The county has not given merit raises for some time. Commissioner Gibson stated over the last five years there have been two cost of living adjustments and outlined the importance of having seasoned employees.

Bryan Bartholomew, of North Ogden, owns multiple properties and said that the appraisal system is bunk and wonders if there is a more uniform way to handle it. He asked what the commissioners are cutting in the budget, how many new homes have been built in the last 5-10 years in the county and how much that increased the budget and where that money has gone. He agrees with discontinuing health care benefits for retiring employees, he asked if there is a cap to salaries and if anyone from the Utah Taxpayers Association was present to defend its letter. Mr. Ulibarri said that the State requires valuing all property in proportion to its market value and that Utah's property valuation method is internationally recognized. Growth since 2008 has been very low and is still well below the prior average. Sean Wilkinson, County Community and Economic Development Director, said that growth figures for the unincorporated areas since 2008 has been about 250 building permits/year—75-100 are single family dwellings. Mr. Hatch noted that the Utah Taxpayers Association tends not to attend these meetings unless they are in opposition and that they welcome any questions/comments.

Lt. Brandon Toll, County Sheriff's Office/county resident, felt that the harmful things said against the commissioners at the August hearing on the proposed tax increase were uncalled for. Many think they are overpaid but he feels they should be paid more for the inordinate amount of time and careful consideration put into their duties, time away from family, etc. He thanked them and supports the tax increase and their decision.

Yvonne, of Roy, supports only a partial tax increase—22% is too much. Many senior citizens had one increase about three years ago of 1%, they are not receiving one in 2017, and Medicare is going up. Her taxes increased \$252 and her property was valued \$26,000 more than the previous year, which does not make sense. She researched it last year and found neighbors with the same square footage with ½ acre paying \$500-\$600 less. The system should be re-evaluated and Utah should consider retired people and their incomes—some have very little to live on, and everything is taxed. The county is taking away income from people that need it to improve their property.

Sandy Neal, of Ogden, said that most people agree that law enforcement needs raises but disagrees how the commissioners are doing it. She said that according to today's newspaper article, the commissioners were giving themselves an 8.5% increase and giving an overall 6.8% increase to county employees. She said that the proposed 22% increase is a big hit. Her taxes increased by \$159,000 this year, she complained and they increased \$10,000 for a storage facility that has been there 10 years. She suggested addressing the state's property valuation system. Fuel taxes are for roads and there is no fuel tax for natural gas or alternative fuel vehicles and these should be taxed to increase revenues. Chair Bell said that the State makes that decision. Chair Gibson said that the newspaper's figures were wrong, there is no raise for the commissioners except the 2% COLA. Mr. Parke explained that previously the commissioners received an automobile allowance that was a separate line item and this has been zeroed out and put into the salaries to be more transparent. The newspaper used the increase but then did not decrease that amount. He said that every job description was reviewed for market comparability and he outlined the various increases, including that the Sheriff's Office is getting an average of 13.3% raise and 676 employees will receive 2%.

Julie Smith, North Ogden resident/YCC Director, asked how the commissioners manage to make Weber County such a fantastic place to live. Running a domestic violence rape crisis center is tough and this is the only place she would do it. She thanked the commissioners for having the courage to hear input and take months to make this decision. She thanked the Sheriff's Office for saving lives.

Gary Snider, of Ogden, said that a more uniform way of determining property market values is needed. This year his home received \$115,000 increase, no other area home increased that amount and the home across the street decreased \$35,000. He had met with the County Assessor's Office and was told it was due to a computer glitch. If the property owner does not appeal, that increase goes through and that is wrong/unfair and needs to change; there should be a catch or a flag for that. He asked where was the rainy fund of \$12 million of the last Commission, and what it was spent on. Mr. Parke said that the fund balance in the General Fund is projected at \$16 million at the beginning of 2017. A healthy rainy day fund has resulted in the county's AAA bond rating for years now, one of only two counties to receive it. Mr. Snider suggested tearing down the parking terrace and for employees to park a few blocks away. Commissioner Gibson noted that of the 3,000+ counties in the nation, ours is among the top 5-6 for bond ratings west of the Mississippi River due to how well it is managed. Commissioner Ebert noted that the Utah Taxpayers Association had reviewed the county's fiscal responsible nature, the fund balance levels, the last time there was a tax increase, etc.

Brent Odenwalder, of Hooper, opposes the tax increase and mistrusts the statement by the Utah Taxpayers Association. He asked what process they used to come up with the recommendation and Mr. Hatch stated that they requested extensive information from the county, conducted research and held a conference call last week with the county. Mr. Odenwalder said that the senator on that board is a conflict of interest and that their letter states that a tax increase is needed about every 10 years but that is not a perpetual thing that can be done.

Bryan Gray, of Pleasant View, asked how much discount the county gave for development in Ogden Valley to the resorts and Chair Bell and Mr. Hatch responded none. Mr. Hatch explained tax increment financing, which is used all over the country, and said that Summit has such an agreement. Mr. Gray asked if county employees, including the commissioners, have paid retirement. Chair Bell said that every government employee in the State is in the State retirement system.

Jeanette Porter, of Riverdale, has been impressed with the amount of trimming/cut backs at the Sheriff's Office—they have found ways to maximize their assets, and she agrees there is no more to trim away and this increase is necessary and way overdue to remain competitive and keep officers safe.

James Coutts, of Roy, said that he had been asked by the Republican Party's executive committee members to review budgets. He said that people who work in government do not work as hard/are not as efficient as those in the private sector, that the Recorder/Surveyor's Office budget is 14% more but they are taking in 30% less documents and reviewing over 10% less surveys from a decade ago, that there has been a 41% increase in employee compensation across the board, including benefits, and a 10% compensation/employee over the last five years, which is 2%/year/employee, but the Sheriff's Office received 6%. He said that there has been terrible mismanagement. Mr. Hatch addressed the comments about the Recorder/Surveyor's Office stating that after receiving Mr. Coutts' data he researched back 12 years. In 2007 the Recorder/Surveyor leadership changed. It is an anomalous year regarding employee salaries where they were 10% lower than the previous year and the following year. In 2016 the amount of money spent in salaries was 3% lower than in 2004 and the benefits increased 48%—primarily health insurance costs. Additionally, from 2004-2007 the county accounted for municipal services differently and comparing 2004 to 2016 the Recorder/Surveyor's total budget has increased 8% in total spending. By contrast, inflation for that period was 28% and they are doing more with less. Mr. Hatch believes this is also true for the other departments. Commissioner Gibson said that unfortunately, as clarified by Mr. Hatch, a lot of Mr. Coutts' figures are wrong, that his characterization of county employees is offensive and it is inappropriate to label an entire group of people not working as hard as others and to say that means he does not know the county employees that he knows and that there are many who work way above what they're expected to do, and as a whole he would put the county's employees against any private entity. Weber County has exceptional employees as a whole. Commissioner Ebert agreed with Commissioner Gibson noting that when one starts with such a bias he is looking for that in all the data he is crunching and has already made up his decision.

Charlie Lovatt, of Ogden, had come to the county with Mr. Coutts to do research for this item and said that Mr. Parke and Mr. Hatch were amazing. They had looked at tons of thousands of lines of data but analytical tools were lacking and he asked the county to incorporate more performance metrics. Mr. Hatch had met with Mr. Leavitt on Saturday and now had more information after speaking with the

Sheriff's Office, which had a utility study done on 2014 at the jail to replace the lighting because of the heavy utility expense. The proposal would have cost \$68,000 to move to LED lighting and the Sheriff's Office considered putting that in their capital projects request but they had such pressing needs (such as the boiler) that they did not even request it due to the limited funds. Commissioner Gibson said that it was impressive that Mr. Hatch had come in on Saturday to meet with constituents and noted that it is good to know that they can access their elected officials at anytime. He stated that the new county software/hardware system cost about \$1 million and pointed out that if the county moves to better analytic system it will also be a significant cost.

Courtlan Erickson, a county employee, expressed gratitude and works for the county because he wants to, having turned down a job offer in another state. He works very hard because he appreciates the fact that his salary comes from the public who pay property taxes. He appreciates working with great people and does not expect to make what the private sector makes. With five children his family is very careful with what they spend. Any salary increase he may get will go to help his children turn into better members of society. He would appreciate any increased salary so that his family will not have to eliminate opportunities for their children.

Richard Baker, of Liberty, thanked the commissioners for their public service. He has never heard of a tax decrease. He believes there is a third revenue source—efficient use of the resources under the Commission's control. Over a year ago the county graveled his road and he expected they would come back and clean up the excess gravel after a time. It never happened and he spent Saturday raking up six wheelbarrows of gravel out of his front yard. He spoke of the condition of the North Ogden Pass and wonders why two projects were done—the Chicken Creek work (multi-million dollar project that he assumes was done by the county) that left a previously beautiful area barren and he questions the utility the public gained and the taxpayer dollars. During storms a lot of debris covers that road and he asked why some areas do not have a net to control it. He said that the commissioners should be intimately aware of these projects and making sure the resources are being applied efficiently to not waste taxpayer money. Mr. Hatch said there was a tax decrease in 2013 and most did not see it because cities increased their taxes and Commissioner Ebert said that when there is opportunity the county will have a tax decrease. Commissioner Gibson believes in not taking a dime more than is needed.

County Sheriff Terry Thompson addressed the 2013 tax decrease. He and his office had taken a close look at their operations, efficiency and effectiveness to try trim things and remain effective. Through attrition over a couple of years his office was able to reduce a number of positions (his second in command, 2 captains, 5 lieutenants, 4 Sergeants, and reorganized some line staff). These adjustments helped to achieve about \$1+ million of reduction in costs. He stated that other county departments are regularly doing that at the commissioners' urging. Budget hearings are very in-depth/detailed. Commissioner Gibson is grateful for what the Sheriff has done and said that these types of things are done county-wide, including reorganizing the entire county structure from seven department heads to three with efficiency/cost savings in mind—trying to do more with less.

Shelly Halacy, of Ogden, said that she is a good county employee—most of her 22 years has been in the Commission Office. She has been through many budget hearings and every one is very intense. The commissioners believe in their hearts that they are doing what is best for the county. She will defend them and all county employees strongly. She said that these commissioners work time and a half. She is proud to work for them and expressed thanks for what they do.

Douglas Dickson, of Liberty, referred to the property valuation issues and would like to see things made right. In 2008 his tax increase from \$400 to \$800 was dynamic to him. He walked his neighborhood, researched the records and his neighbors who have larger properties had a lower net payout than him. He suggested that the commissioners go back to the State legislature and ask them to put a tax on alternative fuel vehicles. The commissioners have been to the legislature about that tax and are actively working on the issue.

Bob James, of Uintah Highlands, was shocked that his property tax went up \$1,000. He does not understand much about the budget and asked if that was the total budget, what it consists of, and if retirees are included in the percentage to fund employees (if not that is a real liability), and how much the county will ask for next year. Mr. Hatch responded that the last time there was a tax increase was in 2005. Mr. James asked what productivity standards were used in job descriptions, how is the \$16 million rainy day fund invested, what is done with the return on the investment, what are the short and long range plans. John Bond, County Treasurer, said that the State has laws for managing and safeguarding that money. In 2008 a lot of cities/counties throughout the country lost money. Weber County lost nothing. He has been involved in helping the county to receive the best bond rating

possible so the interest rate is as low as possible. For the library bond, it was the first time in county history that the county's long time debt was rated AAA. The State pool is currently earning 1.06%. Mr. Hatch said that it is safe to say that the county is not going to ask for any increase for many years. The county has seen the need for a couple of years now but pushed it off and scrimped and saved before going to the public. The county is continuing to tighten its belt looking forward. The 5-year plan was presented in a public hearing last November where the comptroller had said that if the county continued at that rate the rainy day fund would fall below the requirements of best practices in the industry and the bond ratings would slip causing greater cost to taxpayers. Some entities increase taxes every year or so just a little bit, but the county has chosen not to use that method. Generally low increases only get a few people out, and that is the easier thing to do—not as many gripe about it—but that is not the right way.

Mr. Parke recapped that the county is phasing out the 5-years of health insurance and paying out all of retiree's sick leave (an unfunded liability of about \$30 million). The Commission made the change this year but it is not right to pull the rug out from employees, some who are a short time from retirement and planned their whole career for that. Sick leave and annual leave is being combined and capped at 600 hours. The county participates in the State's retirement system, which manages that risk. Mr. Hatch stated that these unfunded liabilities are off-the-book liabilities determined by actuarial studies required by law every two years. Commissioner Ebert reiterated that the county has 5 & 10-year plans, as well as a plan for economic development and will roll out the community development plan soon to help reduce expenditures within the county dealing with poverty issues. This is only a sliver of a very robust plan, most of which is to drive economic development, reducing costs and finding efficiencies.

Charles Riedenour, of Ogden, who is retired, brought a bag of his bills, and wanted to speak for the elderly. His property taxes have increased \$400 from last year. Just 60 years ago he could take one month of Social Security and pay his property taxes and have a little bit left over; now it does not and this shows that every entity is raising his taxes, including the county. He hopes the county can find a better way than increase taxes, especially for senior citizens who make little but are expected to pay the same amount of taxes as everyone else. By living in Ogden he is double dipped, having to pay the city's tax increase as well. If the county keeps increasing his property taxes or his home assessment yearly he hopes not to live any longer than 90; he won't be able to afford it.

Tyler Kunzler, of Ogden, appreciates the changes that the commissioners have made since the last meeting and is concerned that changes are being made because people have to twist their arms. He asked if the gun range was being offset by \$118,000 and Mr. Hatch said those were requests made by the gun range for additional capital improvements. Mr. Kunzler believes that when public funds are used they should benefit the majority of the public and this benefits very few people yet is a liability that has to be funded every year and is not generating the needed revenue. For the county to pay health insurance, the funds should be there. Commissioner Gibson said that the county has made changes since the public input and that is why input is important. Sheriff Thompson explained the benefit of this unique facility for both law enforcement and the public. Thousands use it and over 100 volunteers serve the needs of the community. The range where the Sheriff's employees used to train was shut down. There was no local facility to train officers. In the history of the county there had not been a public range in this lower valley. Commissioner Ebert referred to the State requirement that there be a public component to the gun range. It meets a need for the public and the law enforcement community, not just the Sheriff's Office. Other facilities are a larger distance to travel, do not provide the force-on-force training, cost more for officers to use overtime, etc. He agrees that the county has to maintain vigilance when acquiring liabilities. The current environment under which law enforcement operates and the litigious nature that community has been exposed to has created a higher level of required training.

H.W. Swanson worked for the Air Force for 30 years but never has a 13% increase and said that the commissioners should not be passing this large tax increase to the people, that they are setting a horrible example and are braking people's backs with an increase this size. He asked how many bids there were for rebuilding the parking terrace, how many efforts were made to analyze if it can be reinforced, and he feels that things are not being done properly. The rainy day fund was taken from taxpayers and too many of them are living day to day, barely hanging on, with children and families to support. The commissioners need to go back to see if there is any possible way to reduce costs, including the smaller items, to ensure they are the most efficient and cheapest. Mr. Wilkinson stated that last year an RFP was issued for an engineering firm to give a structural analysis of the parking garage and their recommendation was that it would be ineffective to do patch work because it is seismically unsound and that it should be torn down and rebuilt with seismic measures. The cost is estimated at \$10 million. This has not been put out to bid. Mr. Hatch addressed the purchasing of supplies and explained that there are strict policies in place through the Purchasing Department, and the bidding process has contracts with vendors that have contracts with the State for certain pricing.

Ron Gleason, of Huntsville, thanked the commissioners and department heads for their efforts on the budget. He reviewed the figures and compared them to last year and can see where cuts were made. He is happy that the cell phone allowance is being removed. He referred to the parks and recreation subsidy going away by 2020 and asked if the county is not providing the services if that may result in more special districts and for taxpayers to pay the same amounts but to different entities. He asked that the economic plan be posted on the website and to show how time/money will be put into it because these are multi-year plans/budgets and paybacks can be difficult to quantify. Commissioner Ebert stated that it will be posted and public meetings will be held to discuss it. Mr. Parke stated that the Parks & Recreation Division is not self sustaining and requires a subsidy from the General Fund to pay its bills. Voters approved a tourism tax and there is a plan in place so that by 2020 they will no longer have a General Fund subsidy. The bond on the Eccles Conference Center (\$1.8M) is currently paid by the tourism tax dollars and when that is paid off on/about 2020 those tourism dollars will help end the General Fund subsidy.

Bob Weston, of Ogden, is against raising taxes. He is a retired Weber County employee and knows more cuts can be made if the county really wanted to so, and the department heads and employees can readily see where that can be done. The county is asking for 22% increase, schools about 33% —every entity has asked for more money. The retired have to budget with what they have and the more the county takes from the people the harder it is for them to budget and meet their expenses. Property taxes are only one expense. He noted an experience with the Sheriff's Office where they retrieved his stolen property but never returned it to him and said that he was robbed twice.

Ryan Swenson, of Ogden, feels more comfortable today because of the explanations given about the tax increase; he only supports certain portions. Regarding the parking terrace analysis, he said that those who inspected it are in the business and want the most they can get out of it. He believes the county needs a different opinion about the stability of the parking terrace.

Lance Peterson, County Emergency Management Director, referred to Mr. Cout's comments about lazy county employees and said he could not in good conscience not speak up, that as vice chair of the Republican Party Mr. Cout's should be called out and resign for the attitudes he has, and he should apologize to county employees. In 2011 Mr. Peterson had a heart attack and had four stints put in his heart. Four weeks later in the middle of the night he was in Eden sandbagging people's property and pumping water out. He has responded to innumerable floods in this county. He works hard and resents and is offended by the Republic Party vice chair saying those baseless, erroneous comments. He appreciates the commissioners taking on this tough issue; he does not want higher taxes but will pay if that is what it takes to deliver the services the citizens demand and expect. Commissioner Gibson stated that Mr. Peterson did not sleep from February to September. Commissioner Ebert had been out of town and had called Lance who was already on it and who rolled off all they were in the process of doing, including calling Ogden City—because Mr. Peterson looks at the county as a whole and citizens in need. It is reassuring to have amazing, dedicated employees who, when there is a need, jump in and get it done. Mayors of Ogden City, South Ogden, Washington Terrace, Riverdale, etc., had been so impressed with the things the county was able to do because Mr. Peterson dropped everything in his life and marshaled all the forces to heal our community. He thanked Mr. Peterson for being an example of employees that the county has, that these types of honorable works occur repeatedly, thus this type of diatribe is difficult to listen to when county employees continue to do so much.

Chris Jenkins, county resident, appreciates this open forum stating that he would not have been able to have it in Salt Lake County where he grew up. He appreciates that the county is working with the private sector. He apologized for his friends who had been offensive. He does not want the tax increase but it appears it is needed. He appreciates that the county continues to look at ways to be more efficient.

Lane McFarlane, of West Weber, asked if any amendments had been drafted to give any alternatives to vote on tonight and when does the allocation of the funds get finalized if the increase passes. Chair Bell and Commissioner Gibson said that there is nothing written and the commissioners will discuss it next.

3.

Commissioner Ebert moved to adjourn the public hearing and reconvene the public meeting for item G.3; Commissioner Gibson seconded.

Commissioner Gibson – aye; Commissioner Ebert – aye; Chair Bell – aye

ACTION ON PUBLIC HEARING: G.3-RESOLUTION 36-2016 APPROVING A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

Commissioner Gibson appreciates the comments and the level of scrutiny on the budget; it has been a long process. He is grateful for the county employees' dedication and knows they work extremely hard. He is very concerned about the impact to individuals that a tax increase has, is frustrated that it is the only option and will work with the legislature to give counties different options that are more equitable. Commissioner Ebert agreed with Commissioner Gibson. He is firmly convinced that the steps being taken today in the areas of economic/community development will strengthen our county moving forward and should remove the need for a tax increase well into the future. The commissioners know that raising taxes is not the answer but rather to create growth and reduce costs, and the commissioners are committed to this. He is confident with the team and community members and there is going to be a big change in the county and surrounding municipalities. Chair Bell said that this has been a difficult decision. He noted that they were losing too many employees due to low wages. He stated that the county employees are doing more with less and there has been a lot of trimming. He wants to do the right thing for the county. Commissioner Gibson expressed great concern with the capital expenditure line, but it has such a huge backlog and he does not want to set up the county for failure in the future. He feels that the employee area has been cut as deeply as is possible. The commissioners are working hard on an economic growth plan to help the county grow if they can bridge the next few years.

Commissioner Gibson moved to adopt the tentative budget as passed on November 1 with the following exceptions: to cut \$900,000 from the tentative budget to come from the capital expenditure line, thereby reducing the tax increase to around 19%; to hold the list of items (about \$275,000) on the contingency fund (some of which is new to him) that were not included in the tentative budget, some intentionally, that are still on the floor for individual debate on a case-by-case basis as they have different priorities. He could not vote for a budget with that entire list and said there are opportunities to get through some of it over the next little while. Commissioner Ebert asked staff what a reduction of \$900,000 would do to the 5 & 10-year plans, if that would create more issues and become more costly to push them past lifespan. Mr. Parke said that the capital projects requests presented in the last budget cycle totaled \$21.3 million. Funding at \$2 million/year would take 10 years to get through the current capital projects requested and by striking \$900,000 from that fund the county would be putting itself back in the same position. Commissioner Gibson was torn but felt strongly it was a good compromise. Commissioner Bell is comfortable with the list and disagreed with taking out the money. David Wilson, Deputy County Attorney, noted that the tax increase needed to be adopted tonight. Commissioner Ebert's concern is having \$855,000 in an open-ended contingency fund. Commissioner Ebert seconded the motion to adopt the tentative budget as is, taking the \$855,000 expenditures out to work on that at a later date, and to decrease the capital improvements by \$900,000. He is concerned that there are large facilities (i.e., correctional facility) with very specific capital needs and does not want to cut so much out that the county functionally ties its hands again. He moved to take \$500,000 out of the capital improvement fund to allow moving forward and still be productive. Commissioner Gibson noted that adjustments can be made anytime and are done at least quarterly. Chair Bell expressed concern with shorting capital improvements and would like to adopt the budget as is, with the 22.5% tax increase and the expenditure list, and in January the Commission can make changes. Commissioner Ebert made an amendment to reduce \$500,000 out of the capital improvement projects, to adopt the budget as outlined including the contingency fund and line items on the contingency fund. Chair Bell seconded. Mr. Parke stated that the expenditures that the commissioners were discussing were already included in the tentative budget, they were in the contingency line item (but had not been fully allocated) and this list allocates those expenditures, and there are no additional expenses in the budget; the expenditures were not changing but were just being reallocated because that money was in the contingency fund. The tentative budget was adopted with that money in the contingency fund, except the last line item (engineering position) that was originally included in the tentative budget. This is just switching money from one item to another. There is no increase in expenses on this list. Mr. Parke addressed Commissioner Gibson's question stating that if they adopt the tentative budget with this list for further consideration the engineering position would be removed from the budget and the \$120,000 would be reallocated. Commissioner Ebert's intent was not to remove the engineering position because that was in the tentative budget but to decrease the reduction from \$900,000 to \$500,000 and to adopt the items in the contingency list. Mr. Parke restated the motion for clarification: reduce the capital improvements from \$2.062 million by pulling \$500,000 from it, keep the tentative budget as it was, except to allocate the contingency fund to those items on the list of items for further contingencies except for the engineering position. Commissioner Ebert agreed.

Commissioner Ebert moved to adopt Resolution 36-2016 approving a property tax increase of \$6,850,638 (20.98%) as outlined, with a change to the capital improvements with a reduction of \$500,000 to that specific line item; Chair Bell seconded.

Commissioner Gibson – nay; Commissioner Ebert – aye; Chair Bell – aye

ACTION ON PUBLIC HEARING: G.3.-RESOLUTION 37-2016 ADOPTING THE OPERATING & CAPITAL BUDGETS FOR 2017

Chair Bell moved to adopt Resolution 37-2016 adopting the Operating and Capital Budgets of Weber County for the 2017 calendar year with the approved contingency list, not striking the engineer position, and declaring the county's intent to pick-up a certain percentage of members' contributions to the Utah State Retirement System; Commissioner Ebert seconded.

Commissioner Gibson – nay; Commissioner Ebert – aye; Chair Bell – aye

H. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

I. ADJOURN

Commissioner Gibson moved to adjourn at 10:27 p.m.; Commissioner Ebert seconded.

Commissioner Gibson – aye; Commissioner Ebert – aye; Chair Bell – aye

Attest:

Matthew G Bell, Chair
Weber County Commission

Ricky D. Hatch, CPA
Weber County Clerk/Auditor