

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

Monday, August 15, 2016 - 5:45 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.

COMMISSIONERS: Matthew G Bell, James Ebert and Kerry W. Gibson.

OTHERS 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 – Ricky Hatch

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Eric Barrett

D. THOUGHT OF THE DAY – Commissioner Gibson

E. CONSENT ITEMS:

1. Purchase orders in the amount of \$383,029.59
2. Warrants #407934 - #408170 in the amount of \$2,652,787.78
3. Minutes for the work sessions and meeting held on July 6 & 13 and August 9, 2016
4. Change Order #3 for Staker Parsons Contract on 12th Street project
5. Change Order #5 for Staker Parson Contract on 3500 West Project
6. Change Order #5 for Wardell Brothers Contract on Skyline Project
7. Final subdivision approval of the Horizon Neighborhood at Powder Mountain PRUD, including a Subdivision Improvement Agreement with a financial guarantee
8. Retirement Agreement with Randall K. Reynolds
9. New business license

Commissioner Gibson moved to approve the consent items; Commissioner Ebert seconded.

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

F. PUBLIC HEARING (*Begins at 6:00 p.m.*)

1.

Commissioner Gibson moved to adjourn the public meeting and convene the public hearing; Commissioner Ebert seconded.

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

2. **PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE COMMENT ON A PROPOSED WEBER COUNTY PROPERTY TAX INCREASE OF APPROXIMATELY 25% OR \$8,162,000 TO FUND EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION AND CAPITAL PROJECTS**

Ricky Hatch, County Clerk/Auditor, gave an overview about how property taxes work in Utah and also outlined the available tax relief programs. He stated that the county's budget is completely separate from the values of the properties in the county.

Scott Parke, County Comptroller, gave a slide presentation. He noted that there have been various proposed tax increases this year by different entities, but this item is for Weber County's portion only. Inflation has gone up 17.6% since the last time the county had a tax increase (2006) and tax revenues 21.7%, most of which have been offset by the inflation and the county's purchasing power today is not much greater than in 2006. Yet the county has to provide services on all the new growth. One of the biggest components of the General Fund expenditures is salaries and wages, of which insurance is a large part. The county's health care costs have increased 47% since 2006, in part due to the Affordable Care Act and changes to the county's health insurance premiums. The increase is eating up the available funds to provide services and the county has undertaken several initiatives to reduce costs, i.e., reduced the number of department heads from 7 to 3, put in place a plan to eliminate the Parks and Recreation subsidy from the General Fund property tax by 2020 (bond will be paid off soon and Parks and Recreation will be able to sustain itself with internally generated cash flows and the specifically created tourism tax fund).

The reasons for the proposed tax increase are that the county's employee compensation has fallen behind the northern Utah market, specifically in the Sheriff's Office, but also in other county departments, and the county has aging facilities and additional equipment that require repair and maintenance. County Deputy Sheriff's wages are under the market average by 10%, lieutenant under average by 25% (the lowest in northern Utah), etc. The effect is that the county has had a 20% turnover in the last two years and the primary reason given by those employees was low pay. This low pay is also affecting other county departments; various positions are paid below area market—surveyors are paid 28% below, clerical at about 21%, registered nurses at 16%, engineers 12%, etc. These low wages are hampering the ability of the county to attract and retain qualified employees to meet its constitutionally mandated requirements and to fulfill its other state and federal mandates. An example is that recently the requirements to become a licensed appraiser changed and now requires a bachelor's degree and the Assessor's Office has had about a 48% turnover since 5/2013—many of those employees left to other government agencies for better pay. The last job posting for a credentialed commercial appraiser did not attract a single qualified applicant because of the starting wage.

Mr. Parke said that there are about \$15 million worth of requested projects that need to be addressed soon (i.e., a parking structure has reached the end of its life, the Sheriff's radio system is being converted state-wide requiring replacing all radios, the jail needs to repair its roof, inmate showers, and perimeter security gate, & the Ice Sheet roof has needed replacing for a few years but only patches can be made).

The proposed tax increase is for \$8.16 million (based on the average county primary residence it would cost \$6.25/month and for a business \$11.37/month), with 14% to be used to fund capital projects and 86% for employee compensation, of which \$3.6 million is for the Sheriff's Office (averaging about a 10% increase) and others to receive about a 4% increase. The proposal is to adjust employee benefits, phase out retirement health insurance benefits over 10 years and for employees to pay a portion of their health insurance premiums. The expected savings of these compensation changes over 25 years is about \$31 million.

County Sheriff Terry Thompson stated that over the last several years the Sheriff's Office has streamlined its office operations and through attrition eliminated a number of positions that they felt they could do without and remain effective (including his Undersheriff/his number one man & nearly ½ of his command staff). This elimination netted their budget a reduction of about \$1,000,000, and the majority was returned to the taxpayers. In addition, he cut/realigned several other deputy positions. His office has done its part to be as fiscally responsible as possible. Of the 265 sworn deputies, 53 resigned over the past two years, and of those, 30 left for another agency specifically due to wage issues, and 53% of those had been with the Office for 5+ years—these were the trained and experienced deputies. The time and training spent to provide training for one new full time (FTE) deputy costs the taxpayers \$30,000, which in the last two years equals \$420,000 loss just for new deputies leaving and does not include the 16 tenured experienced deputies who left and in whom there was far greater investment. About 75% of applicants have failed the hiring process and generally there is a 6-9 month training process prior to releasing them to begin serving on their own. It is troublesome to lose trained employees and he has the largest cadre of new employees in 30 years. Each day the Office is at, or close to, being minimum staffed—a concern for safety/security of the deputy and the public. Deputies are required to work overtime—a concern in this stressful job. He asked that they be compensated fairly.

Chris Allred, County Attorney, stated that his office interacts with Sheriff's officers daily and it is evident to him that what the Sheriff described are real pressing problems and a public safety concern ultimately. If a tax increase is necessary to fix the problem he supports it.

Leann Kilts, Recorder/Surveyor, expressed the difficulties her office is experiencing due to low wages. She stated that recently one of her surveyors went to work for Tooele, which doubled his salary.

John Ulibarri, County Assessor, has had approximately a 30% turnover of his appraisers, who have to be credentialed through the state and have a college degree, and there has been a 75% turnover in his business property staff. This is primarily due to low salary. He said that Davis County residents pay \$400,000-\$500,000 more for the same services that Weber County residents receive and Salt Lake County residents pay about six times more. He stated that Weber County is careful with the public's money.

Ricky Hatch, County Clerk/Auditor, has spoken with other auditors regarding property taxes. He has seen a pattern in government entities where there is no property tax increase for many years and then they have to do an enormous one. He gave a recent example of a Salt Lake city's increase of 121%. As he spoke with others

about a solution, he considered indexing to inflation but in the end the current process seems to be the right one. The county constantly tries very hard to find ways to save, but without a tax increase it will not be able to pay the salaries that are needed and stop the bleeding.

Sara Toliver, Convention Visitors Bureau Director, addressed the 10% of the proposed tax increase for capital improvements and its importance. She has been harping to the elected officials for years about the need to take care of the tourism-related facilities that her office has to sell. Currently, there are 36 priority-one projects for the Golden Spike Event Center for a total of \$1.5 million, \$2.2 million for the Ogden Eccles Conference Center, and there are 44 future projects on the list. Since construction of the Conference Center in 1997, four other centers have been built offering competitively sized space with newer technologies, ascetics, etc. The county has not invested the necessary capital improvements over the last few years and now is dealing with deteriorating facilities, etc. The economic impact to the community for group businesses results in over \$10 million annually, a tax savings of over \$1,000/per household. If the county does not invest in its properties to sell them, visitors will spend money in other counties—resulting in a loss to our county.

Marty Smith, County Cultural Parks & Recreation Director, addressed how hard staff works to bring in tourism dollars into the county by increasing revenues and cutting costs. At times they have to cut costs to a point that it is difficult to operate and stay competitive, which is important to bring in tourism dollars and reduce the tax burden per household. There are a lot of needs in the facilities.

Toby Mileski, Pleasant View City Mayor, opposes how the tax increase is being billed to the residents. Eight cities and the unincorporated area use the Sheriff's services. Paying for the jail, courts and other employees that work outside of the patrol division needs to be paid for by those cities that do not have their own police departments. Those cities need to have a tax increase and there should be a contract increase to pay for the deputies that patrol those cities. He agrees with giving the Sheriff employees a raise.

Bryan Swenson, of Ogden, anticipates a state-wide petition leading to a referendum limiting property tax increases. Excessive property tax increases have driven thousands of underprivileged poor and elderly from their homes creating monumental problems, which will lead to adoption of socialism if not curtailed. Tax increases that are larger than the previous years' federal social security increases cannot be tolerated.

H. Douglas Swenson, of Eden, said that a comment was made that deputies do not have time to spend with their families. Many of the residents will not even have homes [with the tax increases]. To propose tax increases greater than the previous years' federal social security increases is irresponsible and will ultimately destroy the property tax base that maintains our local government, including schools and police, and he demanded that the tax be limited to the federal % increase of the previous year. The comments made that we will lose talented public employees without monstrous property tax increases is nothing more than socialist propaganda. Property tax should not increase more than 2% per year.

Cal McCrary, of Washington Terrace, supports the Sheriff's officers. They are not sufficiently compensated, making less than ½ of what others make. The County Personnel Director makes 2-3 times what each of those officers make. He recommends that the commissioners reallocate the money for the line staff and protect them rather than putting so much money in the overhead structure.

Lindley Richards, an 11-year old, of West Haven, asked the commissioners to prioritize needs vs. wants. She has various jobs to earn money and has to prioritize or would run out of money for her needs. The sheriffs are more important than some other things that the county spends her family's tax dollars on, and she asked the commissioners to put protection by the Sheriff's Office over less crucial items.

Tom Perfetto, of Washington Terrace, supports the tax increase for the officers who put their lives on the line. He is retired on a fixed income and has not had a cost of living increase in 2-3 years but would pay to support the Sheriff's Office. He saw online what the commissioners and Brad Dee, County Admin. Services Director, make and was disgusted. He suggests that they take a little pay cut and support the Sheriff's officers.

Mr. Kitchen, of Ogden, is really frustrated that the county took a huge sales tax increase this year and there was another one on automobiles, and he asked where that money is going. The county wants a raise and is putting the officers out in front because they know that the residents have to give them raises. He does all he can to make big purchases from other counties because of what the county has done to the sales tax. He pointed out that health insurance increased for everyone, not just the county.

Phillip Swanson, North Ogden City councilman, is 100% behind the raises for the Sheriff's Office. He initiated a similar raise for his city's Police Department. He is concerned with the proposed increases that are not officer related, with administration increases and other projects not enumerated until just a few moments ago. People are looking for transparency and people need to see the details prior to passing the tax increase.

Maris Bischoff, of Ogden, is not against adequately compensating Sheriff employees but questions the Commission's decisions that helped arrive at the proposed tax increase. She asked why thousands of dollars were spent for the commissioners' flat screen TVs, \$20,000-\$50,000 to turn their conference room into a showcase, \$70,000-\$80,000 to hire a public relations person, why they contracted with an outsider (\$80,000) to duplicate the county's economic development position, why the county had to own a multimillion dollar gun range when it already had use of it (but the public cannot use it), creating a \$60,000-\$100,000 shortfall/year, why the county is not using a fund set by previous commissions that grew to \$13 million to guard against a tax increase and why they doubled their office staff from previous commissions. She said that Commissioner Gibson's platform was not to raise taxes. The public needs to know what steps have been taken to decrease costs.

Wilson Tolman, of Ogden, said that the county is trying to maintain a fixed income of taxes where most people present are struggling to live within their fixed income. He suggested that the commissioners ask the Legislature for help to be competitive and keep the officers and firemen working in the county.

Frank Stone, of Pleasant View, said that the tax increase would really impact him. He thanked the person who made the list of salaries available to those present and asked if it was correct that the commissioners make \$162,000/year and Commissioner Ebert said that most of what is on that list is incorrect. Mr. Stone has 50 employees and 10-15% turnover. Health insurance is a problem for everyone. He asked if the Commission gave Powder Mountain \$18 million for infrastructure, which would go a long ways for wage increases.

Patricia Dickens, of Huntsville, said that with the population of her area growing by leaps/bounds they are experiencing an increase in crimes. She hosted a neighborhood watch meeting and invited a County Deputy Sheriff who basically said that they just do not have the manpower to secure their community. Law enforcement performs a thankless, dangerous job but they continue to protect the citizens. They barely get by financially and most have 2-3 jobs to support their families. Before long they will move to other jurisdictions that pay better. She supports the proposal if indeed the funds will mostly go to law enforcement.

Jon Grove, of unincorporated Weber County, is a public employee and received a ½% raise one time in the last five years. He feels that this proposal is a done deal. Law enforcement needs a raise but our cultural arts and recreation should take a backseat when times are so tough. The commissioners should expand the tax base by bringing in jobs to the county and cut waste/fraud where possible.

Julee Smith, North Ogden resident & Director of the Rape Crisis Domestic Violence Shelter, thanked the commissioners and Sheriff's Office for the amazing job they do to keep the people safe. She stated how critical it is to have law enforcement available when needed. She works closely with the officers who protect the people 24/7 and supports the increase for them.

Monte Hardy, of unincorporated Weber County, said that in researching the proposed tax increase he found in the county's 2015 annual report that since 2005 the General Fund revenues have increased an average of \$2.2 million/year. In 2014 and 2015 the county had a 6.6 % revenue increase, a 55% increase in surplus (from \$16 to \$25 M), debt is being decreased at 6%. Fiscally the county is in great shape; he asked why the Commission waited 10 years to give the Sheriff raises and encouraged them to do so without a tax increase.

Gloria Fugere, of Ogden, opposes the tax increase and believes that law enforcement should be compensated but not by raising taxes again. In the last 21 years her taxes have increased from \$839 to \$1,951 (2016); they increase annually for her 1946 home. She said that every employee in the Sheriff's Office earns more than she does; she received two raises in her retired years in Social Security but Medicare increased so she ends up with a \$1 raise. She does not want her taxes raised and if required to pay the \$1,951 she plans to move.

Sebastian Benitez said that 73% of the county's population is poor, that he understands that law enforcement deserves more money, that 80% of the Hispanic population makes ½ of what each Sheriff deputy makes and if the Commission and executives decrease their salaries 20-25% they would have enough to cover each deputy's salary.

Robert McEntee, of Mariott Slaterville, asked Commissioner Ebert if he would recuse himself from this vote because his wife, who works for the county, would benefit from this raise. He is not convinced that a scalpel has been taken to the budget. Graphs were shown earlier for property tax revenues but not for sales tax growth. There are other revenues—the county receives money from vehicle sales and registrations—and he would like to know if those increases are taken into account. Compared to 2006 the jail has 10% less full time inmates, 39% less calls, 56% less citations, and fuel costs have decreased, and perhaps the county can do with less and still have room for raises.

William Olson, of North Ogden, said that the total county General Fund expenditures projected for 2016 is \$23 million. The jail will cost over \$25 million, the largest expenditure. Taxpayers are not compensated dollar per dollar for housing state prisoners. The state balances its budget on the backs of the counties by appropriating less than their committed funds when the jail was built. He feels there is enough on the \$25 million to compensate law enforcement appropriately.

Jan Zogmaister, of West Haven and business owner, understands the need for taxes. She fully supports a pay increase for public safety and other county staff and stated that that money has to come out of the existing budget, stating that she knows that the commissioners can do that. During the economic downturn from 2008-2010 when she was a commissioner the county did not lay off a single employee and did not increase taxes but had to make tough choices. It is easier to ask for more and harder to find the money from within. She said she knows the money is in the budget and asked the commissioners to find it.

Jason Vandenberg, County Deputy Sheriff, has been in the Sheriff's Office for 7½ years and currently makes \$17.75/hour, which he said is lower than the vast majority of local police departments and \$6-\$8 lower than the average police department in the state. He spoke of his financial difficulty on that salary and raising a family. He works 105 hours/pay period at the Sheriff's Office and works a second job. He loves the Sheriff's Office but if there is not a significant wage increase, he will not be able to survive fiscally the next year.

Howard Brinkerhoff, of Farr West, former mayor of a small county in eastern UT, sees a plethora of operational inefficiencies in various departments and venues, including in the Sheriff's Office, and offered to give specifics if wanted. The Commission and department heads need to look at the budget more closely.

Judy Culley, of Liberty, first read a statement that someone had given her to read, which said that the county has the highest tax rate of any Wasatch Front county according to propertytax.utah.gov. She said that the tax base keeps increasing and does not understand why the taxes are being raised. Ogden Valley had a cut back and they do not have as many deputies patrolling. She would like to see them give a ticket once in a while because she has never seen that. There are marathons every Saturday, with three Sheriff's cars at every intersection. She had asked an officer who pays for them to be there, for the county vehicle and the gas and he responded the marathon pays for the deputies, the taxpayers pay for the cars and gas.

David Gremillion, of unincorporated Weber County, does not have an issue with paying law enforcement more. He takes issue with the county paying so much money to fund a state-of-the-art gun range and it is his understanding that the county plans to build another one on the former landfill. The Ogden Eccles Conference Center running at a loss every year is a concern; he asked where that money is coming from. He asked why the county is bonding for the Powder Mountain infrastructure. He also asked how the 12th Street expansion project came about because it goes right in front of Commissioner Gibson's house and if that is a conflict of interest. It isn't that the county does not have enough money but rather that it has not been spent wisely and if looked into more closely they would find enough money for law enforcement.

David Wilkerson, of Ogden, asked how he is to pay almost \$1,000 in taxes when he has less than \$1,100/month to live on. He misses many meals. He is almost 90 years old and under doctor's care. As a veteran he said that he receives no help from the Veterans Administration. He asked where the poor, normal human beings are to go for help to pay these high costs. Ricky Hatch, County Clerk/Auditor, spoke with Mr. Wilkerson about property tax abatement programs.

Matt Proudftitt, of Ogden, said that there is a pay and benefits problem. He said that \$17/hour is totally insufficient for people putting their lives on the line. He saw online that a detective sergeant makes \$115,000/year but tonight the audience was shown that a Lt. earns around \$75,000. He said that some county staff is making \$260,000/year and recommended making salaries more equitable.

David Smith, of West Haven, said that the cities receiving Sheriff's services have a great benefit—to have their own police forces would increase taxes dramatically. He asked how many new additional full time employees was the county planning to bring in due to the growth the county has been experiencing. He expressed concern that the county is housing many state inmates but is not being fully reimbursed.

Sgt. Lane Findlay, of the Sheriff's Office, expressed support for the Sheriff's Office. After trying for the last two years to retain/recruit good quality deputies they are at a point where they can no longer sustain operations. It is difficult to see the young recruits, on whom so much time/money has been invested, turn around and go to a nearby police department for \$3-4 dollars/hour more. The county will continue to lose hard working deputies if something drastic is not done. The Sheriff has done everything possible to cut operations. Other things they cut includes the traffic squad, community resource officers, FBI crime lab, truck inspector, etc. over the last 6-7 years to ensure they have the most efficient operations.

Commissioner Ebert pointed out that the Commission has asked all the offices and departments to become more efficient and still maintain levels of effectiveness and they have; this is not a new concept to the Commission. The county uses part timers where possible to reduce overall benefit costs, etc. He invited people to speak with the county offices about how their staffing is different from 3-4 years ago.

Lt. Nate Hutchinson, with the Sheriff's Office, is a single father with three children and works three jobs. A couple of years ago he was shot and is willing to sacrifice everything he has but asked for help so he does not have to keep sacrificing time with his children just to make ends meet. In meetings at the Sheriff's Office they cut everything possible and there is nothing else to cut. The county cannot keep losing good employees.

Danny Driggs, representing the Fraternal Order of Police for Weber County, stated that the low wages problem has been pushed back for years. There is no fat left to cut; this increase has to be done in order to raise wages to be competitive, the county is losing good employees, and the training costs are also a great loss. He referred to Deputy Sheriff Vandenberg (with the county 7 years, earning \$17/hour—only \$1 more than a new deputy). He asked the people who are speaking tonight to do more research; unfortunately there is nothing else that can be done but to increase taxes.

Nina Morris, of West Haven, referred to her valuation notice—her tax increase for this year is \$140. She is a mother of three children and makes \$10 less/hour than Lt. Hutchinson. She understands that some deputies need a raise, but not all. She said that the tax increase was done in a sneaky manner—she just found out tonight that half of it goes to the Sheriff and the other half somewhere else and the people do not know where that is going. She spoke with an army vet tonight, who is living on a fixed income, whose tax increase is \$200. The room is filled with elderly people who are living on fixed incomes—and these are the healthy ones who could come tonight. The median income for the county according to the Census Bureau is \$56,000/year. We are the poorest county in northern Utah but have the highest property taxes, yet the county wants to raise them by 25%. She feels the county has done a poor job of prioritizing wages and should be responsible to pay the officers what is due to them, not look to the taxpayers to bail them out.

Clifford Goff, of Ogden, said that the timing to increase the deputies' wages is suspect; the commissioners seem to be playing on the public's emotions for the tax increase when there is a heightened awareness and sensitivity nationwide to the work these civil servants perform. The county citizens can take no pride in knowing that the county pays deputies less than any other entity in the state, and he asked why they have been satisfied in paying our public heroes such minimal wages. He and his wife have been volunteering for two years at the county correctional facility, during which time several valuable deputies left for higher pay. As a former Ogden mayor he said that the commissioners have little understanding or sympathy for what such an increase would do to the inner city people. Many are older, retired and on a strict income. An increase of a mere \$5-\$10/month can be a legitimate crisis. The commissioners' actions validate a lack of understanding of the inner city of Ogden, which needs direct representation. He proposed a new form of county government consisting of 5-7 part-time professionally trained commissioners.

Kim Adams, of Warren, said that her husband is a police officer, and they have five children. He works a lot of overtime and has a second job. He loves his job as a public servant but is not able to spend time with his family and sacrifices his life for the public. His job is difficult not only on their income but their emotions, and their children.

Nealy Adams, a deputy with the Sheriff's Office, is a college graduate. A Sheriff's deputy has had two raises in 8 years. He is aware of three pay studies presented to the Commission showing the low pay—now over 20%. When hired he was promised a COLA and merit/year; this has been taken away from him ten times, which equates to \$12,000/year. He asked the public to support just compensation. He has bled for the county. New deputies have left at an astounding rate. Other deputies say they will leave if this does not get fixed. They have to maintain the employees to protect the community. He has maintained 120 hours for every pay period. In 2006 there were 20 more deputies on the road than there are currently.

Layne Clark, of unincorporated Weber County, local business owner, said that the Sheriff's Office does a wonderful job and he supports them. He showed a stack of cards that represent over \$12,000 in taxes that he will take to his employees to tell them that they will not get a raise. They average minimum wage. He said that \$10,000 is absurd for one tax increase. His buildings get over \$100,000 increase/year and every year he goes to the Assessor's Office and it is a fight. The property tax appeal process needs to change.

Brent Taylor, North Ogden City Mayor, spoke in favor of the Sheriff's Office and supports a pay increase for them. He asked the commission to consider the scope of this massive tax increase, particularly for our businesses when the county is trying to attract more to the county. If there was more information on how the increased taxes are to be used it could help people better understand. A concern is the provision of law enforcement services by the Sheriff, whose primary roles are the courts and the jail but the largest area is patrol because more than half of the cities contract for law enforcement. A large subsidy is coming from the General Fund to pay for the services. This tax increase will go to all county residents, but many already pay for their own police departments. A smaller tax increase could accomplish the goal. They should increase the cost to those cities receiving the services from the Sheriff's Office so that residents are not taxed twice.

Rodney Egan, of Uintah Highlands, said that what he read in the newspaper and received in the mail only said that this was for the Sheriff's Office. When the public got here tonight they found out that the \$7 million does not go to the Sheriff's Office and a lot more people would be here if they had known—that a trick was played on the people. Last year the sales taxes were raised for road improvements; his roads in Uintah Highlands are the worst in the county. If taxes need to be raised the issue should be put on a ballot, but with the Sheriff's Office separated from the rest. Those present agree that the Sheriff's Office needs a raise. He asked how this county has been paying 100% health insurance for all employees.

Tom said that the free market has inflated his home value. He no longer has relatives living in Utah due to increases in taxes. The county's population has really increased, and he asked why the taxes keep increasing with all the new people coming in, more homes being built and the tax base expanding.

Bruce Andersen, of West Haven, said that when he left office as commissioner in early 2000, the commissioners were making about \$73,000. He did not know if the information being passed around was correct, but it could mean that in 16 years the commissioners' salaries had more than doubled. Sheriff's services are mandated but part of the problem has been paying for a lot of wants over the last number of years; now they have to ask for a tax increase. The morale would be better with smaller tax increases. He opposes a new form of government and increasing the county's costs dramatically. The state inmates' situation needs to be looked at. When the county jail was built, the county was told that a lot of the space would be used for the state and that would go a long way to cover costs and the county needs to play hardball.

Lacy Richards, of West Haven, said that security is the #1 mandate given to county government and the Sheriff's budget has to come first. She said it was disingenuous to present this tax increase as being entirely for the Sheriff's Office when it includes items like reroofing the Ice Sheet, which should not have been added onto if the money was not there to maintain it without a tax increase. There is the option to fund the Sheriff's wage increases only. A shortage of this magnitude could not have sneaked up on our county government.

Lisa Pack, of Eden, asked if there was a \$17 million bond given to Summit at Powder Mountain that did not go for the people's vote but was approved by the Commission, if Summit was given 2-year interest payments for \$3-4 million for a total bond to a private entity of \$21, if Summit got 50% reduction in the school tax for 20 years, if the three commissioners sit on any board for Summit and if they have been paid personal money from Summit. Wealth should not be created in inflated government salaries, that county officials are being paid far beyond the average taxpaying citizen and any tax increase used to pay county employees is unjustified as top officials are overpaid and underworked.

James Coates, of Roy City, said that the commissioners have put the Sheriff employees in the line of fire again by subjecting them to hundreds of county residents who are upset with the tax increase because the commissioners do not know how to manage a county budget. According to transparent.utah.gov calculations only \$2.8 million is needed to give the Sheriff's Office/jail a 10% raise and \$1.4 million to give every other county employee a 4% raise including the commissioners, a total of \$4.2 million. He asked where is the other \$1.8 million going or do they say that website is incorrect. There are places to cut the county budget. People would like to see the line items and to have the increases without raising taxes.

Roy Mayor Willard Cragun said that it is a shame that over the years employees have been neglected throughout the State. Tax increases should have taken place a little at a time over years to cover deficits and employee raises. To take care of law enforcement personnel the county should rely a little more heavily on unincorporated areas where the Sheriff does his work. It is difficult to tell his citizens tomorrow that he has to raise their taxes for law enforcement. He said for the commissioners to do the honorable thing.

Jared Evenson, of Roy, asked what is the county's cost for the gun range. He is frustrated that this large tax is being portrayed as a raise for the Sheriff Office—that is all he has heard but when the figures are reviewed, that is not correct. The tax increase plays on the people's sympathy for the officers, but the officers' portion should be separated from other items/improvements. He supports the officers like most everyone present. He said that the commissioners need to quit hiding behind the Sheriff's Office and come clean with what it is.

Ellis Swenson, of North Ogden, said that the request for budget transparency has been a recurring theme tonight. Posting the information and the reason for this tax increase on the county's website would go a long way to alleviate the concerns. It should include comparisons to surrounding counties' starting, average and top pay, rather than the large area of northern Utah. He would like to see the data behind the financial figures shown earlier in a presentation, to show the data to support the need to increase the budget. When comparing salaries to the industry, the pension plans were not accounted for. He said that 3-4% 401(k) match is not comparable to a 55+% retirement pension after 30-35 years. County staff said tonight that there is nowhere else to cut expenditures and he asked about bringing in a third party to show that.

Marion Call, of West Warren, asked how the county determines property values. They purchased property four years ago for \$186,000, did a few minor repairs and the notice for this year shows the market value at \$410,000. She stated that there is no way that it is worth that much and the appraisal backs it. She talked about living within a budget. The 12th Street widening was very unnecessary and she suggested completing the section being worked on and putting the rest on hold as well as other road projects and use the money to pay for the Sheriff. She has lived in that area 30 years and has never had a problem.

Robert Dandoy, of Roy, a retired civil servant, said that in the job they had to make a distinction between essential and non-essential and suggested a benefit analysis. He said that because of security they were addressing the Sheriff but next year it would be something else. He opposes governments taking each other's employees and competing against themselves and suggested they find a common base pay.

Ron Gleason, of Huntsville, said he was making his comments solely based on the Standard Examiner's article. For transparency, tonight's presentation should have been posted many days prior. The \$3.6 million being asked for the Sheriff is 44% of the \$8.1 million that the Commission is asking for and 12.5%-15% should cover the Sheriff and a couple other essential areas. The Commission needs to go back and give the detail for the rest so the people can regain their trust. There is a deficit for the Conference Center and if it's a bad business to get out. Regarding the tax increase, he said that other groups will line up, they are watching. The same numbers will be there next year and he asked for 1, 2 & 5-year plans showing how the money will be spent for capital improvements.

Bryan Gray, of Pleasant View, said his family fought in the American Revolution against taxation and would be shocked that we pay more bloated taxes to federal, state and local governments than ever before. He spoke against being told that the tax increase was for the deputies; he found out tonight that it is not true.

Natalie Batten, of Hooper, said it is difficult to give the county money when she has not seen any proof for it. The county is one of the poorest and she asked how the commissioners justify their income of \$150,000+. She suggested they share their wealth with the county they represent. She lives on Social Security with \$15,000/year and her budget is really strapped; she has no money to pay the tax increase. She said she supports law enforcement, which is scratching for a bone but the commissioners are the fat cats.

Barbara Adams, of West Weber, addressed the needs of the deputies. Her son works so much that his family hardly ever sees him. She said that with only a few officers on the road they don't have spare officers to be writing tickets. There are not enough officers on the streets and they are sleep deprived. The empty job slots need to be filled and at a decent salary. They serve because they want to serve.

Brian Berlin, of Ogden, said that our founding fathers did not expect people in government to make it a full time job at \$100,000+/year. Regarding someone's comment about making \$17/hour, he would be happy with half of that. He feels there are too many officers during a call, calling it overkill. He suggested starting off with a 5% pay raise. He has not had a pay raise in over 10 years and the last one was a ½% cost of living.

Tyler Kunzler, of Ogden, brought his stack of county property tax notices totaling close to \$4,000. He stated that those who use the services the most should pay the tax. He strongly opposes a tax increase that goes to the General Fund. He asked if the commissioners were serious about supporting the underfunded officers and only supports the tax increase for them. He asked that a separate account be created solely for their wages. He does not agree with the taxes going into the General Fund for the Commission to use, as they want.

Dennis Williams, of West Weber, stated that his 2013 property taxes were \$2,600; this year they are \$4,400. His property value did not go up \$40,000 and he asked for an explanation.

Kathy Murdock, of West Haven, thanked every deputy for risking their lives and said shame on those who do not think they need to pay them.

Byron Krenek, of Liberty, said that the biggest complaint he has heard all night is accountability for where the tax money is going. The problem is that the Sheriff's Office has not been allowed to have the money to take care of its staff and the residents. He supports the tax increase to help the Sheriff's Office.

Stephen Naylor, of Ogden, reiterated the need for transparency. He tried to obtain a copy of the proposed budget on Friday but could not get it then or today. He asked for no vote tonight on this issue because it needs more investigation. The residents are getting slammed with taxes from property taxes, state gas tax, federal tax, etc. He is on a fixed income and has some rental properties—his employees make \$8-\$10/hr. and are struggling. He talked about disparity in salaries and said that an across the board raise should be given rather than percentages. He wants the gun range to pay for itself, not the residents.

Melissa Leavitt, of Farr West, loves the officers but knows we all make sacrifices. She opposes these taxes—once a tax is imposed it will never go away, but will continue to burden our children, grandchildren, etc. There are other options. She is willing to volunteer in any way so that the tax burden is not on the people.

Thane Hales, of South Ogden, asked the Commission and Brad Dee, Administrative Services Director, if they receive compensation above their salaries such as medical, dental, driving mileage, etc., and to what percentage that amounts to.

Jeff Stott, of Farr West, said that the Sheriff gave the number of his deputies. A quick calculation of \$3.00/hour increase for 253 deputies would cost about \$1.6 million/year. During the presentation it was said that health insurance increased 47% and that is a serious amount to the budget. If a doctor's association in the county would cover the county employees the health costs could be reduced significantly. He would like to see more bonding used because it allows residents to be participants in the budget.

Blake Chadwick, of Ogden, asked why do something which no one wants, and if no one wants it, then why are they doing it. A tax in 1940 to support the troops was going to drop after the war but it never occurred. He totally opposes the tax increase. He does not have money for food and works at a dangerous job.

Ed Valdez, of West Warren, retired from the county four years ago and said shame on Brad Dee, Administrative Services Director, for taking the people's money. He said that if the commissioners dig deep they can find other sources. He said that no one was against justly paying the Sheriff's deputies. He owns a business and is constantly being hit with taxes. He knows of the waste in the county—the other day he followed a county truck to the grocery store—and said that the commissioners need to look at the department heads, where the waste is.

Tamara Wood, Box Elder resident, owns a yard for equipment in West Haven. In 1996 they paid \$194 in taxes. They built a metal building about 20 years ago and the last tax bill was for \$4,611 and she would like to speak with who has been assessing their land.

Devon Nelson, of Ogden, heard the same discussion at Ogden City's proposed tax increase last week for law enforcement pay; they relented cutting it to a 31% increase. The Sheriff's deputies are not going to put their lives on the line for him; Ogden City police will do that. Ogden residents are being double taxed for law enforcement and asked why they have to pay both to the city and the county. Weber County has a tax rate about 40% higher than Davis County, and according to the state property tax division about three times the rate that residents pay in Utah County. Being the highest taxed county does not invite businesses here.

Karen Colburn, of Ogden, recently came from South Carolina and the commissioners there were volunteers. The smart thing would be for the state to get together and decide on the pay rate because it is asinine for entities to play the game and take our trained officers. She wonders what is going on when funds are transferred from one fund to the General Fund and stated that transparency is important to the people.

Jim Harvey, of unincorporated Weber County/county employee, said that the commissioners have worked to be transparent but a better job can be done—it will help people better understand. He works with the Sheriff's Office almost weekly, who are people of integrity, and he supports paying law enforcement and key personnel. He feels for those on fixed incomes. He stated that everyone wants more accountability. He pointed out the large expenses for the communication on radios, body armor, etc. for the deputies that were not budgeted for 10 years ago, just like the insurance increases.

Brent Call, of North Ogden, is a business owner in unincorporated Weber County. He supports the tax increase needed for the county officers. He stated that the Commission is probably missing the fundamental point that people are sick and tired of being taxed. He asked if law enforcement is a priority for the Commission they should be funded first and go down the priority list. If money is not available for the gun range, Ice Sheet, to fix roads, etc., those should not be funded. If the residents decide that those are necessary, then the tax increase should be discussed.

Preston Murray, of Hooper, asked what the Commission's fiscal priorities are and what will they do to improve their transparency on similar issues.

Cord Pack, of Eden, is totally against a tax increase but is in favor of the law enforcement portion. In Ogden Valley there are a ton of races and marathons, and he said they should be charged for officers, cars, etc. that patrol them. Fees for tickets should also be increased, etc. He thanked the officers.

Questions posed during the public comment period were addressed. The public asked more questions.

1. Can any savings from the library bond be used for Sheriff's increases-Mr. Wilson: no (specific purpose).
2. Can I see data behind figures in the presentation-Mr. Parke: yes, and the information will be posted on the county's website tomorrow & the newspaper can get the information.
3. 3rd party to analyze cost cutting potential-Comm. Ebert: 15-18 months ago an internal auditor was hired to look at where the county can be more efficient. Department heads were pared down from 7 to 3. There has been tremendous savings. Evaluations continue. Over 50 employees on a list that was being passed around by the audience are no longer with the county and the salaries are incorrect. Mr. Hatch: the state's website, transparent.utah.gov, is more current & accurate than utahsright.com.
4. Transparent.utah.gov shows only \$4 million is needed for a 4% increase; where is the rest of the money going. Mr. Parke: the proposal is a 10% increase to law enforcement (with additional costs-FICA, state retirement, etc.). Justin Pack, of Eden: what % of the \$8.2 million tax increase is going to Sheriff compensation-Mr. Parke: 14% (\$1.16 million to capital projects) the remaining 84% (\$7 million) to employee compensation. Of the \$7 million a little over \$3.6 million is to fund Sheriff increases (constituting 45% of the employees) and remaining to go to everyone else. Comm. Ebert: the Commission has not presented this increase as for the Sheriff's Office only—the county has no control over newspaper articles. The Sheriff's Office has an acute problem that has to be addressed, but so do other departments. This meeting is to lay out all the issues to the public and the county has tried to get the information out in sending postcards, etc. & will continue to work on transparency. Comm. Gibson: the other offices heard from tonight also provide mandated services and have shown that there is significant pressure on those salaries.
5. Is Commission serious about supporting underpaid officers-Chair Bell: yes and it is being discussed. Jon Grove, of unincorporated county, only supports the Sheriff's Office increases.
6. Why do something that no one wants. Melissa Leavitt, of Farr West, noted that the majority are willing to support the Sheriff but do not want to be forced with this increase.

7. Will county create a separate account to be used solely for wages-Mr. Hatch: the Sheriff is paid out of the General Fund, through budget controls the county can ensure the increases will go to where they need to go, if the Commission votes for it. Mr. Parke: constitutional officers are paid out of the General Fund, and sub-funds can be designated within the General Fund. Mr. Wilson addressed Marion Call's question stating that the library bond was voted on by the people for a specific purpose, and once paid off it is retired.
8. Where is other half of tax increase going-the public felt this had been explained sufficiently already.
9. Does county have 1, 2, 5-yr. plans on how tax increase will solve these problems (capital projects). Mr. Parke: yes there is a 5-yr. capital projects plan, reviewed annually during budget cycle. There's a county employee benefits plan; the county is aligning to be more in line with private sector, asking employees to pay a portion of health insurance. Kevin Toone: who are the other employees to receive the money-Brad Dee, Admin. Services Director: the numbers presented in the employee categories were from a survey conducted by Wasatch Compensation Group across the Wasatch Front. The adjustments still do not handle all the below market wages. Employees are to receive 4% COLA, employees have not received it for several years. \$1.3 million in adjustments for clerical, nurses, Engineering, surveyors, building service workers, etc. Kyle Stewart, county employee: if the potential 10% wage increase mirrors the out of pocket cost for health insurance. Mr. Dee: employees are being asked to pay 10% of that cost and it may increase over next few years for the current plan. There is also the high deductible health plan option with an HSA. Mr. Dee addressed Karen Coburn's question stating that the 4% COLA is an across the board increase and there are ancillary costs (FICA, etc.) which probably would then be 5.3%.
10. How property values are determined-the public felt this had been explained sufficiently already.
11. How to pay \$1,000 tax on \$1,180/mo. income. Mr. Hatch helped that person regarding tax relief programs.
12. Is an employee making \$266,000/yr.-No. Mr. Dee and Comm. Ebert stated that the county has a stop loss practice and pays employees sick leave at today's dollars.
13. What is commission salary-Chair Bell:\$115,274, with benefits it is \$167,060
14. How to justify that salary when the county is one of poorest-Comm. Gibson: by comparison earnings are lower than other Wasatch counties.
15. Do commissioners receive compensation above salary-medical, dental, mileage, etc., how much is that of current salary-Chair Bell: receive car allowance-\$7000/yr., phone allowance-\$900/yr. with taxes taken out.
16. Any commissioner, elected official receive bonuses. No.
17. Why county not working to bring more jobs in-Comm. Ebert: county is focused on economic/community development, creating environment to attract industry through infrastructure/community development, partnering with cities, rolling out a plan & programs (4 public meetings for next month).
18. Annual revenue increases in CAFR-\$2M/yr in 2014, 2015. Mr. Parke: the county received a lot of revenue from federal grants for the extensive flooding issue in 2012; it was for that specific purpose.
19. Do county taxes increase every yr.-Mr. Parke: the county has not raised its portion of taxes since 2005. Mr. Hatch: the library general obligation bond voted by the voters resulted in a tax increase.
20. What was sales tax growth over past few yrs.-question not clear, Mr. Parke addressed to his best ability: motor vehicle fees go to B&C Funds for state transportation projects only; general sales tax-about \$10M go to county used for various projects, etc.
21. Where vehicle tax growth goes from increases. Already addressed.
22. Did Commission give Powder Mountain (PM)/Summit \$17-18M-Mr. Hatch: the Special Assessment area Bond map was drawn and PM borrowed money using the county as a conduit. The bond was used by PM to build roads that will be turned over to the county. The county/taxpayers are not repaying one penny of that bond but the property owners within that specific area. Chair Bell: PM took out the bond and the county backed it. PM made two \$1.5M each over the past 2 yrs; there are about 2 yrs. reserves. Mr. Wilson: as Summit sells those lots the new owner becomes responsible; if an owner does not pay, the county immediately forecloses and sells it. The county has never paid any of that money and never will.
23. Did Summit get a 50% reduction in school tax for 20 yrs.-Commissioners: School District made that decision-the county cannot obligate the District's funding. Comm. Ebert: tax increment-a common tool used to create economic development and attract businesses. North Ogden Mayor Taylor also explained that the process brings jobs/growth.
24. Do any commissioners sit on any Summit Boards. Commissioners: no.
25. Have any commissioners been paid personally by Summit. Chair Bell: campaign contribution before he was elected. Comm. Ebert may have received a contribution and would have to check.
26. Why all the spending increases-gun range, commission chambers, hiring Public Information Officer (PIO), etc. Commissioners: Commission conference room-put in technology, some remodeling; gun range-\$3.8M but \$3M came from state legislature, about \$1M received from other sources to upgrade it. To get funding, range had to have a public component. PIO: the position existed previously but was not filled for a while.
27. Why does the library need a cafeteria-cafeteria space is leased, no cost to county, it is revenue generating.

- 28 Is county planning to build another gun range on old landfill-Comm. Gibson: before the Swanson Center opportunity arose, it was considered but it would have to be funded through private donations.
29. Where is the money for OECC subsidy coming from-Mr. Parke: OECC is part of county's Parks & Rec., which currently has an operating deficit and is receiving a subsidy between \$300K-\$1M./yr for total Parks & Rec. A portion of their operations comes from tourism tax revenue. Have discussed a plan for 2020 when the last bond payment is made to end all Gen. Fund subsidy for Parks & Rec. Comm. Gibson: there is increased recognition by state legislature & throughout the country the importance of capturing money from tourism.
30. Is 12th Street expansion project a conflict for Comm. Gibson-Comm. Ebert: project was for traffic/safety issues along that roadway. Economic development-county can bring in large companies but needs infrastructure. This project is first step in providing that to develop heavy manufacturing/industrial sites with direct rail service. Comm. Gibson: no county money has gone into the project.
31. Will Comm. Ebert recuse himself from voting on tax increase-his wife would benefit from increase-It would be ludicrous for him to make this decision based on his wife's employment in the Sheriff's Office.
32. Why has county paid law enforcement so little for so long-Chair Bell: no property tax increase for many years. Comm. Ebert: certain politicians had not wanted to face the issue.
33. County paying 100% health insurance for employees-The public felt this had been explained already.
35. Why tax rates keep going up with all the new people into the county-Already been addressed.
36. What is the cost to the county for gun range-Already addressed. Comm. Ebert: 80% of staff are volunteers.
37. Why Ogden City residents have to pay double taxes for law enforcement. Comm. Gibson: not a double taxation. Budgeting for law enforcement personnel is required to be kept separate in the Municipal Services Fund, cities with own police force do not have to pay. Major portions of the Sheriff's Office are county-wide in function and are classified differently (i.e., Jail, Corrections, Search & Rescue).
38. Why the county has most expensive sales tax along Wasatch Front-Mr. Hatch: voters voted for taxes (i.e., transportation projects, RAMP). Comm. Ebert: we may have a higher rate but property values are lower
39. David Smith, West Haven: if increase is approved for existing deputies how many new additional FTE will they hire to provide services within Weber County due to fact that we are expanding-Comm. Bell: no additional money was put in budget for additional staff. The Sheriff has 9 unfilled FTE positions. What steps is county taking to see that the county is reimbursed at 100% for state inmates at the county jail. Comm. Bell: county is a subdivision of the state, which determines what it will pay the county.
40. Nina Morris: if employees making more than \$75,000/yr get a 4% COLA. Mr. Dee spoke of disparate treatment. If it is a COLA across the board everyone would receive it unless they refuse it.
41. Bob McEnTee looked at the sales tax growth in transparent.utah.gov and said it showed in 2009 \$2M in revenue, in 2014-\$9.8M and 2015-\$6M, which is huge growth. Could some of that be used for Sheriff. Mr. Parke: accounting standards changed, previously money that went to UTA or elsewhere was not recorded as revenue for the county but UTA would record it as revenue. Now both the county has to show it as revenue and expenses on its accounting and the other entity has to show it as revenue.
42. Wayne Hirsbrunner, of unincorporated county-in the presentation of salaries \$115,000, \$167,000 were not shown-commissioner were playing at the people's heartstrings for the lower incomes and yet the 4% is for everyone. 4% to higher incomes make a difference but not so much for lower ones. Commission needs to figure out a way to move the money to the lower incomes. Comm. Gibson: one way they tried to do that in the past was with a merit that allows department heads to determine that, but the county has not been able to do that for yrs.
43. Berenice Gomez: where senior citizens on fixed incomes are to get the money. Ogden City, the county, and others taxed residents, that there is tax relief for the rich and poor but what about the middle class-who helps them. She has no help, and asked the Commission to consider them.
44. Lane Findlay, of the County Sheriff's Office-They are in a crisis in the Sheriff's Office, 10% increase would be appreciated but does not solve the problem. Their pay is about 20% behind other agencies. If going to vote the increase, do it right so they are not back in a couple of years.
46. Blake Chadwick: put this on a ballot.
47. Lane McFarland, of West Weber: do not vote the tax increase tonight, the majority who spoke supports the law enforcement and the vast majority is against this tax increase. He agrees with others who suggested that there are other ways to solve this problem. He saw the issue evolve tonight from low paid deputies to other department heads who also have low wages and a 4% increase across the board. The county median combined household income is \$60,000. Many who spoke tonight are living on small budgets and little means.
- 48 What are the county's fiscal priorities-Comm. Ebert: county is focused on creating new growth to drive economic development, outreach in community development, and associated drivers to reduce costs, eliminating expenditures as much as possible, and creating better revenue source through economic development. Also focused on staff and retention and providing mandated services.

49. What will county do to improve transparency-Comm. Ebert: the Commission continues to work on and has done a tremendous amount of transparency. All of this information will be provided to the public. This is the first step. Some came with a preconceived idea from reading the Standard Examiner. He had told the Sheriff that this was not at his feet to defend or argue for—it is an entire county issue. There are specific capital needs that the county has to have.

3. Public comment: Chair Bell invited public comments and one more was offered: Danny Driggs echoed what Sgt. Findlay had said, 10% will be a band-aid and they do not want to compete with other area entities and lose staff. They are grateful but do not want to have to come back in a couple of years.

Commissioner Gibson moved to adjourn the public hearing and reconvene the public meeting; Commissioner Ebert seconded.

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

4. ACTION ON PUBLIC HEARING:

David Wilson, Deputy County Attorney, said that the Commission may take action or set a time certain for the next public meeting at which to consider the tax increase. The Commission discussed different dates and will revisit the issue after the budget hearings.

Commissioner Ebert heard three areas tonight to spend more time on—look for efficiencies, transparency, and money within the budget and moved to revisit this tax increase at the November 8, 2016 Commission meeting. Scott Parke, County Comptroller, noted that it is Election Day. After some discussion, Commissioner Ebert amended the motion for November 29; Commissioner Gibson seconded.

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

G. PUBLIC COMMENTS: No further comments.

H. ADJOURN

Commissioner Ebert moved to adjourn at 11:36 p.m.; Commissioner Gibson seconded.

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

Attest:

Matthew G Bell, Chair
Weber County Commission

Ricky D. Hatch, CPA
Weber County Clerk/Auditor