

**MINUTES**  
**WEBER COUNTY COMMISSION**

Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – 10:02 a.m.

Via Zoom meeting + at Weber Center, 2380 Washington Blvd., Ogden, UT

In accordance with the requirements of Utah Code Section 52-4-203, the County Clerk records in the minutes the names of all persons who 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:** Gage Froerer, James "Jim" H. Harvey, and Sharon Bolos  
**STAFF PRESENT:** Lynn D. Taylor, of the County Clerk/Auditor's Office; Christopher Crockett, Deputy County Attorney; and Craig D. Brandt (via Zoom), of the County Clerk/Auditor's office, who took minutes.

**A. WELCOME:** Chair Froerer

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Stacy Skeen

**C. INVOCATION:** Commissioner Froerer

**D. THOUGHT OF THE DAY:** Commissioner Bolos: President Lincoln was once criticized for his attitude toward his enemies. "Why do you try to make friends of them?" asked an associate. "You should try to destroy them." "Am I not destroying my enemies," Lincoln gently replied, "when I make them my friends?"

**E. PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE.**

**F. PRESENTATION:**

1. Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, Agriculture Program Updates:

Craig Buttars (Utah State Commissioner of Agriculture): It's our intention to meet with every county commission and county council in the state to help county leaders understand the importance of agriculture in their county. We have put together some data, some updates of what has happened in state legislature this year, and some of the strategic plans and goals we have as a department. The Department of Agriculture began in 1921. Some of UDAF's responsibilities include stewardship, inspection, regulation, consumer protection, rulemaking, loan assistance, pest and disease control, and marketing and economic development.

Kelly Pehrson (Deputy Utah State Commissioner of Agriculture): We wanted to do a strategic plan on what the producers and farmers want us to focus on to help them be successful. Meetings with producers and stakeholders led to UDAF's strategic goals of agristructure, workforce development, agriculture land preservation, supply chain development, agriculture education, and customer service. For agristructure, it takes a year to year and a half to harvest a cow. \$9M given to agripark for building of meat processing infrastructure near Nephi. Under workforce development, the average age of a farmer is 65; not a lot of young people are getting into farming and help is at a minimum for farmers who rely on a lot of immigration and visa type workers, known as H2A employees. We are looking for ways to encourage young people to get into farming. Utah State received funding for a veterinarian school. This legislative session approved up to \$100k dollars of loan repayment for those interested in becoming a veterinarian who work in rural areas for five years. Supply Chain issues, like what happened during Covid, it was scary to go to your grocery store and see it empty. We are encouraging local people to buy local food and are trying to find better ways for local producers to sell their food. Ag Land Preservation is a big one; you see here in Weber County how fast ag land can disappear. They say the last crop to be grown is homes. Recent funding aims to help reserve ag land and give producers an option to keep their land in ag land forever. We want to make sure we provide the best customer service to our producers; we don't want to overregulate them and we want to make sure we are at the top of our game with customer service.

Mr. Buttars: Benefits of Agriculture in Utah include providing food, fiber, and animal feed, strengthening our local food security, creating rural jobs, conservation and open space preservation, large economic driver for rural areas, and providing water and resources for wildlife. Weber County farms overview includes \$49M worth of ag products sold, 1260 farms, 94,361 acres of farmland with 27,169 irrigated acres, average farm size is 75 acres and decreasing as time goes on, 97% of farms are family owned, and a 50/50 split between crops and livestock. In Israel, they build homes on hills saving the good farm ground for agriculture production. We have made a mistake in this state of not pushing developments to land that can't be actively farmed. We encourage you, Commissioners, to preserve agriculture land when you can. Weber County ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in the state for woody crops, vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes, 4<sup>th</sup> in horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys, 5<sup>th</sup> in fruits, tree nuts, and berries, 7<sup>th</sup> in milk from cows and total crops, and 11<sup>th</sup> in total market value of Ag products sold. Recent legislative programs include Water Optimization program, LeRay McAllister Working Farm and Ranch Protection Fund, Ag Stress Assistance program, and the Utah Food Security Processing Grant.

Mr. Pehrson: Two legislative sessions ago we received \$1M food processing grant as a pilot program allowing a processor to increase processing capacity. 71 applications for \$14M in requests received last year. Application period this runs from May 1<sup>st</sup> – May 31<sup>st</sup>, with ranking in June and funding on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mr Buttar: We received \$70M towards water optimization that is a 50/50 grant going to farmers and ranchers looking to improve their irrigation systems. We are looking at sub-surface drip irrigation to save water. That is one thing we saw a lot of in Israel; they don't sprinkle any crop other than a wheat or potato crop; they have tens of thousands of acres using sub-surface drip irrigation. A new Ag Stress Assistance program provides free mental healthcare vouchers for farmers and their families, training for producers on how to help community members, and training for 988 crisis line responders statewide.

Mr. Pehrson: The LeRay McAllister fund has been around 1992 and provides a way to do conservation easements around the state. The most recent legislative session moved it to the Department of Agriculture and changed the name to the LeRay McAllister Working Farm and Ranch Protection Fund. It allows for farmers to sell their development rights to put the land into a development easement; they will retain ownership but the land will never be developed. This past session funded \$3M and three full time employees for this program. House Bill 371 requires county to take 20% of rollback taxes and put into Conservation Easements, starting July 1<sup>st</sup>. We will help you match those funds with federal money. We are in the process of hiring a new program manager for this program and will have them reach out to you.

Mr. Buttar: Utah agriculture is essential to protecting our local food supply, boosting rural economies, and preserving open space and quality of life. Consider how your community can find ways to help agriculture remain viable. Encourage municipalities to adopt ag-friendly zoning ordinances. Senate Bill 76 that went through this last session has the Department of Agriculture provide assistance to county zoning and planning ordinances; it requires counties to be involved and get assistance from the state.

Commissioner Harvey: We have been participating in conservation easement in our county. What is the definition of rural community?

Mr Buttar: I don't know that there is a definition from the state. In statute there are different designations as far as class of county. You will mostly see 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class counties considered rural but each county has some rural aspect to it.

Commissioner Bolos: Can you send that presentation to us along with links to the applications? I think it would be great to share with the farmers in our counties so they know the opportunities they have.

Chair Froerer: I think we embrace our agricultural community in Weber County; we think it's a valuable part of our history and our future. With our 20% we put in from rollback tax, we combine that with some state funds and some type of federal funds. Where does that application start and end.

Mr. Buttar: That would start in our Conservation Division. Our staff would also help applicants apply for the federal funding. If the county has a specific employee working that program, we would like to see a partnership so that we are all coordination and working together.

Chair Froerer: Do we have the ability to have input or does the state make all decisions on use of that funding?

Mr. Buttar: Each county has to approve each funded project with each county drafting a letter of support.

Chair Froerer: Are there resources available to help our Weed Board?

Mr. Buttar: The state does have resources available.

Mr. Pehrson: I will add that contact info to the email I will send you.

**G. CONSENT ITEMS:**

1. Warrants #7665-7691, #475453-475594 and #256-258 in the amount of \$1,813,959.42.
2. Purchase orders in the amount of \$127,540.66.
3. Summary of Warrants and Purchase Orders.
4. Minutes for the meeting held on March 28, 2023.
5. Contract with Weber School District for the MESA Day Event to be held at the Golden Spike Event Center.
6. Contract with Spikers Rodeo.
7. Contract with Utah Quarter Horse Racing Association for races to be held at the Golden Spike Event Center.
8. Contract with Rocky Mountain Barrel Racing Association to hold the Dash for Dollars Barrel Race at the Golden Spike Event Center.
9. Contract with Utah Gay Rodeo Association to hold the Crossroads of the West Regional Rodeo at the Golden Spike Event Center.
10. Contract with Dominion Energy Utah to make Dominion Energy become the service provider for the Sheriff's Complex.
11. Operating Plan update to the Cooperative Law Enforcement Agreement between Weber County and the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest.

Commissioner Harvey moved to approve the consent items; Commissioner Bolos seconded.  
Commissioner Froerer – aye; Commissioner Harvey – aye; Chair Bolos – aye

**H. ACTION ITEMS:**

1. **APPROVE RESOLUTION 24-2023 APPOINTING A TRUSTEE TO THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE LITTLE MOUNTAIN SERVICE AREA.**

Stacy Skeen (Commission Office): Midterm vacancy created by passing of Randy Marriott. Four qualified applications received for term running through December 31, 2026.

Commissioner Bolos moved to approve Resolution 24-2023 appointing Craig Jackson to the governing board of the Little Mountain Service Area; Commissioner Bolos seconded.  
Roll Call Vote: Commissioner Harvey – aye; Commissioner Bolos – aye; Chair Froerer – aye

**I. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

1. Commissioner Bolos: My hat goes off to those plowing roads and their maintenance teams this winter with a lot of time away from their families.
2. Commissioner Harvey: Agreed, these crews have been working 16-20 hour days consecutively, the people and equipment are tired.
3. Chair Froerer: We have had some calls from those who had inconvenience from waiting for snow removal. We have a limited staff that takes their job very seriously and a lot of roads to maintain.

**J. ADJOURN**

Commissioner Bolos moved to adjourn at 10:50 am.; Commissioner Harvey seconded.  
Commissioner Froerer – aye; Commissioner Bolos – aye; Chair Harvey – aye

Attest:

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Gage Froerer, Chair  
Weber County Commission

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Ricky D. Hatch, CPA  
Weber County Clerk/Auditor