

Logan County Commissioners Work Session
April 1, 2025

Present: Mike Brownell, Jim Yahn, Jerry Sonnenberg, Alan Samber, Debbie Unrein, Marilee Johnson, Rick Cullip, Kay Rich, Dave Lieber, and Jennifer Crow.

Chairman Brownell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS SESSION - The minutes of the March 25, 2025 Work Session were not finished and were laid over to the next Work Session.

REVISIONS TO THE WORK SESSION AGENDA – There were no revisions.

REVIEW OF THE BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA – There was no business meeting agenda for April 1, 2025.

KAY RICH – HERITAGE FESTIVAL – Kay Rich met with the Board and thanked the Board for the support they recently sent for the Smithsonian Museum’s American’s Exhibit. The Overland Trail Museum was chosen to host the exhibit. It will be here in March of 2026 and will fit in great with the America 250/Colorado 150 Celebration. It will be here for eight weeks in the spring and is perfect for the school tours. The museum is very excited about it.

Kay discussed plans for the 2025 Heritage Festival. It’s a little early for some of the plans right now. Cowboy Poet/Dutch Oven Cook, John Schaffner just texted that he plans to come again this year. July 4th is on a Friday this year, for a three-day weekend. Kay hopes that attendance will be good this year. Sometimes a long weekend means people leave town; however, sometimes it means they will stay here to enjoy all that is going on here. Music is all planned, Ingrid Griffin will be singing. She was at July Jamz last year and is just fabulous. She’s coming here from Nashville. Mud County is a local band that will be here. All of our heritage crafters are in place to come, blacksmithing and so forth, and all of our children’s activities are also ready. Prairie Express will provide shuttles across the highway.

The Commissioners have always provided \$1,500 to help fund this event. Between the County and the City and other support, that’s how they can do the event free of charge to the public. It’s a multi-generational event with something for everyone. Kay is asking for the same amount of support this year.

Commissioner Yahn moved to approve the requested \$1500 for the Heritage Festival. Commissioner Sonnenberg seconded, and the motion carried 3-0.

Kay said the estimated attendance is approximately 2,500 – 3,000. Commissioner Yahn suggested a drone flyover to take video footage of the event to publicize it for future years. The Sheriff’s Office has a drone and might be coming to the festival.

DAVE LIEBER YOUNG FARMERS TRACTOR PULL – Dave Lieber of the NJC Young Farmers met with the Board. The tractor pull association bought another association. They bought out the Nebraska guys around Bridgeport. The Lussetto’s were putting it on, they still pull, but they were doing what they call the Outlaws Pullers Association. They were the western part of the Outlaw Pullers on TV, they have the Midwest and Eastern side. When the Lussetto’s let it go, our group that always comes, the NSPA, bought their association out. When they did that, then the prize money that they pay out goes up. They pay for five places instead of three. This year the contract for our tractor pull has gone up \$10,000. NJC Young Farmers were making before, and with this extra, it’s either don’t do it or try to find some way to make it work.

Lieber explained the prize money and the payout. They pay five places per class. If they only have three pullers in that class, then the pullers group gets the fourth and fifth place money back. He doesn't know how much that's going to be until the day of the pull.

The Outlaw Pullers have fifteen in a class where we usually have five people in a class. They don't need as many classes to make a show. Somewhere around 35 to 40 pullers makes a good show. It makes us a couple hours show for our pullers and for our audience. They only have to buy three or four classes to make a show with 40 or 50 people. Here we have to buy eight classes to make a show.

In the past, they've just given us a contract amount of \$15,000 to come pull. Then we usually put in another \$5,000 by the time we rent the fairgrounds, the Road and Bridge, Department, the advertising, and the expenses are around \$20,000. Last year the tractor pull made \$21,000, so we were able to cover all our expenses.

Lieber does apply to the Lodging Tax Board and gets funds from that Board to help with advertising. He advertises at TransWest, and at Horizon Motors for free. The prize money alone is \$21,000, then insurance, announcer and sled ads up to another \$5000. So, \$25,000 is what they're going to charge him to put on the tractor pull. That's with no advertising yet. Lieber is looking for ways to reduce the costs in the rental of the fairgrounds. He got approval from the NJC Young Farmers at the meeting last Friday night to try and look for ways to save money on expenses. The NSPA pullers, Nicole Lay, and her husband are the owners of it, they're trying to help find some sponsorships, something to offset some of the costs. We charge \$20 per ticket for grandstand seating and \$25 for pit passes.

Commissioner Sonnenberg asked how many sponsorships he has now. Lieber answered not many. Lieber is working on getting sponsors now. Any funds carried over from the prior year are used for Christmas baskets for families and pedal tractor pulls that they do throughout the year. The group is about \$10,000 short now. The Sportsmen's Experience is not doing their event this year. They had joined the Tractor Pull last year but didn't have much success last year. Lieber was not sure why but possibly with the gun laws people didn't come. This year Carol Legg and her son are doing to do a Sportsmen/Baseball Card Show. They are going to team up with the tractor pull to do some advertising and will buy some tractor pull tickets for their exhibitors.

Greg Porter of Redlund Equipment would like to be part of sponsoring the tractor pull. Nicole Lay suggested that Lieber talk to the Sterling store manager here since the tractor pull is held in Sterling. However, the owner is in Greeley. Porter needs to talk to the owner and make sure that they are in agreement. Lieber has some sponsorships amounting to a couple of thousand dollars already and has some other ideas but has not done a lot of fundraising as he wanted to wait until the group met and decided that they would definitely do it.

Western Cleanup is Ronnie Green out of Fort Morgan, and they are pullers. Ronnie Green's daughter is Nicole Lay, who is one of the owners of the NSPA. Lieber plans to talk to Ronnie Green as he has supported the tractor pull for a number of years.

Attendance is usually around 1,000 to 1,200 in the grandstands. They usually have a couple of food booths and the beer garden. He is asking for the \$500 fairgrounds rental fee to be cut down to nothing or at least cut in half. The Road and Bridge Department prepares the track for the event. The fees are \$425 for equipment and labor. The same employee runs both the road grader and roller packer.

Rick Cullip stated that the Building and Grounds Department does minimal preparation for the event, mostly pulling out tables and chairs. The labor portion is mainly the Road and Bridge Department. The Board is concerned that if fees are cut for this event, it sets a precedent, and other groups will want reduced fees. The long-standing event is an economic driver.

The Board would like to see what sponsorship funds can be raised. Lieber was invited to come back after he has done some fundraising, and the Board will see if they can help in some other way. Lieber said that the grandstands and arena are built perfectly for a tractor pull because they can have the track a little closer and the people are right on top of it.

Lieber told the Board about a Tesla truck that came in and wanted to pull, and his buddy had a Dodge pickup. They were going around doing comparisons. The pullers said OK, and they made a YouTube video of it, and it's about 20 minutes long. It's still out there, but it says right in the video, they are pulling in Sterling, Colorado, the Tesla guy gets out on the track and talks to the sled people and in the video, they go out and talk at the drivers' meeting and the lady thanks the NJC Young Farmers for putting this on. He pulls 200 feet and somebody in the grandstands yells to him "Take it back to California!" It's in the video that you can hear that. The video has 1.7 million hits. It was really funny. Then the Dodge pickup pulled, and it pulled further than the Tesla and it was just a street pickup. It wasn't planned or staged or anything, they just showed up.

LIGHTING BEHIND THE CHUTES/PITS – Dave Lieber suggested to the Board that some lights be installed on the four light poles that shine out into the pits behind the rodeo chutes. Everything behind the bucking chutes and the pits are very dark. If each one of those poles had some LED lights shining rearward and shining out into the pits, it would benefit a lot of events including the rodeos and the derby. The LED lights could be adjusted so they do not shine out into the residents across Division Avenue. The Board asked Rick Cullip to look into the matter. If there is not time before the event in June, possibly portable construction lights that run on generators could be used.

Commissioner Sonnenberg suggested rather than reduce the fees for the fairgrounds rental, perhaps the County could donate the Road and Bridge arena work.

Marilee Johnson reported that they will not be able to sell souvenirs at the Visitor's Center. She also reported that she was awarded a marketing management grant of \$20,000 from the Colorado Tourism Office. The Lodging Tax Board will match the grant with \$5,000. The grant will be used to develop a gravel cycling guide to identify routes for gravel cycling. They will put it all into a book and distribute it. The content will talk about our land history, our agricultural history, our water history, the old schools, the communities, buildings, etc. in the county. In the guide, there will be a QR code that will open up to the history of the reservoir or the ditch system that the cyclists are crossing right at the time. Commissioner Yahn talked to the Water Round Table about educational grants to help print the booklet if you use water components in it. Marilee's grant will pay for content, and pictures that can also be used on the website or in digital ads. She will be pursuing additional funds to print the guidebook. There are 1,700 miles of roads in Logan County and 1,500 miles of gravel roads in the County.

AMBULANCE RFP – Debbie Unrein said that one RFP has been turned in. The deadline is one week from Friday.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - Commissioner Sonnenberg moved to go into Executive Session for the purpose of a conference with the County Attorney for the purpose of receiving legal advice on specific legal questions concerning disciplinary alternatives for employees involved in the workplace misconduct, as allowed by Colorado Revised Statutes, Section 24-6-402, (4)(e) Commissioner Yahn seconded and the motion carried 3-0. The Work Session was recessed.

The meeting reconvened at 10:14 a.m. Chairman Brownell stated "The participants in the executive session were: Commissioner Mike Brownell, Commissioner Jerry Sonnenberg, and Commissioner Jim Yahn and County Attorney Alan Samber. For the record, if any person who participated in the Executive Session

believes that any substantial discussion of matters not included in the motion to go into Executive Session occurred during the Executive Session, or that any improper action occurred during the executive session in violation of the open meetings law, I would ask that you state your concerns for the record, seeing none.”

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.