

Logan County Commissioners Work Session
July 22, 2025

Present: Mike Brownell, Jim Yahn, Jim Santomaso, Alan Samber, Cynthia Mills, Rob Quint, Pam Bacon, Patty Bartlett, Rick Cullip, Mike Burri, Debbie Unrein, Marilee Johnson, Wayne Howard, Jason Triplett, Callie Jones and Jennifer Crow.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS SESSION - Commissioner Santomaso moved to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2025 Work Session. Commissioner Yahn seconded, and the motion carried 3-0.

REVISIONS TO THE WORK SESSION AGENDA – Commissioner Brownell added Debbie Unrein for discussion of the budget letter that will be sent out.

HERITAGE CENTER – Cynthia Mills reported on the building project; they are waiting for the new Sterling City Manager to come on board, then they will work out the MOU. They are still researching how to pay for a feasibility study. One of the team members had some personal issues that put the project on hold as well.

August will mark the 50th anniversary of the Logan County Heritage Center. An Open House is planned for August 20th from 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. with cake and punch. Cynthia invited the Board to participate. The Heritage Center will be starting a Candyman award in honor of Erwin Dobson who recently passed away. Erwin was known for his kindness, compassion and service to the community. He would hand out candy to everyone he met. The award would go to anyone in the community for compassion service and kindness. Nominations are opening up for the award. A non-partial committee will choose the winner. Cynthia asked if one of the Commissioners would be available to announce the award. Commissioner Brownell said unfortunately he will be out of town on that date.

August 6th is National Root Beer Float Day. Usually this falls during the Fair and is part of the Heritage Center's way of celebrating the Fair. However, the Fair is earlier this year. On August 6th the Heritage Center will have an Open House again, from 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. for National Root Beer Float Day. They will be kicking off a photo contest at the open house. The top three winners' photos will be enlarged for display in the Heritage Center. Cynthia got the idea from a gas station in Pine Bluffs, Wyoming that showcased vinyl mural pictures of their community.

September is National Senior Center month. There will be lots of senior focused activities including Grandparents Day. The Heritage Center will partner with the Early Learners Child Daycare Preschool to do some intergenerational programs September 8 – 12. Guest speakers will be coming in on September 17th. September 21 – 26 is Fall Prevention Awareness.

Friday, October 10th a committee of several older adults from the center and Karen Ramey Torres, Jane DeSanti from Sterling Creatives and several others started Embracing Aging on the Square six years ago. That has continued to evolve into something really great. This year Embracing Aging on the Square will be held at ES French Hall at NJC. There will be two fantastic guest speakers and a catered lunch. They are applying for grants for funding to help cover some of the cost of renting the hall and covering the lunch. There will be a vendor fair as well.

BUDGET MEMO - DEBBIE UNREIN – Debbie Unrein met with the Board to discuss the Budget Memo that will go out to all departments at the end of the month. Debbie is working on the budget workbooks which will include a letter from the Commissioners to the departments. The memo includes dates to return the

budgets and other dates that are set by statute. Debbie added information should the one-half percent sale tax ballot issue fail. She asked if there was anything else that the Board would like to add. The Board signed the memo as written.

PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT – Rob Quint met with the Board to update them on the Planning and Zoning Department. Former Commissioner Sonnenberg had asked for updated permit fees before he left office. Quint had reached out to some of the smaller counties and Yuma and Morgan Counties. Logan County does not charge very much for the permit fees compared to other counties, especially for the larger projects like the wind and solar projects. Yuma and Morgan Counties both charge per megawatt and per acre of leased land. They charge one dollar per acre of leased land with a minimum of \$5,000 and then it's \$1,000 per megawatt.

Kit Carson County has increased their fees to \$10,000 per megawatt. Logan County charges \$100 for the application, then we charge for the permits. These are all upfront costs. Yuma County calls it a major land use permit. It's \$500 for the permit then they charge for mailing fees. Logan County does not charge mailing fees. Then there are the recording fees which went up to \$43. Alan Samber said that the fees are supposed to be reasonably related to what the county's costs are.

Logan County has always had development agreements which include roads and bridges as there is always heavy truck traffic during the construction of those projects. Morgan County does not review their own permits. They hire a third-party inspector because the permits have gotten so extensive. The last application that Logan County had was over 1,000 pages.

Logan County regulations state that we have 14 days to accept an application. It used to be 30 days. The 14-day timeline is difficult for the Planning Department. The Planning and Zoning Department can take up to 30 days before it accepts the application. The application must be correct in order for the Planning and Zoning Department to accept it, and then there are 14 days until the hearing. A previous Board changed it a few years ago and wanted to condense it and make it easier for people to obtain permits.

When Morgan County gets an application, it is sent to the third-party engineer to review. After the review they usually have recommended changes. The Board agreed that the County should look at amending the zoning regulations, changing the time frame back to 30 days, and also increasing the fees. Quint will compile more information for the Board to determine what fees would be appropriate.

Commissioner Yahn asked if there was bonding on the wind projects to clean up after the project's life span. Alan Samber said that the bond can take different forms. It can be a letter of credit, or an actual bond, or it can be a cash deposit with the County Treasurer. It depends on what is negotiated.

Currently wind towers are being torn down in Peetz. They are the smaller towers and will probably be replaced with larger towers which will need larger bases. Quint was told that Morgan County used to subtract out the salvage value from their reclamation bonds because there's a huge amount of salvage value to the old turbines, but they have done away with that.

COUNTY CLERK – PAM BACON – County Clerk Pam Bacon met with the Board. She updated the Board about the IT grant for Courthouse cyber security upgrades. She should know by the end of July whether the grant is approved. She originally applied for this grant but then the ERTB changed through legislation, so she withdrew the application and then reapplied. The grant amount is approximately \$10,000. She is fairly confident that the grant will be approved because they were going to grant partial approval before she withdrew the first application.

Pam received a bid for the installation of the security cameras that were obtained with a different grant last year. Jerry Casebolt, former Emergency Manager, helped with that grant application to replace the cameras on the Gazebo and parking lot that no longer work. Casebolt was going to install the cameras as an in-kind donation for the County, however he left the County for a position with the State before he could get the cameras installed. Pam tried to get two bids but was only able to get one complete bid. She will coordinate the work with Rick Cullip.

The parking lot updates are almost done. This is something that the Department of Homeland Security wanted done. DHS also wanted cages to be installed around the HVAC units under the back stairwell so that the public could not access them and the breaker boxes, etc.

The ERTB grant has been extended to June of 2029. Pam intends to apply for a grant for hardware, software and maintenance on the Clerk's recording system. She requested bids yesterday and she is estimating a cost of \$300,000. This will cover the recording maintenance and the search engine that they use for recording the back indexing records through June of 2029. She is still in the process of gathering information for the grant application. She is fairly confident this grant will be approved.

Awards will not be announced for the website grant that Pam applied for until August. She is not as confident with this grant application.

The Clerk's Office has not had a lot of push back from the public on the increased recording fees. She explained that the increase is statewide due to the law change, this is not something that her office had any control over. It was a huge jump for both the Motor Vehicle Office and Recording. The fees used to be \$5 per page, now the fees are \$40 per document.

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT EQUIPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICY – Josilyn Lutze met with the Board. On a recent monitoring site visit from the state, one of the things they wanted her to add was an Equipment Management Policy stating where the funds came from to purchase the equipment, making sure that equipment stays up to date, well maintained, etc. The same issue driving this is the one that's driving the Whistle Blower Policy that the Personnel Board is going to add to the Personnel Manual. It's basically a result of the monitoring site visit by the state trying to get us to be in a good position if the feds audit us for the Homeland Security Grant. (the EMPG Grant.) They identified some deficiencies, and these policies need to be in place to be compliant with any federal grant requirements. The Board agreed that the policy is necessary, and it will be added to the next business meeting agenda.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS DEPARTMENT - Rick Cullip met with the Board. Recently retired employee, Arlyn Gibbs has returned to help part-time during the fair. The department has many projects finished, and many projects still underway. The bollards in the Courthouse parking lot are almost finished. They have all the materials; they will finish the project after the fair. They have the ballistic film installed for the Clerk's Office; they just need to get the windows installed after the fair. They did get the screen built for the HVAC area and have done some reseeded of the Courthouse lawn. They are working with the City on the bump out and trying to get that project finished. There is some lawn and xeriscaping work near the generator and Annex and window well work that is still ongoing. The main water valves to the Courthouse were replaced the day that the water was shut off.

The redesign of the Courthouse parking lot is in progress. Once the bollards are all done, he and Pam will discuss what will be the most effective use of space for the handicapped parking spots. We've discussed these parking spots off to the right, there's the four spots that park in an angle that maybe we get rid of those four spots, and we'll make two parallel handicap spots, so it makes for a little bit better flow for people to turn still use the parking in the front. The plan is to put up some new signage for compact cars only.

For the Justice Center, they were able to complete the upgrades for the switches. They were able to get all the tinting finished up on the windows. They still have some sound proofing in the main room. There's some curbing that has not been replaced yet, they are hoping to get to that as it starts to get colder. There are several sections of curb and gutter to be replaced.

Central Services Building repairs are ongoing. There were a few plumbing issues that were dealt with. Some of the hallways have been painted. All of the carpet has been done. There's a small amount of touch-up repair work on the Extension side that they still need to do. He has had a hard time getting the flooring contractor to return and do those repairs, so Rick's department is going to do those repairs. He will deal with R & L on the side concerning the reason they are having to do the repairs.

Cullip has not looked at the Heritage Center restriping project yet. It will need to be recoated and there's a lot of crack fill that needs to take place. The current situation with the Road and Bridge Department crack fill machine will not allow that to be done until that comes back online. It will not make any sense to restripe until the crack fill is done.

The air conditioner for the Emergency Manager was not budgeted. He is hoping to still accomplish that project but if not, he will try to get it on the budget for next year and put an actual HVAC system in the building instead of just the mini unit that is there right now. The unit is keeping up, but barely. A newer HVAC system would probably pay for itself in efficiency. They have not installed the security cameras but have determined what will be used.

Painting and upkeep at DeSoto Building has been taking place. The roofing has been replaced on the rental house and the garage. The memorial fence project continues.

Commissioner Brownell explained that he had a conversation with Rick Cullip about the livestock pavilion brick walls. The mortar is giving out and the walls are cracking and falling apart. One wall was shored up using some all-thread. Another wall really needs to be replaced. One was removed that was falling over. While they were removing the wall, Aaron Hettinger stopped by and commented that everyone that gets stuck behind a wall complains about it. He suggested leaving the wall out for this year and assessing whether or not the walls should be replaced.

There is a company coming in to get water for the missile sites. He does not know how much water they are going to get. They have gotten several loads. The department is keeping a log of how much water they are getting.

The Fair Board discussed the banners that have hung in the indoor arena for a long time. They will be discussing how to use that as a marketing tool for the fair.

COUNTY TREASURER – PATTY BARTLETT – County Treasurer Patty Bartlett met with the Board. She explained that her office just mailed out delinquent tax statements. The cost of mailing is now 74 cents per envelope. The statutes now allow the Board to add a fee of up to \$25 on any tax and interest that is less than \$50 to cover costs. However, probably 99% of those are going to be sent to severed mineral owners that are taxed at 85 cents each. If the fee is added, Patty thinks that the County might end up with a lot of County-held minerals. Because of the changes already made to the Treasurer's deed process, what used to cost \$100 to get a mineral through the deed process is now \$550. Recording fees have gone up recently and the Treasurer's fee increased from \$35 to \$300. The legislature promised they would do a cleanup bill, but it did not even get introduced on the floor. Patty is a member of a committee that has rewritten the entire bill. The proposed bill will drop the fee from \$300 to \$50 for severed minerals.

The Treasurer's Office is switching software companies. Patty has already talked to GSA, the new company. They said that they can do this, no problem. It costs four years taxes and \$550 to get a deed right now for severed minerals. If you are a coterminous surface owner with severed minerals, you get the right of first refusal to pick up the tax lien without coming to the tax sale. Surface owners use to jump at the chance when they could get their minerals back to their property for a reasonable price.

Patty is running out of room for storage of her permanent tax roll books. She spoke with a representative of a company that could digitize the books. He looked at the books in the Treasurer's vault. He said that he would have to cut the oversized books. Patty would not agree to that. He sent a proposal for the 2000 to 2007 tax roll books, amounting to 42,900 pages. If the company transports the books to Minnesota to digitize them, then they can put the Treasurer's records on the same site as the Clerk's records so people can search the records online. The books could be stored off site, because they have no more room for them right now. The fairgrounds were suggested; however, the books need to be in a climate-controlled area. The only other location for the books that has been suggested is the basement of the Justice Center.

The cost to digitize the books in Minnesota is \$27,413. If the company brings their equipment here to do it the cost is \$40,553. Patty will get more information on this quote and will clarify other information as to whether there is an annual charge. The company is also working with Washington County and may be able to transport Washington County and Logan County's books in the same trip.

SALES AND USE TAX EXTENSION – Marilee Johnson reviewed Sales and Use Tax Extension talking points with the Board. She asked Debbie Unrein to review the numbers for accuracy and she will revise the flier with corrected numbers. Alan Samber prepared a primer on Fair Campaign Practices Act for the Board to use when discussing the ballot issue at various times. The Board is able to take a position of advocacy on behalf of the ballot issue before the wording is set for the ballot.

Up to this point the sales tax funds have only been used for the Justice Center utilities. The 2018 ballot issue stated that it allowed for improving, maintaining and operating county facilities which would include utilities. The Finance Department has not charged utilities for any buildings other than the Justice Center to the sales tax. The Board requested that the ballot issue be written to use the funds for utilities for other county buildings as well as the Justice Center.

The Board would like to make the point that the ballot issue needs to be passed, or property taxes will potentially need to be increased, or services will need to be cut; however, they would like to say it in a positive, gentle manner. It would have to be a mill levy increase, which would have to go to a vote.

The Board would like to add a talking point about people passing through helping fund the improvements when they spend locally. Marilee estimated visitors to Logan County spent approximately \$41,000,000 in 2022. The sales tax on that amount is \$205,000. This is money that Logan County residents do not have to pay for utilities for the Justice Center. The first talking point should be that the ballot issue is not a new tax.

The Board agreed to send a mailer out to voters. This will need to be done before the actual ballot issue resolution is adopted in September. The Board discussed other ways to notify the voters of the upcoming ballot issue, such as the website and on the radio interviews and a booth at Sugar Beet Days.

COMMISSIONERS PROCEEDINGS FOR JUNE 2025 – Commissioner Yahn moved to approve the Commissioners Proceedings for June 2025. Commissioner Santomaso seconded, and the motion carried 3-0.

WAYNE HOWARD SEH, INC. BRIDGE INSPECTIONS AND GRANTS – Wayne Howard and Jason

Triplet of SEH met with the Board. Mike Burri of Logan County Road and Bridge Department also joined the meeting. Mr. Howard spent 25 years at Weld County working as a bridge designer, road designer and eventually as County Engineer. He retired there and went to work for SEH and has been with them for nine years doing the same kind of work throughout the state.

Jason Triplet of SEH leads the structure inspection group. He has been doing this work for 27 years. He has already inspected many of the structures in Logan County through the CDOT program. Bridges greater than 20 feet are reported to FHWA on a two-year cycle. Bridges under 20 feet are not covered by the CDOT inspection program. There is not a lot of funding for minor structures (those under 20 feet) so they tend to get less attention. They tend to get left by the wayside until it is too late and they are a bigger problem. Howard discussed an asset management program for minor structures. The key is to look at those bridges with the same perspective as the major bridges have been looked at.

The data collected for the minor structures should be similar to that of the major structures so that there are not two different systems to manage. When it comes down to culverts, there are a lot less things to inspect, so it is easier. This is nationwide, every state uses the same data, the feds mandated this in the late 1970s, and it is still in place today.

The initial problem is gathering the first initial set of data, the inventory of the data, where it's located, collecting it in a three-dimensional way so that it is available through latitude, longitude, the same way the major structures are collected. The plan will give an idea how to plan for the final life of those structures. The earlier you get into the analysis of the data available, the sooner you can project when they're going to fail. Weld County has been doing this since the 1990s. They have about 300 minor bridges because of all the irrigation. Most counties with the reservoirs and irrigation canals tend to have the most bridges.

Mike Burri explained that any time the Road and Bridge Department replaces a culvert or puts a culvert in a new location, they map it on the computer. Rob Kasper is able to look at the culvert on the map and tell when it was replaced and how long it lasted. Triplett suggested that the size of the culvert be added to the map or the data to save the effort of figuring that out later.

Sample inspection reports on a box culvert and a pipe culvert that was completed for Boulder County were distributed for the Board to look at. This was to show CDOT reports for the minor and major reports for their asset management report. Photos are included that show defects identified in the inspection if any. The last page is a load rating summary. If the bridge was deficient or needed to be load-posted, that is where you would find that information.

Things like ADT (average daily traffic) are noted in the report for every bridge that is inspected. That information does get used quite a lot. The County does have a data collection system but does not collect data very often. The County can use the State's data if they have collected it on nearby roads. After all the data is collected, it can be entered into specialized software.

Howard used PubWorks Software at Weld County. It would generate work orders to track effort going into the site and keep track of employee time. Most of the agencies require the people that do the inspections also have an expert to run the software so they can help their staff understand what to do with all the data. Larimer County does this.

Other software available is Cartograph which is now called OpenGov, EyeWorks, and CityWorks. Counties that have GIS systems can enter this type of data in the background of GIS. Larimer County can query their GIS system and bring up all their bridges that are in medium or fair condition. It will pull up all the data that is entered into the system for each bridge, inspections, pictures, etc. You can query the system for every major

bridge that is on the Cache Le Poudre River. Whatever parameters you would like to put in the system at the time, you can bring up. It's an easy tool to manipulate and not as expensive. SHE offers hosting of GIS of the state supplied data and any other data collected in the cloud. The County would not have to purchase all the GIS components and software. The County could then run any query on the GIS system.

There is a significant difference in funding between major structures and minor structures. Many federal programs will not look at or talk about minor structures. They focus on major structures only. There are a lot of discretionary grants through DOLA. The Energy Impact Assistance Grants are a matter of putting together something that can compete and show the need. The oil and gas industry has moved more into Weld County.

Commissioner Yahn asked if there were any grants associated with bridge inventory. Mr. Howard stated that DOLA is a great help when it comes to the discretionary grants that he referenced. He has spent a lot of time with DOLA looking for ways to help counties. The grant cycles are very competitive. It depends on the match money. The more you are asking for, the harder it is to find. When it comes to agencies such as Logan County where DOLA has not been putting a lot of money, they are always wanting to open the door to those communities.

The discretionary grant program has a \$25,000 max grant. Logan County participated in the Raze grant, but it is on hold right now. This was for engineering through NE Colorado Association of Local Governments with Yuma, Washington, and several other Counties as well as the cities of Akron, Wray, Sterling and Fleming. The amount awarded \$5 million to be divided among the local governments for engineering work for up front construction work so that they could apply for larger grants. The grant was awarded in 2024, and the federal government has put a hold on it. Washington County is the fiscal agent. Kent Vance is the Region One Grant Navigator.

Counties must go through CCI for their grant funding to apply for bridge grant funding. Mr. Howard ran a list of all of the bridges in Colorado and sorted them to print the poorest structures. The number of poorest or worst bridges in the counties are on the list. Las Animas County is first on the list. They have 77 total bridges and 24 of them are in poor condition. Adams County is next on the list for poor ranking, then Prowers County, Otero County and then Logan County. Logan County is in the top 5 of the state's poorest bridges. It's not a great place to be however, when it comes to funding, it is a good place to be. These are all major structures.

In the next two months, the county will be getting a letter from CCI stating grant applications are available with a December deadline. Last year they had a lot of money, and it has been climbing. Every year the committee looks at it differently. Last year they looked at it from this perspective that he just talked about. Until you know your project well enough and you've gotten through 30%-60% design, then they will not fund construction. He believes that it will be similar this coming year. They will focus on giving money to counties to get through the design phase to then know how to get through the design phase and come back and ask for construction money and alleviate a couple years of inflation. Materials and labor have been climbing to the point that where if you estimated a couple of years out, and you haven't added 20%, you're going to be in trouble. Right now, they're forcing CDOT to analyze every grant to make sure the funding looks appropriate.

SEH helped write the last grant for the South Platte River bridge. They can help develop the matrix of what structure makes the most sense to go after grant funding. It would not hurt to apply for two bridges at 80% – 20% share. The County would be tied to the CDOT process, the same process as the previous federal grant bridge process. FHWA will not give any leeway on the process. If you don't follow the process, you put the project in jeopardy.

It will be a \$7,000-\$10,000 process to get the list of bridges and help identify the ones that make the most sense that can be competitive. The design fee will be about \$350,000 with the grant amount 80% of that, the County would budget the rest of that amount. The grant award money would be available in 2026, usually in January. CDOT will require a Qualification Based Selection process (QBS) to hire a consultant. An RFP will need to go out to select a consultant. Fees can be negotiated later, it's about what makes the most sense, not about low fees.

Unfortunately, County Road 93 over the South Platte River has two more bridges that are poor bridges. They will score very highly as bridges in serious need. The next two bridges will not be as easy to rebuild as there is always water flowing. Mr. Howard could put together a proposal that would be specific for the upcoming CCI grant. The Raze grant might take a little bit more due to the multiple agencies involved.

Mr. Howard gave an update on the recent bridge project. CDOT has spent the last several months reviewing the construction documentation. The Buy America Certificates have become a big hiccup with the new administration. They don't believe what the contractor furnished is sufficient to pass the FHWA audit. SEH has been working with the contractor who has moved on from the project and is not as ready to come back to the table and help supply the Buy America Certifications. For example, every time a piece of material changes hands, that material has to have certification that it has been bought in America, all the way through the chain. CDOT has looked through and said that there are several pieces that they don't feel have had enough certifications furnished.

SEH is asking the contractor, and will be making a call to the owner, because the project manager is not willing to step up and furnish the data, because it is something that is holding up this project from getting through the final audit. The contractor did supply a letter that they honor a request for any additional information to get the project through the audit process. At some point they might need the County Commissioners to step in and furnish a letter to the contractor letting them know that they promised to assist with the audit process. The latest extension of time on the CDOT contract ends September 30, 2025. They hope to avoid another extension. It all depends on whether Lobato will step up and provide the necessary information. Lobato lost their project manager not long after the project in Logan County was completed. This has been part of the problem.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 12:39 p.m.