

Logan County Commissioners Work Session
July 8, 2025

Present: Mike Brownell, Jim Yahn, Jim Santomaso, Alan Samber, Mike Burri, Josilyn Lutze, Rick Cullip, Peggy Michaels, Marilee Johnson, Rosie Nichols, and Jennifer Crow.

Chairman Brownell called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS SESSION - Commissioner Santomaso moved to approve the minutes of the July 1, 2025 Work Session. Commissioner Yahn seconded, and the motion carried 3-0.

REVISIONS TO THE WORK SESSION AGENDA – Commissioner Brownell added discussion possibly joining other counties on a methane emission coalition under new business.

STERLING CONCERT SERIES – Rosie Nichols met with the Board to represent the Sterling Concert Series Board. She explained that the Board has been around since 2019. They try to bring professional groups to Sterling to perform. They have had piano players, brass ensembles and others perform. Ticket prices are affordable at \$15 for adults and \$5 for students. Season tickets are \$45 for four tickets.

In 2019-2020 it cost \$15,750 to bring four groups here. Next year costs are going up to \$26,000 for only three groups. She asked if the Board would consider being a sponsor for the next season. Sponsors are given listings in the programs. Sponsors can give anything from \$100 up to the largest sponsorship has been \$2,000. With a \$1,000 sponsorship, you get four season tickets, for \$500 and above, you get two season tickets.

The Board explained that they felt that spending taxpayer funds on things like this is not something that they would feel comfortable doing. All three Commissioners expressed that they would be happy to individually support the Sterling Concert Series. The Board expressed appreciation to the Sterling Concert Series Board for bringing entertainment to the area.

LANDFILL METHANE RULES – Alan Samber had talked to Mesa County about joining the coalition to fight against CDPHE's proposed methane rules. About ten other counties have joined in hiring legal help in fighting the proposed rules. Mesa and Garfield Counties have contributed \$50,000 each for legal fees. If other smaller counties join the coalition, for a contribution of approximately \$8,000-\$9,000, it will help pay for specialized legal counsel to fight through the rule making process and get changes that are more favorable to counties. The Board would need to sign a common interest agreement and then the county would be brought into the process. Morgan County has already joined.

The rules will not affect smaller county landfills. Although it might be helpful if they put their name in to fight against the proposed rules. The reason Logan County is included in the regulations is that they are going back to 1983 when the Logan County Landfill was opened. It goes by the cumulative tonnage from 1983.

The fee estimate is \$175,000 - \$225,000. Mesa and Garfield Counties are committing \$50,000 each. The remaining counties in the coalition will share the fees proportionally. The Board discussed whether they would want to cap their initial contribution. Commissioner Brownell believes that Logan County would be the eleventh county to join the coalition. That would leave \$125,000 (Mesa and Garfield are paying \$100,000) divided by nine other counties. Logan County's share would be \$13,888, assuming no additional counties join. Josh Klein has been working with our landfill consultant to put together some costs if they go with the rules that are proposed right now. Morgan County Commissioner Jon Becker is thinking the potential impact that the methane emissions rules could have on the Morgan County Landfill is around \$3,000,000 for the first year. The Board agreed to a maximum cap of \$15,000 if the agreement would allow it. Alan Samber will

discuss this with the Mesa County Attorney and ask if Logan County can join with the expectation that Logan County's maximum contribution will be \$15,000.

The Board discussed whether CCI could help with drafting legislation on this. Senator Pelton has discussed this with Dylan Roberts the Senate President on his willingness to put forth some legislation.

Commissioner Yahn will reach out to Morgan County Commissioner Jon Becker to discuss the issue. Commissioner Becker does not think that CCI wants to deal with this issue. If there are enough counties in the state that have landfills join in and fight the issue, CCI might address it. If it doesn't affect them now, it might affect them in the future. Dusty Johnson emailed after hearing from CDPHE that they think that it sends the wrong message if they make commercial landfills abide by the regulations and counties do not have to abide by the same regulations.

Commissioner Yahn is willing to call some of the smaller counties and ask for a letter of support. Commissioner Brownell mentioned that Morgan County Commissioner Jon Becker told him that they have let the Cities of Brush and Fort Morgan know about the potential rules as that will affect their trash collection fees. Logan County will need to communicate this with the City of Sterling as well because this will be a major cost to them if the county has to increase tipping fees if the CDPHE rules do go through. The City of Sterling may be willing to write a letter of support as well.

LOGAN COUNTY ASSESSOR PEGGY MICHAELS – Logan County Assessor, Peggy Michaels met with the Board to discuss the County's assessed valuation. Every year at the beginning of July, the Assessor's Office gives an estimate of value so the Board will have an idea of what the assessed value will be. The assessed value went up pretty significantly. It was \$389,469,600 last year, and is up to \$433,428,049 this year.

The majority of the reason is the exemptions that went away. There's a \$55,000 exemption on residences that comes right off the top of the actual value and then they pay the taxes on that. The commercial property exemption was \$30,000 off the top. If the property was mixed use, you got both exemptions. That is going to go away this year. Next year it comes back for residential, the first 10% for \$700,000. When people pay their taxes in December, especially properties on the lower end, their taxes may double, and they're not going to know why, but it is because of the legislation, and because the values went up just a little. Peggy said that the County also picked up about \$11 million in State assessed value. Historically, we lose some of that value. Those values are set in July, and they have a month to appeal.

Commissioner Brownell questioned whether it would trigger the County's 5.5%. The County left the Tabor restriction in place for 5.5%. It may be a more limiting factor than our mill levy. Some entities have "de-bruced" and are not affected.

The Board discussed how to inform the public about why the taxes will be increasing. It may be a possible to send a separate notice with the tax notices to explain what has happened.

Peggy said that there is a possibility that the Senior Exemption might go away in 2026, as there might not be enough money (for the State). If people lose that exemption on top of this one, it will be tough. This will be a statewide issue. Peggy agreed to come back next week if Sara Waite from the newspaper is at the meeting to give the same information.

Peggy explained the appeals that came into the office in May. She gave the Board a list of the appeals. The list shows whether they were adjusted up or down or were given no adjustment at all. These are the people who are eligible to go on to protest to the County Board of Equalization. Taxpayers must have appealed to

the Assessor's Office first. The deadline for the appeals is July 15th for Real Property and July 20th for Personal Property. The appointments will be scheduled around the end of July.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS DEPARTMENT – Rick Cullip told the Board that he has an employee that has retired that has offered to come back to help set up for the fair and clean up after the fair. He would come back on a temporary basis with no benefits at the same hourly rate as other temporary employees for 20-30 hours a week. He already knows what needs to be done. The board agreed that Rick could hire him back on a temporary basis. Rick stated that he will check with Human Resources and make sure that they are okay with this process.

Rick also questioned whether CDPHE was going to limit total waste going into the landfill. There is a different avenue of diversion that could be looked at concerning some of the trees and stumps and construction material, etc. If this material gets ground up and applied as immediate cover, it doesn't have to be classified as waste that's going into the landfill. We should make sure that the material is classified as other and not tonnage material. The construction material must be separated and make sure all the wood is nail, screw and wire free, so it can be ground and used as intermittent cover and will not go on the list for tonnage going into the landfill. Any product that can be ground and used for cover does not get included in the total tonnage. The metal and the tires should not be included in the total tonnage either as they can all be recycled.

EMERGENCY MANAGER – Josilyn Lutze reported that she received a phone call from Bob Hildebrandt, the Regional Field Manager for the State Emergency Management. They are trying to get a pulse on what each county is thinking if the EMPG grant were to go away. The EMPG grant is the Emergency Management Performance Grant. It is a fifty percent match grant from the state that helps fund the Logan County Emergency Manager's position. With all of the federal cuts and holds, at the moment, NOFOs have gone out to the states so they can't give out money to the counties. The state would like to know if counties will keep their emergency managers, and whether they would be full-time or part-time and how they will fund them.

Commissioner Yahn stated that Logan County has two reservoir dams in our area, a lot of irrigation as well as the interstate and the river. He feels that Josilyn's position is pretty valuable to Logan County. Josilyn stated that there are other counties that might drop their emergency managers to part time positions. The County does have to have someone filling the emergency manager position at least part-time, at least 20 hours per week per state statute. The Board discussed possibly sharing emergency managers with another county. Josilyn said it would depend on the county and the territory covered whether one person could handle two counties. She explained that Nebraska is divided into seven regions. One of their emergency managers covers five counties, however he does have a part-time deputy in each county.

Josilyn has to have certifications for the EMPG grant and certain FEMA courses to show that you know what you're doing. Above and beyond that is on each person as they want to grow in the profession.

The EMPG Grant is \$55,000. The total budget for Logan County is \$125,000. Logan County would have to make up the difference. The Board agreed that the position is important enough that it should be funded 100%.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10:03 a.m.