

Logan County Commissioners Work Session
June 10, 2025

Present: Mike Brownell, Jim Santomaso, Alan Samber, Debbie Unrein, Marilee Johnson, Rick Cullip, Mike Burri, Brett Powell, Lavon Ritter, Aaron Hettinger, Jeff Rice, Lauren Bower and Jennifer Crow.

Commissioner Yahn is representing Logan County in Cheyenne at the Sentinel Missile update meetings there.

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 May 27, 2025 Work Session as written. Commissioner Brownell seconded, and the motion carried 2-0.

REVISIONS TO THE WORK SESSION AGENDA – Alan Samber added discussion of the Veteran’s Service Officer IGA with Phillips County, and in Executive Session, discussion of the negotiation of the terms of the Emergency Medical Service and Billing Services Agreement.

REVIEW OF THE BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA – At the end of the New Business, Chairman Brownell added discussion of a Fair promotion contract that has been signed.

Alan Samber stated that the Board will need to table the contracts with Concrete Specialties Construction and Utilities until the next business meeting. There has been no feedback from the contractor on whether the contracts are acceptable to him. Mike Burri is communicating with the company that manufactures the box culverts. They have not provided a schedule of when they will be delivered yet. The contract deadlines may need to be adjusted depending on how soon the box culverts can be ready.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS DEPARTMENT RICK CULLIP – Rick Cullip met with the Board to discuss the Fairgrounds rental form. The old form had the renter’s name, mailing address, email address, and phone number on it. The rental form was posted to the Team Up calendar on-line. Members of the public could potentially see if they clicked on the link to the contract. The department has modified the form to separate that information from the rest of the form. Alan Samber has looked at it and thinks it looks good; however, he made one recommendation concerning the North Arena. It is only listed for \$75 per day. Our reservation fee is \$100. It doesn’t specifically say anything in the contract that the reservation fee would either be reduced to that amount or whether we want to consider raising the North Arena cost to rent to \$100 and that fixes that situation.

Cullip went back through the rentals and the North Arena has not been used as a stand-alone area in the last ten years. The department utilizes the Team Up calendar for information. It is a really good calendar. It allows anybody in the county to go on and see if a weekend might be available for a specific area.

There are several other areas with fees that are less than \$100 but those areas are not ever rented without renting areas for an event. Some areas like horse stalls are just overnight rentals that are used with a mailbox and envelope to put their money in on the honor system. Camper hookups are only used for camper parking. Horse stalls and livestock pens are the only other items that are less than \$100.

Commissioner Santomaso moved to adopt the new rental agreement and to raise the rental fee for the North Arena to \$100. Chairman Brownell seconded and the motion carried 2-0.

SHERIFF BRETT POWELL AND STERLING FIRE CHIEF LAVON RITTER RE DIVE TEAM – Sheriff Brett Powell and Sterling Fire Chief Lavon Ritter met with the Board to discuss the Dive Team. The Dive Team consists of volunteers. Powell stated that it is hard to get volunteers for anything anymore. Moving forward, Sheriff Powell would like to turn over all of the Dive Team equipment to the Sterling Fire Department so that the Chief Ritter and the Fire Department can operate the Dive Team. The Sheriff will still own all of the equipment. The Sheriff would like to keep what little money is left in the budget to help them out. He is in charge of search and rescue in the county; the Dive Team will have to run under his authority as Sheriff. In order for them to get the grants from the Colorado Search and Rescue, it will have to be through the Sheriff. They will still be responsible for getting the grants. Most of the volunteers that were on the Dive Team were employees of the prison. If the prison is locked down for some reason, the volunteers that are on the Dive Team are not available. With the Dive Team being in the hands of the Fire Department, the individuals that are still interested in being on the Dive Team, the Sheriff will still be able to sponsor them, and they can do their training through the Fire Department.

The Dive Team will be dispatched through the Fire Department. Alan Samber asked if an Intergovernmental Agreement would be necessary. The Sheriff has an MOU with the Fire Department which says that Chief Ritter is Deputy Fire Marshal. He is the only full-time Fire Chief in the county. If an airplane is called by any of the fire departments, they let Lavon know and he makes sure that the state knows so they all get dispatched. The Fire Department is going to respond on search and rescues to North Sterling Reservoir or one of the other reservoirs. They're going to have all of the equipment, and they already have three or four people trained.

Chief Ritter stated that there are four trained divers. One of the divers is one class away from being a master diver, which will allow him to be able to do the training for the department. The plan is to get him his master diver and then get other divers trained with the department and also train divers with the volunteer departments, specifically looking at Crook and Merino, since they are the ones closest to the bodies of water. Sterling Fire had a boat donated to them. At some point, they could look at having a boat in Crook, a boat in Merino and a boat in Sterling to lower the response times to get people on the water.

Powell had moved everything over to the old posse building when he disbanded the Sheriff's Posse. They have some top-notch equipment. He will take the equipment to the Sterling Fire Department for the department to be able to store it and have immediate access to it if it is needed. The Sheriff's Office will still have two four-wheelers on a trailer stored at the old posse building. The four-wheelers will be available if needed by the Sheriff or the Dive Team. This is the only Dive Team east of Kersey.

Doing this makes sense for the County as the Dive Team will be available 24/7. The Board does not need to take any action. Powell just wanted to let the Board know what the plan was.

PORTACOOLES FOR FAIRGROUNDS – Fair Board member Aaron Hettinger met with the Board to discuss portacoolers. The County owns three portacoolers that were donated back in the 1990s by Les Baney. They are still working, there is nothing wrong with them. Last year during the fair the temperature got to 103 degrees. There was a lot of concern about the animals in that kind of temperature in the barns. Aaron and Guy McEndaffer sent out emails asking people to loan their portacoolers for the duration of the Fair. They ended up with about twelve of them. After the Fair they received many thank you letters letting them know what it did for the Fair exhibitors and for the animals. Hettinger has been working with the CEO of Portacool. The units are built in Texas. He's been to Sterling and is interested in working with us. The Portacool representative came looked at the building. He felt that the Portacool 4,000 was the best option to purchase as far as the size for the building. The cost is \$3,400 each.

If they could purchase six this year and add more next year. This mitigates stress on the animals and people also. Commissioner Brownell asked if the Fair Board would be able to help with the cost. Hettinger will talk to Guy McEndaffer about this at the Fair Board meeting on Thursday. There may be some reserves in the Fair Board budget that could be used.

The meeting recessed at 9:30 a.m. and reconvened at 10:20 a.m.

VETERAN'S SERVICES OFFICER INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH PHILLIPS COUNTY – Alan Samber stated that the Phillips County Commissioners and their administrator went through the IGA. They did not have any substantive changes. We asked them to prepare a spreadsheet similar to the one that Debbie Unrein prepared, so that we could determine our cost for the Veteran's Service Officer (VSO), salary, plus benefits. They did the same in comparing what they prepared, it looks like their benefits are not as good as Logan County's. Their costs for employing the VSO are less than ours. Logan County's hourly cost with benefits would be \$27.34, Phillips County's hourly cost would be \$23.68, significantly less.

Expect that will go up a little bit, because he remembers them saying that they would be giving him a raise. He would be due for a small raise, but even with a raise, it will not be enough to exceed what Logan County's cost would be if he was a full-time Logan County employee.

The only change requested was that they would like 60 days' notice to terminate the IGA instead of 30 days' notice. It looks like it will be less expensive for Logan County for him to remain a Phillips County employee and then they will share him with Logan County, even though he's going to be doing more hours of work in Logan County. Phillips County will pay him for the number of hours he works, and Logan County will reimburse them according to the population ratio, which is calculated at 82%.

If it does not work out, the agreement can be terminated with 60 days' notice for no reason. Chris Kelley anticipates 36-38 hours a week between both counties. He plans to be in Phillips County with regular office hours every Wednesday and in Logan County every other business day if necessary. Commissioner Brownell thought it would be good to have regular office hours so that Veterans know when he will be in the office.

The IGA will require records to be kept of the number of hours worked for each county. If after some time has passed it doesn't look like the cost share is fair based on the number of hours he is working, the IGA can be modified. Reimbursement to Phillips County will be once per quarter. Kelley will not get mileage to Sterling. He may get mileage if he has to run errands or to see Veterans while he is here in town as part of this job.

Glen Marciniak from the state Veteran's Affairs was taking over some of the load since Derrik left. Marciniak has asked Chris Kelley to come over to Logan County several times to take care of Veterans. Kelley is not yet under contract. He asked if he could be paid for some of the visits. Commissioner Brownell feels that it is the right thing to do to pay him as he is working to keep the veterans happy. Alan will communicate with the Phillips County Administrator and prepare the IGA for next Tuesday's agenda. The Board agreed that the 60-day notice of termination will work. Marciniak said that the claims will be about 75% from Logan County and 25% from Phillips County. The statute says to split it out based on the population. The Board agreed to reimburse Kelley for the visits that he has made to date with Logan County Veterans. Commissioner Brownell will confirm with Commissioner Hofmeister of Phillips County that they are on Board with the IGA.

SOCIAL MEDIA ARCHIVING – Jennifer Crow told the Board that all of the County Departments that have Social Media accounts were invited to sit in on a Zoom meeting last week for a demonstration of Social Media Archiving software. Social Media Archiving did not get written in the original CivicPlus contract which was

to be \$500 for the first year and \$4,188 for the Economy Plan. The Standard Plan is \$1,000 for the first year and \$7,188 per year. This is something that needs to be done to back up all social media accounts and posts. Marilee Johnson additionally explained that it is a way to archive all the posts and public comments on the County's social media pages. The County is not in charge of them. Facebook's rules are in charge of what is kept or deleted. This way, the software will capture everything so it will always be there if there were to be a CORA information request received. The software will easily be able to bring up the requested information.

There are quite a few Logan County social media accounts. Marilee takes care of the Logan County Facebook page. There is also a Sheriff's Office Facebook page which posts "Warrant Wednesdays", and they also post the people that are let out on bond. These two kinds of posts often get a lot of comments from the public. The Emergency Manager has Facebook and there are several other departments with Facebook accounts. The Clerk and Recorder, Treasurer, Landfill, Heritage Center all have pages. Some of them are not very active. The software will go back and archive all of the activity from the beginning of the page until the current date to capture all of the comments that have been made by the public. Since the contract with CivicPlus is already signed, the representative is working to try and negotiate the same deal that we would have gotten originally.

This is not something for the public to use, this is something for the County personnel to use in the event that a CORA request is received. Jennifer asked if it could be paid through the IT budget. Debbie Unrein thought it would be better to pay it through the IT budget rather than paying it through each department. There is a Zoom meeting this afternoon at 2:00 p.m. where Sean Jernigan will hopefully know more about what kind of discount or bundle, he can offer the county. Jennifer will send Debbie Unrein the Zoom invite.

COMMISSIONERS PROCEEDINGS FOR MAY 2025 – Commissioner Santomaso moved to approve the Commissioners Proceedings for the month of May, 2025. Commissioner Brownell seconded, and the motion carried 2-0.

SALES AND USE TAX EXTENSION – Marilee and Commissioner Yahn developed some bullet points for discussion. Commissioner Yahn heard a presentation at CCI from a company or firm that will help put a campaign together to get the facts out. Commissioner Brownell said that Commissioner Yahn was going to follow up on the cost. Marilee thought the cost is approximately \$10,000. Commissioner Brownell mentioned the polling might be \$7,500, but when the PR firm was added it could be more. They were two separate companies, but they work together quite often. It might be that the polling would not be that necessary, but it may be more necessary to push the information out for the publicity because we have such a short time frame.

Commissioner Brownell added that once we get the ballot language approved, we can't electioneer on any of this. We can provide information, but we can't ask them to vote for it. We have to come up with the language for the pros and the cons for the blue book for elections. We do need to have our pros and cons ready to talk to groups, City Council, Chamber of Commerce, at the fairs, the 4th of July, etc. so that people understand what we're thinking and why we're thinking that way. These were the suggested bullet points discussed previously:

- Funds critical county-wide services.
- Fair share paid by everyone including visitors and out-of-towners,
- Protects against property tax increases,
- Maintains County Infrastructure,
- Supports the local economy and jobs by having to hire contractors for maintenance
- Minimal cost with maximum benefits.
- Funds stay within the county, local control.

Commissioner Santomaso asked if Marilee was able to get the out-of-town dollars spent in Logan County. Marilee said that it is related to visitor spending, not just someone from Holyoke coming to Logan County to make purchases. The data was from 2021, and it was \$41 million. Half a percent of that would be \$205,000.

Trae Miller might have better stats for purchases from visitors from out of town. Marilee will do more research and talk to Commissioner Yahn and see if she can talk to others about out-of-county visitors' spending to get more information.

Marilee Johnson told the Board that RE-1 Valley School Board has a bond question on the ballot coming up.

One of the selling points should be that the Justice Center utilities cost \$250,000 annually. Alan Samber remarked that ever since the Justice Center was built the Commissioners have lamented the fact that they didn't anticipate the expense to heat it or to cool it and light it. Commissioner Brownell added the Courthouse, Human Services and other buildings adds another \$400,000-\$500,000 even after making the buildings more efficient. The cost of utilities keeps going up.

The Executive Session concerning the EMS billing will be held next week when Commissioner Yahn returns.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.