

**Logan County Commissioners Work Session**  
**June 24, 2025**

Present: Mike Brownell, Jim Yahn, Alan Samber, John Chapdelain, Dusty Johnson, Mike Burri, Debbie Unrein, Marilee Johnson, Rick Cullip, Joselyn Lutze, Angela Shuff, Sara Waite and Jennifer Crow.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS SESSION** - Commissioner Yahn moved to approve the minutes of June 17, 2025 Work Session as written. Commissioner Brownell seconded, and the motion carried, 2-0.

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

**STERLING COMMUNITY FUND MAY 30, 2026 FUNDRAISER AT FAIRGROUNDS** - John Chapdelain of NoCo Foundation and the Sterling Community Fund are planning another large event for May 30, 2026. They will need space for a crowd of about 500+ people. They need a large indoor space and are requesting the indoor arena and the Mitchek Event Center. Mr. Chapdelain thanked the Board for their past support of the Sterling Community Fund's events. The Sterling Community Fund benefits every citizen in Logan County. Any money that goes into that fund or is saved by the fund will benefit every citizen in the County, they ask for a waiver of the fees that have been waived by the Commissioners in the past. The waiver of the fees could be used in lieu of in-kind support for the group and the County will be given recognition for that support

Commissioner Yahn moved to waive the fees for the Sterling Community Fund's use of the Exhibit Center and the Mitchek Event Center for May 30, 2026. Commissioner Brownell seconded and the motion carried 2-0. Mr. Chapdelain thanked the Board for waving the fees.

Mr. Chapdelain told the Board that the Sterling Community Fund is only one of 60 funds at the NoCo Foundation's eastern Colorado office. This fiscal year, they are looking at giving out \$3 million in grants from funds that didn't even exist nine years ago. This is how well the NoCo Foundation is enhancing philanthropy in northeast Colorado.

Commissioner Yahn mentioned that at the last South Platte Basin Round Table he noticed that the Mitigation Fund Northern Integrated Supply Project was given to the NoCo Foundation to do some enhancements along the Poudre River. Mr. Chapdelain said that is correct. As part of the settlement, the NoCo Foundation was charged with being the steward of the funds. There is a three-member committee from one side of the Poudre Valley, there are two members from the foundation that are going to work together over the next 20 years to distribute \$100 million dollars to help with the Poudre River. The NoCo Foundation is known as a trusted steward of these types of funds. Commissioner Yahn said the amount will be \$118 million. Mr. Chapdelain said that the first \$5 has been put into the fund, the committee has met, and they will start digging in and researching what the best use of the money for the long-term health of the Poudre River will be.

**REPRESENTATIVE DUSTY JOHNSON** - Representative Dusty Johnson met with the Board to give an update on 2025 legislative activities. She mentioned that they did get the Division of Water Resources to be more accountable, the water permitting process was streamlined, fees were reduced, and a year was added to the process. Permittees will get two years to do water permitting, as opposed to one. The Irrigation Districts Inflation Adjustments were updated so they could act in real time. Water is becoming scarce. We need to figure out a way that we can monitor that commodity.

Commissioner Yahn said that it had been updated in 2006, but this time the inflation adjuster was added. Republican River wants to do something similar because they're in a Conservation District, not an Irrigation District. They also got Ag buildings exempt from the new energy code standards, which is huge.

Ms. Johnson helped co-sponsor the Key Service Provider Bill with Senator Byron Pelton. In 2022, there was a huge fight against the Ag Labor Bill which ended up going to the Supreme Court on the national level. It allowed key service providers, union workers, and health care providers, not emergency workers, but people coming in with flyers and other things, to enter onto private property, farms and ranches, to give the workers their information. This goes against private property rights, because agriculture operates differently than general businesses. Counties have Right to Farm policies and there are liabilities if someone is injured on someone's farmland. They were able to update this saying that key service providers no longer can go on private property. We got this fixed, so we're now compliant with the law, and we're also honoring the Ag workers. There is nothing saying that the key service providers can't set up a table or something on the county road if they want to, to provide information to people. They can't go unannounced and uninvited onto private property where there is a lot of equipment amid bio security, and taking pictures to twist them for animal welfare, because any angle changes the story.

Ms. Johnson was able to work with NJC, MCC and other community colleges on the Website Transfer Bill for students, along with higher education institutions. They are going to make a platform for all Colorado public schools - private schools can opt in. Public schools are getting government dollars, and we want them to be accountable. Students can see what the school's accreditations are, what credits they have and how the credits will transfer to different institutions in Colorado. It will give students information to better plan their education. They will be able to identify which credits will not transfer and the cost of the credits. Students of any age, adult learners, those from the military, or those going back for a second degree, can see how credits are going to transfer, and they'll be accountable to themselves.

First responders now can be confidential voters. Johnson will be working with County Clerk and Records Offices and the Secretary of State updating how these first responders and their spouses can become confidential voters, along with streamlining the process, they can now do online forms as opposed to just paper forms. Online forms will be available for anyone.

On the healthcare spectrum, Johnson is helping with capital needs for rural and frontier hospitals. There are a lot of good resources out here, but the infrastructure is crumbling. Then when facilities spend more capital on infrastructure, that's less FTE that they can use on employees. We want to help mitigate and try to keep what we have and keep it strong, along with helping to make medications more affordable. Johnson and Senator Pelton created Colorado Proud to help with this. The Senate side was the first bill in the nation to help with pharmaceutical benefit managers. They are the middlemen that drive up the cost. The bill is now curbing in a way that patients are supposed to get the rate that the pharmaceuticals are trying to get to them, without driving the cost up by the middleman so we can actually get more affordable medications.

Rural areas have zoning areas for medications out here. If a doctor prescribes medication A for your diabetes, you go to the pharmacy and the pharmacy says, your insurance in this area only covers medication B. You have to use B now, even though your medical provider said A would be better for you, it's because of the cost game they're playing. There is a market value that they get somewhere more expensive, they can still use that, but it shouldn't be the driving factor. We're not playing with people's lives anymore, especially in rural areas, because they don't have that zoning factor in Denver. They do, but you just have to go a block away, and now you're in a different pharmacy zone, and it doesn't really affect them. Out here, all of the northeast region is in the same zone. No one's really going to drive to Greeley, or Brighton to get their medication.

The Board told Ms. Johnson that they are concerned about the appointments to the State Land Board. She said that they did send “pointed” letters. They also have the rural caucus now. Former Representative Holtorf and Former Senators Sonnenberg and Brophy, Becker always had a small unofficial rural coalition. They now have an 18-member strong Senate, House bipartisan that can actually get things done. It’s really nice when it’s not just Republicans pointing a finger at our government, but we can get some Democrats like the speaker signed on to the letter, which was huge. The governor’s not going to listen to the letter, but we did send it to put it on the record.

Commissioner Brownell discussed the CDPHE rule concerning methane emissions. He has been discussing this with Senator Pelton. At first Senator Pelton thought that Logan County and all of his district would be exempt from it because the landfill did not collect enough tonnage. But Logan and Morgan County are not exempt. Yuma County is exempt, probably because they don’t collect the tonnage that the Logan and Morgan County Landfills collect. According to Byron, CDPHE is not budging on the tonnage limitation. It is going to be prohibitively expensive if the rules go through the way they think they will. He is working with another legislator, and he said the only way we’re going to get around it is to have legislation passed. This is not the Feds or the EPA, it’s the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) trying to determine the percentages of the methane emissions that are landfill related. It is less than one per cent for the Front Range and their ozone.

Johnson said that some dairy farmers have received a letter from CDPHE has sent out a letter to them saying that they have until 2027 to do a new phase for their carbon output. This could be extended to all feedlots, city sewer treatment plants, etc. Commissioner Brownell said that any help would be appreciated. CDPHE has also been a problem with water quality and dredge and fill permitting.

Johnson told the Commissioners about Dewey's restaurant in Stoneham. Their tap offers clean well water. Stoneham residents’ tap water is not clean well water. Instead of putting it on the residents to clean, CDPHE is actually making the town’s water filter through the restaurant, which is a weird process.

A cap was put on them with the boiler plate licensing that they were trying to do with wastewater permitting for municipalities. That was a win last year. It was retroactive because they do so many things so fast.

Commissioner Brownell also explained that a landowner had talked to him about a five-acre lot development. He was wanting to rezone the property. Right now, the property is agricultural pasture. To rezone, the state is requiring him to get a well permit which is only good for one year. He may sell it six months from now or five years from now, but the well permit was only good for one year at the time. Now the permits are good for two years. If he doesn’t sell it in that amount of time, he will have to go back and redo the permit. Any time landowners apply for a subdivision, statutes require that they must prove that they have water available.

Johnson said that she had not followed up after she called about the sanctuary list. The list has been taken down. Rumors are that the administration wants to put it back up. She does not know whether they will follow through with that or not, but if they do, she and Senator Pelton will watch closely to make sure that Logan County is not back on the list. There were a lot of errors on the list. It was published on the Channel 9 News website for 36 hours at most. 9 News did not publish a correction. Boulder, Denver, Jefferson, Pueblo and several other front range counties were the only sanctuary counties.

**RALLY FOR RECOVERY ANGELA SHUFF** – Angela Shuff met with the Board to discuss the Rally for Recovery. The rally was scheduled for September 13, but the date has been changed to August 30, 2025 due to some other activities taking place. The rally will be more Ag focused this year. They have partnered with Milestone Community Wellness to hold an overdose awareness event alongside the rally. The Sterling Fire

Department will fill the dunk tank in the parking lot. They are requesting that the fees be waived for the use of the Courthouse Square and Gazebo for the day. Commissioner Yahn asked Ms. Shuff to write a short letter in the future to the Board requesting that the fees be waived. Commissioner Yahn moved to waive the fees for Advocates for Recovery for the use of the Courthouse Square and Gazebo for August 30, 2025. Commissioner Brownell seconded and the motion carried 2-0.

Ms. Shuff also informed the Board that Advocates for Recovery is providing a self-care fair next month for everyone. She provided a flyer about the event. They are offering free haircuts and chair massages and trail maps and prayer circles.

**PANIC ALARM ACCIDENTLY SET OFF** – A panic alarm was accidentally set off in the Courthouse yesterday. The Clerk's Office locked down, as they have lights notifying them that there was a button activated somewhere in the building. The police came to check as they should. However, there was no all-clear signal given to the building to let everyone know what had happened. The system also is supposed to send emails to departments to alert them that a button was activated. Most Courthouse departments did not receive the emails. Josilyn Lutze will investigate what went wrong with the system and also work on a procedure for the building when the system is activated.

She will also work on a plan for the fairgrounds when tornado sirens are activated. It would be a good idea to have a plan or procedures in place to shelter people who are attending large events such as the fair. Employees in the Courthouse also need to know what to do in the event of a tornado warning.

**NEW SENTINEL MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM PROJECT** – Commissioner Yahn attended a meeting on June 10, 2025 in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The Board previously met with a representative from the Department of Defense who invited the Board to a meeting in Cheyenne. The Board decided that Commissioner Yahn should attend since he is the Commissioner with the most missile sites in his district. The meeting was for the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. It was to be aware of the project and threats that occur around doing a project like this. They said this is the biggest public works project undertaken by the Federal Government since the Interstate Highway System. The project is replacing all the Minuteman Missiles with the new Sentinel Missiles. They want the Minuteman Missiles to remain in place while all this is going on and it will be a two- to five-year process. There are several different sites, one in Colorado, one in the Nebraska/Wyoming area and one in North Dakota and one in Montana that have about 150 missile sites each. It is a big part of our national security. We are the hub of the project.

When the project takes off, and they didn't say when the process would begin for sure, it will be around 3,000 workers coming to the area. Most of the workers will be housed in Kimball Nebraska. The things they wanted us to be wary of, especially within counties, are the threats from outside. It is not uncommon for other enemy countries to try to infiltrate while you're doing a project like this, to either try to thwart it or slow it down. Some of the countries that were discussed were Russia, China, and Iran as being potential threats in our area, and the ways that they come into an area, it can be through students in college. It can also be through the purchase of land next to the missile sites. The Chinese purchase of land is a real deal in some of these areas. They wanted County sheriffs, road and bridge workers, and others to be aware that if you see something odd going on, it should be reported. Commissioner Yahn has information about who to report it to. There were approximately 40 people there, from Homeland Security to FBI Special Agents to Air Force Defense, to a wide range of military people.

Commissioner Yahn also reported that the Department of Defense is not really excited about wind towers and solar fields located near the missile silos. Most of the solar technology is Chinese made, and they install things in the wind tower inverters. The Chinese shut down a solar field in Texas already. When you have a big wind tower with the potential of some kind of information gathering at the top of the wind tower, it spans

a huge area. These are things that we need to be aware of. The other one are the big data centers that are coming into areas, it's not a good thing to have near the missile silos.

Commissioner Yahn said that the meeting was very interesting, and he wanted everyone to be aware of this. Commissioner Brownell questioned whether this would need to be addressed in the wind and solar regulations. One of the first wind farms in Peetz was close to the missile silo area. Alan Samber suggested it may not need an amendment of the regs, but possibly the insertion of certain conditions on the permit that may safeguard those interests in some way and may require consultation with the Department of Defense before we issue additional conditional use permits. Commissioner Yahn stated that he was the only person in the meeting that had grown up next to a missile silo, it was on the ranch that he grew up on.

**SALES AND USE TAX EXTENSION** – The Board briefly discussed the sunset of the extension of the sales and use tax at the end of 2025. The Board intends to put forth a ballot question on the November ballot to extend the sales and use tax. Commissioner Yahn reported on the CCI Summer Conference, it was discussed that Board members can discuss how the funds are used and as people in the community if they think it is a good use of the funds. Once the question is set, Board members must be careful about how they portray it. Alan Samber is working on an outline for the Board to reference what can and can't be discussed. Commissioner Brownell recently gathered input from citizens at the Fleming Elevator. For the most part, they thought it was a good idea to extend the sales tax. They realize that it frees up General Fund dollars for the Sheriff and other things.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.