

**Logan County Commissioners Work Session  
March 4, 2025**

Present: Mike Brownell, Jim Yahn, Jerry Sonnenberg, Alan Samber, Debbie Unrein, Marilee Johnson, Harold Yutzy, Mike Burri, Rick Cullip, Dave Hutt, Paul Schrade, Charlotte Zwegardt, Rob Quint, Jeff Rice 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 the February 25, 2025 Work Session as written. Commissioner Sonnenberg seconded, and the motion carried, 3-0.

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

**REVISIONS TO THE BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA** – There were no revisions.

**HAROLD YUTZY PRESERVING THE STATE OF COLORADO/VOTING** – Harold Yutzy met with the Board. He would like to get the way things are voted for in the state to be one vote per county instead of having the eight to ten front range counties dictate everything for the entire state. Yutzy stated that our governor does not care about farming and ranching or hunting. He is suggesting that the governor be elected by an electoral college system by the counties.

Commissioner Sonnenberg stated that when he was in the Colorado Senate he tried to run a bill that would do something similar to that but give the House of Representatives one vote for each county. That was ruled unconstitutional, because the constitution says one vote, one person, so everything has to be based on population. We would have to change the constitution to be able to have our legislature based on area like the Senate, rather than population. That will probably not happen. You would have to have a Constitutional Convention with 38 states. Mr. Yutzy said that he thinks that they can get 38 states. If you look at the United States by county, 3,244 counties are “red” or conservative. The only places that are “blue” are big metropolitan areas that have all the people that don’t understand what the United States was built on. Commissioner Brownell stated that there is a Constitutional Convention movement that hasn’t gotten the 38 states needed the latest he knew.

Mr. Yutzy stated that Colorado has become more like California. He suggested that eastern Colorado break away from the front range and form a new state. Commissioner Sonnenberg mentioned that he used to get calls from people in western Kansas and Nebraska that had the same problem with their population centers and wanted to be a part of a 51<sup>st</sup> state. People feel like they’re run by urban areas that don’t know or understand agriculture where their food comes from. Congress has made it clear that if they would allow a 51st state here in eastern Colorado and western Nebraska, and Kansas, then they would have to have a state District of Columbia, State of Puerto Rico, etc.

**MOWING AND LAWN MAINTENANCE PROPOSAL** – Rick Cullip met with the Board concerning the Lawn Mowing and Maintenance proposal for the Courthouse, Justice Center, Heritage Center, and Sunset Memorial Gardens Cemetery. The outer area of the Sunset Memorial Gardens Cemetery was added to the specifications this year. The Buildings and Grounds Department and Dave Appelhans have shared the responsibilities of mowing the outer area of the cemetery in previous years. The cost for the departments has been roughly \$300 - \$350 per day to do this. Mr. Hutt is offering to do the mowing for approximately \$1,000 for the whole season. The increase in the mowing contract is not included in the Buildings and Grounds Department’s budget this year. He had budgeted for the same contracted amount as last year. Mr. Hutt has

not had an increase in almost ten years. Cullip stated it was approximately a 5% increase. Mr. Hutt stated that it was \$100 a week. He mentioned that he did not increase the last contract as it was during COVID. He mentioned the 40 trees that were planted at the Courthouse that he has to mow around as a reason for increasing the Courthouse mowing price. The proposal for the cemetery is a minimum number of times to mow. There is no maximum number of times to mow the cemetery. If we get a lot of rains, he will need to mow more for the same price. The cemetery proposal includes mowing at least two times per month. The rates will remain the same for 2025 – 2027. The Board will award the proposal in the Business Meeting today. Alan Samber will prepare a written contract for the Board to sign at the March 18 Business Meeting.

**COMPUTER SERVERS AT JAIL** – Rick Cullip met with the Board concerning replacement of a computer server at the Justice Center in the jail. They just had a switch go bad at the jail which caused a catastrophic incident. They were able to work through that, but it brought up some key points that this needs to be done sooner rather than later. In discussions with Kurt, from Kubl, the current proposal was to upgrade to a single server and move it to the Justice Center and get it out of the control room conditions which are dusty. In order to go forward with the single server, the county would have to upgrade the licensing at a cost of approximately \$15,000. This is a one-time cost. This is something that Kubl missed and would be a win for the county if the county went forward with the single server upgrade. We could do the same upgrade to a dual server upgrade, but he didn't talk as favorably of that, but it would not cost the licensing. Cullip believes that the licensing is something that the County would not have to do for the dual server upgrade within the next two years. Going with a dual server we have now to a single server would require a different license. This will help with future upgrades when additional cameras or different cameras are added. The license will already meet those requirements.

Commissioner Sonnenberg asked for Cullip's recommendation. Cullip is torn between the dual server and the single server. When the switches went down, they were able to migrate a lot of cabling to the other switch and get essential cameras back up that night. He asked Kubl if there was another power outage to have two instead of one and he said no, not necessarily. But if that did take place, you could migrate that in such a way electronically, that if one of the servers did go down, it would automatically move to the first server, but it would double the size of each server. Cullip said that long-term, he thinks it will be beneficial to the county to upgrade the license now to move to one server and that will give us at least four or five years before we should have to do any type of upgrades to that system again based on growth and the type of growth we see right now. Cullip was asked if he had ever seen a server go down. He said he has not seen a server go down. Switches have gone down, but not the servers. The total cost will be \$183,050 with the cost of the license.

Commissioner Sonnenberg moved to go forward with the single server and the upgraded \$15,000 license. Commissioner Yahn seconded, and the motion carried 3-0.

The meeting recessed at 9:30 a.m. and reconvened at 9:55 a.m.

**IRIS DRIVE AND COUNTY ROAD 37** – Paul Schrade, Charlotte Zwegardt, Rob Quint, and Mike Burri joined the meeting to discuss a proposed project to make the intersection of CR 37 and Iris Drive safer for the traveling public. Rob Quint explained that Mr. Schaefer owns a triangle-shaped piece of property at that intersection. He was going to subdivide it into two lots, keep one piece and sell the other. The buyer wants to build a shop with access on both sides from both county roads. At the same time, the Board started talking about trying to buy the tip of the triangle. Rob talked with Schaefer and told him that it would be in his best interest to take his subdivision application off the table because we didn't want to split it into two lots and then have to come back and recreate it again. The Planning Commission hearing was canceled last month and today would have been the Commissioners' hearing on the application.

Mike Burri explained the Board's ideas about the intersection to Mr. Schrade and Mrs. Zwegardt. They

want to change northbound traffic and “T” CR 37 into Iris Drive and place a stop sign so traffic does not have the problem of coming up to the stop sign and turning to see traffic back behind them. There are other options that have been discussed. If a shop is built on the lot, there may be more of an obstruction of the view. Quint stated that new letters will be sent out for the subdivision application again once everything is sorted out. Mr. Schrade and Mrs. Zwegardt left the meeting.

Mike Burri stated that Scott Schaefer said that the price is \$18,500 for the tip of the triangle. Once he hears back from the County, he will contact the surveyor and have them get going on the survey again. The lot will be approximately .26 acres. Burri and Commissioner Sonnenberg will check with the Assessor’s Office to see what the lot is appraised for so that they can come up with a counteroffer.

**CR 43.5 FEEDLOT ROAD NEAR CR 32.2** – Mike Burri reported that he talked to Damon Mitchek about CR 43.5. Apparently, CR 43.5 is not a County road. They do not want to open up CR 43.5 to traffic. In fact, they want to put up a gate so that only his feedlot trucks can travel on it. He was receptive when Burri told him that the County could take over the road, build it up, and maintain it regularly. Then he was hesitant because of the paved road (CR 32.2). He kept saying “We have a nice road that is paved, why can’t we use it?” It seems that he’s got a problem with the railroad. It is a valid argument. The railroad sits over that crossing for longer than 30 minutes all the time. Commissioner Sonnenberg stated when he was working on the rules, it was 30 minutes was the maximum that the railroad could block the crossing. It’s always just one or two railroad cars or an engine or two blocking the crossing. If they would just stop a little further up it would not be a problem. Commissioner Sonnenberg suggested that the Board put this on the back burner right now. His bill is up in committee in the Senate on March 19<sup>th</sup>. Hopefully by the end of the month or the middle of next month it will be signed.

**CATTLEGUARDS** – Mike Burri reported that Rob Kasper talked with neighboring farmers Gary Nelson and Alan Hutt about the cattleguards. They are okay with the cattleguards going where Jason Klinzman wants to place them. The Board agreed that there should be some sort of standard design for the cattleguards, as the County is likely to get more requests for them due to the high cost of fencing. Burri discussed the design of the concrete cattleguards and how they are maintained. There is no need to tear up the road as they do with current cattle guard design. The cost is approximately \$7,000 per cattleguard for materials. The Board suggested a policy of once the Board approves the location, the cost is \$10,000-\$12,000 including materials and labor. They will all be installed in the same way, with concrete boxes and the cattleguard that can be lifted off and cleaned out without having to tear up the road.

**EMERGENCY MANAGER VEHICLE REPAIRS** - Mike Burri reported that the department contacted Gandee Automotive regarding the repairs to the Emergency Manager’s vehicle. Apparently, the engine for this type of vehicle has 800 of those exact engines on backorder. Then they talked to South Platte Auto. Apparently, they can get the same motor somewhere else, and they can do it right away, but they want \$10,500 for the job instead of \$8,800 or \$8,900. Burri talked to Gandee again and asked him why he can’t find a motor right away. He was going to shop around, but Burri has not heard back from him yet. The Board asked Burri to get the vehicle fixed in the quickest way possible, even if it does cost more money as it is causing inconvenience for the Assessor’s Office.

**SILICON PLAINS COMPUTER SETUP** – Debbie Unrein expressed frustration over the speed in which the new computers are being installed for departments. They have been dealing with this since January. The Silicon Plains tech only comes out once a week on Thursdays. He drives out from Thornton, so he arrives between 10 a.m. and noon, is here for a couple of hours and it seems like he gets involved with other projects and then he’s gone. The Solid Waste Department computers are not set up yet, he has been moving the plotter from the basement to Pam’s records room on the third floor which involves moving wiring from the IT room into the records room. The Finance Office received two new computers, they are set up, however there are

issues with them. Silicon has to get on remotely to take care of that. Debbie did not know if they are charging a trip charge for each trip, they have not gotten a bill yet.

Debbie suggested that the IT services need to be put out for bid again to see if we can get someone local. Another issue is that Jerry Casebolt was given extra money to take care of the IT issues, but by doing that, Silicon didn't know where these things were. The list of computers that Debbie gave them or computers that he may have replaced, however, Silicon didn't know what the connections were.

When Silicon gets here to set computers up, the tech may not have all the necessary components, like the docking stations and whatever it takes to set up the computers. He will have to go back to wherever they order the part from and bring it out the next week to finish the setup. Even though the Treasurer's Office computers got set up, and the Assessor's Office computers were set up, they're not completely operable. They robbed parts from one department in order to get another department's computers set up.

Debbie explained that the County used the IT services of Platinum Technology, with Les Archuletta for many years. The only network that the Courthouse had in those days was for the Assessor's Office. Jane Bauder felt we needed a different IT provider. Jerry Casebolt helped with the selection of Paramount of Brush, Colorado. Paramount decided that they didn't like how Platinum Technology had set the network up. Paramount went out of business within a year.

The Silicon contract can be terminated at any time. Commissioner Brownell talked to Phillips County, they are with Platinum Technology and are very happy with them. Washington and Morgan Counties have in-house IT employees. Debbie said there is a new company in Sterling. Platinum may not want to work with Logan County again. Silicon Plains has been a good IT company for the county except for this issue has been inconvenient to deal with.

The Board would like to see the billing from Silicon Plains and better communication before making a decision on whether to put the IT services out to bid again.

**AMBULANCE RFP** – Debbie Unrein asked if she could meet with Commissioner Yahn and Chief Ritter to get more questions answered on the billing RFP. Chief Ritter answered two of her questions in an email, but she had several other questions that remain unanswered. Commissioner Yahn said his wife would be able to answer questions also.

**HB21-1110 PROGRESS** – Jennifer Crow updated the Board on the progress that she has made with remediating documents for the website with the CommonLook Online software from Allyant. The software grant will expire in April. The cost to renew the software license will be \$938 for each license. The County has two licenses. Jennifer uses one license currently and the other license is used by Danny Gutierrez-Dutton. Approximately 187 documents on the website have been remediated thus far with the software. This includes Commissioners' minutes, Work Session minutes and Clerk and Recorder articles. No agenda packets have been remediated due to the difficulty in getting the different types of documents included in the packets. Those PDF documents have to be first OCR recognized and saved before going through the remediation process.

Jennifer had seen in the DHS minutes that Commissioner Sonnenberg had mentioned that the Board is considering closing down the website due to HB21-1110. Jennifer wanted to confirm that. Commissioner Sonnenberg did confirm that statement, adding that a very basic website with very little information may be the option that the Board goes with. Commissioner Yahn asked if there is a way to determine how many hits the website gets. Jennifer has contacted the State and has that information available. It is available in real time how many people are using the website at any given time. It varies between 10-15 people located all

over the United States. They most likely are using the Assessor's website or the Treasurer's website for property foreclosures or the Clerk and Recorder's pages.

Jennifer has put all of the Commissioners minutes and agendas older than 2024 into archived folders. Documents that are archived do not have to be remediated. This was confirmed by the Allyant software company. Allyant also gave a quote for website remediation. Jerry Casebolt received several proposals for the Board last summer to work towards this goal of accessibility. Allyant hires a disabled person who will sit with a sighted person and go through each page and see how accessible the pages are. This will be for the Logan County website, the Logan County Fair website and the Logan County Shooting Sports Range website. They will issue a report detailing their findings and recommend fixes. The company will also give ongoing accessibility support for \$13,500 each year. Allyant will also remediate up to 100 documents per license that we send to them. Jennifer would like to send them the County employment application and several other documents to make sure that they are done correctly.

Commissioner Brownell mentioned the Sheriff's Office website. That website will need to be redone altogether. Allyant is associated with the Colorado Statewide Internet Portal Authority. Marilee Johnson was given permission last year to have the Explore Sterling website redone. She had a proposal at the time to completely redo the County websites (main website, fair website and LCSSC website) that was roughly in the \$50,000 range.

Commissioner Sonnenberg downloaded a free reader software for the blind a couple of months ago to try to read the agenda packet that is sent out in PDF form, and it could not read it. It did read a spreadsheet, but it didn't make any sense, because you couldn't follow where it was.

Commissioner Yahn explained that Lower South Platte upgraded their website to be compliant. They have real time data that updates every 15 minutes, and they got it compliant. LSP used a company out of California called Streamline. The cost was \$2,000 to redo their whole site and \$2,500 a year to maintain compliance.

The Board discussed whether the Facebook feeds and the links to Bidnet were going to be accessible. If not, they would have to be discontinued on the website.

Alan Samber noted his concern that after the July 1 deadline, certain plaintiff's lawyers will find disabled clients and they will start testing the local government websites. When they find one that's not compliant, then the lawsuit is going to get filed. Then they will get all the members of a disabled organization to also try to access it. They will also say they couldn't access it. Then there are many more plaintiffs and at \$3,500 per plaintiff, for some cases, each day the violation occurs, you have that liability, plus attorney fees. The Board will discuss this at next week's Work Session.

**NECHD IGA** – Commissioner Brownell discussed the new amendment to the IGA. Commissioner Sonnenberg has questioned how much local control the Boards of Commissioners will have. Commissioner Brownell stated that this amendment is trying to make it to where the Board is not financially liable if the NECHD for some reason would go back on their bonds or notes for the new building. It is separating the counties financially from that. Alan Samber said that they would have to do this with a lease purchase agreement and with a certificate of participation. They can do it without going to a vote of the people. The Board discussed more details about the NECHD and what the agreement might bring about and whether the Board will still have control or whether CDPHE will have control.

**CITY OF STERLING IGAs** – Alan Samber asked if the Board had decided to renew the IGAs for another year and then wait to see if the ambulance billing change would affect the ambulance IGA. Commissioner

Yahn said that all of the IGAs would be renewed for five years. Some language could be added to have the ability to modify the ambulance IGA if necessary. Alan suggested having the ambulance IGA renewable in one year and the rest in five years. Commissioner Brownell had some changes to the landfill IGA on the spring and fall city cleanup days. They must last no longer than ten days each, except if the landfill must close for inclement weather. The City of Sterling will pay the State of Colorado CDPHE fund, which is currently \$1.30 per ton, but not be charged the regular rate for trash. Alan will work up a draft and send over to Kevin Blankenship and the City Attorney for approval and copy the Board on it. He will have it ready for the March 11 Commissioners agenda if all goes well.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.