

**Logan County Commissioners Work Session
September 3, 2024**

Present: Mike Brownell, Joe McBride, Jerry Sonnenberg, Alan Samber, Kristan Lange, Marilee Johnson, Jerry Casebolt, Byron Pelton, Debbie Unrein, Rick Cullip, Jim Yahn, Jeff Rice and Jennifer Crow.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS SESSION – Commissioner McBride moved to approve the minutes of August 27, 2024 as written. Commissioner Sonnenberg seconded, and the motion carried, 3-0.

REVISIONS TO THE WORK SESSION AGENDA – Commission McBride added Marilee Johnson and Senator Pelton to the Work Session Agenda, both under New Business.

REVIEW AND APPROVE SCHEDULE OF COUNTY BILLS – The Board met with Kristan Lange to review the Logan County schedule of bills dated September 3, 2024. All bills were approved as presented.

REVIEW OF BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA – There was no discussion.

NEW BUSINESS: WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY - Marilee Johnson gathered more information after meeting with the Board last week. The webmaster that she is using for the exploresterling.com website recommended that we put all the websites on one platform such as WordPress. She asked if the county website could be on that platform.

Jerry Casebolt joined the meeting. He felt that the county could lose our logancounty.gov address. However, Jennifer did not think that we would lose the domain (logancountyco.gov) if we went with a different platform but we would lose the free website through the State of Colorado. Marilee noted that this is just discussion right now, but the webmaster suggested that the county website, the Logan County Fair website, Exploresterling.com and the Logan County Sheriff website could all be rebuilt and put on the same platform, making everything consistent for around \$50,000. When everything is rebuilt, it will be made accessible. The Exploresterling.com website can be taken out of the amount if the Lodging Tax Board approves the request for funding.

Commissioner Sonnenberg reported that he sent an email to Representative Ortiz and also asked our Senator to have a conversation with him about the website accessibility standards.

The complexity of the different county websites was discussed. The Logan County website is very extensive and has a lot of information and links to other pages. The Sheriff's website is a very basic site and does not have a lot of content. There are two or three spots where you can click on links to put money on inmates' accounts. The Logan County Fair website may be a little bit more complicated because of the ticketing process and is very interactive. The Logan County Fair ticket sales are managed through a link to the Sapphire ticketing website.

In 2017 it cost \$10,000 to build the Exploresterling.com website from scratch, now it's going to take \$15,000 to rebuild it. Currently Exploresterling.com is hosted by Agency Tourism at a cost of approximately \$100 a month. Jerry Casebolt said that the Sheriff pays approximately \$400 a year for the domain logancountysheriff.com through GoDaddy.com. Marilee pays approximately \$13 a year for the Exploresterling.com domain.

The state has made some changes to make the site more accessible, but anything that's already there is not accessible. Jerry Casebolt said that he posted some things on his page the other day and it made him put in some taglines that he never had to put in before when he added a picture. The Board's minutes can be posted if

they can be read by a reader, but if there are charts or diagrams or anything other than basic wording on a document, then they would not be accessible.

Agenda packets often contain copies of bids and things that a reader would not be able to read. HB21-1110 says that it all must be accessible. There are some things that are not feasible to make accessible. Alan Samber commented that the House Bill carves out an exception for things that would create an unreasonable, undue burden on the counties. Jerry Casebolt will be meeting with another company that has reached out to talk about website remediation and accessibility.

The meeting recessed at 9:26 a.m. and reconvened at 10:26 a.m.

SENATOR BYRON PELTON LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – Senator Byron Pelton met with the Board to discuss the recent special legislative session concerning property tax reform. Senator Pelton told the Board that the two ballot initiatives 50 and 108 would be removed from the ballot. Initiative 50 would have prevented any government from raising property tax by 4% each year except by a statewide, opt out only, vote. Initiative 108 would drop the residential rate to 5.7% and drop the commercial rate to 24%. Senator Pelton is almost positive that in Senate District One both initiatives would have passed.

The thing that they were discussing was if they could find a way to lower property taxes in a responsible way (like in Senate Bill 233, that was passed during the session), that we would be able to make sure that county governments could still provide services and rural school funding would not be affected, because they “decoupled” the schools away from that. There were several discussions on how they could lower the rate and still keep 233 intact, because if 108 and 50 were to pass, you would have to wait two years for any kind of property tax relief. Instead of going down to 6.5% we went to 6.4% on residential. Everything else goes to 25%.

Senator Pelton went on to discuss the state assessed values and the cap change. It is now on a two-year cycle with a 12% cap. Logan County’s state assessed values only went up 3%. State-assessed land is the State Land Board land, railroads, pipelines, and wind towers, etc.

Senator Pelton noted one other thing that he is working on is trying to get the state out of property taxes and add an amendment with language Commissioner Sonnenberg gave him. The language he wants to add to the amendment to the permanent Gallagher limit is for any local government to be able to opt out of unfunded state mandates and unfunded fees. He asked for the Board’s help at CCI when they start voting on priorities. They need to make sure that they go after the unfunded mandates on counties.

Pelton discussed another bill he is working on, another unfunded mandate, involving railroad crossings. Counties cannot afford to contribute what the railroads are requiring them to pay for crossing upgrades. Commissioner Sonnenberg wants to change the requirement to have an agreement with the railroad. They need to have a conversation with the counties and negotiate. If they do damage to the road, they have to pay for it unless they have that conversation or negotiate with the local government. Senator Pelton agreed that it is a good compromise. Commissioner Sonnenberg said that local governments may want to work with the railroads to expand crossings or do things differently. Railroads should not be able to go in and charge local governments for use of their rail crane to put in their rails that has nothing to do with the highway or for their signalmen and flaggers for railroad upgrades.

Senator Pelton discussed the PUC and rulemaking. He reported that he has been getting complaints from the Eaton area. The DNR is charging farmers and making them obtain mining permits if they want to flatten out a

part of their farm. They are calling that mining because of the rulemaking at DNR. Farmers are calling and complaining when they are made to take out a mining permit when this is a normal agricultural operation. Pelton is looking into the statute to make them exempt from any mining permits if it's a normal agricultural operation when they take the layer of topsoil off.

Another bill in the works is making electric cars pay for HUTF. Electric cars traveling through Colorado is a big issue right now. We're losing HUTF money like crazy. People charging electric cars on public chargers need to pay a fee to replenish the HUTF fund.

Chairman Brownell mentioned the sponsors of the bill about being able to control pesticide application. Senator Pelton is certain that they will see that bill again because the Governor wants it. However, there are enough people on the House Ag Committee that help them with that. They are able to help control and kill it. They've been fortunate if they see it in the Senate, the Chair of the Senate Ag Committee has been excellent. He sides with them when it comes down to pesticide matters.

Another bill Senator Pelton participated in was with Senator Roberts concerning the State Land Board kicking lessees off state leased land to put solar panels on the land. The Board discussed wind farm's conservation and reseeded practices on properties.

Commissioner Sonnenberg mentioned that he called the woman that had the complaint about the sprinkler watering the road. She hasn't called him back. She needs to call the Sheriff to warn the landowner.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 11:14 a.m.