



GRAND COUNTY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

**Grand County Commission Chambers
Hybrid virtual participation on Zoom
Moab, Utah**

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MINUTES 7 January 2025

The Grand County Commission met in a regular meeting on January 7th, 2025. The meeting was held in-person in the Grand County Commission Chambers, with hybrid virtual participation also available via Zoom. It was also broadcast and saved on YouTube. Attending the meeting in-person were Commissioners Jacques Hadler, Mary McGann, Bill Winfield, Trisha Hedin, Melodie McCandless, Mike McCurdy and Brian Martinez. Also attending in-person were Commission Administrator Mark Tyner, Associate Commission Administrator Quinn Hall, County Attorney Stephen Stocks and Clerk/Auditor Gabriel Woytek.

2:01 p.m. Call to Order

Nomination and Appointment of the Commission Chair and Vice Chair for 2025

Outgoing Commission Chair Hadler offered a prepared statement regarding his experience as Chair.

Motion by Commissioner McCurdy to nominate Bill Winfield as Chair and Melodie McCandless as Vice Chair

Motion seconded by Commissioner Martinez

Discussion

Commissioner Hedin expressed concern regarding a commissioner just starting their first term being nominated for Vice Chair. Commissioner Winfield advocated for Commissioner McCandless's qualities and stated that she deserved the chance as much as anyone by virtue of having been elected. Commissioner Hadler shared his experience being a brand-new commissioner as a way of illustrating that it would not be the most effective fit.

Motion passes 4-2, Hedin and Hadler opposed, McGann abstaining

Chair Winfield gave a statement regarding his enthusiasm for the role and gratitude towards Commissioner Hadler for doing what was possible to facilitate a smooth transition.

Closed Session

At 2:09 p.m., Motion by Commissioner McGann to enter closed session for the purposes of discussing pending or reasonably imminent litigation, the purchase, exchange, lease, or sale of real property, and the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Hadler

Motion passes 7-0

At 3:59 p.m., Motion by Commission Hedin to exit closed session

Motion seconded by Commissioner McCurdy

Motion passes 7-0

Chair Winfield called a 5-minute recess

4:10 Chair Winfield reconvened the Regular Meeting

Pledge of Allegiance

Citizens to Be Heard

Lynn Jackson, introducing himself as a former Commissioner and the Republican Party Chair, stated that the recent election dictated a change in course towards less government, less taxation, fiscal responsibility, openness and transparency, protection of property rights, less regulation and common-sense practical solutions.

Dave Bodner stated that he was opposed to any action against the Arches timed entry system, which he sees as effective, stated that he was opposed to proposed increases in special event limits, and stated that he was opposed to the removal of responsible recreation messaging. Bodner spoke in opposition to what he termed 'endless growth endlessly.'

Cassidy Jones, Senior Visitation Program Manager with the National Park Service, stated confidently that the Arches Timed Entry System was an exemplary and scientific visitor management program. Jones affirmed that the system was popular, generated certainty for visitors, protected resources, and kept operations sustainable. Of any crowd management tools that have been attempted, Jones stated that time-entry was the most effective.

Sena Hauer urged the Commission to address aircraft use in professor valley following a disastrous event at her ranch when a moto glider stalked her trail ride, injuring human and horse and causing extensive costs, and which she states is representative of a broad issue in the region that has gone unaddressed. Hauer has met with BLM and would like to move forward with all stakeholders regarding protection from these users.

Josh Green, directed the Commission's attention to safety issues on South Highway 191. Green continued by referring to 3.1C in the Land Use Code, which outlaws what he considers innocent backyard camping by residents, and asked the Commission to consider striking this type of regulation.

AJ Throgmorton stated that he supports the County's opposition to the Arches timed entry system.

Pete Gross stated that he was opposed to any action against the Arches timed entry system, which he sees as effective, stated that he was opposed to proposed increases in special event limits, and stated that he was opposed to the removal of responsible recreation messaging, stressing the importance of visitor education regarding responsible uses.

Audrey Graham expressed support for the Arches timed entry system, advocating for alignment with Moab City, which is in support of the system. Graham added that visitors have a better experience when educated by responsible recreation messaging, and these values should not be altered hastily without better evaluating their consequences.

Lynn Jackson, this time introducing himself as a former administrator with the Bureau of Land Management, stated that many viable alternatives were not considered before implementation of the Arches timed entry system, and that an appropriate economic impact analysis was not completed. Jackson stated that Park Service visitation is down and business is down, which will result in the burden falling on property tax payers.

Tina Brown spoke in support of the Arches timed entry system, which she views as effective and providing a better experience for visitors. Brown spoke in support of responsible recreation messaging and the current economic development plan.

Ian Michard, local motoglider and administrator in the local paramotor group, stated that he would like to be involved in any stakeholder discussions regarding aviation uses and their regulation.

Chair Winfield moved Action Item 8 up, without objection

8. Withdrawal of Support for the Draft Plan/Environmental Assessment for Arches Visitor Access and Experiences with Arches National Park as currently written, and the Timed Entry Reservation System as implemented. (Chair Winfield)

Presentation

Southeast Utah Group National Park Service superintendent Lena Pace shared a statement providing clarification regarding the Arches timed entry system. Pace stressed that there was common ground in desiring a continuation of both healthy visitation and a positive visitor experience.

Chair Winfield prompted the Commission to offer any potential conflict of interest disclosures in consideration of this particular action item.

Chair Winfield stated that he did meet with Superintendent Pace in anticipation of this presentation and action item.

Commission Hadler stated that he would recuse himself from voting on this item as he signed a letter of support of the Timed Entry system as a representative of his business.

Commissioner Martinez stated that he was a concessionaire at Arches National Park, serving as a general manager with no direct economic interest as it relates to park operations.

Presentation and Discussion continued

Commissioner Hedin gave an overview for the process that the Commission took for responding during the public comment period in support of the timed entry system. Hedin stated that Commissioners did not take

the opportunity at that time to offer the objections currently being raised, and that the Commission as a whole had no opportunity to give their input in the face of what she sees as significant shifts in value.

Motion by Commissioner McGann to deny the letter withdrawing support for the draft plan/environmental assessment for Arches Visitor Access and Experiences with Arches National Park as currently written, and the timed entry reservation system as implemented.

Seconded by Commissioner Hedin

Discussion

Commissioner McCurdy sought confirmation that 15-18% of vehicles are turned away at the gate, and asked whether those visitors were surveyed regarding their experience. Superintendent Pace stated that these visitors most often did come back and enter the park at a different time. McCurdy stated that this turnaround rate was too high.

Commissioner McGann stated that previous visitation growth patterns at Arches National Park were not sustainable, and offered reasons why the timed entry system was favorable to visitors. McGann added that Arches National Park was a critical asset to Grand County's economy and that it was not the National Park Service's responsibility to support Grand County's economy, but to operate and preserve a well-run park.

Commissioner Martinez agreed that Grand County is lucky to have Arches National Park in its backyard, and that the futures of both parties are intertwined. Martinez stated that 1,450,000 people is the cap for visitation, and disagreed with the socioeconomic data being presented by the National Park Service and stated that he would like more time to review it. Martinez added that he has a duty to protect local business, and not to support the mission of the National Park Service, and that he hopes the Commission commits to continued dialogue and progress.

Commissioner McCandless stated that she appreciates all of the effort associated with implementation of the timed entry system, and that her biggest concern was that the timed entry system might be considered a permanent solution without more evaluation.

Motion fails 2-4, Winfield, Martinez, McCandless and McCurdy opposed, Hadler abstaining

Motion by Commissioner Martinez to approve the letter withdrawing support for the draft plan/environmental assessment for Arches Visitor Access and Experiences with Arches National Park, and the timed entry reservation system as permanent policies until such time that more analysis can determine the real impacts to the Grand County community through a working group Federal, State, and local stakeholders

Motion seconded by Commissioner McCandless

Discussion

Superintendent Pace stated that the Timed Entry system is still in a pilot phase, with opportunity while still supporting the current pilot, to offer comment. Without the timed entry program, staff would be left with no time for planning efforts that would improve the park experience into the future.

Motion fails 0-6, Hadler abstaining

Motion by Commissioner Martinez to approve the letter withdrawing support for the draft plan/environmental assessment for Arches Visitor Access and Experiences with Arches National Park as it is currently written, and the timed entry reservation system as it is currently being implemented, with a request to present more information and analysis before the Commission can reconsider its support

Motion seconded by Commissioner McCurdy

Discussion

Commissioner McGann stressed that maintaining support at this time was critical and that the current letter being considered for approval does not offer that needed support, and suggested that a new letter be drafted.

Substitute motion by Commissioner McGann to postpone the item to redraft the letter

Substitute motion seconded by Commissioner Hedin

Substitute motion fails 2-4, Winfield, Martinez, McCandless and McCurdy opposed, Hadler abstaining

Motion passes 4-2, Hedin and McGann opposed, Hadler abstaining

Department Reports (none scheduled)

Presentations (none scheduled)

Commission Member Disclosures

Commissioner McCurdy disclosed that his wife is an employee at the Grand County Sheriff's Office.

General Commission Reports and Future Considerations (18:30)

Jacques Hadler

- Attended local visit from Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity
- Attended and gave address at celebration for 15-ton removal milestone at UMTRA site

Trisha Hedin

- GWSSA meeting, proposed rate increase for highest water users (tier 4, 5, and 6)

Bill Winfield

- Press release regarding harassment of Grand County staff surround Kane Springs development
- Airport Board Meeting
- Attended meeting with BLM and David Pals regarding assistance and rescue for longtime resident Nick Hogan

Brian Martinez

- No reports at this time

Mary McGann

- Gave a statement against any threats whatsoever against individuals related to the Kane Springs development, strongly condemning any harassment of anyone involved
- Economic Development Advisory Board meeting
- Future Consideration: roundtable to discuss needs for aviation regulation

Mike McCurdy

- No reports at this time

Melodie McCandless

- Future Consideration: review camping ordinance as mentioned by citizen to be heard

Elected Official Reports**County Attorney Stephen Stocks**

- Stocks commended County response to harassment and abuse of County staff in relation to Kane Springs development

Clerk/Auditor Gabriel Woytek

- Revenue withheld as a result of State Auditor's Office findings was officially lifted

Commission Administrator Report

- Administrator Tyner welcomed the new Commissioners and expressed enthusiasm and appreciation for his new role
- Associate Administrator Hall: Pack and Kerby lane low water crossing, commit Road Department to maintaining and fixing as part of grant application, but no direct financial commitment. Commissioners agreed that it would be ok to proceed

General Business - Action Items, Discussion and Consideration of:

Chair Winfield tabled action Item 1, without objection

2. Assignments of County Commission Representatives/Liaisons to District and County Boards, Commission, Committees, and Other Agencies (Chair Winfield)**Presentation**

Per the Governing Body Policies and Procedures: In January of each year, the Commission shall review each Commission Representative's position on County Boards, Commissions and Committees, Local and Special Service District Boards, and other agencies. Commission members shall indicate which assignments they would prefer. For assignments selected by more than one Commission Member, the Commission shall vote on who receives the assignment. In the event that no Member volunteers for an assignment, the Chair shall assign a Member.

Vacated board seats were considered first. Commissioners Martinez and Hadler volunteered to assume roles in the Internal Audit Committee, replacing Commissioners Hedin and Walker.

Commissioner Martinez expressed interest in the GWSSA board currently held by Commissioner Hedin, which she does not wish to vacate. Chair Winfield called for a straw poll vote to fill the GWSSA board seat, which resulted in four votes in favor of Martinez filling the role.

Commissioner McCandless expressed interest in the Mosquito Abatement District Board currently held by Commissioner Hedin, which she does not wish to vacate. McCandless deferred to Hedin.

Commissioner McCandless assumed the Public Health and Mental Health board positions that had been held by Commissioner McGann.

Commissioner Martinez assumed the Travel Council Advisory Board position that had been held by Commissioner McGann.

Commissioner Winfield expressed that he would like to be listed alternate of the Moab Tailing Project Steering Committee.

Commissioner McCurdy assumed the Housing Authority Board position that had been held by Commissioner McGann.

Commissioner McCandless assumed a combined role with Commissioner McGann on the Economic Development Advisory Board, and assumed the Economic Development Corporation of Utah position currently held by Commissioner McGann.

6pm Citizens to be Heard

Oscar Niehaus spoke in support of the Arches Timed Entry system, stating that he feels that it improves Moab's image as a destination.

Brittney Melton stated that the Commission would need to be more flexible in their thought processes in order to support the community working together and that she expects that leaders would not make disparaging statements towards whistleblowers. Melton stressed that she hopes the Commission focuses on affordability and transparency.

Andrea Swenson spoke in support of the Arches Timed Entry system, which she feels improves the visitor experience.

Chair Winfield brought forth Action Item 1

1. Volunteer Citizen Appointment to the Noxious Weed Board (Grand County Weeds Supervisor Izzi Weimholt)

Presentation

Weimholt gave an overview regarding vacancies and applications, as shown in the packet. Two qualified applications received for one vacancy.

Motion by Commissioner Hadler to approve the appointment of Ben Menard to serve on the Noxious Weed Board, with term expiring 12/31/2027.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Hedin

Discussion

Commissioner Martinez stated that the Board bylaws had not been revisited on an annual basis, according to statute. Martinez stated that Vice Chair Tim Higgs informed him that he had spent many years trying to foster inclusion of a farmer-rancher, and the applicant not recommended by the board best fit that description. Commissioner Hadler stated that he was comfortable following the board's recommendation. Chair Winfield suggested that the farmer-rancher designation did not cleanly apply to an employee at the Youth Garden Project. Commissioner Hedin stated that very few people derive their entire income as a farmer-rancher.

Motion passes 5-1, Martinez opposed and McCurdy abstaining

Item number 2 resumed

Commissioner Martinez assumed the Noxious Weed Board position currently held by Commissioner Hadler.

Film Commission Committee and Star Hall Advisory Committee and the Arches Hotspot Region Coordinating Committee appeared to be defunct.

Commissioner Martinez assumed the Chamber of Commerce position currently held by Commissioner Hadler.

Commissioner McCandless assumed the Community Renewable Energy Board position currently held by Commissioner Hadler.

Commissioners McCandless and Martinez assumed the position on the Transportation Stakeholder Committee

Commissioners Hedin and Martinez assumed the one open position on the Budget Advisory Board, pending adjustment to bylaws that would allow for one more voting Commissioner.

Commissioner Martinez assumed the Motorized Trail Committee Board position currently held by Chair Winfield.

Commissioner Martinez assumed the Arches Special Service District Board position currently held by Chair Winfield.

Straw poll for Hedin on the Airport Board, not enough votes, to be retained by Chair Winfield.

Commissioners Hedin and Martinez assumed the open Federal Agencies Liaison position.

Commissioner McCandless assumed the open Sand Flats Stewardship committee position.

Commissioner McCandless assumed the open EMS SSD board position.

Commissioner Hedin assumed the open Cemetery Maintenance District Board position.

Commissioner McCandless assumed the open Canyonlands Healthcare SSD Board position.

Commissioner Winfield assumed the open Building Codes Board of Appeals position.

Commissioner Hadler assumed the open Boundary Commission position.

Commissioner McCandless assumed the open Council on Aging board position.

Motion by Commissioner Walker to approve the assignments of County Commission Representatives/Liaisons to District and County Boards, Commission, Committees, and Other Agencies as discussed

Motion Seconded by Commissioner McCurdy

Discussion (none at this time)

Motion passes 7-0

3. Assignments of County Commission Sub-Committees Member (Chair Winfield)

Presentation

Commissioner Martinez suggested that three Commissioners be named to each subcommittee with appropriate accompanying goals.

Chair Winfield tabled Item 3, moved up Item 5

5. Consideration of South Van Pelt Road Vacation (Roads Supervisor Bill Jackson and Attorney Stocks)

Presentation

Palladium Foundation is the owner of a 40-acre property in Professor Valley leased long-term to Canyonlands Field Institute (CFI) for outdoor education programming. The parcel is 060-CVF-0010, located off State Highway 128 near the 19 Mile Marker. The official address is 1246 S. Van Pelt Road. Currently, the county holds a ROW issued by the Bureau of Land Management for an access road that dead ends adjacent to the metal barn along the east boundary. To increase child safety and overall security at the location, petitioner would like to add a locked gate across the last section of access road. The portion of the road that would be included in the partial assignment would be removed from the BLM travel plan through maintenance action. The public would not lose access to the surrounding public lands as the Professor Valley Equestrian Trailhead would not be included in the partial assignment. Noticing requirements per Utah Code §§17-27a-208 and 72-3-108 have been fulfilled. Application materials will be made available upon request. Roads Supervisor Jackson confirmed that he was in support of the proposed road vacation.

Motion by Commissioner Hedin to approve an ordinance vacating that portion of South Van Pelt Road #233, a Grand County B Road located through real property known as parcel no. 060-CVF-0010.

Motion Seconded by Commissioner McCandless

Discussion (none at this time)

Motion passes 7-0

Item 3 resumed

Discussion

Commissioner McCurdy assumed a third spot on the Spanish Valley Multi Use Pathway Committee along with Chair Winfield and Commissioner Hadler.

Facilities Committee was removed in favor of absorption by the Organizational Structure Committee.

Hadler, Winfield, and McCandless formed the Legislation Committee.

Hedin, Winfield, and McCandless formed the Flooding Mitigation Committee.

McGann, McCandless formed the 'Tax – EMS/GCSO Committee', which deals with rural health care sales tax and optional transportation sales tax

Hedin, Martinez, and McCurdy formed the Housing Committee

Winfield, Hadler and Martinez formed the Organizational Structure Committee

Martinez, McCandless, and McGann formed the Economic Development and Travel Council Committee

Hadler and Winfield formed the Committee to Review Policies and Procedures of the Governing Body

Motion by Commissioner Walker to approve the appointments to the Sub-committees, as discussed

Motion Seconded by Commissioner Winfield

Discussion (none at this time)

Motion passes 7-0

5. Moetivations Training Contract for Dispatch Services (Dispatch Supervisor Jenny Swenson)

Presentation

Attorney Stocks gave an overview of the proposed contract for providing training and best practices for handling 911 calls.

Motion by Commissioner Hedin to approve the Moetivations Training contract

Motion Seconded by Commissioner McCandless

Discussion (none at this time)

Motion passes 7-0

6. Repeal and Replace Chapter 8.16 (Special Events) of Grand County General Ordinances (Commissioner McCurdy)

Presentation

This amendment to the Special Event chapter of Title 8 removes the committee from the special event process and gives the Special Event Coordinator the authority to approve low-impact events. Additionally, the threshold for what qualifies as a low-impact event has been doubled, and the timelines for approval have been significantly reduced. Commissioner McCurdy suggested that more changes could be expected. Attorney Stocks gave detailed justification and context regarding the proposed changes. Commissioner Hedin suggested that a workshop be called in order to properly examine any significant changes to the ordinance. Commissioner Hadler agreed that a workshop would inspire more holistic discussion and compromise. Commissioner Martinez stated that the low impact participant number threshold appears to be the main point of contention, such that some discussion regarding that point might be sufficient to move forward. Commissioner McGann highlighted that the process in developing the ordinance was lengthy and extensive, should not be hastily adjusted, and was thoughtfully oriented towards quality of life for residents.

Motion by Commissioner McGann to postpone action in favor of a workshop

Motion seconded by Commissioner Hedin

Discussion

Commissioner McCandless stated that she walked through the process for special event applications and that the critical goals of keeping law enforcement and EMS in mind remain intact when approving events. Commissioner Hadler expressed particular concern regarding proposed stricken language regarding event impacts along named roadways. Commissioner McCurdy stated that he was amenable to a workshop but that he did not accept an ordinance that he feels was designed to stifle events. Chair Winfield stated that he didn't feel that the policy was working very well, and expressed concern regarding the need to have a workshop that may not result in any real compromise.

Substitute Motion by Commissioner McCurdy to pass as written, with upcoming planned workshop to consider additional revisions

Motion seconded by Commissioner Martinez

Substitute motion fails 1-6, McCurdy in favor

Original Motion passes 7-0

7. Resolution Establishing a Grand County Policy for Promotional Advertising (Chair Winfield)

Presentation

Chair Winfield introduced the updated draft language of the resolution, which he stressed did not have the intention to remove responsible recreation messaging but to make it a secondary emphasis.

Commissioner Hadler made reference to the recent prevalence of concepts such as sustainable tourism and overtourism and suggested that the proposed action would not be taking into account widespread problems in tourism-based communities. Hadler added that Grand County has become an international leader in regards to sustainable tourism messaging and this action would move away from that. Commissioner Hedin stated that this action would be moving away from what is clearly considered the industry standard in prioritizing stewardship of a destination, and expressed discomfort with how the draft policy came up for Commission consideration without an ability for her or other Commissioners to first give input.

Motion by Commissioner Martinez to approve Grand County's opposition for repealing Grand County Resolution 3248 and adopting the policy for promotion advertising as presented

Seconded by Commissioner McCurdy

Discussion

Commissioner Martinez stated that it was not reasonable for all promotional materials to have a responsible recreation emphasis, and that a welcoming message should be the highest priority. Commissioner McCandless questioned whether the Travel Council Advisory Board was in favor of the original ordinance as it was written, and agreed with the tweaks proposed by Commissioner Hedin. Chair Winfield stressed that the goal was to change the marketing tone to a welcoming message because the current tone has driven tourists away. Commissioner Martinez stressed that everyone still wants to support responsible recreation while helping guests feel welcome and not look at tourism as an all or nothing proposition.

Martinez detailed minor tweaks to be included in the final approved resolution (no official amendment to motion): specify in policy item number four that responsible recreation messaging is to be 'strongly encouraged' as a secondary message, and change the word 'shall' to a 'must' in policy item number two.

Motion passes 6-1, Hedin opposed

9. Economic Development Department Budget and Activities (Chair Winfield)

Presentation

Commissioner McCandless pointed out the split for salary and benefits related to economic development that are currently in the Fund 23 budget, along with Rural County Grant administration, both of which do not use TRT funds. Discussion (no action) regarding the potential to freeze expenses by the Economic Development department while any remaining issues are cleared up and more clarity offered on budget items.

(No action taken at this time)

10. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Meeting Minutes for December 3, 6, 9, and 17, 2024**
- B. Ratification of Payment of Bills**
- C. Ratification of Chair's Signature on LOS for Building UP Program, SEUALG**
- D. Local Consent for PRCA Rodeo**
- E. NRCS Funding Assistance Request – Authorize County Clerk/Auditor to submit forms with estimated funding amounts**

Motion by Commissioner Hedin to approve the Consent Agenda, as read by the chair, with Item A excluded.

Motion seconded by Commissioner McCandless

Motion passes 6-0, McGann absent

Discussion Items

Discussion with Planning and Zoning regarding Housing Funds

McCurdy explained postponement of this discussion while more information was gathered regarding assured housing funds that might be available.

Improving Agenda Review

Chair Winfield stated that he would like to see the Attorney's Office involved in agenda review, and invited Commissioner McGann to attend these reviews as well for further balance and oversight. More oversight is needed regarding fitness for items to be placed on agendas, including appropriate legal review.

Closed Session

At 8:35 p.m., Motion by Commissioner McCurdy to enter closed session for the purposes of discussing the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Hedin

Motion passes 7-0

At 9:02 p.m., Motion by Commission Hedin to exit closed session

Motion seconded by Commissioner McCandless

Motion passes 5-0, Hadler and McCurdy absent

Chair Winfield adjourned the meeting at 9:04 p.m.

Bill Winfield

Bill Winfield
Chair, Grand County Commission

Gabriel Woytek

Gabriel Woytek
Grand County Clerk/Auditor

Audit trail

Details

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Activity

 SENT	dvanhorn@grandcountyutah.net sent a signature request to: • Bill Winfield (bwinfield@grandcountyutah.net) • Gabriel Woytek (gwoytek@grandcountyutah.net)	2025/03/06 23:22:58 UTC
 SIGNED	Signed by Bill Winfield (bwinfield@grandcountyutah.net)	2025/03/07 14:22:35 UTC
 SIGNED	Signed by Gabriel Woytek (gwoytek@grandcountyutah.net)	2025/03/06 23:43:12 UTC
 COMPLETED	This document has been signed by all signers and is complete	2025/03/07 14:22:35 UTC

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