



# UTAH ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

## 2023 OCTOBER INTERIM

Oct. 11, 2023

**UAC is the advocate for all 29 Utah counties.** If you have questions about legislative action, please reach out to the legislative team or visit [uacnet.org](http://uacnet.org).

<p><a href="#"><u>Business and Labor Interim Committee</u></a></p>	<p>Business and Labor heard a report from the County Recorder Standards Board, created by <a href="#">HB 351</a> during the last legislative session. The nine-member board is made up of county recorders, attorneys, and industry representatives. Rashelle Hobbs, the Salt Lake County Recorder and board chair, Chad Montgomery, the Box Elder County Recorder and board vice chair, and Shelley Brennan, the Duchesne County Recorder, presented the work and standards the board has adopted so far. The committee did not take any action based on the report.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Economic Development and Workforce Services Interim Committee</u></a></p>	<p>Summit County Council Chair Roger Armstrong and County Executive Shayne Scott highlighted <a href="#">Summit county’s affordable housing endeavors</a> to Economic Development and Workforce Services. Sen. Winterton celebrated Summit County’s accomplishments in affordable housing, outlining the crucial role of strategic initiatives and partnerships.</p> <p>Victory at Summit apartments, which received a \$500,000 grant from the Utah Housing Preservation Fund, has been able to rehabilitate and continue to provide 96 affordable housing units. Slopeside Village at Canyons Resort, a workforce housing development, is making strides in Phase 1, offering 1,197 beds at median rent of \$675, affordable for those earning 12-36% of the area median income (AMI).</p> <p>Councilman Armstrong conveyed a request to the legislature for time and support for local governments to implement strategic housing initiatives, and bolster local public-private partnerships. Summit County’s commitment and proactive approach toward affordable housing, reflects an innovative and local-driven effort to navigate housing challenges.</p>



<p><b><u>Government Operations Interim Committee</u></b></p>	<p>Government Operations considered two bill proposals related to election administration.</p> <p>One is a proposal from the Lt. Gov.'s office to clarify ballot chain of custody and training issues by <a href="#">making the County Clerk the primary election official for all elections in their county</a>. Under the bill's proposal, municipalities can still request to count their ballots in elections that only have municipal races and questions on the ballot, but counties will be ultimately responsible for printing, verifying signatures, providing lists and equipment, etc.</p> <p>A second bill considered expanding electronic voting provisions (currently available to members of the military and those serving religious missions in areas without reliable postal service) to emergency responders who have been called up to serve out of state. Two versions of the bill were presented, <a href="#">one with a narrow requirement for a declared emergency</a>, and <a href="#">one with a broader allowance</a>. In either case, a voter would have to sign an affidavit that they meet the requirements of the bill. The committee recommended the broader allowance.</p> <p>In November, the committee will consider several issues from previous interim meetings, including a deeper conversation about changes to the state's citizen referendum process.</p>
<p><b><u>Health and Human Services Interim Committee</u></b></p>	<p>County and Local Mental Health Authority receiving centers and behavioral health centers have experienced difficulty collecting payment from insurance providers. The Health and Human Services Interim Committee requested a report from the Office of Substance Use and Mental Health about progress on an effort to increase remittance from private insurers. While none are refusing payment, many are non-responsive.</p> <p>Last session, Rep. Eliason considered a mandate for private insurers to pay but was promised that the insurers would resolve the problem during the interim. Since the problem is not resolved, the Behavioral Health Crisis Response Commission is considering the mandate again. In committee, Utah Health Insurance Association CEO Mike Sonntag committed to making this happen and will help to facilitate the contracting process.</p>
<p><b><u>Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Interim Committee</u></b></p>	<p>Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice heard a legislative proposal from Rep. Wilcox. His bill would enhance penalties for threatening or falsely reporting an emergency at a school. A false emergency report would require a school to suspend or expel a student who made the report. An intentional hoax to disrupt school that involves bodily injury, death, or damage to property would be enhanced from a misdemeanor to a third degree felony. A false report made through 911 or any other request for emergency services would now be a second degree felony.</p>



<p><b><u>Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee</u></b></p>	<p>The Utah Geological Survey reported on the feasibility of an <a href="#">Early Earthquake Warning system</a> in Utah called ShakeAlert. Were a large earthquake to occur, the system would be able to detect subterranean seismic activity prior to a noticeable, surface-level earthquake, and a warning could go out to residents prior to the quake. A few seconds may not be much time for the general public, but automated responses (such as recalling elevators, opening firehouse doors, shutting off water and gas valves, activating generators, etc) would decrease emergency management issues.</p> <p>Construction of the system would begin on the Wasatch Front and then expand throughout the state. The estimated one-time capital costs are \$4.8 million with about \$1 million ongoing operation and maintenance costs. This is contrasted with the \$80 billion estimate from FEMA for short-term economic losses if Utah were to experience a 7.0 earthquake.</p>
<p><b><u>Political Subdivisions Interim Committee</u></b></p>	<p>Political Subdivisions considered several legislative proposals.</p> <p>Metro townships requested changes to address their growth and maturity. <a href="#">Rep. Teuscher’s bill</a> would dissolve all existing metro townships and transition them into cities or towns, depending on size. Elected officials and the current election cycle would be maintained.</p> <p>The committee heard a <a href="#">committee bill file to change several definitions within the Open and Public Meetings Act (OPMA)</a>. Some of the changes include defining the meanings of meetings and gatherings, deleting the definition of convening, and updating the statute to reflect electronic communications. Under the new statute, a meeting would be constituted by a gathering or conversation with a quorum of the body present physically or electronically to act as a public body or discuss matters within the scope of the body’s authority. It would also include strategy or planning for action to be taken by the public body.</p> <p>Lastly, the Committee heard a <a href="#">bill from Rep. Walter</a> to require the state treasurer to annually report the current balance in the Public Treasurers’ Investment Fund (PTIF) for each entity that has transferred money to that fund. The report would occur by Oct. 31 each year. The bill also defines the PTIF, which wasn’t previously defined in code.</p>



<p><a href="#"><u>Revenue and Taxation Interim Committee</u></a></p>	<p>In Revenue and Taxation, Sen. Dan McCay led a discussion on disclosure of commercial real property prices. His proposal attempts to resolve the issue of valuation <a href="#"><u>disproportionately affecting residential properties</u></a> by mandating the disclosure of commercial real property sales prices to taxing entities. Entities would be able to use this data as a basis for comparable properties and enhance valuation accuracy within distinct property classifications.</p> <p>Sen. McCay’s proposal has two core components- limited disclosure and limited use. He wants both to be designed with safeguards and constraints to protect taxpayers while ensuring accurate valuations.</p> <p>Limited disclosure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sales price and transaction information-</b> only the sales prices and certain transaction-identifying details would be disclosed.</li> <li>• <b>Disclosure to specific parties-</b> information would be selectively disclosed to taxing entities and parties involved in a property tax appeal under a nondisclosure agreement.</li> <li>• <b>Protection of sales price-</b> the disclosed sales price would be protected by the Government Records Access and Management Act (GRAMA).</li> </ul> <p>Limited Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>As evidence of value-</b> disclosed sales prices would serve as one piece of evidence in determining property value.</li> <li>• <b>Not exclusively determinative-</b> sales prices would not act as the sole metric for determining value, but rather, be incorporated into a broader array of evaluative factors.</li> </ul>
<p><a href="#"><u>Transportation Interim Committee</u></a></p>	<p>In Transportation, UDOT and regional transportation planners presented <a href="#"><u>Utah’s Unified Transportation Plan for 2023-2050</u></a>. The plan is prioritized by both need (timed phases) and funding, describes strategies, and has a great map that can be filtered by location, mode of transit, or phase.</p> <p>The committee also discussed road rage, recently passed railroad bills, and coordination efforts between UDOT and DPS on roads that are changing character such as Bangerter and Mountain View in Salt Lake County, and the West Davis Corridor in Davis County.</p>

