

Legislative Policy Committee Meeting minutes

June 22, 2015 @ 12:00 p.m.

Zion's Bank

Lynn welcomed everyone and excused Mayor John Curtis who is attending his father's funeral.

Lynn next called for a motion to approve minutes. That was seconded and the minutes were approved. He also stated that the meeting was online so a microphone would be provided for all comments.

Lynn introduced the first item of business was HB 362 Transportation Infrastructure Funding, for outreach and update, and asked Cameron lead the discussion. Mentioned that there would also be an update on the federal transportation dialogue given by Senator Hatch's office.

Cameron stated that this was the first LPC meeting for the 2016 Legislative Session. He indicated that today they would cover the big picture items for the next session.

The first item covered was what the League had done since the Midyear Convention down in St. George in regard to HB 362. The League said they would leave no stone unturned to get information out to all of the cities and towns regarding the legislation. The League has no official position, but they have agreed to get out the information needed for cities to make their own decisions. They created a document with the political framework of the Legislation and met with all 244 cities and towns in regards to the document, as well as all 29 counties, and each transit district and agency. Brandon met with Cache Valley. Nick went numerous times to the Vernal area. Cameron took southern Utah. Ken met with northern Utah, and Jody went to the Wasatch Front. They were successful in talking to everyone. As of June 22, only one county, Grand, has stated they will put transportation on the ballot. As the League is acting as a clearing house of information, they requested that everyone make sure they contact the League with their city's decision. Many have said they are considering it, but a handful have stated that they are still unsure.

Commission meetings are being held June 30 for Weber, Davis, Salt Lake, and Utah counties. A sample resolution has been distributed that encourages the counties to put the quarter cent option on the ballot in 2015. The League asked that the cities deliver resolutions to the counties before then so that the counties will consider city resolutions. The Transportation Coalition has a poll in the field regarding the local option. Poll results will come out at the end of June or the beginning of July. In July, the League will begin the second stage of getting the legal framework out to the cities and towns so that everyone is aware of the legal guidelines of what they can and can't do. The County deadline is by August for the 2015 elections.

Cameron thanked Senator Weiler and Speaker Hughes for their help with transportation. Especially Speaker Hughes for keeping the door open during the session so that they could get consensus.

Cameron then turned the time over to Melanie for the Federal Transportation update from Washington DC. Melanie began with stating that transportation is a key priority for Senator Hatch and that he is involved in a lot of discussion regarding it. As the Chair of the Senate Finance

committee, He will play a key role on a national level for transportation. Senator Hatch is looking for responsible and sustainable options for funding the highway trust fund. Senator Hatch wants a multiyear, not annual budget. Congressman Ryan is putting together a package on tax compliance measures and spending options. On Thursday they will have another meeting to discuss financing options for highways. Melanie stated that they welcome input for the local governments and are happy to hold meetings to discuss transportation further.

Lynn stated that he had the opportunity to attend the National League of Cities and that Utah is the envy of the nation. He said that the Governor and the Legislature have taken a bold and brave step, and we can't drop the ball on it now. He called on the local officials to step up and be counted.

Speaker Hughes spoke next. He stated that the Legislature wouldn't have agreed to spend the political capital without the leaders in this meeting. He said he had confidence in the League and offered his thanks.

The first issue he addressed was SB296. He said that the House spent a lot of time on this bill. (Audio cut out a little over a minute.) Felt that Utah was doing this bill the right way, and that the Legislature is very proud of it.

HB 362 was the first major step in transportation the state has taken since 1997. This change should be more sustainable. The change had to be multimodal. In the American Public Transportation Association opening meeting, they were all impressed with the 130 miles of rail put in the last 7 years. He said that we have taken a cooperative method for cleaner air, and that is incomprehensible to many that government and mass transit could work together.

Speaker Hughes' next item of business was on the Criminal Justice changes. He considers it hallmark legislation. He said that we aren't fixing things by merely changing a felony to a misdemeanor. They are still working on a perfect formula, but it is a great opportunity to be able to build a new prison and make procedure changes at the same time. He said that everyone seems to be willing to work together and that it seems to be a better model to get those that are sick and addicted help so that they don't end up back in prison. This has been discussed for years.

Next Speaker Hughes spoke on Line of duty death benefits. He knew the officer in Draper that was killed. He acknowledged that while this is important, other even more important issues have had to be addressed before it. He stated that the work isn't done, but that they are making headway and that it has been a long time coming.

Next he gave a budget overview. The GDP is \$41 billion. He briefly gave a breakdown of the budget. Education and welfare take up the majority of the budget. In regards to Public Education, there was a record increase in budget and it takes the largest portion of the budget. Law makers need to let people know what they have done. There was a half a billion dollar increase. There was an equalization bill, and as with all equalization bills, there are winners and losers. This time, one of the "losers" just asked that they retain what they have and then they would be able to support the bill. He said that he loves it when they bring kids into the session and want the kids involved.

He showed Jonathan Ball's "where it goes" pie chart. He clarified that although the social services don't take up too much of the general funds, money is coming from the Federal government, and if funds are taken from the federal government, there are rules that we are forced to comply with. He said that as the economy came out of the recession, we started borrowing less. Our rainy day fund won't increase as it had before the recession but is still doing better. Twenty one states are in budget shortfalls right now, but we are doing fine.

In regards to Medicaid Expansion, He said that we need a general, not annual, decision on funding. He showed a news video clip regarding letters of Medicaid termination. There was no audio. With Healthy Utah, Medicaid will be expanded, but he is worried about the Federal government beginning able to fulfill the 90% reimbursement to the states. Traditional Medicaid is only 70%. HHS said to go ahead and pay it because they were sure the bill would pass. Utahns don't budget that way. He also stated that people generally seem thankful for the benefits there are been able to receive, unlike the reactions of those in the video clip. He also stated that the 10% is hard for the states to prepare for because state projections of Medicaid expansion have been significantly off in the past even with appropriate research and methods of prediction. In May, USA Today said that Kentucky hospitals were closing because the Medicaid expansion wasn't sustainable. Secretary Burwell asked why other states haven't been complaining about the concerns with the 10% bill coming due. Hughes believes that is because the bill hasn't come due yet. If all 10% is not paid on time, the Federal funding will be retracted. Sec. Burwell said she thought that people are going to like it show much they aren't going to want to get rid of it. Hughes proposed plan is to take states out of it altogether and let the Federal government and the private sectors work together. The private sector suggested they would need some assurances. Speaker Hughes explained that those assurances are what the state has been seeking.

Lynn and Cameron stated that they would have the big ticket items addressed at this point.

Senator Weiler spoke on Criminal Justice counsel. He said that the most well known secret of the state is that criminal justice needs reform and that we will be forced to deal with it in 2016 or 2017 at the latest. Roger said that it isn't the ones who are trying to work around the system that they want to help, but the ones that need help and then would be good taxpaying citizens.

The next item was on body cams. Only one of three bills were passed last session and the issue needs to be reviewed this year. Weiler said that use of force is actually going down nationally, but the media are choosing to report it as if it was opposite, as they did with shark attacks a few years ago. He stated that while police officers act different knowing they have cameras on them, the public does as well. He doesn't think that there is a one size fits all policy that will work, but he does think there can be uniformity on how long videos are stored and how they are accessed.

Weiler went on to state that the body cams went hand in hand with use of force legislation. He referenced a man growing marijuana in his basement and that lead to him and an officer ending up dead. Weiler feels that situations like that could be avoided with appropriate legislation. There will be many hearings on this issue, and he is hoping they will be ready come February.

He said that there will need to be a lot more screening when people are arrested. It costs \$33,000 a year per person incarcerated, but only half that to treat people and get them back to their families. He said that we need to figure out a substance abuse treatment and part of that will include the Medicaid expansion. Roger put in that we have an opportunity to rethink things now. Georgia and other states have had a lot of success with similar changes.

In regards to 911, Roger said that it is an ongoing process. The systems need to all be updated and the private and government sectors have ideas. But nothing has been decided.

Ken stated that Senator Weiler has been with the League previously and so he understands what we are doing. Ken expressed his appreciation.

Cameron stated that the rest of the agenda items will be covered briefly today and more in depth at a later date.

Jody spoke on water concerns. She said that with low snow pack, the time is right to make changes. She said that last session they were able to start a fundamental change without a negative vote. Since the session, there have been two legislative audits that raised issues about the current data we are receiving. Municipalities only use less than 10% of water, but the methods to meter outdoor watering is flawed. Reporting doesn't actually show what is being used. The general policy has been that if you don't use it, you lose it, so everyone seems to be reporting more than they actually use. They are doing analysis of the big water districts. \$32 billion has been allotted for new projects, retrofit dams, and replace pipelines. With the lack of snow pack, there have been conservation measures taken. The Governor has issued a task force to assess water use and pricing measures with use. One idea is gradual pricing. Last interim session there was over four hours spent regarding these issues. It is being talked about that maybe development standards are too high. Jodi shared that the Land Use Taskforce believes there are 15 items to tackle. The President of the Senate asked the task force to come up with recommendations and mesh state policy with land use policy. They will meet tomorrow and every two weeks after that.

Cameron stated that a critical issue is wild land fire suppression and mitigation. They need new municipal officers to participate. They are discussing mitigation and prevention action. 100% of suppression will be covered by the state but only if preventative regulations have been followed. He thanked cities for sending elected officials and asked for more.

Other items that have working groups are federal updates and signed ordinance. He also stated that in the September conference they will have more policy focused workshops. Other items to discuss later are online sales tax and a transportation resolution. Their next LPC meeting will be in August.

Lynn motioned to adjourn. Motion passed.