

1 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) EXECUTIVE**
2 **COMMITTEE MEETING HELD MONDAY, APRIL 19, 2021 AT 3:30 P.M. VIA ZOOM**
3

4 **Present:** Chair Chris Robinson, Mayor Erin Mendenhall, Mayor Jenny Wilson, Mayor
5 Jeff Silvestrini, Mayor Mike Peterson
6

7 **Staff:** CWC Executive Director Ralph Becker, CWC Deputy Director Blake Perez,
8 Communications Director Lindsey Nielsen, Office Administrator Kaye
9 Mickelson
10

11 **Others:** Chris McCandless, Dave Fields, Tom _____, Laura Briefer, Lise Sorenson,
12 Catherine Kanter, Helen Peters, Patrick Shea, Lisa Hartman, Steve Van Maren,
13 Gay Lynn Benson, Mike Marker, John Otis
14

15 **1. OPENING**
16

- 17 a. **The Meeting will be Called to Order by the Chair of the Board Christopher F.**
18 **Robinson. Chair Robinson will Read the Letter of Determination Regarding**
19 **Electronic Meetings.**
20

21 Chair Chris Robinson called the meeting to order via Zoom at approximately 3:30 p.m.
22

23 The Legislature, pursuant to Section 52-4-207(4), required the Board to make a determination, which
24 was as follows:
25

26 ‘I, as the Chair of the Board of the Central Wasatch Commission hereby determine
27 that conducting council meetings at any time during the next 30 days at an anchor
28 location presents a substantial risk to the health and safety of those who may be
29 present at the anchor location. The World Health Organization, the President of the
30 United States, the Governor of Utah, the Salt Lake County Mayor, and the Health
31 Department have all recognized that a global pandemic exists related to the new
32 strain of the Coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2. Due to the state of emergency caused by
33 the global pandemic, I find that conducting a meeting at an anchor location under the
34 current state of public health emergency constitutes a substantial risk to the health
35 and safety of those who may be present at the location. According to the information
36 and from State epidemiology experts, Utah is currently in an acceleration phase,
37 which has the potential to overwhelm the State’s health care system.’
38

- 39 **2. Fiscal Year 21/22 Tentative Budget: Mayor Jeff Silvestrini, Treasurer, and Chair of the**
40 **Budget/Finance/Audit Committee, will Present that Committee’s Recommended Budget**
41 **for the Upcoming Fiscal Year for Forwarding to the CWC Board of Commissioners at the**
42 **May 3, 2021, Board Meeting. Public Hearing and Board Approval Anticipated at the**
43 **June 7, 2021 Board Meeting in Order to Meet State Date of June 22, 2021.**

44 Mayor Jeff Silvestrini reported that the Budget/Finance/Audit Committee was prepared to recommend
45 a tentative budget to the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Board at the May 3, 2021 Board
46 Meeting. He reviewed several discussion items from the previous Budget/Finance/Audit Committee
47 Meeting. For instance, there was a surplus of approximately \$30,000 (approximately \$10,000 from
48 unused outreach and \$20,000 of unused contingency) that could be used for short-term projects during
49 the current fiscal year.

1
2 Mayor Silvestrini discussed the Visitor Use Study. The CWC discussed funding the Visitor Use Study
3 with \$50,000 from the current fiscal year budget. However, they would receive \$150,000 of
4 appropriations from the State of Utah. \$95,000 of those appropriations were earmarked for the Visitor
5 Use Study. That meant that the originally budgeted \$50,000 could also be spent, it has currently been
6 reflected as returned to reserves
7

8 The tentative 2021-2022 budget would restore membership contributions to 100%. Mayor Silvestrini
9 explained that for most members, anticipated revenues had not suffered to the extent initially
10 anticipated. As a result, the Budget/Finance/Audit Committee felt it would be appropriate to return to
11 the 100% membership contribution levels. There was discussion regarding cities that previously paid
12 90% of the membership contributions. Mayor Mike Peterson reported that Cottonwood Heights paid
13 90% last year. However, their sales tax revenues ended up being quite high and they were happy to
14 return to the 100% membership contribution. He believed other cities would feel the same.
15

16 Mayor Silvestrini reported that there was a Closed Session during the Budget/Finance/Audit
17 Committee Meeting where personnel matters were discussed. Committee Members concluded that the
18 salary compensation of CWC staff should be increased. Staff had not received an increase for two
19 years due to COVID-19 and budget concerns. The salary increases were built into the tentative budget.
20 Mayor Silvestrini added that the proposed budget still preserves the CWC goal to have at least one year
21 of revenue in reserve. The full breakdown of the numbers was included in the packet for further review.
22

23 Mayor Jenny Wilson asked for additional details about the budget process. CWC Deputy Director,
24 Blake Perez reported that the budget process began in February. The Budget/Finance/Audit Committee
25 spent time discussing values and assumptions. Building from the framework from the previous year,
26 various scenarios were presented and discussed. The Budget/Finance/Audit Committee had since
27 forwarded a Tentative Budget to the Executive Committee. From there, it would move onto the CWC
28 Board for the May 3, 2021 Board Meeting. There would also be a public comment period. The goal
29 was to have a final budget approved at the June 7, 2021, CWC Board Meeting. It would then go to the
30 State by June 22, 2021 where it would be finalized and approved.
31

32 Mayor Wilson noted that Salt Lake County worked on a calendar year budget. She reported that they
33 would be undergoing a rigorous review of all memberships and programs, which included ongoing
34 contributions to the CWC. Mayor Wilson noted that she would need to speak to her Council about a
35 possible six-month contribution while the review process is underway.
36

37 Mayor Peterson asked how the salary increases for CWC staff were determined. CWC Executive
38 Director, Ralph Becker reported that it was proposed that Office Administrator, Kaye Mickelson move
39 to a part-time position and that the relative savings be used for the two younger members of staff. He
40 noted that based on extensive market-based research, all four staff members were being paid
41 substantially less than what would be a market-based salary. The proposed changes would bring the
42 two younger members of staff closer to a market-based salary. Mr. Becker would only receive a Cost-
43 of-Living-Adjustment (“COLA”) under the proposal.
44

45 **MOTION:** Mayor Peterson moved to forward the Tentative Budget, as outlined by the
46 Budget/Finance/Audit Committee, to the CWC Board. Mayor Wilson seconded the motion. The
47 motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.
48

1 **3. Short-Term Projects: Staff will Present an Update on the Short-Term Projects Process -**
2 **Committee is Scheduled to Meet on April 27, 2021.**

3 Associate Director, Lindsey Nielsen reported that there had been a call for short-term project ideas.
4 Just under 30 submissions were received and the finalist proposals would be reviewed by the Short-
5 Term Projects Committee on April 27, 2021, at 8:00 a.m. Ms. Nielsen stated that the total amount of
6 funding requested from the applicants was just over \$200,000.
7

8 **4. Visitor Use Study: Staff will Comment on Email Sent to Commissioners with Follow Up**
9 **Information to the April 9, 2021, Meeting with the Utah State University Team.**

10 Mr. Perez reported that the CWC Board approved an Interlocal Agreement and contract with Utah State
11 University for the Visitor Use Study. The Utah State University team started work on Phase One of
12 the study. CWC staff was able to meet with the team to ask questions related to the timeline for Phases
13 One and Two. The Utah State University team felt they could complete Phase One in an expedited
14 manner. The timeline to complete Phase One was now estimated to be the end of summer. The timeline
15 discussed for Phase Two was between the end of 2021 and early 2022. Mr. Perez noted that the details
16 were still being outlined.
17

18 Chair Robinson wondered if the contract had been fully signed for Phase One. Ms. Mickelson
19 explained that Utah State University reviewed the agreement and had questions. CWC Attorney, Shane
20 Topham was working on that now. She reported that Utah State University would present a report to
21 the CWC Board in June 2021. It was anticipated that they would have a work plan and a cost estimate
22 for Phase Two at that time.
23

24 **5. Stakeholders Council Membership: Staff will Review Decision Tree/Timeline for**
25 **Reappointment and Application Call for New Members.**

26 Mr. Perez reported that a decision tree was included in the packet related to Stakeholders Council
27 membership. He explained that approximately half of the Stakeholders Council Member terms would
28 expire at the end of June 2021. All the members with expiring two-year terms indicated to staff that
29 they were willing to serve another term. However, there were six Stakeholders Council vacancies due
30 to previous resignations. The goal was to have six new Stakeholders Council Members approved at
31 the CWC Board Meeting in July 2021.
32

33 Applications for the Stakeholders Council would be accepted from April 30, 2021 to May 30, 2021.
34 Within the first few days of June, the applicants would be reduced to a handful of applicants with the
35 assistance of a Selection Committee which includes Dr. Kelly Bricker, Chair- Jan Striefel Vice-Chair,
36 and Councilor Max Doileny from the CWC Board of Commissioners. Those recommendations would
37 be forwarded to the Executive Committee and then to the CWC Board. Ms. Nielsen reported that staff
38 would send a newsletter and other communication to communications managers within CWC
39 jurisdictions. Mayor Wilson asked staff to circulate information on the current Stakeholders Council
40 Members. For instance, their professional backgrounds or groups they represent. This would ensure
41 that the Stakeholders Council membership remains balanced. Mayor Mendenhall requested application
42 information be forwarded to SLC communications staff as well as to her and her staff.
43

44 **6. MTS Discussion: Staff will Update on Scheduling Commissioners and Other MTS**
45 **Matters.**

46 Mr. Becker reported that the CWC is in the midst of trying to reach a consensus recommendation for a
47 Mountain Transportation System (“MTS”). After the last CWC Board Meeting, staff in consultation
48 with Chair Robinson, came up with an approach to move the decision-making process forward. It
49 included the following:

- Take the agreed-upon objectives for an MTS and put them into one column: and
- Spend time with each of the Commissioners individually. This exercise would look at the whittled-down list of objectives and help evaluate which transportation modes might best satisfy a successful MTS.

Mr. Becker noted that nearly all of the individual meetings with Commissioners had been scheduled. They would take place before the CWC Board Meeting on May 3, 2021. He believed the process would help the Commissioners feel better prepared to make a transportation decision.

Mayor Peterson applauded the work done by staff and believed the objectives were all strong. However, he noted that it may be difficult to reach a consensus about whether a transportation mode meets certain aspects of the objectives. Chair Robinson noted that there could be varying opinions on whether the alternatives meet the objectives.

Mayor Wilson commented that the CWC is divided with regard to transportation. She felt the individual meetings would be helpful as a way to better understand each of the Commissioners' perspectives. She noted that the timeframe is important due to the current Utah Department of Transportation ("UDOT") approach and wanted to hear from the rest of the Executive Committee Members about how the process should move forward.

Mayor Mendenhall expressed a preference for expanded bus service. She felt that the idea of a high-capacity transportation mode, such as a gondola or a rail system, seemed oversized given the impacts and costs. She commented that a phased approach may be more appropriate. Mayor Mendenhall believed CWC could confidently support an expanded bus alternative and management package that could begin immediately. As the CWC continues to discuss capacity issues, they may be able to more confidently support a high-capacity transportation mode in the future. She was unsure they would be able to fully support a high-capacity transportation mode within the UDOT timeline. Laura Briefer agreed. She felt it was important to evaluate capacity issues so that critical natural resources are not overused. Ms. Briefer also felt that a phased approach would be rationally based on the data presented.

Mayor Wilson discussed the importance of maximizing vehicles off the road. For instance, ensuring that all buses and cars are full. She also felt it was important to put resources into infrastructure improvements that would assist with traffic flow as well as an increased focus on carpooling and technology. Mayor Wilson discussed risk mitigation, tolling, and the possibility of a third lane dedicated to buses. She felt that the CWC had understudied the existing road.

Catherine Kanter initially felt uncertain about a phased approach, because at some point, a transportation decision would need to be made. However, she realized that there were still unknowns related to the high-capacity transportation options that need to be explored more thoroughly. It made sense to focus on simpler measures first. For instance, experimenting with tolling, limited access for cars during high-use periods, parking fees, reservations, no roadside parking, and enforcement measures. Ms. Kanter discussed possible rail alignments that were not included in the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS"). She felt they would need to be subjected to a more formal process.

Chair Robinson explained that any other rail alignment would need to go through a National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") EIS process. He reported that the UDOT Little Cottonwood

1 Canyon EIS ruled out anything with wilderness areas and anything requiring a significant amount of
2 input from the U.S. Forest Service. Mayor Wilson wondered what would happen if UDOT chose to
3 look at a different rail alignment than what had already been proposed. Chair Robinson explained that
4 UDOT would need to supplement the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS. He did not envision that
5 the CWC would recommend any of the five alternatives currently included in the UDOT Little
6 Cottonwood Canyon EIS. He believed there would be a recommendation that included some sort of
7 combination, either through a phased approach or other modifications.
8

9 Mayor Peterson stated that Cottonwood Heights was very concerned about whatever action is taken.
10 He addressed the possible unintended consequences on Wasatch Boulevard. There were already days
11 when there was gridlock on Wasatch Boulevard. That meant the Wasatch Boulevard Master Plan that
12 Cottonwood Heights had developed along with Wasatch Front Regional Council (“WFRC”) would be
13 an important component to consider. Mayor Peterson felt that a phased transportation approach would
14 be appropriate. Not taking action was not a solution. He felt that the CWC needed to do something
15 and take a position. He commented that busing would likely be a piece of the transportation solution,
16 but he did not sense there was consensus on the high-capacity transportation modes. There were still
17 too many questions about the unintended consequences.
18

19 Mayor Silvestrini believed that buses were part of all transportation solutions. He did not think that
20 busing would be eliminated but commented that buses were unlikely to solve the transportation
21 problems. The Utah Transit Authority (“UTA”) had already stated that there were capacity and
22 frequency issues related to buses. Mayor Silvestrini felt that bus service could be improved but certain
23 improvements, such as road widening and snowsheds, would have extreme impacts. As a result, he
24 felt there would eventually need to be a high-capacity transportation mode. It would likely come down
25 to which option is less impactful. Based on what he had been heard so far, Mayor Silvestrini believed
26 the gondola would be fundamentally less impactful than a rail system. However, he needed more
27 information related to the specific alignments.
28

29 Mr. Becker commented that staff’s objective was to support the Commission as they work toward a
30 consensus decision. He discussed the importance of improved protections of the mountains through
31 Congressional action and a Visitor Management Program. Staff appreciated the time and energy the
32 Commissioners put into the transportation discussions.
33

34 Chair Robinson reassured the Committee Members that although the CWC often deals with difficult
35 issues, the focus is always on consensus. He noted that the CWC did not have to provide UDOT with
36 a transportation recommendation. However, he felt it would be beneficial to share some sort of
37 consensus recommendation. Chair Robinson reported that UTA provided additional information at the
38 previous CWC Board Meeting related to valley transit solutions. If Commissioners needed additional
39 transportation information, Chair Robinson asked that they inform staff.
40

41 Chair Robinson believed the MTS discussions had helped the Commissioners become more educated.
42 Additionally, he felt that the time and effort invested had been worthwhile. He discussed the idea of a
43 phased approach and referenced comments made by Ex-Officio Member Carlton Christensen during
44 the last CWC Board Meeting. According to Ex-Officio Christensen and staff at UTA, there was not a
45 short-term bus solution, other than tweaking existing bus schedules. There were certain changes that
46 could be made, such as tolling and improved bus frequency using the existing bus fleet, but he noted
47 that it would take two years to order new buses.
48

1 In terms of phasing, Chair Robinson liked the idea of starting with short-term enhanced bus. This
2 would involve things that could be done in the short-term, would have an immediate effect, and would
3 not involve a lot of capital for rolling stock or physical infrastructure. He wondered how long a short-
4 term enhanced bus phase would be appropriate and when something else would be needed in order to
5 meet ongoing transportation needs. Chair Robinson did not believe the long-term solution was buses.

6
7 Mayor Wilson noted that at the end of the previous CWC Board Meeting, Councilor Jim Bradley
8 discussed the idea of taking a step back to focus on priorities. She noted that it may be beneficial to
9 look at what motivates each Commissioner. Mayor Wilson discussed the motivation behind her
10 preferences thus far and made note of Ms. Briefer's extensive knowledge and experience. Mayor
11 Wilson shared concerns related to capacity. She commented that the current bus service provides
12 capacity limitations while expanded services and high-capacity transportation options did not. Mayor
13 Wilson outlined issues related to the visitor experience and stated that the idea of a multi-transfer
14 transportation system was not ideal for skiers. She reiterated that it was important to understand the
15 priorities, preferences, and biases of each of the Commissioners.

16
17 Chair Robinson felt that Councilor Bradley made a solid point. He explained that the purpose of the
18 individual meetings with CWC staff was to distill those priorities. The evaluation matrix was
19 synthesized down to where there were specific questions and line items for Commissioners to consider.
20 He hoped this would lead to a productive discussion at the May 3, 2021, CWC Board Meeting. Mayor
21 Wilson asked staff to define what the individual meetings would look like.

22
23 Mr. Becker reported that following the suggestion made by Councilor Bradley, CWC Staff took the
24 evaluation matrix and homed in on the core objectives for an MTS. The individual meetings with the
25 Commissioners would allow staff to walk through each of the objectives and hear Commissioner
26 opinions, views, or needs as they relate to additional information. Those meetings would shape what
27 staff would bring forward to the CWC Board at the May 3, 2021 meeting. This may include additional
28 information or analysis.

29
30 Mayor Wilson wondered what the backup plan was if the CWC was unable to reach a consensus. She
31 hoped that the individual meetings would be for information gathering purposes and would not push a
32 specific preference or alternative. Chair Robinson explained that there was no bias toward a particular
33 transportation alternative. The individual meetings were to ensure that staff can provide all of the
34 necessary transportation information to Commissioners. Chair Robinson reiterated that this would be
35 a consensus-based decision.

36
37 **7. Adjournment.**

38
39 **MOTION:** Mayor Wilson moved to adjourn. Mayor Mendenhall seconded the motion. The motion
40 passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

41
42 The Central Wasatch Commission Meeting adjourned at approximately 4:57 p.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central Wasatch*
2 *Commission Executive Committee Meeting held Monday, April 19, 2020.*

3
4 Teri Forbes

5 Teri Forbes

6 T Forbes Group

7 Minutes Secretary

8

9 Minutes Approved: _____