

# SALT LAKE COUNTY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

## LEGISLATIVE LUNCHEON

December 1, 2009  
Utah Cultural Celebration Center  
WVC

### **WELCOME**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Kent Money, COG President, and all were welcomed to lunch. Individual introductions were made.

### **READING**

Mayor Dan Snarr, Murray, gave an original reading encouraging cooperation between the legislature and the cities.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Salt Lake County Councilmember Michael Jensen spoke briefly about transportation concerns within the municipalities and the County. The COG would like the opportunity to pursue legislation that would allow counties to pursue a local option user fee or ask for a general sales tax. Infrastructure issues need to be maintained before costs escalate and roads deteriorate. Funds from a local option fee would be used on projects of regional significance.

In 2008, the local government portion of the motor fuel tax covered roughly 50% of the cost of highway construction and maintenance. With the reduction in motor fuel tax receipts and the growing demand for infrastructure, that gap will widen in 2009.

### **JAIL CONTRACTING AND REIMBURSEMENT**

Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon differentiated contracting and reimbursement. Contracting is between counties and the Department of Corrections to house prisoners. This saves the State money and allows the counties to have some revenue.

Reimbursement refers to the funding that the State pays the counties to house prisoners. Under present legislation, the state would pay 50% of what it costs the State to house prisoners, if there are state funds available. Today the county receives \$.20 on the dollar to house state prisoners.

Prisoners charged with felonies are tried and convicted on state charges and sentenced in state courts to the state prison. Often judges say the prison term and grant probation on the condition that the prisoner spends time (up to a year) in a county jail. The Court retains jurisdiction as opposed to becoming the responsibility of the State Board of Pardons.

The counties must accept these prisoners. Underfunding of the jail reimbursement program affects all of the county's municipalities who share responsibility of funding the county jail. With approximately 300 of the available beds taken by state condition of probation inmates, the difference in cost is born by the city and county partners. This amounts to approximately \$7 million that is subsidized for these prisoners.

Suggested solutions were:

- Limit jail time for felony probations

- Department of Corrections should coordinate all COP jail time to jails with capacity
- District courts should have jurisdiction over prisoners rather than the State
- Pre-sentencing write ups should go back to the courts rather than stay with the State
- The state could pay the agreed upon rate

## **RESTAURANT TAX**

Mayor Kelvyn Cullimore, Cottonwood Heights, gave a brief overview of the Tourism, Recreation, Cultural and Convention Center (TRCC) tax which was expanded in 1991 to include a 1% sales tax on restaurant purchases. This revenue stream had already included a sales tax on car rentals and a ½ % transient room tax. The funds are used for public buildings for local citizens and to promote destination tourism by providing venues for community, regional and national events, attracting visitors from outside the county. These large scale conventions are significant revenue and tax generators for Salt Lake County.

Facilities such as Hale Center Theatre, the Equestrian Park in South Jordan and Sugar House Park are examples of facilities that help Salt Lake maintain its international reputation as a business, cultural and recreational center.

There have been proposed changes to the restaurant portion of the TRCC tax. One would have diverted a portion of the revenues to fund an ad campaign sponsored by the Utah Restaurant Association. A second proposal would have mandated the distribution of restaurant tax revenues to cities within the county. There was also the proposal to eliminate the tax.

This year the Utah Restaurant Association is proposing the repeal of the restaurant tax and replacing it with a local option general sales tax. The cities and county agree on the following:

1. The restaurant tax is a stable and reliable source for SL County's convention business, cultural venues and recreation facilities within the county.
2. The Utah Restaurant Association claims the restaurant tax is unfair, stating that it is misused and should only be used to increase tourism around restaurants. This tax has always been considered from a broader concept of community benefit. Restaurants benefit from the influx of convention attendees at the Salt Palace and South Towne Exposition Center. SL County citizens benefit from the many parks, recreation and cultural facilities throughout the county.
3. The 1% is a direct pass through to the restaurant patron. It is not a tax on the restaurant. The traffic brought in due to the cultural, convention and recreational facilities funded by this tax patronize restaurants.
4. In 2007, SL County and the cities within the county supported SB64 which established the TRCC Advisory Board made up of five mayors and four at large members to advise the County Council on how to expend TRCC revenues.
5. The Restaurant Association has expressed its intention to keep the county whole by replacing the lost restaurant tax revenues with a new general sales tax, there is concern that the legislature would not agree to the trade off.
6. The legislature has a role to give the county the tools it needs to keep our competitive edge in the convention, cultural and recreation market.

## **OTHER**

Barbara was asked to email copies of the 'white papers' on each of these topics to the members of the legislature in Salt Lake County.

Time was opened for questions of a general nature. Rep. Biskupski responded to a question on the status of discussion about retirement changes. She indicated that these are probable changes:

- Benefits will probably change from a defined benefit to a defined contribution
- Will probably need to maintain one system till existing employees are out
- Retirement pay and building 401Ks for 'double dippers' will probably go away
- There will be significant discussion with regards to public safety employees status

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.

PRESENT

<b>LEGISLATORS</b>	<b>COG MEMBERS</b>	<b>OTHERS</b>
Wayne Harper	Dave Newton	Barbara Thomas
Luz Robles	Dennis Nordfelt	Michael Allegra
Patricia Jones	Bill Applegarth	Chuck Chappell
Tim Cosgrove	Daniel Snarr	Zachary Fountain
Marie Poulson	Kelvyn Cullimore	Jan Wells
Jackie Biskupski	J. Lynn Crane	Doug Hattery
Karen Morgan	Claudia Anderson	Justin Jones
Howard Stephenson	Michael Jensen	John Geilmann
Greg Hughes	Jenny Wilson	Layne Long
Brian King	Peter Corroon	John Hiskey
Laura Black	Tom Dolan	John Guldner
Trisha Beck		Kara Trevino
Karen Mayne	Scott Bracken	Sam Klemm
Lynn Hemingway	Don Antczak	Tom Guinney
Rebecca Chaves Houck	Lynn Pace	Cheri Burdick
Brent Goodfellow	Randy Horiuchi	Len Simon
Jennifer Seelig	Joe Hatch	Rob Jeppsen
Sue Duckworth	Leona Winger	Ann Ober
Janice Fisher	Max Burdick	Kathi Johnson
Christine Johnson	Aleta Taylor	Ben McAdams
Jim Bird	Mike Winder	
Michael Waddoups	Josh Mills	
Chris Buttars	Derk Timothy	
Jim Dunnigan		
Ross Romero		
Merlynn Newbold		
Jay Seegmiller		
David Litvack		