

**MINUTES OF THE
POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS INTERIM COMMITTEE**
Wednesday, April 24, 2002 – 2:00 p.m.– Room 223 State Capitol

Members Present:

Sen. Carlene M. Walker, Senate Chair
Rep. David L. Hogue, House Chair
Sen. David L. Gladwell
Sen. Paula F. Julander
Rep. David N. Cox
Rep. Fred J. Fife III
Rep. Kory M. Holdaway
Rep. Joseph G. Murray
Rep. Darin G. Peterson
Rep. Richard M. Siddoway
Rep. Max W. Young

Members Absent:

Sen. Beverly Ann Evans
Rep. Stephen D. Clark
Rep. Scott Daniels

Staff Present:

Mr. Joseph Wade, Research Analyst
Mr. Robert H. Rees, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Joy L. Miller, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present and a copy of materials can be found at <http://www.image.le.state.ut.us/imaging/history.asp> or by contacting the *Committee secretary, Joy Miller, at 538-1032.*

1. Welcome and Committee Business

Chair Walker called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m. Members of the committee and staff were asked to introduce themselves.

MOTION: Sen. Julander moved to approve the minutes of January 16, 2002. The motion passed unanimously with Rep. Cox absent for the vote.

2. Municipal Services to Unincorporated Areas

Mr. Alan Dayton, deputy mayor, County (Salt Lake County), distributed a summary of the County's municipal services. He explained that the County provides municipal services to residents who live in the unincorporated areas and cities who contract with the County. Some of these municipal services include road maintenance and repair, planning and zoning, sheriff patrol, and fire. Residents of the unincorporated County pay for these services with taxes that are earmarked for the Fund (Municipal Services Fund). Additional sources of revenue to the Fund include fees, grants, and contracts. The County's total Fund budget for 2002 is over \$84 million. Mr. Dayton indicated that the creation of the Fund was required in 1971 to segregate out the revenue used to pay for municipal services. In a 1998 Legislative Audit of the Fund, three areas of concern were raised: paramedics, sheriff investigations, and jail services. Legislation passed to remedy the problems with paramedics and sheriff investigations had a multimillion dollar impact on the Fund and allowed the cities to capture the revenue without truth in taxation to fund the services they were already providing. Tax sources in the Fund come primarily from property taxes, but it also receives sales tax revenue and revenue through fees and contracting. Contract cities consist of 128,000 citizens. There are 209,000 people who live in unincorporated areas of the County. The cost of services per person is \$109.

Mr. Dayton said the third issue identified in the audit was the issue of jail billings. The auditor revealed a case of reverse double taxation, wherein cities were not reimbursing the County for jail services.

Legislation was passed which allowed counties of the first class to create a special district for the operation and maintenance of the jail. The County council has not yet created the district. Mr. Dayton indicated the Fund is fairly stressed and taxes have had to be raised twice in the past four years. Annexations and incorporations of cherry picked areas have burdened the Fund. Annexation and incorporation laws should be fair to those who remain behind and only take out as much revenue as they do expense.

Mr. Fred Finlinson, representing the Salt Lake County Council, acknowledged that the County council is very concerned about the issue of urban growth being experienced. Weber County is starting to provide for an increased number of municipal type services for the people that live in the unincorporated part of Weber County. Most of the other counties have made the determination that if a citizen is to receive municipal services, they must be part of a city or the county has to organize some type of special district or other way to provide those services. He suggested using the interim period to determine if there is a more rational method of dealing with these critical issues. He requested that impacted parties be given time to meet independently of the Legislature to seek resolution to the problem and report to the committee in a future meeting.

Mr. Charles Faux, resident of South Cottonwood Community Council, stressed the importance of including community councils in the meeting process.

3. Emergency Responder Priority

Rep. Holdaway discussed H.B. 180, Emergency Responder Priority, which was introduced during the general session. He gave examples of some of the problems that have occurred. The legislation proposes that providers of police, fire, emergency medical technicians, and paramedic services enter into agreements to facilitate the most rapid, appropriate responder regardless of geographic or political boundaries.

Mr. Pat Casaday, Sandy City, indicated that the legislation may impede rather than enhance public safety. It removes the incentive for a small city to enhance its public safety and undermines the ability for Sandy City to enter into contracts. He stated that the bill appears to be a redistribution of resources.

Ms. Jennifer Seelig, Utah League of Cities and Towns, distributed a compilation of written statements from municipalities collected by the league regarding H.B. 180. She said they are willing to work with all parties to establish a resolution.

Mr. Dennis Ickes, Gold Cross Service, distributed a summary of his comments to the committee. He noted that the existing system works. The licensing process delegates exclusive responsibility to an EMS provider in specified geographic areas so long as the provider meets the public convenience and necessity. The creation of the Utah Emergency Medical Services System Act of 1999 has fostered cooperation among traditional first responders, ambulance providers, paramedics, and health care professionals. H.B. 180 introduces confusion to the process and creates new sources of responsibility and liability.

Mr. Gerald Maughan, chief, Midvale City Police Department, maintained that the bill is unnecessary. All the police departments, including the sheriff's office, have signed an Interlocal Cooperative Agreement to work with and support each other if and when back up is necessary. He expressed concern with the potential for liability.

Mr. Stephen Higgs, chief, Midvale City Fire Department, stated there is currently good public policy in place that is working well. He said that through interlocal agreements they run an integrated delivery system providing fire, EMS, hazardous materials, and special operations services to all of the residents within the County. They operate through two dispatch centers, one in Salt Lake City and VEC (Valley Emergency Communications). He said they feel very strongly that the bill is not necessary. Mr. Higgs pointed out that within the system they are able to integrate both public and private providers. He briefly explained the difference between fire and medical response. He stated that many times in a medical response the closest unit is not the appropriate provider for service. During a call for fire service, units are dispatch from stacks which are the closest units to that area. Mr. Higgs said functional consolidation has already been achieved in the way fire and EMS services are provided in the County.

Mr. Terry Ingram, VEC, indicated that VEC is a special district which was created in 1988 and has expanded to include all the political subdivisions in the County with the exception of Salt Lake City. He stated that law enforcement calls are first handed to the sheriff's office. Medical calls are worked on jointly. He stated that VEC is one of the first centers in the nation to move into consolidated communications in regards to sharing resources. The limiting factor has been the technology. He said they have used stacks to determine the order. New technology is being developed to handle these calls in the future. He said the legislation has the potential to complicate the improvements that will be made.

MOTION: Rep. Siddoway moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously with Rep. Hogue absent for the vote. Chair Walker adjourned the meeting at 5:25 p.m.