



**MINUTES**  
**January 26, 2023**

*All slide presentations are posted at CoSkiTowns.com*

- I. **Call to Order & Introductions, Jonathan Godes, President**
- II. **Welcome to Steamboat, Robin Crossan, City Council President**
- III. **Yampa River Health & Water Policy**  
*Katie Berning, Outreach Coordinator, Friends of the Yampa*  
*Michele Meyer, Exec. Director, Community Ag Alliance*  
*Jennifer Bock, Asst. City Attorney*

(See slides) There is a great degree of collaboration around maintaining the health of the Yampa River, including very active involvement from agricultural interests. The Western Slope has water quality and sustainability ideas to offer the rest of the state. One example of adapting to climate change is planting shade trees on the banks of the Yampa to decrease warming of the river. Steamboat has a tube fee on any tube purchased in town and the money goes to sustainability and education efforts to reduce plastic and other waste.

Prior Appropriation vs Public Trust models were reviewed, and examples were given of how the different models have played out in Colorado and California. Instream flow rights is an example of ways Colorado has adapted and how the state takes an incremental measured approach. There is a disconnect between State agencies that are in charge of water regulations, but they are starting to move together.

There was discussion around local government's role in providing clean water to mobile home parks that are privately owned. Legislation is in the works on water issues and mobile home parks. DOLA is overwhelmed with water quality issues at mobile home parks.

- IV. **Managing Parks & Rec Demand**  
*Alexis Wolf, Parks & Recreation Manager*  
*Craig Robinson, Parks, Open Space and Trails Manager*  
*Brad Setter, Howelsen Hill and Rodeo Manager*

The City has entered into several Public Private Partnerships. Resident vs non-residents rates have been considered but it was determined they were too difficult to enforce. Park City has a "Pickle Ball Crisis" so were interested in how Steamboat has managed Pickle Ball interests. There isn't much conflict between tennis and pickleball groups in Steamboat Springs. A local nonprofit pickleball group is fundraising to build a building. There was lots of interest in the parks and recreation Cost Recovery Model that the City developed.

V. **Sustainability in the Yampa Valley**

*Michelle Stewart, Executive Director, Sustainability Council*

(See slides) The Yampa Valley sees sustainability as action, rather than balance. Reducing emissions will build resilience landscapes. Routt County and municipalities did a GHG inventory and a Climate Action Plan and created an intergovernmental agreement.

VI. **Official's Mental Health & Well Being, Skippy Mesirow**

Mr. Mesirow highlighted statistics around the mental health challenges that elected officials face. An elected official's mental health retreat is planned for March.

VII. **CAST Housing Task Force Update, Eric Heil, Chair**

The task force meets monthly and welcomes more participation. The group is tracking housing legislation. A survey of CAST member Housing Goal was completed and shared with the membership. The task force has been exploring action around RETT. The task force will draft a position statement and continue conversations but 2024 looks to be the next year for any action on repealing the RETT prohibition in the state constitution. The Right of First Refusal bill sponsored by Rep. Boesenecker is good in concept but could be problematic with push back from realtors and the private sector.

The Governor's Office has reached out to a few resort communities about a proposal that will be coming from the Governor around land use and affordable housing. CAST and the Governor's Office have shared goals of wanting more affordable housing and reducing emissions, but there is concern about the Governor's approach.

There is no one size fits all land use regulations that will work for the entire state. A blanket policy can't serve the entire state. The Governor's apparent desire to remove density restrictions and any minimum parking requirements are concerning. The proposal as it has been outlined gives developers a green light. Regarding the proposal to make ADUs use-by right, how do communities monitor to ensure that units are being used for local work force? Who enforces deed restrictions for these new developments? The Governor's office indicated there might be ability for local governments to influence ADU deed restrictions.

This proposal crushes home rule authority and is a slippery slope for local control. CAST communities are often land locked by federal lands with limited infrastructure. What CAST communities really need to support affordable housing development is funds to address infrastructure needs, as well as higher AMI thresholds for state housing programs. Many CAST communities are already doing a lot around affordable housing. Resort communities have spent far too much time working through zoning and historic districts to protect our communities to have this proposal unravel our efforts and reverse our progress.

We need to educate the proponents of this proposal on the realities of affordable housing in our communities. A coalition of local government organizations will meet to discuss this proposal and their next steps. CAST will participate in this coalition. Resort areas should provide a viable alternative to the Governor.

VIII. **Hot Topics Roundtable**

Employee Housing/Taxable Benefit: Crested Butte isn't sure how the IRS views this and is looking for template policies of employee housing. CB charges low rent for employee housing because employees are required to live in town. Telluride provides housing benefits and taxes it as a benefit in their payroll. Basalt doesn't tax on employee housing. Winter Park does not tax it as a benefit. The Leadville attorney advised it is a taxable benefit.

Employee Housing/Pets: Leadville allows pets on a case-by-case basis. Winter Park allows pets with a deposit, and it is built into a P3 that they are required to allow pets. They annually approve lease rate ranges that can be charged, and all are executed by the Managers office.

Employee Housing in Estes Park: The Town gets push back as many feel it is not fair to dedicate housing to town employees over other local residents.

DEI & Municipal Governance: Access to Councils is growing smaller with the increasing cost of campaigns. A recent Council candidate in Jackson WY spent \$58,000 on a campaign. How can a different model of governance help combat this? Does any certain model provide for more DEI? Steamboat has a strong Council, no mayor with three Districts and then a city wide vote. They do not have a spending limit and they see big spending. Higher Council salaries can lead to more diversity. Frisco went from Strong Mayor to Strong Council. Durango has a low council salary and rotating mayor and mayor pro tem and they see declining interest in Council seats. They are looking for pay changes and want to find the right mark as it is not a full time "position." Glenwood has a \$400 max donation to candidates. Avon has a spending limit of \$250 max donation. The council gets town benefits which is of value, but despite efforts, they have not been able to get a Hispanic candidate. Jackson does a bi-annual review of salaries. Park City is looking at Council pay. In Colorado, a disparity has been discovered between the cost of campaign vs regular ads. The press is profiting off of public campaigns.

USPS: USPS is not meeting their mandate and the level of service continues to decrease. Crested Butte is investigating litigation and considering the best way to approach this. Ongoing conversations with the USPS have yielded very little progress. The cost to investigate what litigation would look like is in the neighborhood of \$30,000/\$35,000 and they are building a coalition of communities. Let Dara MacDonald know if your community is interested in participating within the next week or so.

HOAs and Deed Restrictions: CAST members have had issues with HOAs trying to disallow deed restrictions. Breck has had issues with their Buy Down program and HOAs have overridden the Town's first right to buy.

Local Government Engagement in Child Care: How did your community's situation evolve over time resulting in the local government providing childcare? Mountain Village doesn't have a mill levy but instead funds with their general fund, just like other important things like roads and other infrastructure. Summit County has a tiered approach to childcare costs based on AMI. Frisco and Breck pay for childcare out their general funds but hope a future countywide structure will support pay for providers and lead to increased capacity. Jackson purchased a building for expanding local government offices and the council gave their office space to childcare. There was interest in the childcare space from provider but would require a large subsidy. Steamboat partners with Colorado Mountain College to do early childhood care education to groom future providers. Local government often needs to be involved in Infant Care spots because of the its high cost. Telluride has zero licensed spots for infants but in a new housing project, they carved out one unit to be a childcare business. They have an RFP to bring in an in-home provider. Full time preschool has alleviated the need for childcare spots.

Sen. Bennet's Office: 1. SHRED/ski fee retention bill has support from a Republican cosponsor from WY. The bill would allow a portion of ski fees to be retained locally. These retained fees would partially fund administrative needs of ski areas, but a portion would be available for general recreation management needs of the USFS. It is likely to be re-introduced soon and has a good chance of passing. They will request an updated letter of support from CAST. 2. AMI: Info from communities on this issue would be helpful, specifically how to structure AMI that meets the needs of both metro and rural resort areas. This is on their radar and their legislative team is discussing. 3. USPS: staffing and pay levels are an issue. Could we support the union as they work on pay and retention? USPS process for filling positions is ineffective. The Postmaster General is nominated by President but then serves under

direction of a board of nine Governors. Increased oversight of the Postmaster General might be something to explore. CAST members asked what they could do to affect any real change on the USPS front. Communities requested guidance and direction from the federal delegation on how we should approach this, otherwise all individual communities are working with no advancement. Would more funding for USPS fix the problem or are the issues much greater than just money?

Congressman Neguse continues to be increasingly concerned about USPS level of service and he plans to announce some action in the coming days, including the need to make connections between USPS and available local housing opportunities. The Congressman is proud of last session's success in getting federal funding resources to local governments. He sees bipartisan opportunities this session, including in the Farm Bill such as renewing the Flexible Partnership Act.

IX. **New Business**

-The October 2022 Meeting Minutes were approved.

-The 2023 calendar was reviewed and was recently emailed to the membership.

X. **Afternoon Tours**

**Combined Law Enforcement Facility:** A joint project between the Routt County Sheriff's Office and the Steamboat Springs Police Department that allowed both the city and county to save money on construction costs and promote collaboration between the two agencies; and

**Howelsen Hill:** North America's oldest operating ski area, owned by the City of Steamboat Springs.