

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION OF WYOMING

The Transportation Commission of Wyoming met via Zoom on August 17, 2023. Chair Holmes convened the meeting at 8:30 a.m. The following members were present constituting a quorum:

Chair Susan Holmes, Sheridan
Vice Chair Jon Dolezal, Evanston
Commissioner Micheal Baker, Thermopolis *via Zoom*
Commissioner Patrick Crank, Cheyenne
Commissioner Mark Hughes, Sundance
Commissioner Brandt Lyman, Rock Springs
Commissioner Jim Willox, Douglas
Commission Secretary Caitlin Casner
Interim Director Darin Westby

Others present and participating in the meeting: Dennis Byrne, Chief Financial Officer (CFO); Mark Gillett, Chief Engineer; Tom DeHoff, Assistant Chief Engineer for Operations; Keith Fulton, Assistant Chief Engineer for Engineering and Planning; Colonel Timothy Cameron, Wyoming Highway Patrol (WHP); Taylor Rossetti, Support Services Administrator; Nathan Smolinski, Chief Technology Officer (CTO); Mike Kahler, Senior Assistant Attorney General; MacKenzie Sewell, Assistant Attorney General; Brian Olsen, Aeronautics Administrator; Nicholas Gronski, Procurement Services Program Manager; Rodney Freier, Budget Program Manager; John Davis, Management Services Manager; Senator Stephan Pappas; Representative Kevin O’Hearn; Hank Rettinger, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA); Dan Benford, Association of General Contractors, Wyoming (AGC-WYO); Kelli Little, AGC-WYO; Jason Tystad, S&S Builders; Mike Haynes, AGC-WYO; Lauren Benford; Reiman Corp./AGC-WYO; Chris McBarnes, The WYldlife Fund;

Other meeting attendees: Doug McGee, Public Affairs Manager; Matt Groth, Public Affairs; Mark Ayen, District Two Engineer; John Eddins, District Three Engineer; Ali Ragan, Grants and Contracts Policy Program Manager; Pam Fredrick, Senior Budget Analyst; Julie Newlin, Program Performance Manager; Sara DiRienzo, Transportation, Wildlife, and Gaming Policy Advisor to Governor Gordon; Captain Dustin Ragon, WHP; Troy McAlpine, WHP; Susan Elliott, Executive Assistant; Kimberly Chapman, Public Safety Communications Commission and Aeronautics Commission Secretary.

1. Pledge of Allegiance: Chair Holmes led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3A. July 20, 2023 Business Meeting Minutes: It was recommended by Secretary Casner, moved by Commissioner Hughes and seconded by Commissioner Lyman to approve the July 20, 2023 Business Meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

3B. July 20, 2023 Executive Session Minutes: It was recommended by Secretary Casner, moved by Commissioner Willox and seconded by Commissioner Dolezal to approve the July 20, 2023 Executive Session minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

6A. WyLDLIFE Presentation: Chris McBarnes presented to the Commission regarding WYldlife's programs, governance, priorities and current projects they are involved in.

Commissioner Baker joined the meeting at 8:47 a.m.

6B. Association of General Contractors Executive Director Introduction: Executive Director Dan Benford introduced himself to the Commission and gave a history of the Association of General Contractors. Mr. Benford emphasized the importance of partnership between the AGC-WYO and WYDOT. Mr. Benford also introduced AGC-WYO Director of Government Affairs Kelli Little, who explained her role with the AGC-WYO. AGC-WYO Board members Mike Haynes and Lauren Benford also introduced themselves and echoed Mr. Benford's comments on the importance of partnership. Mr. Haynes also addressed the Commission regarding risk management between contractors and WYDOT as well as usage of alternative delivery methods.

6C. Update on Northeast Port of Entry: Colonel Cameron updated the Commission on issues discussed at a previous Commission meeting regarding the northeast port of entry. Cameron explained recent efforts, including reviewing signage and their placement. Several bypass agreements have been received recently, which enable trucking operations to bypass the port. Standardization of processes across the state at all ports has also been discussed, and Colonel Cameron has tasked Captain Dustin Ragon, WHP Commercial Division, with outreach to truck drivers and owners. A program is being developed that will use troopers as inspectors at owner/carrier shops, and those troopers will conduct safety briefings and mock inspections. Colonel Cameron is traveling to Gillette to survey recent recommendations and will also complete a ride along with a local trucking company. Cameron thanked the AGC-WYO and Wyoming Trucking Association for their collaboration on this and other issues that impact Wyoming citizens.

Commissioner Willox questioned why a port of entry was placed in Gillette and Casper, and not along entries into Wyoming. Colonel Cameron explained that ports of entry are to enhance highway safety and help preserve infrastructure while providing essential services. Cameron also explained that there is entry in to Wyoming on I-90 near Garner Lake and also that the port in Gillette was placed there due to the energy fields and is a resource for weighing and permitting.

Chair Holmes questioned who has the authority within the state to place signage along the roadway. Colonel Cameron stated that WYDOT has the authority, and there is a specific formula for determining where signs are placed. More information regarding sign placement will be presented by Colonel Cameron at a later date.

6D. 2024 Meeting Dates: Chair Holmes summarized the proposed 2024 meeting calendar. Secretary Casner explained that at this time she is simply asking for the Commission's approval of the proposed dates so that she can begin to book flights. Other state entities and agencies are starting to request usage of the state plane and flight scheduling has requested Commission meeting date information.

Chair Holmes asked staff to determine meeting locations for 2024, including two to three meetings out of Cheyenne, based on what may be occurring in different areas around the state. Holmes also stated that she believes it would be appropriate to leave the meetings in July and December as Zoom only.

Commissioner Baker suggested visiting the Beartooth Highway in northwest Wyoming based on recent efforts by the U.S. Park Service to transfer ownership of roads in the Cody area. Chair Holmes agreed and advised that August 2024 may be an appropriate time to view the Beartooth Highway. Commissioner Willox suggested that the September meeting remain in Cheyenne as it is when the WYDOT budget is approved.

It was moved by Vice Chair Dolezal and seconded by Commissioner Lyman to approve the proposed 2024 meeting dates. The motion carried unanimously.

Commission recessed to break at 9:46 a.m.

Commission returned to public session at 9:56 a.m.

7. Director's Report. Director Westby thanked the Commission for their support during the appointment process. Westby also thanked the staff for their help in educating him regarding all things WYDOT. Director Westby thanked the Wyoming legislators that have reached out to him, and hopes to build the relationship between the Legislature and WYDOT. Lastly, Director Westby thanked the WYDOT partners such as AGC-WYO that have contacted him.

Director Westby advised that development of the FY2024 budget is underway, and asked the Commission to contact Executive Staff with any questions or concerns.

Executive Staff is preparing for the upcoming Joint Transportation, Highways, and Military Affairs. Director Westby summarized draft bills that will be discussed at this meeting, including diesel fuel tax administration, electric vehicle taxation, a WYDOT efficiency study, I-80 blowovers and light/high profile vehicles, and Commercial Driver's License (CDL) downgrading issues. Commissioner Willox requested that the documents provided to the Legislative Service Office by WYDOT for the upcoming meeting be forwarded to all Commissioners.

Director Westby reminded the Commission that money was set aside for a new Transportation Management Center (TMC), and advised that he has instructed staff to complete an analysis of the existing complex and space before a new building is built to ensure space is used efficiently. Director Westby will continue to update the Commission as more information is made available.

Compensation increases have been seen in employee paychecks, and Westby hopes that this helps with employee retention and recruitment efforts. One of Director Westby's priorities is to address the staffing shortage and is working with the Governor's office and the Department of Administration and Information (A&I) to do so, including position marketing and how to set WYDOT apart as a premier employer. Westby also discussed implementing succession plans and the ability for employees to move upward.

Director Westby also discussed his goal of working internally and externally to review all revenue streams and how WYDOT can secure more stateside revenue. At this time, WYDOT is 70% federally funded and 30% state funded, and state funding has remained at a flat level for several years despite increases in inflation. Director Westby advised that gas taxes, fee increases, and Federal Mineral Royalties (FMR) and severance caps will be examined as possible solutions.

Director Westby also addressed increasing WYDOT's credibility with the Governor's office, the Legislature, and WYDOT Commissions. Westby believes that increased empowerment and accountability of the WYDOT team at all levels is very important as well.

Westby also advised that he will be focusing on developing his relationship with internal and external stakeholders, which he believes is crucial to WYDOT's development and future success.

8. Mr. Byrne presented the Chief Financial Officer's Report.

8A. Monthly Budget Report: Mr. Freier presented the monthly budget report. Overall, the budget report revealed that the Commission budget was 78 percent expended, and the legislative budget was 83 percent expended in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023.

8B. Award of Procurement Services Bids. It was recommended by Mr. Byrne, moved by Commissioner Lyman, and seconded by Vice Chair Dolezal to move Bid numbers 23-193RC, 23-195RC, 23-196RC, 23-206RC, 23-217NG, and Requisition Number 0000068124 to a consent list. The motion carried unanimously.

It was recommended by Mr. Byrne, moved by Commissioner Willox and seconded by Commissioner Hughes to approve, by consent, the following bids. The motion carried unanimously.

- Bid 23-193RC to furnish 318,000 gallons of liquid organic accelerator to departments statewide. The bid was awarded to Smith Fertilizer and Grain, of Pleasantville, Iowa, for the sum of \$612,600.00.

- Bid 23-195RC to furnish 6,403 tons of bulk sodium chloride, type one (1) and 10,050 tons of bulk sodium chloride, type two (2), to departments statewide. The bid was awarded to Broken Arrow, Inc., of Lakepoint, Utah, for the sum of \$578,802.00 and to Compass Minerals America, Inc., of Overland Park, Kansas, for the sum of \$914,946.25.

- Bid 23-196RC to furnish 86,000 gallons and 10,320 tons of liquid and solid anti icers/deicers to departments statewide. The bid was awarded to Desert Mountain Corp. of Riverton, Wyoming, for the sum of \$376,800.00 and Dustbusters Enterprises, Inc., of Evanston, Wyoming, for the sum of \$959,793.75.

● Bid 23-206RC to furnish 79,500 tons of maintenance stockpiled material to departments located in District One (1). The bid was awarded to 71 Construction, of Casper, Wyoming, for the sum of \$1,069,950.00 and Simon Contractors, of Cheyenne, Wyoming, for the sum of \$2,495,765.00.

● Bid 23-217NG to furnish emergency bridge repair on WYO 450, to the department located in Campbell County. The bid was awarded to S&S Builders, LLC, of Gillette, Wyoming, for the sum of \$214,850.00.

● Requisition Number 0000068124 to furnish 80 Motorola radios and chargers for use department-wide. The requisition was awarded to Motorola Solutions, Inc., of Chicago, Illinois, for the sum of \$229,235.20.

It was recommended by Mr. Byrne, moved by Commissioner Hughes and seconded by Vice Chair Dolezal to award Bid 23-194RE to furnish a new 80 foot pedestrian bridge walkway over the North Laramie River to the department located in Wheatland. The bid was awarded to Reiman Corp., of Cheyenne, Wyoming, for the sum of \$251,000.00. The motion carried, with Commissioner Baker voting no.

Mr. Byrne explained that the bid received for bid 23-194RE was higher than available funding, but that additional monies from the State Construction Program fund would be made available. WYDOT has a responsibility to maintain this walkway as it is a landowner's only access to a diversion dam and is based on an agreement that has been in place since 1964 when the interstate was built.

It was recommended by Mr. Byrne, moved by Commissioner Lyman and seconded by Vice Chair Dolezal to award Bid 23-211NG to furnish an 80 ton chiller removal and replacement at the Materials Lab. The bid was awarded to GW Mechanical, Inc., of Mills, Wyoming, for the sum of \$201,752.39. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Byrne explained that the bid will be awarded to the second low bidder, as the first low bidder did not provide a bid bond or sign the WYDOT terms and conditions page.

9. Mr. Gillett presented the Chief Engineer's Report.

Mr. Gillett thanked the AGC-WYO representatives for attending the Commission meeting and emphasized the importance of WYDOT collaboration with contractors. Mr. Gillett also referenced the importance of using innovative contracting methods, and advised that rules and regulations are being drafted by WYDOT as a result of the passing of a alternative contracting methods bill by the Wyoming Legislature at the last session. Mr. Gillett also thanked Mr. DeHoff and Mr. Fulton for the recent Commission education session.

Federal/State Funding Split: Mr. Gillett presented a map that includes the federal/state Department of Transportation funding split for Wyoming's surrounding states as well as the national average.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA): New Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) have been unveiled by the USDOT. The Rural and Tribal Assistance pilot program and the Neighborhood Access Equity and Reconnecting Community pilot program have been posted.

WYDOT plans to submit an application for Rural Grant Funding NOFOs, and has three projects that these grants could be applied to. The first project is the I-80 Winter Fleet Refuge and Congestion Project, which offers truck parking in the Evanston area. The second project is the Coffeen Avenue Restoration and Community Connectivity Project in Sheridan, and the third project is for passing lanes on U.S. 20 in District Five, near Shoshoni.

Mr. Gillett advised that an internal meeting was recently held to discuss projects that may apply to the Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) grant. This grant funds transportation technology projects, and Mr. Gillett will update the Commission at a later date regarding WYDOT projects that the SMART grant could be used for.

Local government grant opportunities are managed by WYDOT, and applications have been received for the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP), which is a very popular grant opportunity. The total requests received total \$18 million, while only \$4.5 million is available.

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) is also in use by Northeast Wyoming cities, who typically use the funding to control dust on gravel roads.

Emergency Slide Repair: Mr. Gillett presented photographs showing recent slides in District 5 near the Big Horn mountains on U.S. 14 at Reference Marker (RM) 33.7. Mr. Gillett asked the Commission to approve an emergency contract so that repairs can occur before winter.

Mr. Gillett advised that WYDOT solicited bids from four contractors that typically complete this type of work, and only one contractor submitted a bid. This bid is for \$276,000.00, which is less than expected. The repair would be funded with state funds, and the contractor would be able to mobilize within three weeks after Commission approval and begin repairs before winter. Commissioner Lyman asked if this repair would be temporary or permanent. Mr. Gillett advised that he believes this repair will be permanent, and will be completed by both WYDOT crews and the contractor.

It was recommend by Mr. Gillett, moved by Commissioner Willox, and seconded by Commissioner Hughes to award the emergency contract to GeoStabilization International. The motion carried unanimously.

Buy America, Build America (BABA) Act: The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) recently issued final rules that state they will not keep the current waiver in place for construction materials and manufactured products under BABA. The USDOT has issued a statement regarding these rules and de minimus waivers requirements. Mr. Gillett advised that the FHWA will be reviewing the rules and their interpretation of how it applies to FHWA projects in Wyoming. The new rules have the potential to adversely affect projects and exacerbate supply chain issues.

John Davis addressed the Commission and advised that these regulations have been tightened through the last 40 years, and based on recent issues including the pandemic, the push for these regulations to be implemented is stronger.

Commissioner Willox asked if it is economically sound to continue oiling the shoulder of the road instead of just the driving surface. Mr. DeHoff explained that it is very important to seal the entire road top, including the taper on the shoulders. This keeps moisture out of the pavement, and allows bicyclists to safely travel. Traffic occasionally needs to be diverted to the shoulder, and oiling the shoulder allows this to be an option for the traveling public when construction projects are taking place.

Commission recessed to break at 11:33 a.m.

Commission returned to public session at 11:40 a.m.

9A. Mr. Fulton presented the Engineering and Planning Report, beginning with the July 2023 STIP addendum.

9Ai. August 2023 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Addendum: Mr. Fulton presented the August 2023 STIP Addendum.

It was recommended by Mr. Fulton, moved by Vice Chair Dolezal, seconded by Commissioner Lyman, and carried unanimously to approve the August 2023 STIP addendum.

E-Bidding: Mr. Fulton advised the Commission that a small group of staff and WYDOT partners are currently working on a transition to all electronic bidding. Rules and regulations are being developed currently.

9B. Mr. DeHoff presented the Operations Report.

Construction: The construction season is currently in full swing. There are currently 79 active construction projects across the state. Paving efforts continue around weather events. Districts have wrapped up the majority of their public STIP meetings, and Mr. DeHoff thanked all the Commissioners that have attended for doing so.

Projects have been temporarily suspended while events such as Cheyenne Frontier Days and the Ham and Jam in Hulett take place.

There will be a ribbon cutting held on September 20th for the Build Freight project, and Commissioners are welcome to attend.

Mr. DeHoff also advised of the Everyday Counts FHWA initiative, which is a state based model that identifies and deploys proven yet underutilized innovations that make transportation systems adaptable, sustainable, and equitable. WYDOT and Knife River are working on a pilot program for e-ticketing on the Terry Ranch Road project. Use of e-ticketing can improve efficiencies for

all involved, and aids in early identification of delays. Currently, a staff member is required to collect weight tickets from drivers, which can be very dangerous for a variety of reasons.

Commissioner Crank joined the meeting at 11:48 a.m.

Mr. DeHoff reminded the Commission of prior discussions regarding traffic control, especially in construction zones. Mr. DeHoff advised the Commission of current Spec book requirements regarding traffic control for contractors. Potential reasons for traffic control delays during a project were presented, such as material supply issues and weather conditions. Mr. DeHoff also presented potential solutions to this issue, including lane rental requirements, incentives, disincentives, and contractual requirements and restrictions, among several others. Internal meetings have been held to place emphasis on enforcement, and direction was given to take down traffic control as soon as the work is completed.

Commissioner Crank expressed that this is an important issue for him, and mentioned multiple projects where it appears that no construction activity is occurring but traffic control is still in place and is impeding traffic. Mr. Crank recommended solutions such as enforcing liquidated damages and controlling project timelines through contracts.

Mike Haynes with the AGC-WYO advised that many times the delays are due to issues with parts and equipment as well as weather conditions, and sometimes companies will switch the project they are working on to increase efficiency while experiencing delays.

Commissioner Crank reiterated his prior observations on construction projects across the state and delays that occur for long periods of time. Mr. Haynes explained that occasionally delays also occurred based on subcontractors and their availability and manpower.

Chair Holmes stated that there are variables outside the control of the contractors and WYDOT that affect project timelines, and she believes it is important to allow all involved parties to implement and work through the solutions Mr. DeHoff previously identified.

Mr. Benford addressed the Commission that the AGC-WYO is working with contractors to implement solutions and emphasize the importance of using traffic control only when necessary.

Commissioner Lyman suggested that the AGC-WYO come to a future Commission meeting and present regarding construction project scheduling.

Mr. DeHoff reiterated that emphasis is being placed on not having traffic control on the road if it is not absolutely necessary, and advised that if the Commission has any questions on why traffic control might be up on a certain project, they contact him.

Operations: Mowing and clean up efforts have been increased around the state. Delineators and guardrails are also being repaired.

The state hot plant is currently in the Rawlins area and is producing mix for District One crews. District Five is finishing chip seal projects.

Mr. DeHoff advised that District Five has been notified that the Commission approved an emergency contract to repair a slide on US 14 at mile post 33.7, discussed earlier by Mr. Gillett. There was a 75 foot long slide in the Wind River Canyon at the beginning of August, prompting WHP to close the road, and maintenance crews responded and had the road open within three hours of closure.

WYDOT and A&I Human Resources Division (HRD) are currently working on an occupational study for maintenance employees, using a questionnaire to make sure employees are in the right classification.

Traffic: Mr. DeHoff explained that meetings have been held between WYDOT and the paint supplier, and WYDOT has been assured that the paint will be delivered mid-September. Stripers will then begin to place paint on roads and maintenance patches. Urban striping crews are busy painting crosswalks and stop bars in communities to prepare for the beginning of the school year.

Shops: Mechanics are repairing summer equipment as well as assessing and repairing snow equipment. One new rotary will be delivered to the Jackson area, and Mr. DeHoff is optimistic that the rest of the five new rotaries will be delivered by the end of the year.

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Facilities: There has been a partial closure of the Cheyenne River Rest Area north of Douglas to fix Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) building access. All other facilities and rest areas are open at this time.

Commissioner Crank thanked WYDOT staff for their efficient work repairing the pedestrian bridge over I-25 in Cheyenne.

Commissioner Hughes asked Mr. DeHoff to explain the Build Winter Freight project that will have a ribbon cutting ceremony on September 20th. Mr. DeHoff explained that this project was funded by a grant that allowed for expanding truck parking at Fort Steele and Quealy Dome, as well as westbound truck climbing lanes near Cooper Cove and eastbound truck climbing lanes near Halleck Ridge.

Commissioner Hughes asked if there would be any utility in purchasing another state hot plant for use by WYDOT maintenance crews. Mr. DeHoff advised that WYDOT crews only work on patches, and the hot plant is only used in areas where there are no commercial producers of needed materials. Mr. Gillett added that there is a limit to how far hot plant mix can be hauled and still used effectively. Mr. Gillett also stated that it may possible that WYDOT would need an additional hot plant, but funding and staffing issues could prove to be an issue in obtaining this equipment. Mr. Gillett advised that given inflation and other issues, patching efforts have been reduced.

Commissioner Crank asked approximately how much another hot plant would cost. Mr. Gillett stated that the cost based on the machine output could reach around \$3 million. Commissioner Crank requested Mr. Gillett put together a proposal so that the Commission can explore the possibility of purchasing another hot plant. Mr. Gillett replied that more state money would be needed to purchase another hot plant, as federal money cannot be used on maintenance.

Director Westby advised that staff will review and analyze the costs and operating requirements of a second hot plant and will report back to the Commission at a later date.

Commission recessed to break at 12:27 p.m.

Commission returned to public session at 12:37 p.m.

10. Colonel Cameron presented the Highway Patrol Report.

The Fatal Crash Summary through July 31, 2023, includes 66 fatal crashes involving 81 deaths. The fatalities include 20 rollover crashes, 42 multi-car crashes, 2 fixed-object crashes, 5 motorcycle crashes, 3 all-terrain vehicle crashes, 2 snowmobile crashes, and 6 pedestrian crashes. Of the 66 fatal crashes that have occurred in 2023, 24 involved commercial vehicles.

There were 0 fatal crashes deemed drug or alcohol related, resulting in deaths through July 2023.

Of the 81 deaths this year, 34 were attributed to not using occupant restraints, with 15 involving rollover crashes, 17 involving multi-car collisions, and 2 involving fixed objects. Twenty of those who died from the non-use of occupant restraints were Wyoming residents. Ten perished that were under 21 years old.

Of the 66 fatal crashes so far this year, 86 of those drivers had no distractions. In 37 of the reported crashes, it was unknown whether a distraction caused the incident.

Of the 66 fatal crashes that have occurred this year, 29 occurred on primary/secondary highways, 24 occurred on interstate highways, and 13 occurred on city/county roads.

Of the 66 fatal crashes that have occurred this year, 12 had multiple fatalities.

Inclement weather or road conditions contributed to 14 vehicle crashes in 2023, which resulted in 16 deaths.

The days of the week for fatal crashes in 2023 are as follows:

Sunday	9 crashes
Monday	10 crashes
Tuesday	9 crashes
Wednesday	13 crashes
Thursday	3 crashes

Friday	10 crashes
Saturday	12 crashes

The times of day for fatal crashes in 2023 are as follows:

12:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.	11 crashes
6:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	12 crashes
12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.	28 crashes
6:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.	15 crashes

The Commission also heard the following statistics:

- 75 percent of those who died in rollover crashes were unbelted.
- 40 percent of those who died in multi-vehicle crashes were unbelted.
- 100 percent of those who died in fixed-object crashes were unbelted.
- 68 percent of the fatalities in 2023 were drivers.
- 25 percent of the fatalities in 2023 were passengers.
- 34 percent of the resident fatalities were unrestrained.
- 18 percent of non-resident fatalities were unrestrained.
- 31 percent of fatalities involved alcohol and/or drug impairment.

There were 3,633 patrol investigated crashes so far in 2023.

Colonel Cameron asked the Commission to contact him if there is any other information they would like to be included in his monthly report. Chair Holmes requested that Cameron provide information on issues that the WHP faces. Commissioner Crank also requested information regarding the different types of troopers and WHP personnel. Commissioner Lyman requested Colonel Cameron analyze and report on the large amount of accidents near the Rock Springs and Green River area.

Cameron reported that the newest class of WHP recruits has 11 individuals currently going through training.

WHP also recently established a trooper as the recruiter for the agency, and recruiting efforts are improving.

Cameron also stated that WHP is working on refining emergency and non emergency communications across the state and aligning processes with WYDOT as well as formalizing data usage.

Commissioner Crank asked if it would be more efficient to utilize the Law Enforcement Academy in Douglas instead of having all training occur in Cheyenne. Colonel Cameron advised that he has seen great success during his time with WHP with holding their training in Cheyenne only, but will analyze the possibility of utilizing the Academy in Douglas.

11. Director Westby presented the Aeronautics Report on behalf of Mr. Olsen, beginning with the July 2023 Aeronautics Flight Operations Passenger Summary Report.

Federal Update: The House and Senate released their respective versions of the FAA Reauthorization bill mid-June. Overall, the proposals by the House and Senate are positive for Wyoming airports. The House version unanimously passed out of committee, was debated on the floor of the House and passed the full House on July 20th with good support. On the Senate side, the bill has not been considered in committee due to contention over proposed amendments on the 1500 hour rule. Congress is currently in their August recess, however, Mr. Olsen is optimistic that conversations are still taking place around FAA Reauthorization on the Senate side.

The House and Senate Appropriations committees have passed their respective transportation FY24 funding bills.

Due to a busy floor schedule in September (there are twelve (12) appropriations bills as well as FAA Reauthorization and the Farm Bill that need passed) and differences in topline spending levels between the House and Senate, there may be a continuing resolution to keep the federal government funded past September 30th or even a government shutdown if the two houses are not able to reconcile spending levels. Additional consideration is being given to passing the twelve (12) appropriation bills by the end of this calendar year before a 1% budget cut goes in to effect on January 1, 2024.

Division and Airport Updates: There are currently 21 active construction projects at airports around the state.

AJ Schutzman has been selected as the program manager for the Aviation Planning Program. Mr. Schutzman replaced Cheryl Bean, who retired last month after 37 years of service to the State.

Air Service News: Load factors in July dropped slightly from June but still finished strong for Wyoming markets. Month to date load factors for August are slightly lower than July, however, the remainder of the month is booking very well. Forward bookings into the fall months look good but the usual slowdown due to school resuming is anticipated. Overall, U.S. domestic seat capacity is roughly 3% above pre-pandemic (2019) levels so far this year. This is mostly driven by growth from the ultra-low-cost (e.g. Allegiant, Frontier) and low-cost airlines (primarily Southwest). Traditional network airlines like American Airlines, Delta Airlines and United Airlines are still below 2019 levels. Travel demand to Europe has rebounded dramatically this summer with airlines increasing transatlantic capacity 13% over last summer, almost back to pre-pandemic levels. Intense demand has driven airfares to Europe up over 7% this summer despite the extra capacity. Partly driven by this shift toward European demand, U.S. domestic airfares have softened an estimated 11% this summer, a much-appreciated respite from the increases in domestic airfares over the last several quarters. Another contributing factor to lower airfares is the aircraft fuel prices are down roughly 30% from last summer's levels, although this is largely being offset by increased labor rates stemming from new pilot contracts.

12. Mr. Rossetti presented the Support Services Report.

Employment Summary: WYDOT employed 1,737 personnel as of July 28, 2023, compared to 1,737 a month ago and 1,767 one year ago.

Mr. Rossetti also presented the compensation adjustment summary by classification family, which included information such as the average pay on 5/1/2023 on 7/1/2023 and the percentage increase.

Commissioner Crank asked Mr. Rossetti how the dispatcher pay levels can be near market when local agencies such as the Sheriff's Department are paying much higher wages. Mr. Rossetti explained that the market is a result of composite of private and public jobs within a 12 state region, however counties do not participate in the market study, and so their data is not reflected.

Mr. Crank expressed concern that if pay rates are not adjusted in the near future for dispatchers, a public safety emergency may occur. Mr. Rossetti stated that WYDOT is seeking an exception to the compensation policy that utilizes savings from vacant positions, and apply this to dispatchers, some levels of WHP, and maintainers. Commissioner Lyman questioned what would happen if the exception request was denied. Mr. Rossetti advised that if it was denied, he would re-evaluate and re-write the request or possibly seek temporary increases or hiring bonuses. Director Westby thanked the Commission for their support regarding compensation increases, and believes the support of the Commission will help when HRD is considering the request.

Mr. Rossetti also updated recruiting efforts, especially for WHP, which include assigning a non-sworn public involvement officer and targeted online marketing.

Chair Holmes requested that an update regarding the compensation increase request be provided at the September meeting.

13. Chief Technology Officer's Report: Mr. Smolinski presented the Chief Technology Officer's Report.

Blow Overs: Mr. Smolinski addressed the prior questions from Commissioner Lyman regarding blowover enforcement and signage. Mr. Smolinski explained that his department is currently working on a study that will help narrow down vehicle type, weight and windspeed for blow over restrictions and appropriate signage. Mr. Smolinski advised that the goal is to preemptively inform the traveling public about conditions as well as keep the highways open. Mr. Smolinski also advised that he is assembling a presentation that can be brought to the Commission at the September 2023 meeting that explains the details of this project.

WyoLink: Mr. Smolinski presented to the Commission statistics and information that is shared with the Public Safety Communications Commission (PSCC) at their quarterly meetings and is largely geared toward WyoLink. Mr. Smolinski also presented the WyoLink 16 Site Expansion project status report.

In response to a request from Commissioner Hughes, Mr. Smolinski presented the WyoLink local towers and locations site map and will continue to include this and the statistical report in the monthly meeting materials.

RIS/TIS: The contract has been signed and a kickoff meeting will be held in conjunction with Kyndryl, Inc. in the next week. Mr. Smolinski explained that further updates with increased information will be given in the coming months.

General Update: Mr. Smolinski reminded the Commission that he is the Statewide Interoperable Coordinator (SWIC) and the Statewide 911 Coordinator. A State Communications Interoperable Plan (SCIP) was recently developed for statewide use for five years. Several counties and cities participated in the development of the SCIP, which will be presented to the PSCC for final approval. and is currently in Casper for a development plan that will span the next five years covering emergency communications across Wyoming.

Mr. Smolinski advised that the Transportation Management Center (TMC) has access to daily reports from Don Day Weather, Inc., which are focused on highways across the state. These reports are extremely useful to WYDOT staff at all levels, especially during the winter months.

Commissioner Willox requested that Mr. Smolinski review any technologies used by the State be made available to or shared with local entities in the future. Mr. Smolinski advised that this has happened in the past and will continue.

14. September 2023 Commission Meeting: Secretary Casner advised that the September 2023 meeting will be held via Zoom and in person in Cheyenne. September 20th will be the budget education session and there will be a service award luncheon on the 21st. Chair Holmes advised that she will not be in attendance for the September meeting and Vice Chair Dolezal will run the meeting in her absence.

15B. Commissioner Comments: Commissioner Baker stated that he is especially interested in utilizing WHP Troopers communicating possible road maintenance issues to staff. Commissioner Lyman thanked Mr. Fulton and Mr. DeHoff for the August 16th education session, and expressed interest in following a STIP project and visit with departments involved. Commissioner Crank stated that he is very pleased with the Commission and how well everyone functions together and welcomed Director Westby. Commissioner Hughes congratulated Director Westby and envisions a bright future for WYDOT. Commissioner Hughes also thanked Senator Pappas and Representative O'Hearn for attending as well as AGC-WYO representatives. Commissioner Willox stated he appreciates being able to listen in to the Budget Subcommittee meetings. Vice Chair Dolezal echoed the other Commissioner's thanks and welcome to Director Westby. Chair Holmes expressed her appreciation for the Commissioner's participation and the tenor of the current environment.

17. It was moved by Commissioner Crank and seconded by Commissioner Hughes to adjourn the meeting at 1:5 p.m. on Thursday, July 20, 2023. The motion carried unanimously.

