

Bluff Town Council Work Session  
Tuesday, June 4, 2019  
Bluff Community Center at 10:00 a.m.  
190 North 3rd East P.O. Box 324  
Bluff Utah 84512  
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## MINUTES OF WORK SESSION WITH THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM) ON TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2019

The Bluff Town Council met with Gary Torres, Field Manager of the Monticello Bureau of Land Management Office along with two of his staff members, John Chmelir, archaeologist, and Angela Bulla, Natural Resources.

Town Council Members that were present were Luanne Hook, Brant Murray, Jim Sayers, Ann K. Leppanen. Linda Sosa had an excused absence. The meeting began at 10:06 a.m.

Present in the audience were Deborah Westfall, Jim Hook, Sallie Cole, Josh Ewing, Jocelyn Meyers.

Torres introduced himself by stating that he is “passionate about multiple use on public land.” He gave a brief overview of his job history and his return to Monticello. Both Bulla and Chmelir gave a brief introduction as well.

In order of discussion:

**BLUFF RIVER TRAIL.** Jim Hook presented his long term vision for a river trail from the Recapture Lodge to Sand Island and beyond. The River Trail is a part of the Bluff Historic Preservation, which is a non-profit local entity. Other partners in this are the Grand Canyon Trust, adjacent local land owners, and the BLM. Torres recommended that Bluff do as other towns have done and that would be to form a committee to work with the group and to present ideas and plans to the BLM. The River Trail already has such a committee and has completed most of the work for an Environmental Assessment (EA). They also have worked with a landscape architect. Westfall said that trailheads have shifted locations from the first plan. Torres concluded the meeting that meeting with the trails group would be his first priority.

GRAVEL. There is an established right-of-way for a gravel pit on the west end of Bluff toward the north bluff area. UDOT and the BLM have looked at other options as no one would disagree that gravel is not needed. The issue is the placement of the gravel pit. Hook asked why preexisting gravel pits could not be used instead of creating a new one but that does not seem to be an option. The west Bluff gravel pit option is close proximity to homes and Bluff while the airport option has its own issues. Another option is the area by the slot canyon and corral by Sand Island. The BLM has been talking with UDOT about putting in a turn lane at Sand Island which would then make this area perhaps a possible site for the gravel pit.

AIRPORT. San Juan County has assigned the lease for the airport to the town of Bluff but paperwork at the BLM has not yet come through. Jim Hook is the airport manager and he sees this as a great commercial space once gravel is finished, if in fact, that is where the gravel pit ends up. The airport is a great resource and one that Bluff wants to retain.

SANDDUNE PETROGLYPH PANEL. Leppanen asked that the town be kept in the loop should there be any consideration given by the BLM to make this site a “signed” site with parking lots and publicity. Leppanen’s opinion is that most of the town would be opposed to development of such a fragile and important archaeological area. Sallie Cole was not sure how far along rock art documentation of that site has developed but she concurred on its fragility and importance.

TRANSFER STATION. Bulla said that there is only one possible BLM parcel available for use as a transfer station and any other BLM parcel would require amending the Resource Management Plan. That parcel is the same parcel as the possible gravel pit location on the west end of Bluff to the north of the highway. Torres said gravel is his second priority.

Torres stressed transparency by the BLM in dealing with towns and cities. He did note that the BLM has no legal requirement to “listen” to towns but that he welcomes input and wants Bluff, and other communities, to engage in conversations around the BLM since we will be partners for a long time. And everyone recognizes that the Bears Ears National Monument and pending litigation will impact planning.

The work session adjourned at (approximately) 11:45 a.m.