

1-28-21

House Political Subdivisions Committee

Bill: HB 128, Local Accumulated Fund Balance Amendments

Sponsor: Rep. Winder

Floor Sponsor: Sen. Harper

UASD Position: Tracking

This Bill: amends provisions related to local accumulated fund balances.

Discussion: Rep. Winder said, in the state of Utah, there are two conflicting value of saving for a raining day fund that has a large amounts of reserves. This bill raises the amount Utah cities and towns can keep in their reserves. The sponsor said the proposed cap in this bill is designed to allows towns to keep 75% of their budget in reserve, cities 25%, small counties 50%, large counties 20%, small interlocal entities 50%, and large interlocal entities 25%. The sponsor continued by adding many counties have lost money due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some areas did well, but those in the tourism industry have not fared well. The sponsor said many places in the state have been drawing from their reserves because of the pandemic. The Utah League of Cities and Towns and the Utah Association of Counties support this bill. Rep. Winder said this bill is to protect local governments from the most volatile sales tax swing. Rep. Christiansen asked if there were counties that were on the border of being a large county and, therefore, have to save more money. The sponsor and the Utah Association of Counties said it is designed to be a two-pronged test that uses size as a test and taxable value as a test. There are only four large counties and they are all within the Wasatch. The bill passed unanimously and will be placed on the consent calendar.

Yeas: 9

Nays: 0

N/V: 1

Outcome: Passed out of the committee with favorable recommendation, and moved to the consent calendar.

Bill: HB 96, Emergency Management Amendments

Sponsor: Rep. Harrison

Floor Sponsor:

UASD Position: Support

This Bill: amends provisions of the Emergency Management Act related to emergency preparedness and response, and other duties of the Division of Emergency Management.

Discussion: The sponsor asked for 1st substitute to be added to the bill. This substitute repeals the sunset date by one year. The sponsor said there is support from the Utah Regional Coordinating Committee, Utah Emergency Management Association, Utah League of Cities and Towns, Utah Fire Chiefs Association, The Emergency Management Council, and The Utah Association of Counties. This bill requires that new state buildings be insurable and that if a building is located in a flood plain, the building must meet the standards of the Division of Emergency Management. It also requires the interest earned by the State Disaster Recovery Restricted Account be deposited back into the State Disaster Recovery Account. The sponsor said this bill does not create an unfunded mandate for municipalities. The Utah Division of Emergency Management said after a year like 2020 it has become more apparent that we need a strong Emergency Management System, especially at the local level. The representative from the Division of Emergency Management continued by saying it is important that the interest accumulated goes back into the state fund. The Unified Fire Authority said in Emergency Management (EM) there are five pillars of Emergency Management. The first three pillars go to what happens before the event. This is where EM spends most of its time. The last pillar is recovery and this pillar is one of the most important. This bill provides more tools in the tool box for EM. The Sponsor said the only changes this substitute makes in the original bill is the change to the sunset date and a small technical change. Members of the committee voiced their support for this bill. The sponsor said the training for EM is done in the state and grant programs help pay for it. The sponsor also said it is clarifying the chain of command at the local level so individuals know who to talk to in an emergency situation. Rep. Harrison continued by saying it is a matter of designating who the point of contact is in an emergency. Members of the public voiced their support for this bill. The Cache County Sheriff's office supports this bill. The motion to substitute the bill passed.

Yeas: 10

Nays: 0

N/V: 0

Outcome: 1st Sub. HB 96 Passed out of Committee with a favorable recommendation.

HB 115 Municipal Boundary Modifications was not heard in Committee.

UASD Position: Track