

Truth in Taxation Public Hearing

Thursday, August 21, 2025 6:00 PM

Garfield County Courthouse, 55 S Main St., Panguitch, UT 84759

I. Call to Order

II. Statement of Purpose

III. Public Comment

IV. Board Action Item

IV.A. Tax Rate

V. Adjournment

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I. Call to Order

II. Statement of Purpose

Lane introduced the topic of the truth in taxation hearing. He provided an overview of the amount of the increase, what the funds will be used for, and discussed the reasons the increase is taking place.

III. Public Comment

Public Comment: Bill Wepner

- Bill Wepner questions the increase in revenue and the definition of a certified tax rate.
- He argues that the increase in revenue is not in line with the definition of a certified tax rate, which should remain stable.
- Wepner mentions his experience on the board and the historical trend of lowering school taxes.
- He questions the need for the \$1.07 million increase and suggests bonding for capital expenditures.

Public Comment: Brenda Beckler

- Brenda Beckler expresses concerns about the impact of increasing taxes on local residents, particularly those on fixed incomes.
- She suggests exploring other funding options like cutting unnecessary expenditure or seeking private funding.
- Beckler asks for details on how the taxes will be used and mentions a neighbor's concerns about building a cabin due to increased taxes.

Public Comment: Steve Garrett

- Steve Garrett presents his tax bill and questions the significant increase in taxes.
- He argues that the increase is not in line with the state's truth in taxation law, which should decrease rates with increasing property values.
- Garrett mentions his recent conversation with the state about the truth in taxation law and the need for adjustments.
- He suggests the district should cut back on expenses and not expect taxpayers to bear the burden.

Public Comment: Harshad Desai

- Desai emphasizes the importance of adhering to the state's truth in taxation law.
- He argues that the increase in property values should result in a decrease in tax rates to maintain revenue neutrality.
- Desai suggests the district should address the

issue with the county commission if the state's law is not being followed.

- He mentions the significant increase in property values and the need for adjustments in tax rates.

Public Comment: Nathaniel Colt

- Nathaniel Colt expresses his support for the homework and knowledge brought to the meeting by other speakers.
- He shares his personal experience with property tax increases and the impact on his budget.
- Colt suggests the district should cut back on expenses and not expect taxpayers to bear the burden.
- He mentions his intention to hire an attorney to grieve the tax increase and possibly change his residency.

Public Comment: Steve Lambert

- Steve Lambert shares his experience with property tax increases and the impact on his properties.
- He questions the significant increase in taxable value for properties with no improvements.
- Lambert mentions his properties in Sky Valley and the increase in taxable value despite no changes.
- He expresses frustration with the increase and the lack of understanding behind the calculations.

Public Comment: Shannon Fawson

- Shannon Fawson compares the school district to a public company and questions its financial management.
- She mentions her frustration with the increase in taxes and the lack of transparency in the district's financial decisions.
- Fawson suggests the district should cut back on expenses and not expect taxpayers to bear the burden.
- She expresses her intention to take further action if the tax increase is not addressed.

Public Comment: Brent Night

- Brent Night shared his experience with the tax increase on his summer home property.
- He asked for clarification on the need to build a new middle school.

Public Comment: Justin Whitlock

- Justin Whitlock shared his concerns regarding the recent property tax increase.
- He encouraged the board to explore alternative options to help offset costs rather than raising the tax rate.
- He expressed frustration with overtaxation and asked the board to work collaboratively with citizens to identify solutions other than increasing taxes.

Public Comment: Lance Syrett

- Lance Syrett expressed his disappointment with the tax increase and shared how it will personally impact him.
- He asked whether the district had discussed the tax rate with the county government.
- He requested clarification regarding the additional one million dollars.
- He voiced frustration over the tax increase, noting that other states are considering eliminating property taxes altogether.

Public Comment: Denise Payne

- Denise Payne shared her frustration with the tax increase and the size of the increase this year.
- She asked why the tax rate had not been raised gradually over the past several years and requested clarification on where the additional funds will be allocated.

Lane addressed many of the comments made by audience members including the total dollar figure, the uses of funds, and other matters.

Board members commented on the truth in taxation situation and their positions on the matter.

IV. Board Action Item

IV.A. Tax Rate

Curtis made a motion to ratify the rates as presented.

The motion was seconded by Jared. The motion passed 4-1 with Ralph voting Nay.

V. Adjournment



Garfield County School District

145 E Center St., Panguitch, UT 84759

Phone: 435-676-8821

DATE: August 20, 2025

TO: Garfield County Board Of Education

FROM: Lane Mecham

RE: Truth in Taxation Overview

Utah's property tax system follows a process called the Certified Tax Rate (CTR) process. This process ensures that taxing entities raise as much revenue as the previous year without increasing the dollar amount of property taxes paid by taxpayers. As home values rise, the property tax rates decline. This keeps the dollar amount of property taxes stable as home prices rise.

The State also has a system where school districts can get matching revenues from the State by levying a minimum levy amount. For the Board and Local levies this is a combined rate of 0.002. The district is proposing a board local levy of 0.0007 and a voted levy of 0.0013 for a combined levy of 0.002 – the minimum levy that maximizes our matching guaranteed funds. The district would lose approximately \$70,000 in matching revenues from the State if we did not reset to these rates. The combined rates account for \$336,982 of additional revenue from local property taxes.

Two years ago, the State mandated that Garfield County adjust its assessed values to reflect more current home values. This skyrocketed home values:

Year	Property Value % Change
2025	15.36%
2024	25.39%
2023	4.15%
2022	5.78%
2021	6.68%

The total increase for the previous two years is 40.75%. This is the cause of the significant increases seen on tax bills this year. In 2022 the district set similar rates.

Levy	2022	2025
Board Local Levy	0.000802	0.0007
Voted Local Levy	0.0016	0.0013
Capital Local Levy	0.00225	0.00225
Total	0.004652	0.00425

In both instances, we levied these rates to maximize our matching state guaranteed funds and to get access to the matching funds for capital projects through the small schools capital projects fund.

The small schools capital projects fund will grant funds to school districts for capital projects that it could not otherwise afford. The amount of matching funds the fund will give is based on the capital levy of the district. This was done to make sure that communities demonstrated local effort to build the projects. The following summarize how much will be matched based on the levy:

State Tax Rate Threshold	State Funded %
0.00105	50%
0.00150	67%
0.00180	75%
0.00225	80%

The difference between the amount of revenue generated by the highest matching rate is \$737,565.45 above the CTR amount. This means that a levy of 0.00225 will generate that amount more than what is currently scheduled using the CTR rate of 0.001589.

We recommend that the Board move forward with the rate of 0.00225. We further recommend that if the Board elects to use a rate below that amount, that it goes no less than 0.0018. This is the rate where funding does not result in a decrease to revenues from the previous year.

We recommend using the 0.00225 levy for the simple reason that it saves taxpayers more money in the long run by obtaining more grant funding for our capital projects. Our projects will still need to find a way to be financed if we do not levy the highest level. The construction of a new Panguitch Middle School is likely to cost \$25 million or more dollars. The difference between an 80% match and a 75% match is \$1,250,000 on a \$25 million project. These are funds that the County will have to come up with on our own if we do not get the grant funding.

This is a summary of the TNT issue this year and I look forward to any questions you may have in board meeting.



Lane Mechaon
Business Administrator

NOTICE OF PROPOSED TAX INCREASE GARFIELD COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

The GARFIELD COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT is proposing to increase its property tax revenue.

The GARFIELD COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT tax on a \$350,000 residence would increase from \$632.75 to \$818.13, which is \$185.38 per year.

The GARFIELD COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT tax on a \$350,000 business would increase from \$1,150.45 to \$1,487.50, which is \$337.05 per year.

If the proposed budget is approved, GARFIELD COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT would receive an additional \$1,074,548 in property tax revenue per year as a result of the tax increase. If the proposed budget is approved, GARFIELD COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT would increase its property tax budgeted revenue by 28.96% above last year's property tax budgeted revenue excluding eligible new growth.

The GARFIELD COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT invites all concerned citizens to a public hearing for the purpose of hearing comments regarding the proposed tax increase and to explain the reasons for the proposed tax increase. You have the option to attend or participate in the public hearing in person or online.

PUBLIC HEARING

Date/Time: 8/21/2025 06:00 PM

Location: Garfield County Courthouse Commissioner's Chambers
55 S Main St
Panguitch

Virtual Meeting Link: <https://garfk12-org.zoom.us/j/88445862499>

To obtain more information regarding the tax increase, citizens may contact the GARFIELD COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT at 435-676-8821 or visit www.garfk12.org