

MONTEZUMA COUNTY BOCC 5/8/17

This week's meeting was slightly different since Congressman Scott Tipton was to meet with the County Commissioners to discuss some concerns of the County. Since the agenda noted this, apparently some local socialists organized a picket protest against the Congressman. The meeting room was packed to well over 50 attendees anticipating the Congressman. Chairman Suckla made it clear that the meeting was not a townhall meeting, but rather a discussion between the BOCC and the Congressman, however ample opportunity may be given for public if time permitted. As usual, the comments here are not "minutes", but only comments as viewed/heard by this one person. Additionally comments in italics are personal thoughts being expressed by this one person author.

Following the weather and court house reports, the public comment time was opened to go until Congressman Tipton arrived. There were 5 persons who spoke. Four were all commenting on Mr. Tipton's recent vote to replace the Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare), fearing it would destroy the local hospital and many people could not have insurance. One suggested that the County appoint an advisory board to evaluate the impact the law change (*note that it has only passed the House and will be changed in the Senate, and who knows after that, so what are you going to evaluate?*). All speaking were opposed to the change (*proposed change*) The other person spoke regarding not getting any help from Tipton on mining and energy impacts on our environment regarding Uranium and Methane gas. *Reality seems to escape many of residents regarding the natural presence of Radon throughout the area has been here from time immemorial, as well as natural Methane gas escaping from exposed coal seams, etc. The*

appeals were all pretty emotional from fears based on bad and or misinformation.

Congressman Tipton arrived and discussed some of the bills/issues he has been working to move forward with, such as “Protecting Water Rights Act” to stop the federal water Grabs. “Healthy Forest Management Act” to put more power in management to the local areas. “Planning for American Energy Act”. Moving the BLM Headquarters out west away from Wash D.C.. The “Taylor Act” to aid the local banks in overcoming the Dodd/Frank bill that had hamstrung banks from helping local businesses. Also, he planned to meet with the new Sec. of Interior Zinke regarding the review of the recent Monuments.

The BOCC then asked for assistance in several areas of concerns. The Invasive Mussel is seriously impacting our water recreation, since there is no money available for boat inspectors, so many launching locations have to be closed and limited times to launch on the few others. Federal lands are expanding, limiting our private property economic development opportunities. Only 27% of Montezuma County is Private Property. The National Monument has expanded by thousands of acres, but they have no money to manage what they already had. No money to do the many many studies before anything logical can happen. This is the same case with the Parks, BLM, FS controlled areas. Are they under funded or what is going on? Tipton responded that there is a \$26 Billion shortfall in Parks, BLM, and FS. He was concerned that there was budget requests to purchase MORE LAND??? BOCC commented that 17 years ago the BOCC passed a resolution on Canyon of the Ancients for access development, parking lot etc.. Old historical facilities have been purchased as well as more land but NOTHING HAS

HAPPENED on the issues from 17 years back. BOCC asked what he knew of AZ Senator Flake's bill on federal land access which is similar to Garfield County proposal on settling the Public Road Access in federal controlled lands (*this is the RS2477 road issue such as the Norwood road and many many more here locally*). BOCC expressed concern that the BLM is ignoring local counties positions regarding the Mineral Leasing Plan (MLP), No County wanted it, but the State BLM Director acted unilaterally and approved it to move forward (*this would be MORE federal expenditures and time of which they have neither*). Tipton answered that he had met with Director Welch just last week to work on this and the BLM 2.0 reg. BOCC commented that the effort to expand the Phil's World area has been 7 years in the process and the LaPlata Coal mine renewal still waiting for approval. WHY so long for feds to approve anything?? Tipton response was that there are so many tiers of studies like EA's etc. . (*There is always a NEW study that has to be done, and of course no money to do the study. But they can buy more land!*)

The meeting was then opened for response to and by the public. First one thanked the BOCC for having open meetings and townhalls, and to ask Congressman Tipton to hold a local townhall here. (*After this meeting don't expect him to come here for a townhall, I sure would not*). Another attacked the lack of funding available for the BLM , and suggested our taxes should be given to the BLM (*Uuhhhh we need some real education around here*) . Others stated that the healthcare problem had been fixed with the ACA (Obamacare) and that Tiptons vote to replace it was bad. Said there is too much partisanship in healthcare, so it should all be "singlepayer". (*doesn't dawn on any of them that the single payer is YOU AND ME*) The Statements many used

were obviously based on bad misinformation fed them. One question was if Tipton had actually read the Bill before voting on it. He responded that he had indeed read the entire bill and also the 8 page amendment to it, and have you read it?? He then explained, very clearly, what it actually said regarding the concerns asked. *He obviously had read the bill and knew the specifics.* At one point in discussing the lack of funding in many areas, he stated that the U.S. is 20 Trillion in debt. And there is no magical source of new money.

This unplanned "townhall" was a very sad example of the residents of Montezuma County. Most were civil, however several were rude, caustic and interruptive. Unfortunately, even the somewhat civil ones would loudly shout and clap support of the rude ones statements. One common thread seemed to be, as one stated, "when is he going to start representing the people?" They seem to believe that THEY are representing all of us in their desires and wishes. A Second common thread seemed to be "I/WE WANT"! Whether you agree with or even like Congressman Tipton or any other elected official, we must realize they represent ALL of us NOT THE JUST LOUD ONES! Many seem to not understand that elected officials do not take an oath to do what some of their constituents tell them to do. They have OTHER constituents as well. Their Oath is "to support the Constitution of the United States", and in the case of State and County offices it includes the "Constitution of the State of Colorado, and to perform the duties of the office". No more, no less! We certainly do need to hold them accountable for their oath and doing their job (what is just listed above), but NOT for failing to do what any one of us/you want them to do. I was proud at how Congressman Tipton AND the entire BOCC responded and handled this unplanned demonstration. This meeting clearly demonstrated how

massively ignorant some/many is of our Constitutional Republic governing system. When coupled with unfettered emotional fears and personal desires, the masses react without regard for their fellow man and the future of the very area they reside in. That was very sad to see what some (hopefully only a small segment) of our local society has become.

ROADS & MUSSELS New subject was discussed following Congressman's departure. It was noted that this past week a boat preparing to launch at McPhee was inspected and it was found to be contaminated with the Invasive Mussel larvae in the motor water cooling system. This sparked a BIG concern on the importance of catching them before they enter the lake. There are several access points where motorboats and jet skis can be launched bypassing inspection points. One major one is the old Road X at Sage Hen area. There needs to be some system to ensure, as best we can, to prevent the Mussel from infecting our lakes. While finding means to provide more and better inspections, this launching site will be temporarily CLOSED, pending hearings and searching means to enable it to be open. Concern was discussed that the same site is used by equestrians and hikers using the Sage Hen Trail. Provision will be made to make that access open for those uses.