



VOTER INFORMATION PAMPHLET

2020 GENERAL ELECTION
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD

Proposition #10

The arguments for or against a ballot proposition are the opinions of the authors.



PROPOSITION # 10

PROPOSITION #10 TEXT:

Shall Grand County adopt the alternate form of government known as the Council- Manager Form, pursuant to the Optional Plan for Grand County Government that the study committee has recommended?

- FOR
 AGAINST

Argument **FOR** Proposition #10:

The passage of House Bill 224 in 2018 required that Grand County change its form of government to one of the four forms of government allowed by Utah statute. The Grand County Change in Form of Government Study Committee, a diverse group of seven county voters, was created by the County Council and tasked with studying those approved forms of government and recommending to the voters of Grand County the one that best fit the needs of this county.

Over the course of 10 months the Committee held over twenty open public meetings to solicit citizen input including: a special educational meeting at Star Hall led by Attorney Gavin Anderson and four public open houses to answer citizen questions and discuss the differences in the 4 forms of government. The Committee also conducted an anonymous citizen survey and received over 250 responses. Individual in-person interviews were conducted with county council members, county elected officials, the County Council Administrator, and all county department heads.

Based on the strong preference expressed through public input for a form of government with a separation of powers, along with interviews, contact with other counties, and hours of discussion, the Study Committee recommended that a Plan for a council-manager form of government be submitted to the voters. This Council would have the legislative authority and would hire a professional manager who would have the executive responsibility and authority to manage the county departments and assure the proper operation of the county within the framework of regulation, policy, and budget established by the council. Any county manager operating outside of their authority would be subject to removal by the council. Council members would be elected "at large", allowing voters to vote for all five council seats.

The county council members would be part-time officials and would not receive benefits beyond salary. The base annual salaries would be reduced from \$36,425 to \$22,200 for the chair, and from \$31,000 to \$19,200 for the remaining council members for a total savings of \$123,625 each year.

In 2020, the State Legislature grandfathered the Grand County Change of County Government process into legislation, but prohibited small counties in the future from ever selecting a county council form of government.

If Prop 10 is voted down, Grand County voters will lose the opportunity to change to a council-manager form of government for all time.

We recommend voting FOR Prop 10.

For more information go to: <https://grandcountyutah.net/984/Changing-Form-of-Government>

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Argument **AGAINST** Proposition #10:

This ballot proposition would take executive authority away from the county's elected, legislative body and, instead, give executive authority to an unelected, appointed county manager.

Moab City has a similar council-manager form of government. This proposition would make the county's government structure more like the city's.

As explained below, this council-manager arrangement would likely make county government less transparent and less responsive to voters.

It is important to note that if this proposition fails, the county legislative body could still choose to hire a county manager and delegate some responsibilities for running day-to-day operations, as it has done in the past. However, the legislative body would have more flexibility in making sure that the county government remains responsive to voters.

The council-manager form of government in proposition 10 treats executive authority in a rigid and inflexible way. A "No" vote on this proposition would give the county more flexibility and better ability to respond to changing times and changing needs of citizens.

In recent years, Moab City has experienced the following issues with its council-manager form of government:

- A very unpopular city manager caused a lot of disruption, and the city council's hands were tied in dealing with the situation.
- Controversial projects were approved by a city manager, without the legal requirement for wide public input.

By taking executive authority away from elected representatives and transferring it to an unelected county manager, problems similar to the above would become more likely in Grand County.

Advocates for proposition 10 seem worried that if our elected representatives have executive authority, they will use that authority to micromanage county staff. But Grand County's legislative body has had executive authority for decades, and this has not been an issue thus far. Proposition 10 is proposing several big, significant changes to address a problem that doesn't really seem to exist.

Two additional reasons to vote "No" on proposition 10: Earlier this year, the state legislature *again* rewrote the rules on county forms of government, this time prohibiting counties with smaller populations (such as Grand County) from adopting council-manager forms. Thus, if proposition 10 passes, Grand County would *again* have a "non-conforming" form of government, and it is likely that in the future we would once again be required to modify it, as recently happened with our longstanding and popular plan that had been in place since 1992.

As a final note, proposition 10 would also remove districts and reduce the number of elected members' seats. Voters who like our current mixture of districts and at-large seats should vote "No" on prop. 10. Voters who prefer commissions to council-manager forms should also vote "No" on 10, since propositions 16 and 17 give voters additional options on districts and on the number of seats.

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Rebuttal against argument for Proposition #10:

The Study Committee's proposal, though well-intentioned, contains two serious flaws.

First, the proposal puts **too much power** into the hands of an **unelected** county manager. In state and federal government, we have separation of powers, but the executive (governor or president) is elected, not appointed. The appointed manager in the Study Committee proposal would not be directly accountable to voters, and that increases the chances that county staff will be less responsive to voters' concerns.

If Prop 10 fails, Grand County will still have a professional county manager, but the elected representatives will have more flexibility in managing the county.

Second, Prop 10 makes changes which would likely result in a less political and geographic diversity on the County Council. The number of seats would be reduced from seven to five, which directly reduces the variety of viewpoints represented on the Council. Under Prop 10, **all five council members would be elected by exactly the same pool of voters. The likely result is that all five council members would share similar political beliefs.** Moab City elects all five of its council members at large, and this has resulted in a City Council where all five members share similar views.

The advertised salary savings are only a tiny fraction of the overall county budget, and in any case would not last long because under Prop 10 council members would still be able to set their own salaries.

We can do better than Prop 10. **Vote NO on Prop 10.**

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