

Five County Association of Governments

1070 West 1600 South, Building B
St. George, Utah 84770

Fax (435) 673-3540



SOUTHWEST UTAH

Post Office Box 1550
St. George, Utah 84771

Office (435) 673-3548

[THESE MINUTES WERE APPROVED ON NOVEMBER 8, 2023]

MINUTES FIVE COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2023, at 1:30 P.M.

MEETING HELD AT: SOUTHWEST UTAH PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT BUILDING
260 DL SARGENT DR, CEDAR CITY, UTAH
MEETING WAS ALSO AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC VIA A ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Commissioner Celeste Meyeres
Commissioner Paul Cozzens
Commissioner Gil Almquist
Commissioner Wade Hollingshead
Commissioner Jerry Taylor
Hurricane City Mayor Nannette Billings
Escalante City Mayor Melanie Torgersen
Milford City Mayor Nolan Davis
Cedar City Mayor Garth Green
Orderville Town Mayor Lyle Goulding
Tyler Fails
Curtis Barney (via Zoom)
Henrie Walton (via Zoom)

REPRESENTING

Kane County Commission
Iron County Commission
Washington County Commission
Beaver County Commission
Garfield County Commission
Washington County Mayors
Garfield County Mayors
Beaver County Mayors
Iron County Mayors
Kane County Mayors
Beaver County School Board
Garfield County School Board
Utah Tech University (ex-officio member)

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Bryan Thiriot
Gary Zabriskie

Nate Wiberg

Kim Cooper
Kyle Wilson
Jason Brown
Allegra Sturdevant
Cody Lutz
Laura Hansen
Monica Gurule

REPRESENTING

Five County AOG Executive Director
Five County AOG Deputy Director/Chief Technology Officer/
Director of Community and Economic Development
Five County AOG Community and Economic Development
Division Planning Manager
Five County AOG Community Action Partnership Director
Senator Mitt Romney
V.P. of Education & Communications, Envision Utah
Communications Specialist, Envision Utah
Planning Project Manager, Envision Utah
State Planning Coordinator, Governor's Office of Planning & Budget
Grant Specialist, Children's Service Society of Utah

BEAVER

GARFIELD

IRON

KANE

WASHINGTON

AGENDA ITEM I. Welcome by the Chair.

At 1:30 p.m., Kane County Commissioner Celeste Meyeres, Steering Committee Chair, after a roll call of members present, confirmed, and acknowledged that there was a quorum present, enabling the meeting to occur. She welcomed everyone to the Steering Committee meeting on Wednesday, October 11, 2023, and stated that the location of the meeting was at the Southwest Utah Public Health Department building at 260 DL Sargent Drive in Cedar City. She also acknowledged the participants on ZOOM.

AGENDA ITEM II. Pledge of Allegiance.

At the request of the Chair, Mayor Nolan Davis led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ITEM III. Review and Approve Draft Minutes from August 9 , 2023 meeting.

Following the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance, the Chair entertained a motion to approve the draft minutes for the August 9, 2023 Steering Committee meeting.

Commissioner Gil Almquist moved to approve the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Paul Cozzens.

The Chair, after asking for any needed discussion, and seeing there was none, called for a vote.

The vote of the Steering Committee members was unanimous in the affirmative to approve the minutes as presented.

AGENDA ITEM IV. A-95 Areawide Clearinghouse Reviews.

The Chair moved the meeting onto agenda item four, "A-95 Areawide Clearinghouse Reviews". She turned the meeting over to Mr. Gary Zabriskie, Deputy Director at the Association, who referred everyone to page 15 in their packet.

Mr. Zabriskie explained that these two A-95 Areawide Clearinghouse Reviews regard proposed School and Institutional Lands Trust Administration (SITLA) range improvement projects, one in Iron County, and a second proposed range improvement project in Garfield County.

He said that the first one is a livestock water system out in western Iron County. He said that he contacted the county and they are supportive of all these projects to do rangeland improvements. Mr. Zabriskie explained that this board can either be supportive, not supportive, or remain neutral on these areawide clearinghouse reviews. He did say that SITLA, of course, may do whatever they want, but they do take these comments that you may have here into consideration in these projects. Mr. Zabriskie said that the second one was a late arrival and therefore he wasn't able to get the actual review sent out to you prior to the meeting but is in the packet in front of the Board now. He said he spoke with Commissioner Taylor last week after the CIB meeting to get the County's view on this. Mr. Zabriskie said that this is a rangeland improvement project in Garfield County, southeast of the town of Hatch, where the grazing committee wants to chain and seed 431 acres of pinyon and juniper area in the sagebrush area and put in a water line and trough out there. He

explained that this project is in conjunction with a project that is being done by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The other one, in Iron County, is in conjunction with some things with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Mr. Zabriskie explained that the Steering Committee can either do both reviews together, or if you wanted to separate them, can do two votes, but that is up to the Board. He again stated that the Board can either be supportive, neutral, or not support any proposed project. He said if the Board members want make comments that you want recorded in the minutes, that can be done as well. Mr. Zabriskie said he sends a form in to SITLA that says our Board met as an A-95 clearinghouse and was supportive, not supportive, or neutral on a project. He said he can include any comments if the Board wishes.

The Chair stated that she can probably guess how Commissioner Taylor is going to respond to this, but asked him if he wanted to say a few words? Commissioner Taylor responded that he was really good with the project in Garfield County. She asked the same question of Commissioner Cozzens who responded he was good with the one in Iron County.

The consensus of the Board was to make a single motion. The Chair entertained a motion on the A-95 Areawide Clearinghouse reviews.

Commissioner Jerry Taylor moved to support both the Garfield County and Iron County proposed rangeland improvement projects on SITLA lands in those respective counties. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Paul Cozzens.

The Chair, after asking for any needed discussion, and seeing there was none, called for a vote.

The vote of the Steering Committee members was unanimous in the affirmative to support both the Garfield County and Iron County proposed rangeland improvement projects on SITLA lands in those respective counties.

AGENDA ITEM V. Review and Support Determination by Steering Committee of FY2024 2nd Trimester CIB applications.

The Chair moved onto agenda item number five which is to review and make a support determination by the Steering Committee of FY2024 2nd Trimester CIB applications. Mr. Zabriskie explained that Milford City was the only applicant during this trimester of CIB. He said that they are doing a wastewater project, and this will be the first phase. He said that they will likely come back to the CIB for a later phase. He said that the items in this application are the most critical items that were listed, and they are requesting approximately \$2 million, as half-grant, half-loan. Mr. Zabriskie explained that the CIB policies require that each AOG's governing board review all CIB applications from entities in their region and consider whether to be supportive, not supportive, or remain neutral on that application. He said that this one is presented to see how this board feels about this project. He said that this project, because it is a sewer project is likely to be on the January 2024 CIB agenda when Milford representatives will go up to a board meeting in Salt Lake. He said that this is what they call an areawide clearinghouse of the application to see how our Board feels.

Commissioner Jerry Taylor, who is our region's representative serving on the Utah Permanent Community Impact Fund Board, explained that right now for this next trimester the CIB has \$104 million in application asks, and they figure the CIB will have about \$37 million in actual dollars to allocate. He said that they only have a third of the funding for the amount of asks. He said that there are some pretty big asks in there. Mr. Zabriskie opined that there are some pretty unreasonable asks, such as swimming pools right now, when there is such a significant downturn in production in the state and no leasing of federal land taking place in the state, because of federal government policies put forth by the current Administration.

The Chair asked to hear from Milford City Mayor Nolan Davis about their project. Mayor Davis explained that this project consists of completely redoing one of their sewer lift stations. He said that they have two lift stations and this is the one they want to start repairing. He said that they have got to do it in phases. He said that the total project if everything that is needed was done now would be over \$7 million. He said that there is no way they can go ask and expect that kind of money from CIB. He said that he explained it to their City Council, the way CIB has been working, that chances of getting a 50% grant/50% loan is going to be, in his opinion, slim to none, but they still wanted to make the presentation and try to go off and talk to the CIB board in January. He said that they want to do the overall project in a couple of phases. He said the immediate problem is they have got to do phase one now because the lift station is bad. He said, luckily, when it went down, they had a backup pump, but the problem is they don't make those pumps anymore, they would have to specially build one, and they are in a confined space, where you have to put people down, which they are not allowed to do anymore. He said part of the bigger project needs is they have trouble with the clay liners in Lagoon Cell 2, so this application is just for the first of two phases, and is probably the most important. He said that he kind of wanted to hold off for another six or eight months and see where they are at and see where the CIB was at, but the Council wanted to go ahead and push it through and see what happened.

Washington County Commissioner Gil Almquist said that this is a good project that serves a definite "need", not a "want". He said that he thinks this is a great project and that they ought to ask for it now and get their foot in the door and compared with the other projects that are there that are less worthy, there's nothing more worthy than handling sewer effluent, because it has so many other negative probabilities if it's not treated properly. The Chair said that that sounded like a motion.

Commissioner Almquist moved to support the Milford City CIB application as presented. The motion was seconded by Beaver County Commissioner Wade Hollingshead.

The Chair, after asking for any needed discussion, and seeing there was none, called for a vote.

The vote of the Steering Committee members was unanimous in the affirmative to support the Milford City CIB application as presented.

Commissioner Taylor asked the Chair if he could indulge the Board for minute? The Chair turned the time over to Commissioner Taylor. He said that, as a member of the CIB, he thought back in the day, as a young man in Escalante, which was a long time ago, every spring their community would come together and the high school would let out two or three days, and the students and faculty would all go clean out the ditches for the community. Throughout the years they've done a lot of that stuff as communities, and then all of a sudden, the last few years, they've got away from

doing those types of project, helping out and whatnot. He said he would like to see when you come before CIB anymore, that an applicant community has some input, not just dollars, but if there's anything they can do to further a project with volunteerism. He said that wouldn't necessarily be applicable to this project, but mentioned Mayor Torgerson's Escalante Clinic project that just got funded. He questioned whether on a project like that is there things like maybe landscaping the local adults and youth could help with, or is there something that they could do as a community to donate some time to be able to help out? Commissioner Taylor said that he just wanted everyone to think about that, to get more volunteers to help with these projects. He said that when the communities in rural Utah were settled, they raised barns together, built homes together, and built churches. He said that local folks did a lot of that, and he thinks the state of Utah needs to get back to more of that, and more volunteerism in many areas. He asked Mayor Torgersen to take a look at it, to see if there is a part of it that the city could do, even if it's just a little bit to show that the people are helping with it? Mayor Davis said that he thinks that is a good idea because the problem he sees with it, and it goes back to what Commissioner Taylor said, everybody used to volunteer to take care of their communities, but today nobody wants to do that, and they want to rely on the CIB or other government agencies to go ahead and do all the funding, so all they've got to do is sit back and sign their name on a piece of paper and then get the money. Mayor Davis said that it shouldn't work that way. He said that they have got to give back to the community somehow, and he thinks Commissioner Taylor made a good point that they all need to get everybody involved to participate in this, and not just rely on the CIB to give us \$2 million or \$3 million and then go out and find somebody to do it.

Mayor Torgerson put in a little plug in for Garfield County saying they have had multiple city projects, building an elementary school, as well as a number of different buildings, and Garfield County has stepped up and helped them with every project, donated money and labor, as has J.T. Steel. Commissioner Almquist said that communities and counties all need to get their attorneys to write indemnification policies that will allow private citizens to be on public property and not sue the county or the city if they get their nighty in a knot. Commissioner Almquist said if a person helped the city out and said "I fell off this", or "I did that" the city needs some kind of indemnification. He said that they need something and that that was a good point, because that's where it all changed was when people said, as an example, "If they sign it or whatever and say, I am helping with this project and I'm doing it at my own volition". He said that UCIP already has some language for that, so maybe we should target them for finding out. Iron County Commissioner Paul Cozzens said that a great example of that is Parowan City. He said that they wanted to build a new swimming pool and when they got the quotes, it was over \$10 million for that little town. He said that, of course they couldn't afford it, so they all came together and refurbished their old pool. He said that they really came together and they did it for under \$500,000 and it's beautiful and was an awesome project. He said that the kids helped, everybody helped, and they have ownership.

AGENDA ITEM VI. Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) - Approval by Steering Committee.

Mr. Nate Wiberg, Five County Association of Government's Planning Manager in the Community and Economic Development Division, was recognized by the Chair to present on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, which is also called CEDS for short. Mr. Wiberg said that some may have already heard a little bit about this since we've talked about this several times throughout the planning process here at Steering Committee. He said that Executive Director Bryan Thiriote and him had already been out to some of the counties, meeting with the County

Commissions. He said that the CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development. He said the CEDS is a result of regionally owned planning processes designed to build capacity and guide economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region. He explained that it is also designed to increase collaboration among communities and counties in a region. He said that the AOG staff tries to coordinate with the county economic development directors on a regular basis to make sure to get each county's priorities into CEDS. He said that when he says priorities, he didn't mean projects. He said that the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), is no longer looking for this plan to spell out specific projects. He said that EDA wants to see priorities in the plan, and most of that is in the strengths and weaknesses section. He said that this plan was really put together using data gathered from regional stakeholder engagement sessions and correspondence via email or phone. He said that the AOG put together a regional business survey at the AOG, and the AOG staff asked all of the chambers of commerce to push that out through their lists. Mr. Wiberg said that the AOG got some pretty good feedback, not as many as would have liked, but did get some feedback from the businesses in our communities, which was really good. He said that we've never done that before for our CEDS process. He said that the AOG also hired a consultant to put together an area sector analysis plan to kind of identify the types of economic development that is both desirable to our region and also is a good match. He explained that the analysis was done through Utah State University through their Western Rural Development Center.

Mr. Wiberg said that the AOG also coordinated with the state of Utah with their Coordinated Action Plan for Economic Development. He said the AOG also put together the Five County Recovery and Resiliency Economic Development Plan. This plan just references other socioeconomic data that you can find in here. He said if any of the cities and towns and the counties can't link directly to the data, they are always welcome to ask him, and he'll get the plan studies or raw data. He finished by stating that the AOG has gone through a 30-day public comment process, and the last thing needed to make this plan final is board approval. He emphasized the fact that "adoption" of the plan is not required, just an approval.

Commissioner Almquist commented that the plan was very well put together. The Chair stated that she likes all the pictures. Mr. Wiberg said that the addition of a lot of pictures was Mr. Bryan Thiriot's idea. Mr. Thiriot said that he told Mr. Wiberg that we need pictures from all areas in this region. The Chair said she recognized most of those places in the pictures.

The Chair thanked Mr. Wiberg for the information and stated that what is on the table is to approve or deny approval for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, and she entertained a motion.

Hurricane Mayor Nannette Billings moved that the Steering Committee of the Five County Association of Governments approve the Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The motion was seconded by Mayor Nolan Davis.

The Chair, after asking for any needed discussion, and seeing there was none, called for a vote.

The vote of the members was unanimous to approve the Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

The Chair commented that the plan was very well done.

Beaver Commissioner Wade Hollingshead asked if the plan information was available somewhere to the public? Mr. Wiberg stated that it is both on the Five County AOG's main website at <http://www.fivecounty.utah.gov> as well as the AOG's economic development website <https://www.fivecountyecon.org>. He said that there is also a copy available in our office for the public. Commissioner Hollingshead asked about the economic development back in the counties and whether they have this information? Mr. Wiberg said that a copy of this plan was sent to all of the economic development directors, the chambers of commerce, and to this board.

AGENDA ITEM VII. Statewide Growth Survey Results.

The Chair recognized Mr. Jason Brown with Envision Utah. He said that they have been working on this statewide growth conversation in partnership with the Governor's office. He explained that Envision Utah is a nonprofit organization that has been around for about 25 years, and their goal is to help make sure that Utah is planning for the future and preparing for the growth that we have and maintaining our great quality of life, even in the face of our rapid growth in Utah. He said that this is what they do, and they have been partnering with the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (GOPB). He explained that this project, the "Guiding Our Growth" Initiative, is a statewide conversation about Utah's future, and they earlier met with the Steering Committee, he said he thinks it ended up being virtually, because of the snowstorm about a year ago, when they were first kicking this off, and they spent about an hour discussing some of the growth challenges that this region is experiencing, whether in a really rapidly growing area or a less rapidly growing area. He said that they have since then conducted a massive survey with the public in Utah, and they are here to share some of those results, and then also talk about what these results mean moving forward, and get input on some potential policies for the state or other things that can be done locally or what kind of supports entities might need to help implement some of the strategies that are coming out of this. He said that this initiative was funded by the Utah Legislature, in the 2022 session, and then it took a little while to get off the ground. He said that they got everything on board and working, and then last fall, they traveled all around the state holding workshops to gather input, and then they surveyed the public over the last few months, and now they are doing their second round of traveling to talk about where this goes from here. He said that the basic premise of this effort is that Utah is a pretty great place to live, but the things that make Utah great also make Utah grow. He said for the most part, we hope that our kids grow up and stay here. He said that we have people who move in and out of state, but we're a really rapidly growing state, and growth is a challenge that takes some effort to figure out how to accommodate and deal with that growth.

He said that in the first phase of this, they traveled around to educate Utahns of the effects of the different growth decisions we can make, and the effects and trade-offs of those decisions. He said that they want to solicit input from the public to understand how people want us to grow. He said that this is kind of where we are now. He said that they want to try to generate a list of what they are calling big ideas or guidance for decision-makers or policymakers. He explained that they want to make sure that whatever happens with the information they have gotten from the public is supportive of existing local and regional planning efforts. He said that they then want to identify the tools and resources needed on a local level to help successfully guide and deal with the growth, or sometimes lack of growth, that areas are experiencing.

He said that phase two of this project went all through summer with the big survey. He said that Mr. Cody Lutz is going to talk in detail about what they have learned from that. He said that they

had some 20,000 Utah residents participate in that survey and weigh in on what they want for the future of the state, how they think the state should deal with and accommodate growth. He said that Mr. Lutz will get into the details of how many from the Five County region answered and where those all came from. Mr. Brown mentioned that he was supposed to have started off by mentioning that Ms. Laura Hansen, the state planning coordinator, who has sort of been the key point of this was going to walk in this door any minute. He said that she was supposed to be giving this part of the presentation, but she was at a meeting about this until 9:30 that morning and got in her car as quick as she could and that she'll be there any minute. He said that Mr. Lutz was going to talk about the survey results, and then after that they want to have a discussion with the Board and they have a few questions they will want the Board's help in answering so that they can capture as much input as we can.

Mr. Cody Lutz, with Envision Utah, introduced himself. He said, just to reiterate what Mr. Jason Brown had said, this whole effort "Guiding Our Growth" has really been pushed by the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, and they have been helping with the public engagement side of things by doing things like putting together this big survey and things like that. He reiterated that Ms. Laura Hansen will be joining there shortly. He said that they put out this big survey. He said that the phase of the project that Mr. Brown just introduced was a big survey to kind of see how Utahns are feeling about growth and how they think we should address growth-related issues. He said that they have heard more and more that people are feeling a little bit overwhelmed by the growth. He said that those in this region may have felt that as well. He said that was the real impetus that drove them to want to put out this survey. He said they recognize that not all different areas are experiencing the same issues related with growth, so they broke up the survey into three different surveys. He explained that there is one for urban areas, one for growing rural areas, and then there is a separate one for areas that aren't growing so much. He said they weren't sure if everyone from the five-county region would be represented at this meeting so they are coming back down to Washington County next week, so the results they are presenting today just have the other four counties. He said that they can get those results to the Steering Committee members as well, or if one attends that meeting on Tuesday, they will get them. He said that Cedar City is broken up by zip code, so Cedar City got the urban ones as well as St. George got the urban questions. He said that there is some growing rural areas. He said that all of Garfield County is slow and no growth. Commissioner Taylor stated that Garfield County is 93 percent federally owned, so it is hard to grow. Mr. Lutz showed a slide that showed the number of responses that were collected from the zip codes in this region. He said that most of them were from the urban areas, largely because the population is bigger. He said that there is not as many folks in the less populated areas.

He said that Mr. Bryan Thiriot and his staff, and a lot of the staff of other AOGs, and some other stakeholders, were involved with several rounds of meetings to create the survey to decide what issues they focus on, and how it's structured. He explained that the first part of the survey compared different growth options, and they let people rate their level of support, or if they oppose different growth options. He said that the second part of the survey talks about different big ideas, and that's more of traditional polling, where it just is a list of different ideas, or policies, that can be pursued, and people just selected the ones that they wanted to see happen. He said that the growth options were tied into four separate topics— housing, water, open space, and transportation. He said that within each of those, there's four options. He said that they tried to display different tradeoffs and help people make informed choices about which of those realistic options they'd like to pursue. He explained that he would just go ahead and jump into the results here. He apologized

that they didn't have Washington County in this, but said they can get those out, if anyone wants to follow up, or make it to that meeting next week.

The group made a PowerPoint presentation. This covered Phase 3 of the Envision Utah project. The presentation listed the agenda items that they were trying to accomplish in Phase 3. Those included: 1. Guiding Our growth; 2. Survey Overview; 3. Survey results; and 4. A discussion of what do we do with these results. A slide showed the following population figures for the state of Utah: 2010 population 2,772,667; 2020 population 3,284,823; and projected populations: 2030 population 3,879,161; 2040 population 4,440,560; 2050 population 4,969,929; and 2060 population 5,450,598. They explained that the goals of the effort are to: 1. Educate Utahns on the effects of growth decisions; 2. Solicit input on Utahns' growth preferences; 3. Generate a list of Big Ideas and guidance for decision makers; 4. Support existing local and regional planning efforts; and 5. Identify the tools and resources needed by local governments to successfully guide their own growth. They explained a timeline of the overall Guiding Our Growth project. Phase One from Fall 2022 to Spring 2023 was to Educate and Invite; Phase Two from May 2023 through August 2023 was to Invite and Inspire; and Phase Three in the fall of 2023 is to Inspire and Act.

They explained that there were three distinct surveys designed to fit specific types of communities: Urban; Growing Rural; and Slow/No Growth Rural. They explained that in the survey Utahns shared four topics as top priorities for managing growth: Housing; Water; Transportation; and Open Space and Recreation.

They explained in a number of slides the preferred options in urban areas in the Five County region and statewide, and then also the preferred options in rural areas of the Five County region, and statewide.

They explained that they received 616 comments that had these key takeaways: A preference for developing housing within already developed area as opposed to expanding into new land around cities; and Conversations revolving around concerns related to traffic, public transportation and housing costs.

They said it was discovered that 67% of respondents to the survey support or strongly support the conservation of water in both new development and existing communities with water-wise landscaping.

They said that the survey determined that Utahns want to use public transit, trails, bicycles, and cars to get around. They said it was discovered that 63% of respondents to the survey support or strongly support prioritizing convenient walking, biking and public transportation in many town centers. They said it was discovered that 58% of respondents to the survey support balanced investments in walking, biking, and transit in existing cities with additional roads and highways to serve new suburbs. They said it was discovered that 59% of respondents to the survey want to focus new development along main streets to create a lively town center and maintain country roads outside of town. Two interesting results of the survey were presented. They said it was discovered that only 47% of respondents to the survey support building new housing on smaller lots close to town, and only 44% of respondents to the survey support restricting housing development as a strategy to preserve open space.

They reported that Utahns living in rural areas that are not experiencing growth do not support significant growth or change. They said that the survey showed that 36% prefer to add some job opportunities; 33% want their community to stay the same, even though that might mean jobs for current and future generations are hard to come by; and only 14% want to add a lot of job opportunities.

As part of their presentation they provided attendees with an interactive “Active Poll” through the use of a Slido.com QR-Code on the screen. The first question asked: “What kinds of local actions would be most meaningful to your community in guiding our growth?” Some of the answers from attendees were: relax zoning density; create housing and jobs; increase water storage; and provide education on the role of government. The second question asked: “What kinds of state policy changes (if any) or strategic investments would be most meaningful to your community in guiding growth?” Some of the answers from attendees were: education of the role of government; stopping unfunded mandates; defend local control; easier access to funding; we have enough water; and stop climate crisis rhetoric. The third question asked: “Which of the following resources would be of most value to your community as you’re considering local planning and decision making?” The choices given were: 1. Funding; 2. grant opportunities; 3. data and research to back up decisions; 4. best practices toolboxes; 5. model ordinances; 6. technical assistance; and 7. webinars and training. While three through seven each received a small number of votes, the two that were almost unanimous were: 1. finding grant opportunities; and 2. grant opportunities.

Ms. Laura Hansen arrived and after providing an introduction of herself, and explaining her role in the Governor’s office, she finished by stating that we all have to take action to maintain our quality of life in Utah. They said that to accomplish that they are: 1. sharing the survey results widely; 2. facilitating a series of solution development workshops; 3. exploring how well the survey results match existing plans; 4. developing a list of recommendations to policy makers; and 5. developing a set of performance metrics to evaluate progress.

She answered a question about the survey presentation at Steering Committee focused on the rural counties and Iron County, to the exclusion of Washington County. She said that the Washington County survey results will be presented at the upcoming Dixie Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Executive Council. She said if anyone is not able to make it to the DTEC meeting, she can send those Washington County results out. She finished by stating that the statewide and random sampling results are available on the “Guiding Our Growth” website: <https://GuidingOurGrowth.Utah.gov> She said if for some reason you didn’t answer the survey yourself, you can actually see the survey questions on there, and then the statewide survey results.

The Chair thanked the group for their presentation.

AGENDA ITEM VIII. AOG Executive Director Meetings with County Commissions – Update.

Mr. Bryan Thiriot, Five County AOG Executive Director, explained that he and Mr. Nate Wiberg have attended meetings with the commissioners in Garfield County, Iron County, and Kane County, and are planning to go to Beaver County next Tuesday. He said that they have been asked to reschedule Washington County for December. He said that by the end of the year, they will have attended all of the county commission meetings. He said that it is nice to be able to go out and talk to all the county commissioners. He mentioned that one thing he had learned in Garfield County is that Commissioner Pollack would like to increase the number of scholarships for the annual Utah

Congressional Briefing from 20 to almost 35. He said that 40 is what he would like to do. He said the only issue is finding a way to pay for it. He said that they want to be able to get more congressional staffers out here to the state of Utah.

AGENDA ITEM IX. Congressional Staff Updates.

The Chair recognized Mr. Kyle Wilson with Senator Mitt Romney's office. He said that he can vouch for the Five and Six County AOG congressional briefing trips, and said that the relationships that are made on those is invaluable. He said that they will go to serve rural Utah for a long, long time. He said that it is about the staffers. He said that staffers communicate one with another. He said that the number of calls that he has had already, and he is friends with a few of those folks on social media, that we talk to almost daily now just from that innocuous seeming trip, so it is invaluable. He said that those are relationships that will help us for a long time. He briefly described what the Congressional Briefing trip is, and explained a trip where the Five and Six county AOG, and the associated counties, contribute and the state and some agencies contribute money to fly congressional staffers out, most of whom are from Democrat districts or work for Democrats on committees. He said that they have been effective at reaching across the aisle. He said for this year's trip in particular, the attendees were so curious and authentic and genuine with their questions. He said that there were some things that we disagreed upon in terms of principles and values, but by and large, it was a really, really, good group, and he said that he could work with that kind of people all day long. Mayor Nannette Billings said that right from the very start, from the very minute we went to dinner that night, it was like, it was interesting, their comments, because we were with one young female staffer from New York City who had only been in New York City and to Washington, D.C., and she said she had no idea there was this kind of open land. She said that you see this in a movie, but you don't ever stand in it, so people don't know. She said this staffer said she thought that it was just all used up space, and there was no more space for anything else. The Chair said the trip gives us an opportunity to kind of guide that thought process, because if you've never seen it, then the very first thing you're going to think is, we need to keep it this way forever and ever, and the federal government can help with that. She said that from her perspective, as a commissioner in one of these counties, that is 90% federal land, we need to have some livelihoods and ability to thrive and have communities and have people living in our county. She said that we have just got to be careful that we guide those perceptions and show all sides of things. Mayor Billings said that it was very effective how it was explained to the staffers that came on this trip that even the search and rescue or people that are on your ambulance or fire that they are volunteers. Those people said, I didn't know there were volunteers. They didn't even think that you'd have a volunteer for that, so it was very effective. Mr. Tyler Fails stated that if it wasn't for their volunteers in their public safety, they couldn't operate. Mr. Wilson said that it was eye-opening for those folks and he thinks they enjoyed learning about it. He said that if nothing else, if the only thing they learned while attending is the term "active management", then it would be an overwhelming success, but it yields way, way more, and that is a good thing. Commissioner Taylor stated that the Utah's delegation staffers all played a very good part in that and they appreciate them. Mr. Wilson stated that for the last month, our lives have all revolved around preventing a shutdown that he was 99.9 % sure was going to happen anyway, and it didn't, yet. He stated that with that being said, the Senate is in recess. He said that the House is busy cutting each other's throat over the speaker race, and so there's not a whole lot of work happening in Washington right now, which means everyone can hang on to their pocketbooks for a little while longer. He said that last month the Senate passed a resolution that restored, or clarified, the Senate's dress code, which is something that they are obviously in favor of. He said that Senator Romney chaired a few

committees with oversight hearings for Korea, China, and some artificial intelligence issues, but otherwise there's not a lot going on, and there's not a lot to report. He said that they are all heartbroken over the Israeli situation and are monitoring that as closely and in real time as much as possible. He said that this was all he had to report on and said if there's anything he and the other staff can do for anyone, to please let him know. The Chair thanked Mr. Wilson for his brief update.

AGENDA ITEM XI. State Agency Updates.

The Chair moved onto State Agency Updates. Mr. Bryan Thiriot explained that Mr. David Busk with the Utah Department of Workforce Services would be unable to attend that day and asked Mr. Thiriot to give his regrets to the committee.

AGENDA ITEM XII. Universities and Technical Colleges Updates.

The Chair invited Mr. Henry Walton, with Utah Tech University, who was participating via the ZOOM video conference to present. Mr. Walton said that he didn't have too much to report today. He said they just had the State of the University address, and they reviewed 10 years of growth and of being a university. He said that they became a university in 2013. He said they have had 42% enrollment growth over those years to where now they have over 12,500 students. He said they have increase retention of students by 5% and increased credentials by 91%. He said from 2013 to 2023 they awarded 24,400 degrees and started 204 new academic programs. He said that they are working hard to increase opportunities for young people in Washington County and Southwest Utah to stay in this area with good paying jobs. He said that they have created 29 new centers, labs, and institutes. He said donations have significantly increased from \$2 million in 2013 to \$13 million in 2023. He said they have built a significant number of new buildings on campus and have renovated the stadium. He finished by saying they had just had a ribbon cutting for the renovations to Heritage Cove which is part of the Encampment Mall, to honor the heritage of the early pioneers and the founding of "Dixie".

The Chair thanked Mr. Walton for participating via ZOOM.

AGENDA ITEM XIII. Local Affairs Discussions, if needed.

The Chair recognized Ms. Monica Gurule, Grant Specialist with the Children's Service Society of Utah. She explained that growth is inevitably happening, whether you want to or not in all the communities. She said that they are hoping that employers across Utah will be open to starting to offer a childcare benefit to their employees in some capacity. She said that employer's first thoughts when they say that, is they don't have the funding to restructure their benefits package, which is understandable, and she says that she gets that, because that is asking for a lot. She said that there are different ways to offer it. She said that the employer can partner with a provider to receive funding. She said to do so they would need to create some type of a partnership with a business, and that business could be donating goods, and then that provider gives your employees priority enrollment. She said that childcare is something that many don't often associate with growth and employment and employee reappointment and retention, but she explained that she can only work because she has a childcare provider, and most people can only work because there is a childcare provider. She said that in Cedar City, in particular, it has been described as a childcare desert. She said that they have looked at some of the childcare in Beaver, and there's just not available enough

childcare spots for what is needed, and especially for growth. She explained that she was there just to let you know that this grant is available, and if anyone wants more information, she is happy to give it or meet with you or answer any questions. She explained the funding that is available and how it is open until September of 2024 to spend \$4 million and they plan open as many child cares in rural Utah. Mr. Zabriskie asked how this coordinates, works with, or dovetails with the Care About Child Care, which Five County is a provider in a 10 county area, working with our five counties and in the Six County AOG area with the exception of Juab County? She explained when providers are applying for the child care grant, they have to provide a business plan or budget plan, and a few different things, but one of the major things is they have to be a part of Care About Child Care, and being a part of Care About Child Care means that they are on a national database where parents can go and look and check what the vacancies are, but more importantly, they can go and check, are you rated high quality? Has your center been rated high quality? And they have to be a part of that system, so then where this grant isn't just offering child care to any babysitting situation, we are wanting to open high quality child care so that our kids have the best chance at the start they need, and so that's how it kind of goes together. She said they need to be a part of Care About Child Care and be a part of the quality system that Utah has. She said that their website is: <https://cssutah.org/>

AGENDA ITEM X. Adjourn.

The Chair asked if there was any other business to address. Seeing there was none, she called the meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m. and thanked everyone for attending and participating.

These minutes were transcribed, typed and edited by Mr. Gary Zabriskie, Deputy Director at the Five County Association of Governments.

The minutes were formally approved by a unanimous vote of the Steering Committee at their November 8, 2023 meeting in Cedar City, Utah.