

Utah Inland Port Authority Board 2023

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Utah Inland Port Authority Board Meeting Minutes
Monday November 6, 2023
2:00 pm
Utah State Capitol, Room 445
350 State Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84103

Board Members Present: Miles Hansen, Ryan Starks, Mike Schultz, Abby Osborne, Jerry Stevenson
Non-Voting Board Members Present: Bill Wyatt, Victoria Petro
Board Members Absent: none

UIPA Staff: Ben Hart, Benn Buys, Larry Shepherd, Lynne Mayer, Stephen Smith, Diana Gardner, Carol Watson, Amy Brown Coffin, Max Ivory, Mona Smith, Scott Wolford, Danny Stewart, Kaitlin Felsted

Others in Attendance: Brook McCarrick, Brandon Tholen, Tammy Coffey, Elita Thurber, Karol Long, Bernadette Taylor, Margaret Droling, Jim Droling, Shantal Decker, Joan Gregory, Sarah Buck, David Bennett, Heather Dove, Brain Moench, Lorin Hansen, Mason Aeschbacher, Andy Hulka, Ann O’Connell, Patricia Becnel, Gary Hanneran, Monica Hilding, Patti Hobfoll, Michael Drury, Deeda Seed, Lauren Griffeth, Shantae Decker, James King, Katie Pappas, Steve Van Maren, Leia Larsen, Holly Lopez, Camden Woll, Melissa Early, Jaime Hernandez, Abdikadir Hussein, Alexis Hanks, Joy Prince, Sean Higgins, Jeilani Athman, Kira Kaur, Fich Monsen, Brice Wallace, Elizabeth Weight,

1. **Welcome**

UIPA Board Chair, Miles Hansen, welcomed the board members, staff and public to this Utah Inland Port Authority Board Meeting.

2. **Closed Session**

At 2:05 pm the board voted to move into a closed session meeting held in the Utah State Capitol at 350 State Street, Salt Lake City, UT, 84103, for the purpose of a “strategy session to discuss the purchase, exchange, or lease of real property,” as allowed and described in Section 52-4-205 of Utah Code and sections 52-4-204 of the Open and Public meetings act.

Board member Starks made a motion to move into closed session. Board member Stevenson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed with a unanimous vote of board members present. Board members Schultz and Osborne joined the meeting after the closed session began.

Roll Call Vote:

Ryan Starks – yes
Jerry Stevenson – yes
Miles Hansen – yes

The closed session began at 2:05 pm and concluded at 2:39 pm.

3. Approval of Minutes, October 4, 2023 and October 24, 2023 Board Meetings

Board member Osborne moved to approve the minutes from the October 4, 2023 and October 24, 2023 board meetings. Board member Stevenson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Executive Director Report

UIPA Executive Director Ben Hart provided an executive director's report, he talked about the Inland Port's efforts to counter the increasing number of lower wage warehouse/distribution facilities in the Northwest Quadrant and the ability to help with more environmentally friendly development in the area. He mentioned recent news coverage of the positive impact of the port's project area creation in rural areas of the state. As the port authority is completing negotiations on the purchase and ultimate remediation of a former landfill, he noted that the things the port is doing are important and transformational.

He announced the intent to proceed with the presentation of the Tooele County and Grantsville City project areas for approval at the board's meeting on December 5, 2023 and that the Weber County project has been placed on hold.

He also discussed the grants to be awarded under the Westside community impact provisions in the interlocal agreement with Salt Lake City and announced the recommended recipients and funding amounts. The UIPA Board will make the final determination on the grant awards.

6. Budget Update

UIPA Deputy Director, CFO, and Treasurer Benn Buys provided a budget update. He summarized expenses for the first three months of FY 2023 and discussed the role of the UIPA Finance & Audit Committee.

5. Policy Presentations

UIPA Chief Compliance Officer Amy Brown Coffin discussed the annual review and edits to three UIPA policies which will be considered for approval in a future meeting:

BP-06 - Board Policy Review

Policy ensuring timely review of board policies.

BP-08 - Whistleblower Policy

Policy to provide protection to individuals who report illegal, unethical, and improper activities.

BP-09 - Internal Control Program Policy

Policy governing internal controls over agency operations, financial reporting, and compliance.

UIPA Environmental & Sustainability Manager Mona Smith presented the following policy for board consideration:

BP-17 - Wetlands Policy

Policy to maintain regulatory compliance for wetlands present in UIPA project areas.

6. Public Comment

Board Chair Hansen opened up the public comment period and invited those in the room to submit comment cards for an opportunity to speak. He reminded all that the port welcomes written public comment anytime via the UIPA website at <https://inlandportauthority.utah.gov/contact/>.

Comments made included uncertainty over the port's purpose and mission, concern over negative impact on the environment and development that encroaches on wetlands, saving the Great Salt Lake, and opponents of development feeling they are unable to participate in the process of port policymaking.

7. Review and Award of Funding, Westside Community Enrichment Initiative

The following projects were selected by the board to receive funding under this initiative.

Neighborhood House - \$100,000

Suazo Business Center - \$50,000
Tree Utah - \$50,000
Neighborworks - \$100,000
Salt Lake City Police Foundation - \$10,000

Board member Osborne moved that the UIPA board authorizes funds to be appropriated as presented for grants, from the Community Impact portion of the Westside Community Enrichment grants between the Inland Port Authority and Salt Lake City. Board member Stark seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Approval of BP-17 Wetlands Policy

Board member Starks moved to approve BP-17 Wetlands Policy, as presented. Board member Stevenson seconded the motion.

Vote:

Ryan Starks – yes
Jerry Stevenson – yes
Mike Schultz – yes
Abby Osborn – yes
Miles Hansen – yes

9. Adjourn

Board Chair Hansen adjourned the meeting.

Board Chair, Miles Hansen

Written Public Comments submitted during and after the meeting:

Patricia Hobfoll - 11/6/2023

I am writing to once again state my opposition to the inland port, and my disappointment in the lack of concern for the impacts it will have on our community - human and non-human - in the Salt Lake Valley. It is absolutely critical right now to have all hands on deck for the conservation of our Great Salt Lake, its wetlands, and the ecosystems they house. Building roads and parking lots over wetlands is not the answer. Bringing more trains, planes, and ground freight is not the answer. Our water and air is already suffering, and the port(s) only exacerbate the problems. It is time to immediately abandon all port projects in Utah.

Katie Pappas - 11/6/2023

I hope you will all take the time to read the submitted wetlands report. It is a thorough assessment of potential (probable) harms resulting from development in or near wetlands. I have also read your wetlands policy. While it identifies the process for developing in these areas, only the last two pages address UIPA's plans. Unfortunately, incentives and motivators are all optional. The best way to protect wetlands is to not build on or near them. Please stop this.

James King - 11/6/2023

1. The existence of the UIPA violates the Utah constitution, 5:2, no matter what the corrupt Utah Supreme Court says.
2. There are earthquake faults below the SITLA property or landfill.

Shantae Decker - 11/6/2023

I am a mother of 3 amazing kids.

Their lives, their future, and their safety depend on the protection of the Great Salt Lake.

The harm you are planning on inflicting on the Great Salt Lake, its wetlands and ecosystem is unacceptable.

Lorin Hansen - 11/6/2023

I want to urge the board to consider the sanctity of all life, including insects and wildlife. Everything we destroy will be part of our own destruction. Please listen to the public! Please put constituents over profit!

Thank you.

Monica Hilding - 11/6/2023

The Great Salt Lake is in a crisis situation. Wetlands are an essential part of the lake much as kidneys in the human body. Wetlands filter much of the water that eventually reaches the lake. Besides providing homes and stop over refuge for millions of migratory birds, they protect surrounding communities by providing overflow basins for spring runoff and torrential rain storms. UIPA's promises of using the best materials and methods for ensuring the safety of storm water runoff in the numerous parking structures already constructed around built warehouses have been proven false. Worthwhile suggestions by the public and scientists have been ignored.

Patricia Becnel - 11/6/2023

I attended my first Inland Port meeting yesterday at the capital. Though I have not been a proponent of the port from the beginning, I have not been actively involved in stopping it. And then my daughter had our first grandchild and everything changed. Now, more than ever I want to protect this beautiful place for her as I am sure all of you wish to do for your own children. However, there are some discrepancies in how we might achieve a vital economy while preserving a high quality of life. Ben Hart, you said that it seems no matter what you do, people will object. In most cases I agree. It is impossible to make everyone happy and so I have found the best way to move forward on anything is with collaboration, research, planning, and a holistic view. I think that is the biggest objection to the port. Developers saw vacant land and for them, vacant land meant money. Just as we had devalued the Great Salt Lake because it is a terminal lake, and the philosophy seemed to be that the water should not sit idle- it should do something tangible to be profitable. We are learning that was not a wise decision and are now pumping millions of dollars into saving the lake. I would hope we had learned something that will be applied to the concept of the port. It seems we haven't. Your actions are stating that empty land is not

valuable unless it is paved over and turned into an industrial complex. And there is the crux of the argument.

There was no long-term vision for the port. We were promised environmental standards would be followed just as now we are promised damage to wetlands will be mitigated. Yet, the construction continues, the damage to wetlands increases, truck traffic clogs our roads and our air – already out of attainment- gets worse. Do you wonder why we object? Your promises do not match your actions.

I am from San Bernardino, California. When I grew up there, it was a beautiful place to live- nestled beneath the mountains and not far from the beach. We could see across the valley on a clear day and most days were clear. However, slowly smog crept in. The Inland Port was established and the air became thick and dirty. The last few times I have been to the area, the air is so brown and polluted, we can't wait to leave. Businesses are boarded up, crime is high, and truck traffic has devastated surrounding communities. Health problems have increased and a once beautiful valley is gone. I know none of you want the same to happen here. I know you will not want to explain to your kids how you let this beautiful valley become uninhabitable.

So we are asking you to rethink the port. Stop the construction and truly bring all cohorts to the table to create a vision. Mr. Hart, yesterday again you laid blame on the Stop the Polluting Port coalition for not collaborating to help create a viable plan. Yet, for most meetings, you have excluded any public commentary. And you have also assumed that if we don't agree with you, then we are disruptive. In truth, we have done our research. We have cited other places with ports and the low paying jobs they have brought, the increased traffic, congestion and poor air quality. We have supplied economic studies showing these ports benefit a few developers, but for the most part, not the major populations. And now we have given you a well-researched, documented guideline outlining the need to preserve wetlands. I appreciate Mona's report but most of hers, from my understanding, focused on mitigating damage to wetlands. Mitigation is not the same as preserving them in their natural states. We are asking you to acknowledge the buffer zone established and to preserve our existing wetlands by not allowing construction in or in close proximity to them. The future of Utah depends on it; the Great Salt Lake depends on it, and the health and welfare of our residents deserve no less.

It is only through honest and open collaboration, well documented research, and a long-term vision that we should move forward. The port has been haphazard from the beginning, and it is time to stop wasting tax payer money and endangering our health in the hope of small economic gains. Currently we have a shortage of workers, a shortage of affordable homes for them and too much costly pollution. Why would you want to make all that worse by providing a high traffic center for low paying jobs, poor air quality and a assured destruction of the lake?

Miles, you were so kind to the little girl, Evie, who almost spoke. You said your daughter would think the same. Why are you not actively protecting this area for her?

I ask all of you to pause. To read the research submitted yesterday and to adjust or abolish your plans until your actions can match your rhetoric and if they cannot- if the port cannot be created in an environmentally sound manner, abandon it.

Thank you.