



SEVEN COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE COALITION  
MEETING MINUTES

March 14 at 10:00 a.m.

Carbon County Commission Chambers (Anchor Location + Electronic)  
751 East 100 North  
Price, Utah 84501  
(801) 712-7622

**Board Members Present:** Casey Hopes (Carbon County), Lynn Sitterud (Emery County), Greg Jensen (Sevier County), Brad Horrocks (Uintah County), Silvia Stubbs (San Juan County), Greg Miles (Duchesne County) attended electronically and Jack Lytle (Daggett County).

**Also, in attendance:** Keith Heaton, Brian Barton, Jon Stearmer, Stacey Herpel, Mike Hawley, Daniel Hawley, Melanie Sasser, Doug Rasmussen, Senator Winterton, Senator Hinkins, and Kent Wilson

**Attended telephonically:** Kelly Carter, Melissa Schnee, Jay Johnson, Will Lane, Joel Brown, Candace Powers, Deeda Seed, John Laursen, Sam Van Wetter, Ted Zukoski, and David Bennett.

**Others Present:** (Please notify staff at 385-337-0033 of any spelling corrections or if you were present and not listed.)

**Public Meeting Participation Information:**

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://jonesanddemille.zoom.us/j/86748043561>

Or Join by Telephone:

1-253-215-8782 or

1-346-248-7799 or

1-669-900-6833

Webinar ID: 867 4804 3561

**1. Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance (Casey Hopes)**

Chairman Hopes welcomed everyone to the meeting at 10:00 AM. Board members were present including Commissioner Miles who attended electronically. Commissioner Hopes then led the Pledge of Allegiance. He then moved to the second agenda item.

## 2. **Public Comment** (Casey Hopes)

Public comment was accepted verbally, during the meeting, telephonically by Zoom, and by electronic written submission at [stacey@7county.utah.gov](mailto:stacey@7county.utah.gov). Electronic written comments will be forwarded to the Board Members. All comments are summarized in the meeting minutes. A complete copy of any written comments submitted may be requested at the email address provided herein. Chairman Hopes then turned time over to Brian Barton for those wishing to make public comment electronically.

Seeing no comments online or in the Commission Room Chairman Hopes moved to the next item on the agenda.

## 3. **Approval of Meeting Minutes for February 8, 2024** (Casey Hopes)

Chairman Hopes inquired about changes or updates to the minutes, there being none requested a motion.

**Motion to approve February 8, 2024 meeting minutes made by Commissioner Jensen, seconded by Commissioner Stubbs.**

Chairman Hopes called for a vote to approve the minutes. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Hopes then moved to the next agenda item.

## 4. **Legislative Overview** (Casey Hopes)

Chairman Hopes turned the time over to Senator Winterton and Senator Hinkins. Senator Hinkins stated that they had a good session this year although there was not as much money as there has been in the past couple of years because of the federal dollars that came into the state due to COVID.

One of the highlights was Representative Watkins had an appropriation request bill for the energy center and we got \$2 million from that, it will be called Utah Energy Center or something with the name Utah in it. The board is still in the process of being made for the Energy Center. We are hopeful that this will open the doors for Rocky Mountain Power, when they upgrade their power plants.

One of the bills that I ran with this session was the water bill. A couple of years ago we started mandating outside water metering on secondary systems, and I was able to change it a year ago to exclude people off the Wasatch Front and systems with less than 1000 meters could use a master that would not have to meter it and they could use a master meter rather than individual meters on each lot. During the summer some concerns in Beaver and Parowan. In Beaver City they were getting up to close to the 1000 hookups. The whole intention was to make sure that they are getting water into the Great Salt Lake. 70% or more of the water in Utah does not go to the Great Salt Lake, so we are being penalized to do the individual metering to comply to help that so it was not really doing a lot of good. There was surplus money and in some of the bigger

districts, like the Jordan District, there was a cap on the amount of money that they could get, so this was able to raise their cap. This bill raised the cap so they can get more meters in the districts and it frees up some of the money that was appropriated, \$250 million. This will allow the bigger water districts to have extra money to help their cost. Senator Hinkins turned the time over to Senator Winterton.

Senator Winterton stated that the Energy Center will be under DNR. We will be able to tie in our conversations the past year with the Idaho National Lab and Pasco, Washington. They do a lot of studies and research on nuclear and we have been working with Wyoming. Rocky Mountain Power wants to replace these power plants in Utah with Nuclear. We are still 20 years out from having that plant operational. We ran 5 bills on this to allow Utah time to research and study the energy policy of the state and establish energy policies. This will help our rate in Utah, if we keep going out rates will continue to increase if we allow Rocky Mountain Power to keep doing down the road of green energy and not having something that is reliable, dependable, dispatchable, or affordable. These things fit into the energy policy which we instituted last session with Representative Jack. Utah has always been an exporter of power, and now we are importing. As a state, we are trying to look at keeping our resources and then not allowing them to decommission anything that will put us in a bigger bind or have blackouts that other states are experiencing.

The Senate President ran with a water bill this session. We will study the needs of Utah along with other studies that we have with the Great Salt Lake. What are our needs and what makes the most sense. With the bill we have a new Water Commissioner which will go outside of the State of Utah looking for resources in which we might be able to develop and bring to the state. They will be looking at water storage and a proposed reservoir in Central Utah. The hardest thing for any project, regardless of energy, water, or infrastructure is the time of permitting any off those projects and so we are trying on the state level to make sure that we are doing our part to streamline that and push back on the federal agencies that they have to be quicker in responding to these things. A few years ago we set aside \$250,000 a year that is ongoing funds and the only counties that use it is Garfield and that is for EIS on the cleanup of the juniper pinions. There is this state fund here that can be utilized if you see projects that could use these funds, to make you aware of it.

When you do local projects, you had to bid them out. Counties were capped at \$150,000, and then it had to go out to bid. That cap has now been raised to \$350,000. If cities and counties choose to do the work themselves on their projects, they had to be built at standards that UDOT would use. Contractors wanted this piece in there, if we are going to hold them to a higher standard, they want everybody to build those roads, so we are not throwing good money after bad. Last year we did the B&C Rd fund at \$40 million one time and then added the formula so you should be seeing more money coming in as that formula for cities and counties.

Senator Winterton expressed his appreciation to the Coalition and the guidance we have given them while they have been representing the Coalition and stated that it has been a pleasure representing the Coalition. Senator Winterton also stated that he would like to invite Senator Owens to a Coalition meeting. Senator Owens has been instrumental in helping us represent a lot of the counties and that we all work together well for being a small group.

Chairman Hopes thanked the Senators for their updates and appreciated their efforts at supporting the Coalition during the session. He then moved to the fifth agenda item.

**5. Rural Water Presentation (Ron Pierce)**

Chairman Hopes turned the time over to Ron Pierce for a presentation on rural water. Rural Water works closely with the communities in the state to help them with their water and wastewater needs, and we have circuit writers for drinking water and wastewater tax. We help the communities with their water needs and any problems they may have with their systems. We help them with training to keep their operator certified and if they are out of compliance, we try to find a way to help them get back into compliance with the Division of Drinking Water or with the Division of Environmental Quality. We have new employees through EPA for wastewater and they have been tasked with some tribal communities to help them with their septic tanks and their wastewater needs, like an upgrade with their system or if they need something fixed. We are branching out and growing more into the wastewater sector that used to be water and drinking water. The main reason for me being here today is to try to reach out to your communities or in your counties and see how we can help you with some of your projects.

Chairman Hopes thanked Mr. Pierce for his information and for his willingness to collaborate with us on our water issues. Chairman Hopes also requested Mr. Pierce share his contact information and stated that we will spread the word of his association. Chairman Hopes then proceeded to the next agenda item.

**6. Report on Uinta Basin Railway Project (Brad Horrocks & Greg Miles)**

Chairman Hopes turned the time over to Commissioner Horrocks and Commissioner Miles for the Uinta Basin Railway report. Commissioner Horrocks stated that there are no new updates at this time. Commissioner Miles stated that we did file paperwork on our petition with the Supreme Court. Commissioner Miles expressed his appreciation for the legal team. The legal team spent many hours compiling all of this for us. Other than that, there is not a lot to update on. Commissioner Miles expressed his appreciation for Mr. Pierce and Rural Water Association. The small municipalities, small districts, and counties rely on rural water and they have been a great resource for decades. We appreciate what the Rural Water Association does for our communities, making sure that we have safe drinking water.

Chairman Hopes thanked Commissioner Horrocks and Commissioner Miles for the update and asked for any questions or further discussion, there being none moved on to the next agenda item.

**7. Report on the San Rafael Research Center (Lynn Sitterud)**

Chairman Hopes turned the time over to Commissioner Sitterud for the San Rafael Research Center report. Commissioner Sitterud stated that Senator Hinkins and Senator Winterton have updated the board on a lot of what is happening. We had a meeting with the state and this is sitting on the governor's desk waiting for him to sign the bill or if it will get signed with a bunch

of other bills. We are just waiting for it to get across his desk and then everything will take effect.

Chairman Hopes thanked Commissioner Sitterud for the update and asked for any questions or further discussion, there being none moved on to the next agenda item.

**8. Report on San Juan County Projects (Sylvia Stubbs)**

Chairman Hopes turn the time over to Commissioner Stubbs who expressed appreciation for all the commissioners during legislation session who have been kind and willing to share notes and network. Commissioner Stubbs appreciated this opportunity, since they are so far away from everyone else. Commissioner Stubbs appreciated the support for the Monticello Hospital Project. Commissioner Stubbs appreciated the Coalition and the Engineers with their help and support on the Water Project. We have a small community near Blanding and they are trying to get water, so it is an exciting time for our community to have a waste water system in place and running water. Commissioner Stubbs appreciates the support of the Coalition and everyone that is helping in San Juan County.

Senator Hinkins followed up on what Commission Stubbs has covered with adding the update on two new food banks that have opened in Montezuma Creek and Monument Valley. Senator Hinkins stated that he took a trip to the food bank and had a meeting with the CEO of the food bank and they believe that the food bank was owned by the state. The food banks are not owned by the state, they are owned by the communities that they serve. Senator Hinkins stated that they raised \$30 million from generous people in the state of Utah to run the food bank and obtain the food from a variety of different corporations, like Wal-Mart and other grocery stores, that have donated to them. There are currently 265 food banks here in Utah, so there is a great need in the state. Senator Hinkins also mentioned Monticello Hospital and that they were able to help them get \$35 million through loans and grants, that hospital is the oldest hospital in the state, so there is a great need in this area for a new hospital. Senator Hinkins stated that the Lieutenant Governor, State of Utah, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was also instrumental in helping the area obtain water and power. One of the big things is that Utah State is going to build a \$18 million campus in the Blanding area. These are some things to make everyone aware of.

Chairman Hopes thanked Commissioner Stubbs for the update and appreciation and thanked Senator Hinkins for the update on the projects. Commissioner Hopes asked if there were any more questions, seeing none he moved to the next agenda item.

**9. Greendale Recreation Area (Jack Lytle)**

Chairman Hopes turned the time over to Commission Lytle for an update on the Greendale Recreation Area Project. Commissioner Lytle stated that there has been a multi-county effort to develop a recreation area and ski resort in Greendale that is in Daggett County. We have a proponent that really wants to make it work, who has experience with owning and operating Cherry Hill in Cache County ski area. That is our request and we would like Seven County Coalition to become involved in this project. Commissioner Lytle stated they are in the project development and study part of it. We have \$2700 right now through GOEO and the Uintah Basin Association of Governments has agreed to add some money as well. The environmental studies

part will be anticipated to be around \$1.2 million and the proponent is in for half for that funding. Due to the multi-county effect, there is some lagging in the financials, terms of lodging, and different things associated with Uintah County as well as Daggett County and what this can do for us with a full season recreational facility and economic development. There is a path that could be successful and so we are hopeful after conversations with Director Heaton and Jon Stearmer. We welcome any input in that conversation.

Director Heaton stated that this has been on the radar for a while and appreciated Commission Lytle and Commissioner Tippetts. Much of this project hinges on the private side of the equation and their ability to raise private equity. They have been working on the environmental impact statements in conjunction with the Forest Service, one of the slowdowns has been that the principal on that is John Chadwick, who has presented here before. Mr. Chadwick has assigned his right hand man Steven Shepherd to be the point person, because Mr. Chadwick is running Cherry Hill and other interests. Director Heaton stated that he had a meeting with Mr. Shepherd and they have made progress on the environmental side than we hadn't realized. They are willing to continue to push that forward and work on the funding side. So, our request to this board is simply to allow myself and Jones & DeMille engineering to continue to work through this project and develop an agreement with the private side in conjunction with Daggett County, the Association of Governments, and Uintah County. As Commissioner Lytle stated, Daggett County has received a grant from the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity that the grant is coming up on expiration at the end of the calendar year and we do not have much to show for it. Director Heaton is asking the Coalition to get involved to push this project forward, make sure that money does not go to waste, and take the first step to seeing this project come to fruition. 30% of the residents actually live in the county and the other 70% come for recreation during the summer months, during winter there is nothing. Creating this type of recreation area in this county would be a large boost to their economy. With the boards approval we will continue to push this project forward. With what we have experienced with the railroad and the type of teamwork we know what is required to get to an end point.

Chairman Hopes thanked Commissioner Lytle and Director Heaton for their update and bringing this project to the Coalition. Chairman Hopes asked if there were any questions, seeing none he moved on to the next item on the agenda.

#### **10. Executive Director Report (Keith Heaton)**

Chairman Hopes turned time over to Executive Director Heaton for the director's report. Director Heaton thanked everyone for being here today. Director Heaton expressed his appreciation for the state Senators, who both carried legislation on behalf of the coalition. The Senators have worked hard on behalf of everyone in the area and they have been very effective. Director Heaton stated that he is very grateful to each of the board members for spending the earlier part of the year at the legislative session, far from home, and the efforts they made. Director Heaton also appreciated Mr. Stearmer and Mr. Barton for their help, although we were not funded on two major projects, we are excited about the funding of the Research Center, San Juan County Hospital, and some money went to Daggett County regarding the San Juan County projects, especially with the Navajo Mountain Road, we have been supporting the county on this project and with the coalition's approval, we will continue to support this project. Next year we will try again for some other state and federal funding sources. We have initiated conversations

on further CIB funding. Director Heaton expressed his appreciation to the CIB board members and the CIB staff for entertaining those conversations and strategically thinking through what works best for rural Utah. We think the money invested in the coalition is good money, it is a good investment, but we understand that there are a lot of communities in need that are also good investments, so we want to make sure that we are mindful of doing things appropriately and we will be looking at that closely over the next six months, but we will be submitting for more funding.

Director Heaton expressed his appreciation to those who have been helping with legal matters. Melissa Cano has been very engaged, Brian Barton, Jon Stearmer. One of the efforts that we have spent a lot of time and energy on is garnering amici support, we do appreciate all of our friends and supporters out there who are helping us in that regard.

Director Heaton stated that we will continue to work on getting natural gas pipeline extensions in Uintah County. We appreciate Mr. Stearmer for his work on that, working with multiple private entities and private property owners on easements that this organization had the foresight to secure years ago. We are still working towards capitalizing some of those earlier opportunities, it is just a matter of time before some of that materializes. These are not huge deals like a railroad, but they are small things and they are important to the continued growth and development of the area.

Chairman Hopes then called for any additional questions for Director Heaton. Chairman Hopes thanked Director Heaton for both his report and all the work he is doing in support of the Seven County Coalition. Chairman Hopes then moved on to the next agenda item.

#### **11. Strategic Communication Report (Melissa Cano)**

Chairman Hopes turned the time over to Melissa Cano for the strategic communications report. Ms. Cano is going to piggyback off what Director Heaton just said on the strategic communications front, that they have been busy coordinating, planning, and garnering partnership support to the best of our ability with the railway and making sure websites are up to date and social media is answered and up to date. Ms. Cano stated that is all she has for an update for this month and hoping to have a bigger update next month when she plans to meet with Director Heaton and put a plan together to move forward for some coalition communications and business.

Chairman Hopes thanked Ms. Cano for her update and called for questions, there being none, he then moved on to the next agenda item.

#### **12. Engineers Report (Jones & DeMille)**

Chairman Hopes turned the time over to Brian Barton with Jones & DeMille for the Engineers Report. Mr. Barton stated that they will continue to provide the technical engineering side of all the projects and efforts that have been discussed. There is a lot going on, the types of projects the coalition is able to touch, explore, and investigate is quite extensive, which is exciting and that is

the importance of the coalition, being able to do important things across a very broad area. Mr. Barton asked Dan Hawley to talk to the board on some projects.

Mr. Hawley stated that there a couple of things to add to some of the projects that have been discussed, you would notice in the monthly summary. We did update the Capital Improvements list for the Coalition and have sent that out in a separate email. We have updated our ongoing monthly project list to reflect this as well. Mr. Hawley stated that they have another meeting on April 1<sup>st</sup> with the group they have been working with on the water project, to keep conversations going there. We have had a little pushback from health services on some of the data that we have been working to gather, but most everyone has been open and trying to give us information. We are hoping to keep that going along with some process meetings and hydraulic engineering analysis. We have been working with some of the alternatives there and then just ongoing updates to the database.

Director Heaton expressed his appreciation to the work the engineers have been doing, particularly Mr. Hawley. Director Heaton stated that he has been looking at these reports for a couple of years and feels that this is the first time it has been spot on for where we are at and what we are doing. Director Heaton stated that he understood it all, and really thinks that is becoming a useful tool and tells the board where we are at with those projects and what our priorities are. Director Heaton thanked them for their great work and keeping all of those moving pieces organized.

Chairman Hopes thanked Jones & DeMille for their update and all the work they have been doing for the Coalition and asked if there were any questions about the Engineering Report. There being no further discussion, Chairman Hopes moved on to the next agenda item.

**13. Presentation, Approval and Adoption of Monthly Expenses.** (Smuin, Rich & Marsing)

Time was turned over to Melanie Sasser. Ms. Sasser presented the financial information and requested payment approval today. She went on to request payment approval amounting to \$130,189.59. If there is any discussion or review of any items included in the payment request today, she is happy to entertain or discuss those individual line items



**SEVEN COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE COALITION PAYMENT APPROVAL**  
**March 14, 2024 at 10:00 am**  
**751 East 100 North**  
**Price, Utah 84501**

Expenses Previously Approved by Board:

Vendor	Check #	Invoice #	Amount	Description	Grant

Checks Currently Being Approved:

Vendor	Check #	Invoice #	Amount	Description	Funding Source
VOID #2405					
Smuin, Rich & Marsing	2394	47360	2,731.80	Consulting Per Contract	General Grant
Keith Heaton	2395	22	130.52	Director's Travel and Admin Expenses	General Grant
Stacey Herpel	2396	0224	1,325.21	Contract Labor	General Grant
Public Employees Health Program	2397	285844	1,668.74	Insurance Premiums - March	General Grant
Health Equity	2398	h1m1n7w	2.25	HSA Administration Fees - February	General Grant
Health Equity	2398	hbt5seh	2.25	HSA Administration Fees - March	General Grant
Jones & DeMille	2399	0133618	8,393.80	Program Management and Engineering	General Grant
Jonathan A Stearmer	2400	02/29/2024	4,102.94	General - Legal Services	General Grant
Jonathan A Stearmer	2401	02/29/2024	6,350.00	Utah Rail Line - Legal Service	Utah Basin Railway Project Grant - STB Regulatory and Other Legal Services - Phase 2
Venable LLP (1/2 Invoice)	2402	2672078	21,630.79	Utah Rail Line - Litigation Challenges to STB Decision	Utah Basin Railway Project Grant - STB Regulatory and Other Legal Services - Phase 2
Wilson-Epes Printing Co, Inc	2403	35847	8,204.40	Printing Petition for Writ of Certiorari - for filing with U.S. Supreme Court	Utah Basin Railway Project Grant - STB Regulatory and Other Legal Services - Phase 2
ETJ Law	2404	2683	350.00	Utah Rail Line - Litigation Challenges to STB Decision - October 2023	Utah Basin Railway Project Grant - STB Regulatory and Other Legal Services - Phase 2
Jones & DeMille	2408	0133620	8,900.00	Utah Rail Line - Engineering	Utah Basin Railway Project Grant - Program Management Services - Phase 2
Jones & DeMille	2408	0133620	14,900.00	Utah Rail Line - Engineering	Utah Basin Railway Project Grant - Strategic Communications - Phase 2
ETJ Law	2406	2684	11,681.25	Molten Salt Research Center Facility - Legal Services - October 2023	Energy Research Center
Jones & DeMille	2407	0133619	39,815.64	Navajo Water Settlement - Engineering	Division of Drinking Water
<b>Total Payment Approval</b>			<b>\$ 130,189.59</b>		

**Motion to approve expenses for January in the amount of \$130,189.59** was made by Commissioner Horrocks, seconded by Commissioner Lytle. Chairman Hopes called for the vote. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Melanie Sasser then reviewed the balance sheet which was complete to February 29, 2024. It shows the total assets and liabilities of the Coalition with the second page showing profit and loss statement for January through February. Total income for the entire year has been \$2,802.82 We also have included a profit/loss by class which shows the funding and expenditures by project. We have detail information for activity that has happened through February by project as well. She then asked if there were any questions regarding the financial information.

**Motion to approve the financial report for March** was made by Commissioner Lytle seconded by Commissioner Jensen. Chairman Hopes called for the vote. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Melanie Sasser, again for information purposes only, reviewed the project sheet. This does not require any approval from the Coalition. This concluded the financial update to the Coalition.

Chairman Hopes thanked Smuin Rich for their work efforts and moved to the next item on the agenda to a closed session.

**14. Motion for closed (executive) session pursuant to 52-4-205 (Litigation, personnel, real estate acquisition, &/or character/professional competency).** (Casey Hopes)

Chairman Hopes then requested a motion for a closed session.

**Motion to move into closed session for litigation was made** by Commissioner Lytle, seconded by Commissioner Horrocks.

Chairman Hopes called for a roll call vote to move into closed session. Motion passed; closed session began at 11:18 AM.

SEVEN COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE COALITION VOTING:

Carbon	Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___
Daggett	Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___
Duchesne	Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___
Emery	Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___
San Juan	Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___
Sevier	Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___
Uintah	Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___

Chairman Hopes requested a motion to move back into open session and exit the closed session.

**Motion to move out of closed session was made** by Commissioner Horrocks with a second by Commissioner Stubbs.

Chairman Miles called for a roll call vote with motion passing at 12:00 PM.

SEVEN COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE COALITION VOTING:

Carbon	Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___
Daggett	Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___
Duchesne	Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___
Emery	Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___
San Juan	Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___
Sevier	Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___
Uintah	Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___

**15. Motion to Adjourn** (Casey Hopes)

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Jensen with a second by Commissioner Lytle at 12:02 PM.

A motion to approve the January 11, 2024 meeting minutes was made by Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_.

SEVEN COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE COALITION VOTING:

Carbon	Board Member	Yea ___ No ___
Daggett	Board Member	Yes ___ No ___
Duchesne	Board Member	Yea ___ No ___
Emery	Board Member	Yea ___ No ___
San Juan	Board Member	Yea ___ No ___
Sevier	Board Member	Yea ___ No ___
Uintah	Board Member	Yea ___ No ___

\_\_\_\_\_  
Co-Chair: Greg Miles

\_\_\_\_\_  
Co-Chair: Casey Hopes

**(COALITION SEAL)**

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stacey Herpel