

[APPROVED ON JUNE 12, 2024]

# 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

## MINUTES

### STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2024, AT 12:00 P.M.

MEETING HELD AT FESTIVAL HALL; COMBINED ROOMS 5 & 6; 105 N. 100 E., CEDAR CITY, UTAH

MEETING WAS ALSO AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS ONLY 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  
Milford City Mayor Nolan Davis  
Cedar City Mayor Garth Green  
Orderville Town Mayor Lyle Goulding  
Mr. Tyler Fails  
Ms. Lauren Lewis  
Mr. Henrie Walton [non-voting member]  
  
Ms. Becki Bronson [non-voting member]  
(via ZOOM)

#### REPRESENTING

Kane County Commission  
Iron County Commission  
Washington County Commission  
Beaver County Commission  
Garfield County Commission  
Washington County Mayors  
Beaver County Mayors  
Iron County Mayors  
Kane County Mayors  
Beaver County School Board  
Iron County School Board  
Assistant to the President for Government &  
Community Relations, Utah Tech University  
Assistant VP, Community and Government  
Relations, Southern Utah University

#### OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. Bryan Thiriot  
Mr. Gary Zabriskie  
  
Mr. Cody Christensen  
Ms. Kim Cooper  
  
Mr. Gary Webster  
Mr. Kyle Wilson  
Ms. Tani Downing (via ZOOM)  
Ms. Cindy Bulloch (via ZOOM)

#### REPRESENTING

Five County AOG Executive Director  
Five County AOG Deputy Director/Chief  
Technology Officer/Director of Community and  
Economic Development  
Five County AOG Associate Planner  
Five County AOG Community Action Partnership  
Director  
Senator Mike Lee  
Senator Mitt Romney  
Congresswoman Celeste Maloy  
Congresswoman Celeste Maloy

---

BEAVER

GARFIELD

IRON

KANE

WASHINGTON

Mr. Courtney White  
State Senator Evan Vickers  
State Senator Derrin Owens  
State Representative R. Neil Walter (via ZOOM)  
State Representative Joseph Elison  
State Representative Rex Shipp

Interim President of Utah Tech University

## **MEETING MINUTES:**

### **I. Welcome by the Chair – Introductions of all participating.**

Steering Committee Chair, Commissioner Gil Almquist, welcomed all to the Five County Association of Governments Steering Committee meeting, calling the meeting to order at 12:22 p.m.

### **II. Pledge of Allegiance**

The Chair asked Mayor Goulding to lead everyone in the pledge allegiance.

The Chair asked the Committee if they would be willing to rearrange the Agenda to bring **Item #VI, and then Item #V** to immediately follow the approval of the minutes to accommodate the state legislators, who were there in-person, and on ZOOM, so they could make their individual update presentations and leave, if necessary.

**Mayor Nannette Billings made a motion to rearrange the meeting Agenda, bringing Item #VI and Item #V to follow the approval of the minutes. That motion was seconded by the Vice-Chair, Commissioner Paul Cozzens.**

The Chair called for a vote. The voting was unanimous in favor of the motion and the motion was approved, thus rearranging the Agenda.

### **III. Review and Approve Draft Minutes from January 29, 2024 and March 13, 2024 Steering Committee meetings.**

The Chair said this agenda item was to review and approve the draft minutes from the January 29, 2024 and March 13, 2024 Steering Committee meetings. He said that this required a motion and a vote. He asked if there was any discussion, or amendments or changes to the draft minutes needed? After not seeing any, he asked for a motion.

**Mayor Nolan Davis made a motion to approve the Minutes from the January 29, 2024 and March 13, 2024 Steering Committee meetings as presented. That motion was seconded by Mayor Nannette Billings.**

The Chair called for a vote. The voting was unanimous in favor of the motion and the minutes were approved.

## **VI. Reports on the Recent 2024 Utah Legislative General Session.**

The following state legislators provided updates from their perspective on the recently completed 2024 Utah Legislative session: State Senator **Evan Vickers**, State Senator **Derrin Owens**, State Representative **R. Neil Walter** (via ZOOM), State Representative **Joseph Elison**, and State Representative **Rex Shipp**. Their legislative session updates are included within the video recording of the meeting which is available in its entirety on the Association's website at this link:

[http://www.fivecounty.utah.gov/Public\\_Meeting\\_Recordings.html](http://www.fivecounty.utah.gov/Public_Meeting_Recordings.html)

## **V. Introduction of Mr. Courtney White, Interim President of Utah Tech University.**

Utah Tech University Interim President Courtney White introduced himself. He said that it was a privilege to be there and would try to not take too much of the Committee's time. He said that while there were still some of the state legislators there, he wanted to say thank you to them for their support, both financially, and on the policy front. He said that they are really grateful as a state institution for all the legislators do. He said that Commissioner Almquist of Washington County is absolutely terrific to be able to partner with Utah Tech University. President White also thanked the federal delegation. He gave some information about himself. He said he has been on campus at Utah Tech for almost nine years now and has been interim president since January of this year. He said that prior to being interim president, he was chief of staff and secretary to the board of trustees. He said immediately before that, he worked at what was then the Utah State Board of Regents, which is now the Utah State Board of Higher Education. He said that the last time he was in the Heritage Center building, he was managing the presidential search for SUU, when Scott Wyatt was hired for SUU. He said that they held the semi-final round interviews in the building. He said that he has been inside and outside the Utah System of Higher Education for most of the last 25 years. He said that it is a wonderful system, terrifically supported by the state, and much more so than by many other states. He said that he has worked both legislatively, government relations-wise, at the University of Oregon. He said that that was where he obtained his law degree. He said that by comparison purposes, the University of Oregon receives about 3% of their E&G budget from the state of Oregon, so they are essentially a private entity working within Oregon. He said that at Utah Tech, they receive what is approaching 60% of their E&G budget from the state. The University of Utah, comparable to the University of Oregon, received less than that. He said that anytime somebody indicates that the state could service U.T.U. better, he completely disagrees. He said he feels wholly supported by this state, and they are extremely grateful for everything that's been done already. He said that he is from the middle part of the state, from the Ephraim-Manti area. He said he went to Manti High School, lived in Ephraim, and went to Snow College. He said that his dad worked at Snow College for a lot of years and his mother worked at Ephraim Elementary. He said that he went up to Utah State University where he met his wife, Jen. He said that he loves higher ed and is happy to be at Utah Tech. He said that it has had a tremendous arc over the last 10 years and has really grown into a tremendous institution. He provided some of the highlights of that growth over the last 10 years. He said in the last 10 years enrollment has increased about 46%. He said that they have a commencement the next week and will have close to 3,000 students graduating. He said that they are actually

doing a morning commencement and an evening commencement, with morning for associates degree graduates and evening for bachelors and masters graduates. He said that they were not going to be able to accommodate all of the graduates, and their families if they stuck to one commencement ceremony. He said that a little more than 10 years ago, they were still a junior college. He said as a university now, they have added a number of bachelors degrees so they can now keep students there and educate them and also have a handful of master's degrees, too. He said that the institution just gets bigger and better. He said that if anyone hasn't been to campus for a little bit, he encouraged them to come. He said that it looks quite different than it did 10 years ago. He said that they had not built a new residence hall on the campus in 50 years. He said that now they will be completing their third one in about six years that will open this coming fall. He said that they have a new Human Performance Center that's really kind of exemplary. He said it offers anything a student could possibly want as it relates to exercise, exercise education, and medical-related education. He said that it is really cutting edge with the Olympic-sized pool that's constantly being used for some of the events. He said that they have added a Wellness Center, and the Science, Engineering, and Technology building. He said that a lot of this is due to the funding of the legislature. He mentioned the Greater Zion Stadium, where they can now hold championship-level high school athletics events because they now have 10,000 seats in the stadium. He mentioned several other buildings that have recently been remodeled. He stated that their police department was the first police department within the state amongst the institutions to be accredited and it continues to be one of the safest campuses across the nation and so they pride themselves on that. He said that their U.T.U. students have provided close to 2 million hours of community service over those 10 years, which is also a really important part of their active learning, active life focus at the university. He said that their fundraising has raised millions of dollars, contributed to scholarships, and the buildings he had talked about. He said that one of the items he was intimately involved with was the transition of the athletics department from Division II to Division I, which he said has been a lot of fun. He said that they are playing teams that people recognize. He said that they are playing SUU in football and basketball that they hadn't done in decades. He said that they are playing Weber State and Utah Valley University in basketball. He said that he goes back to the era when he was at Snow College when they played Dixie Junior College in football, and played Rexburg Idaho's Ricks College in football, He said they went through kind of a period during their Division II era where they were playing College of the Arts in California and other teams, obscure teams, that he said he can't even remember their names. He said it has been exciting from a community standpoint, from an athletic standpoint. He said that they played at BYU in football this past year, and actually they were close in the first half. He said that in the second half it got away from U.T.U. a little bit. He said that he is really thankful for the partnerships and support that they have built overall, and said he looks forward to another decade of growth and opportunity in serving the community. He briefly mentioned the Innovation Plaza and the innovations that are coming out of there and the patents. He said that there are worldwide impacts.

Acting Chair Cozzens thanked Interim President White for his report.

#### **IV. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Second Public Hearing by the FCAOG.**

The Chair turned the time over to Mr. Cody Christensen, Associate Planner at the Association, and manager of the Community Development Block Grant Program in this region.

Mr. Christensen explained that the Five County Association of Governments has amended its capital investment plan as part of the approval of the 2024 CDBG Rating and Ranking Policies that this body approved last year. The AOG was approved to apply for, and receive, \$100,000 of CDBG funding to administer the five-county region CDBG grant or CDBG program, update the consolidated plan, write the annual action plan, provide technical and planning assistance for the communities in the five-county region and prepare and update any other plans that including affordable housing plans.

Mr. Christensen stated that this hearing was called to allow all citizens the opportunity to provide input concerning the project that was awarded under the 2024 Community Development Block Grant program. He explained that the Five County Association of Governments amended its capital investment plan and as part of the approval of the 2024 CDBG Rating and Ranking policies approved in August of last year, Five County was preapproved to apply for and receive \$100,000 of CDBG funding. Cody described that fund will be used to administer CDBG in the Five County region, update the regional consolidated plan and annual action plan, provide technical planning assistance for communities, and prepare affordable housing plans. She said that the project was on the Capital Improvements List which is available at the Five County office or on the Five County website at <http://fivecounty.utah.gov> He invited anyone with questions, comments, or suggestions to identify themselves by name before they speak so names may be recorded in the minutes, and any questions or suggestions responded to during the hearing.

The Acting Chair called open the Public Hearing for any community input or comments. Seeing that there was no one present from the public to provide comments during this Public Hearing, the Acting Chair then closed the public hearing at 1:33 p.m. The Acting Chair asked Mr. Christensen if they needed to vote on that, or was this to just do the hearing? Mr. Christensen responded that the process doesn't need a motion, that it was just the need to have held a public hearing, which the Steering Committee just did.

#### **VII. SITLA Notification.**

Mr. Gary Zabriskie presented two SITLA project notifications. He said the first was a late arrival that he said he had sent to Commissioner Taylor who Mr. Zabriskie said could likely add further information on the county's thoughts on the proposed project. Mr. Zabriskie said this was a notification from SITLA regarding an application to drill a well, install a solar pump system, storage tank, pipeline, and a trough, plus fencing around the wellhead and the trough. He said that it is pending approval of the water right being secured which is in process and it's not expected to exceed an acre. He referred the Committee to a map showing where the project is located. He asked Commissioner Taylor if he wants to make any recommendations to the Steering Committee to either support, remain neutral, or not support this SITLA project. Mr. Zabriskie said that the Steering Committee does these

clearinghouse reviews, and then he said he sends that to SITLA along with any comments the Steering Committee has, or just the recommendation to support or not support or remain neutral. Commissioner Taylor said that the Garfield County Commission is in favor of this project. He explained that any time they can get water and improve that, they are all for it. He said they believe this is a good project.

The Chair stated that this requires a motion and a vote.

**A motion to support the SITLA project in Garfield County was made by Commissioner Jerry Taylor. The motion was seconded by Mayor Nannette Billings.**

The Chair called for a vote. The voting was unanimous in favor of supporting the SITLA project.

Mr. Zabriskie said that there was an additional SITLA notification that said they are advertising a special use lease in Garfield County. He explained that the property is north of Ticaboo. He said that the Trustlands Administration is required to send a notice out to affected government agencies and that notice was provided. Mr. Zabriskie said that this item is not one that requires any kind of recommendations from the Steering Committee. He said that SITLA is just notifying this body as the areawide clearinghouse that there is a proposal to lease, sell, or exchange 140 acres north of Ticaboo. Mr. Zabriskie said he was just bringing this to the Committee's attention that this action was occurring. The Acting Chair thanked Mr. Zabriskie for that information.

#### **VIII. Congressional Staff Updates.**

**Mr. Kyle Wilson**, with Senator Romney's office, led off the congressional updates. He said that the day before was a vote on funding for Ukraine, Taiwan, and Israel. He said that they co-sponsored a fraud bill. He said they are co-sponsoring a Congressional Review Act on the BLM's landscape conservation rule. He said there is a very good chance it will get to the President's desk and die, because it's not veto-proof. He said that with Senator Lee, they are co-sponsoring a RECA extension for two years. He said that the last extension passed, and they are hopeful that this one will as well. He said that they are also watching the BLM management plans. They just want to see science dictate those plans rather than philosophy and politics, and those two things diverge. He thanked everybody for their effort in public comments on FLPMA and NEPA and all the other processes that require that. He said that if anyone has casework issues with the IRS or government pensions, etc. they can make phone calls and get things to happen. He said sometimes it just takes a phone call and less than 24 hours to get things cleared up. He said that they love to help with constituents to get things cleared up. There was a short discussion on how California is considering legislation for clean air where they don't want to use any California rail that uses diesel.

**Mr. Gary Webster**, with Senator Lee's office said he would talk about a couple of quick items. He talked about the sage grouse issue and mentioned that last year was the 50<sup>th</sup> year of the Endangered Species Act, of which the sage-grouse is not on there. He said he attended a wild horse and burro conference in Elko, Nevada the previous week. He said

while there they went out on the range and interestingly enough, and the scientists have determined this, but it is not yet peer reviewed, as wild horse numbers increase, sage grouse numbers decrease. He said that this means they will have a clash of federal laws that is going to be really interesting. He said that our state folks have done a great job in preserving as much as we can on the sage grouse range. He spoke about a big hydrogen development that received \$504 million of DOE loan money. This particular plant, most of it has been engineered with our friends in Norway. He said that what was really interesting, and thinks there needs to be some checks and balances, is most of the material that is in those existing facilities came from China. He said that it is really unfortunate that of our half a billion dollars of loans, most of the materials are coming from China. He said that is not a surprise to anyone. He said that it is interesting to note that in this state, talk about energy security with hydrogen, geothermal, wind, solar, natural gas, coal, oil, Utah is a tremendous state in that regard, with these natural resources, which leads him to hoping that Senator Lee, in the future, will be the chair of energy and natural resources in the U.S. Senate so that they can accomplish some of the things that the country needs to do for our national energy security. He discussed the status of small nuclear facilities and the technology. He said they are very frustrated the impeachment articles received by the Senate from the House, where Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas have been delayed or will not be taken up, and there will not be a trial. He said they are very frustrated about that. He spoke of several other efforts the Senator and staff continue to work on throughout the state. Mr. Webster said he was in Blanding last night with a situation with Bears Ears. He said a big concern with the BLM is they are wanting to elevate conservation (non-use) efforts to be at the same level as multiple use. He said that issue is their biggest challenge, and some of the ranchers obviously feel the same way. He said it is going to be a big challenge and they will watch that closely, and will fight to combat that. He said it was good to hear from our state of Utah legislators that actually get the job done. He said that, unfortunately, the nation is \$34.5 trillion in debt and they are not getting the job done.

**Ms. Cindy Bulloch**, with Congresswoman Celeste Maloy's office, who was on ZOOM video, thanked everyone that was able to come to their natural resource field hearing that was held the previous Monday in Hurricane. She said that the hearing was mostly about the Northern Corridor, but they also talked about general outreach or general problems with overstepping of [federal] government agencies and the problems that they create for the rest of all of us. She said that it was a really good event. She said that for those that that may be able to attend, on April 25<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. in Ivins, they are having a veterans event. Congresswomen Maloy, and Marietta Meeks, who is a 24 -year veteran of the military and serves on the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, and chair of the Health Committee, they will be doing an event at the veterans' home in Ivins. She said that everyone is welcome, but it is focusing on veterans' issues, and they don't want that to get hijacked with other issues. She talked about community project funding because they have had some people reach out. She said they are still working on 2024 and trying to make sure that they get those funds pushed down to those agencies that were successful. She said that for 2025, they are still waiting. She said that there is a new chair of the Appropriations Committee, so they assume that is some of the reason that they haven't been able to get that process starting is that they are getting new committee staffers. Miss Bulloch said they will keep everyone apprised as soon as those application periods are open. She said

that as far as new bills, they are also talking about a RECA bill, the downwinders that on the house side to expand that, a Good Samaritan bill for cleaning up hard rock mines, and then a youth vaping bill to try to prohibit flavored vapes, try to just keep kids a little bit safer. She talked about the FISA reforms, and said that Congresswoman Malloy did vote for that. She said that the Congresswoman was very disappointed and voted on some of those amendments that would have prohibited warrantless searches, but those amendments didn't make it into the final bill. She said that the Congresswoman felt like, overall, it was still a good bill, not as good as it could have been, and was disappointed that some of those amendments were not put in, but feels it is moving in the right direction. Ms. Bulloch said they will continue to monitor that, as well as a bill to increase the funding for Ukraine. She said that the Congresswoman did not vote in favor of that, it was \$113 billion, she just felt that to balance that with domestic needs and national debt, border security, that that money, until Ukraine can kind of step up a little bit and offer some accountability for what they've done with the funds that Americans have given them, she wanted to hold back on increased funding to make sure that Congress can balance that but they will continue to monitor that. She finished by stating that the Congresswoman is the commencement speaker at Dixie Tech College the following day, and on that Friday, she was to be a speaker at the Junior Livestock Show at the Washington County Fair Park.

#### **IX. State Agency Updates.**

Mr. Zabriskie said that this is usually just Workforce Services, but they have not been attending for the last several meetings. The Acting Chair moved on to Agenda Item #X, University updates.

#### **X. Universities and Technical Colleges Updates.**

There were no further updates at this meeting beyond President White's earlier report.

#### **XI. Local Affairs Discussions**

Mr. Bryan Thiriot brought up correspondence from the Osmond Foundation. He said they are looking to do an event called the Pioneer Legacy at SUU, and Cedar City and Iron County is a part of that, too. He said that they have asked for a donation by Five County AOG. Mr. Thiriot said that he was thinking to do \$300 if that's something the Steering Committee would like him to contribute to this 24<sup>th</sup> of July event honoring the pioneers that came into the Salt Lake valley. He said this event will be at the SUU football stadium. The Acting Chair asked if there was a consensus of the Steering Committee members for Mr. Thiriot to provide that donation by the Five County AOG. It was the consensus of the members for this to take place. Mr. Thiriot said that they will do that.

#### **XII. Adjourn.**

Seeing that there was no further business, the Acting Chair thanked everyone for attending, and called the meeting adjourned.

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

These minutes, in their draft form, were approved by the Steering Committee at their June 12, 2024 meeting.