

# Unified Economic Opportunity Commission Meeting Minutes

September 16, 2024 · 10:00AM – 12:00PM · East Senate Building, Senate Room 210

<https://utah-gov.zoom.us/j/89679360105>

---

**Commission Members Present:** Governor Spencer Cox, Speaker Mike Schultz, Sen. President J. Stuart Adams, Commissioner Lee Perry, Mayor Dawn Ramsey, Ryan Starks, Casey Cameron, Sydnee Dickson, Joel Ferry, Sophia DiCaro, Craig Buttars, Carlos Braceras, Margaret Busse, David Damschen, Geoffrey Landward, Jonathan Freedman\*, Ben Hart\*

---

**Commission Members Excused:** Scott Cuthbertson\*, Stephen Lisonbee\* \* Non-voting member

---

**Presenters:** Abby Hunsaker, Steve Black, Todd Bingham, Winthrop Jeanfreau, Aaron Starks, Ryan Starks, Steve Starks

---

## 10:00 AM – Welcome and Opening Remarks, Commission Chair Gov. Spencer J. Cox

Gov. Spencer J. Cox welcomed everyone and expressed excitement about hearing from more targeted industries and Vision 2034 today. About the Olympics, he said that it's time to accelerate that work.

## 10:10 AM – Approval of Minutes, Gov. Cox

Suggested Motion: "I move to approve the July 2, 2024 meeting minutes of the Unified Economic Opportunity Commission."

- Motion: Sophia DiCaro
- Second: Pres. J. Stuart Adams
- Motion passed unanimously

## 10:15 AM – Timeline for UEOC 2024-2025, Abby Hunsaker

Abby Hunsaker briefly outlined UEOC business for the remainder of the year, including the timeline of strategic plan presentations and subcommittee budget requests and legislative items.

## 10:20 AM – Targeted Industry Strategic Plans

### 10:20 AM – Adv. Manufacturing, Steve Black, Todd Bingham, Winthrop Jeanfreau

Steve Black introduced himself, Utah MEP, and his co-presenters. He explained the concept of advanced manufacturing, which makes daily life much more convenient. Utah is in the top 5% of states in the industry.

Todd Bingham explained the role of artificial intelligence in advanced manufacturing: it is in almost every company in the industry. Through AI, the industry is able to gather needed data. The challenge now is breaking that data down and getting it to engineering teams to streamline processes. The use of AI in manufacturing does not take the jobs of humans; automation is not a threat to jobs, but it greatly increases productivity—because the automation of low-skill tasks frees up the time of skilled individuals for more consequential tasks. AI allows the industry to upskill and increase wages.

The average manufacturing company in Utah employs 50 people. These smaller companies could benefit so much from using automation and AI, but because implementation requires so much capital, they do not often have the opportunity.

Black and Winthrop Jeanfreau presented the main goals of the strategic plan:

- Goal 1: Accelerate Advanced Manufacturing Adoption and Utilization
  - Metric: By 2035, >50% of Utah's manufacturers will be classified as Advanced Manufacturing.
- Goal 2: Ensure a Trained Workforce
  - Metric: Keep Utah in the Top 10 for Technology and Science Workforce
- Goal 3: Develop Resilient Supply Chains
  - Double the use of Utah's supply chain database (CONNEX™ UTAH) by 2034
- State Legislative Ask: Manufacturing by leveraging the Manufacturing USA Institutes
  - \$2 MM in one-time funds to the Utah-MEP to transform two dozen manufacturers across Utah over the next 5 years

Ryan Starks told the commission about the process of adding Advanced Manufacturing to Utah's targeted industries in 2019.

Ben Hart informed the commission that the state is in a global battle right now to ensure that the most sophisticated automated procedures and platforms are being implemented into Utah businesses. If we don't put a lot of effort into this, we will lose ground. A few other states are doing well, and if we lose important companies to them, it will be another generation before we get the chance to compete again. We have to make sure that we win.

Hart added that the economic multiplier with manufacturing is huge. Targeted industries make the difference for our communities, which means we need to focus on the right ones. Additionally, every business is now a logistics business. We have to have logistics independence, and air cargo will play an important role in that effort. We cannot depend on California's transportation, for example, because their regulatory environment will strangle our businesses.

Black pointed out that growing rural Utah requires manufacturing, as it is a taproot industry.

Commissioner Lee Perry asked about both power availability and conservation. Bingham said that power is one of the top two costs in the industry. More power is often required with more automation. Industry leaders are watching the issue very closely and working with Rocky Mountain Power and other stakeholders to solve challenges around it. Utah needs to be aggressive if it intends to stay at #1, because other states are watching and nipping at our heels.

State Superintendent Sydnee Dickson asked whether the legislative ask includes any funding for apprenticeships, internships, or outreach efforts to young people. Black said that this technology is most easily adopted by younger generations. Bingham said that he is working closely with Vic Hockett and Talent Ready Utah. It is a challenge right now for manufacturers to create apprenticeship programs, so it has helped for the Utah Manufacturers Association to be the intermediary.

Bingham went on to say that the industry needs to invest more in informing young people of opportunities within the industry.

Ryan Starks commented on the recent changes to GOEO's board structure to include Talent Ready Utah and a representative from the advanced manufacturing sector. He believes this will help close the gap.

### **10:45 AM – Aerospace & Defense, Aaron Starks**

Aaron Starks, CEO of 47G, gave a brief background on 47G and its mission to “make Utah the nation’s premier ecosystem for aerospace and defense companies.” The mission has four pillars:

1. Academia
2. The industry itself
3. State and government
4. Professional services

The industry is in a “state of momentum,” as so much progress is being made. Project Alta is focusing specifically on creating the nation’s first operable air mobility ecosystem by the 2034 Olympics. That means that air taxis will transport people from the airport to sites within minutes. Another project, the Impact Center, will go beyond just convening companies; it aims to deliver comprehensive services to help them develop more manufacturing competitiveness.

Starks discussed the stability of the industry due to Department of Defense contracts; they are not tied to speculative investments. This creates great stability for the economy.

Because the industry is so broad, industry leaders want to be intentional in how they grow it. They want to understand supply chain gaps, workforce needs, and other data, so they plan to perform a comprehensive analysis so they can become informed before they start transforming.

The small-midsize business is the lifeblood of the industry. This means that recruiting and growing companies is key to success. Other keys listed included workforce development, access to capital, and selecting five international markets to focus on.

Hart said that we create so much more inertia and energy by partnering with the private sector. Utah aerospace is being talked about around the country; this is an industry that we really want to attach ourselves to. He complimented the work 47G is doing.

### **11:10 AM – Vision 2034, Ryan Starks & Steve Starks**

Ryan Starks gave an overview of the making of Vision 2034 up to this point.

Steve Starks, Vice Chair of the Olympic Bid Committee, started by telling the commission that Utah has joined an elite group by being named as hosts for a second time. In addition, no host community has ever been awarded the Games so far in advance. That speaks to our leadership, incredible talent, a great track record, the state of our venues, the fact that we are a growth state, and our fiscal responsibility. He explained the timeline for the Games going forward, emphasizing the December 24th deadline to form the Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (OCOG). This is already underway.

The first track, he said, is ensuring that we host the Games successfully. The second track is asking ourselves, “What does this mean for Utah?” The Games will be incredible, but if we miss the opportunity to use this as an opportunity to accomplish broader policy goals, then we will have missed the mark. If we identify policy areas and then go to work with our federal partners, we will be able to accomplish both of these tracks in a remarkable way; Utah will be better because of the Games.

This is why we need a strong state Olympic officer: someone with government experience who can lead that charge for a decade and pull together all of these working communities. He mentioned Project 29, which intends to get all 29 counties involved.

Ryan Starks commented on the theme of today’s meeting being strategic planning.

Sophia DiCaro said that this raises the question of the role of the State over the next ten years. Steve Starks responded by saying that fundamentally, the State backstops the Games. This had to be in place before we could be awarded. Beyond that, State leaders can use the Games as a catalyst to create a vision. What do we want transportation and housing to look like? How do we

involve rural Utah in a meaningful way? There are many groups working on this vision, so a state Olympic officer could unify all of these efforts. This person will also be able to provide continuity, as speakers, senate presidents, and governors will change over the years.

Gov. Cox added that because of that backstop piece, we are motivated to make this happen.

Mayor Dawn Ramsey said that she is excited to ensure that the Olympic spirit covers all of Utah. This is a priority for cities, along with transportation. The Wasatch Front Regional Council has already had many conversations about this.

Gov. Cox said that he wants every single city to think about how they can use the Olympics to improve their communities, even those far away from venues.

He continued to say that he is already talking with people about modeling a program after Junior Jazz so we can get Olympic athletes out to Utah schools over the next 10 years. He wants to inspire potential Olympic athletes to compete at home on their own snow. Utah has produced more Olympic athletes recently.

The Olympic spirit is real. Because of the standards that Utah set for volunteers, the Olympics changed. Viewership numbers were up this year, so we can expect LA '28 to be huge. Additionally, we may be able to continue hosting every 16-20 years after this.

Kori Ann Edwards outlined the Vision 2034 process in more detail. She listed the vision's Core Topics:

- Housing
- Transportation
- Water
- Energy
- Higher Education & Workforce Development
- The Utah Business Landscape
- Elevate Urban & Rural Utah
- Quality of Life
- The Olympic Experience

Edwards then provided Vision Levers for each of the Core Topics. These come from the "listening tour" that the process provided. These Vision Levers will make up the final, but live, document. She called this our version of a playbook.

Carlos Braceras said that in 2002, they had two main concerns: hauling snow where they needed it and air quality. He asked if this could be added, and Hunsaker agreed to do so.

Perry brought up security as being critical, and Gov. Cox agreed. The OCOG will be deeply involved with that. Lee said that professionals from all 29 counties and even other states will have to come in to help us.

Dickson mentioned Utah's status as having more students involved in dual language immersion per capita than any other state. She thinks it is critical that government partners support these programs; she is seeing participation wane, along with understanding and elevation of language and culture. Part of it is getting caught up in politics. It is so valuable for our workforce to have kids graduate speaking a second language fluently and without accents. This matters for business, global trade, and other areas.

Commissioner Craig Buttars said that along with inspiring kids to get involved in athletic programs, maybe Olympic athletes can inspire them to take care of their mental health, spend more time outside, and limit their screen time.

#### **11:50 AM – Concluding Remarks, Gov. Cox, Speaker Schultz, & Pres. Adams**

Gov. Cox counted his previous comments as his concluding remarks.

#### **12:00 PM – Adjourn**