

Utah Board of Tourism Development
Meeting Minutes
Friday, March 14, 2025

Board Members Present Jared Berrett, Kym Buttschardt, Lesha Coltharp, Joan Hammer, Commissioner Victor Iverson, Jason Murray, Graydon Pearson, Melva Sine, Jordan Smith, Kevin Smith, Jennifer Wesselhoff, Shayne Wittwer

Board Members Excused Kaitlin Eskelson, Nathan Rafferty, CJ Wade

Tourism & Film Staff Tera Atwood, Jenica Barber, Rachel Bremer, Rachel Creer, Lorraine Daly, Denise Jordan, Anna Loughridge, Carli Mahas, Ben Mangelsdorf, Christina Martin, Derek Mellus, Virginia Pearce, Natalie Randall, Arianna Rees, Laici Shumway, Dave Williams, Heather Zang, Stacey Zoller

Public Elliott Clark, Jamie Elliott, Blaine Fackrell, August Granath, Jim Grover, Alison Harford, Ryan Lundstrom, Debra McKee, Marissa Mallory, Amy Myers, Sherry Stevens, Forest Turner, Brice Wallace, Matthew Watson, Allison Yamamoto-Sparks

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Board Chair Kym Buttschardt welcomed everyone and asked **Lesha Coltharp** to chair the meeting. Lesha called the meeting to order.

MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: Jason Murray motioned to approve the February 14, 2025, board meeting minutes. Commissioner Iverson seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Natalie Randall, Managing Director, Utah Office of Tourism

- The Olympic organizing committee was officially formed and announced. Our board member Nathan Rafferty was appointed to the steering committee. He will be an outstanding advocate and voice for the tourism and ski industries.
- Advanced air mobility study results recently released from UDOT. Utah contracted a company to study the economic impact of the innovative concept of air transportation through electric vertical take-off. Tourism industry involved in the conversations. Looking at how the new technology could be implemented into our planning and strategy of moving visitors around the state.
- Working closely with the Western Governor's Association, where Gov. Cox is the Vice Chair this year, and will be chair next year. The WGA has a resolution around recreation and tourism and it is being updated. Working closely with the Governor's office and the Western States Policy Council.
- Navigating the potential shutdown, or partial shutdown, of the federal government. Hopefully resolution will be found but our team is prepared with clear and articulate messaging that we are committed that all of our national parks and public places remain accessible.

- The CaPR team hosted a marketing summit for the DMO partners recently. Great participation from partners.
- The Marketing and Communications team is currently doing video shoots for a new ski campaign and relieved to have snow.
- Kevin Blomquist has left the tourism team. Will be hiring for that position soon. Laici Shumway officially started on our team, March 3. She joins the CaPR team and will be based in Moab. Tera Atwood has moved from the marketing manager position to joining the Global Markets team.
- UTIA shared a great legislative summary that has been sent out. They are hosting a meeting March 17 for all industry partners.
- The legislature left the film cash incentive in place after early conversations of taking it away.
- The Tourism Marketing Performance Fund (TMPF) was cut by \$1.5M which is much better than the \$5M that was originally proposed.
- Sundance was funded at \$3.5M one time.
- SB-12, a committee bill by Sen. Plumb, renewed this board for another 5 years, until 2030. Standard process as all boards are reviewed every 5 years. There is great understanding of this board's value, and the Governor sees the importance of it representing the industry.
- HB-200, by Rep. Cutler, is an existing bill with specifics regarding a government shutdown. This year it was cleaned up. National parks, monuments, forests and recreation areas have always been on the priority list. This bill added U.S. fish and wildlife services. When a shutdown occurs, how we prioritize which areas the State supports by funding to keep open comes from the divisions of outdoor recreation and natural resources. They work closely with our office, and there is coordination with GOEO and our team to fund the public areas to keep open.
- HB-456 is Rep. Bolinder's bill on transient room tax. The piece that is connected to UOT is around the reporting that is required of counties, and will be consulting with the state auditor's office.
- SB-2 is around the state resource management plan (SRMP). It is housed at the Public Land Policy Coordinating Office (PLPCO). That plan has traditionally focused on gas, oil, extraction, logging and agriculture industries. Tourism and outdoor recreation have not been prioritized in the plan and this bill does that. It calls out coordination with UOT, state parks, outdoor recreation and PLPCO to identify 10 priority outdoor infrastructure projects to be listed on the SRMP. This is elevating the importance of outdoor recreation and tourism in the state's public land conversations.
- Jason Murray asked about the year over year TMPF budget cuts and how it is going to impact UOT the most.
- TMPF goes into three buckets – 10% goes to Utah Sports Commission, 20% goes to the cooperative marketing grant program, and 70% goes into the broader marketing, stewardship and development program.
- Joan Hammer commented that it was a bumpy year at the legislature but commended the coordination of UOT, UTIA and broader industry to keep it as smooth as possible.
- Lesha Coltharp encouraged everyone to listen in to the UTIA legislation wrap-up briefing on Monday, March 17.

UTAH FILM COMMISSION

Virginia Pearce, Utah Film Commissioner

Incentive Program Allocation

- Utah Film Trail project announcement is releasing March 19. There are 10 installed. There is a toolkit on the industry website for all partners to assist in promoting locally.
- *Rock the Block* is a home makeover show that premieres April 14 on HGTV. It was shot in Tooele.
- *The Chosen* has its season five premiere on March 27 in theatres. It then rolls to streaming.
- Local filmmaker T.C. Christiansen's *Raising the Bar: The Alma Richards Story* is premiering April 25 in theatres. Encourage everyone to see it. It is a story about Utah's very first Olympian in 1912, Alma Richards, a decathlete from Parowan. It was shot all over the state and has a lot of Utah nuggets.
- Film incentive program was allocated \$20M for FY25. The rural film program is \$12M, the motion picture program is \$6.79M in tax credit and \$1.5M in cash rebate.

- Have approved 23 projects so far in FY25 - 10 in the rural program, 8 in motion picture tax credit and 5 in motion picture cash rebate.
- The incentive program has awarded almost \$12M this fiscal year which has resulted in more than \$50M in economic impact.

MOTION: Commissioner Victor Iverson motioned to approve \$5,456,993 for an incentive for the following productions which have met the criteria defined by statute. Graydon Pearson seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Production	Estimated Utah Spend	Incentive Amount Per Production	Locations (counties)
<i>Insult to Injury</i>	\$140,000	\$28,000 - 20%	Salt Lake & Utah
<i>Christmas Roses</i>	\$250,000	\$50,000 - 20%	Utah
<i>Haul out the Holly 3</i>	\$2,700,000	\$675,000 - 25%	Salt Lake
<i>HBO Original Untitled Jesse Armstrong Film</i>	\$9,720,358	\$2,430,090 - 25%*	Summit, Utah and Wasatch
<i>The Chosen Season 6</i>	\$11,369,516	\$2,273,903 - 20%*	Utah
	\$24,159,874 TOTAL Spend	\$5,456,993 TOTAL Incentives	

*Payment for these projects will be split into multiple fiscal years

Jamie Elliott, Producer

The Chosen

- Shared that *The Chosen* production team always has a great experience in Utah. They feel very supported and grateful for assisting us.
- The upcoming season will be doing some of the very large background scenes in Utah this time. In addition to the cast and crew, it will bring in almost 600 people per day for 7 days. They will all need hotels and they will all contribute to the economy by eating out.
- Begin filming this season at the end of April.
- Appreciates the incentive program very much and allows producers to do so much more.
- Work closely with Lee Adamson at Visit Utah Valley and appreciates his collaboration.
- Welcome board members to do set visits.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Jason Murray reported guides and outfitters are seeing a significant drop in business in Grand County. Their numbers are not recovering post-Covid. Reporting 15-20% decreases for businesses.
- Jared Berrett agreed that business has been down over the past year in southeastern Utah. Not seeing a rebound yet this year.
- Shayne Wittwer reported a few months were up a little bit and credited the winter campaign. But trending down in months ahead.
- Jennifer Wesselhoff said Summit and Wasatch counties are very concerned about the recent federal staffing reductions for land management. Tremendous local impact for land and watershed management, wild fire mitigation, and the public health impacts of managing human waste and garbage.

MEETING ADJOURNED