TOURISM TAX ADVISORY BOARD
PENDING MEETING MINUTES JUNE 26, 2025

Commissioner Gil Almquist called the meeting of the Tourism Tax Advisory Board of Washington County to order at 9:30 AM on Thursday, June 26, 2025, in Conference Room #182 of the Washington County Administration Building, 111 East Tabernacle, St. George, UT. Those in attendance included the Tourism Tax Advisory Board: Kevin Smith, Shayne Wittwer, Dorothy Heers (via Zoom), and Ken Neilson. Other attendees included Deputy County Attorney Steven Scott, Commissioner Gil Almquist, Tourism Director Brittany McMichael, and Tourism staff members Matthew Watson, Chad McWilliams, Joyce Kelly, Trista Nielson, and Jamie Allen.

WELCOME

Commissioner Gil Almquist welcomed all attendees and confirmed that a quorum existed for voting on action items.

CONSIDERATION OF APRIL 24, 2025, MINUTES

MOTION: Motion by Ken Neilson to approve the April 24, 2025, Minutes.
Motion seconded by Kevin Smith and carried by a unanimous vote.

GREATER ZION PR & PAID MEDIA REPORT- FALGREN MORTINE/ THE SHIPYARD

Representatives from Falgren Mortine / The Shipyard presented the PR and Paid Media Report, focusing on telling the Greater Zion story beyond Zion National Park, increasing national awareness, driving visitation, and generating positive media coverage. They are also working on a new creative campaign for Greater Zion.

CONSIDERATION OF DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT REQUEST

MOTION: Motion by Kevin Smith to move agenda item #5, Consideration of Destination Development Requests, to agenda item #4.
Motion seconded by Shayne Wittwer and carried by a unanimous vote.

Tiffani Wright, Recreation Director for Hurricane City, reported on the planned replacement of the Hurricane City Aquatic Center. The new pool, located on the Recreation Campus, will expand from five lanes to eight lanes to accommodate more meets, with a 14-month construction timeline starting in September. The request is $2 million dollars.

Kaden DeMille, Hurricane City Manager, updated the board on trail projects. Hurricane City is requesting $200,000 for the Sand Hollow Road piece of the main trail, $450,000 for a 600 N. staging area and restroom facility, and $300,000 for a bridge crossing at 180 W. over Gould's Wash. The total request is $950,000 dollars.

MOTION: **Motion by Shane Wittwer to approve up to $200,000 for the Sand Hollow Road trail project and up to $300,000 for the bridge crossing at 180 W. over Gould's Wash trail project, contingent upon review and approval of the trail designs and budgets by Washington County.**
Motion seconded by Dorothy Wells and carried by a unanimous vote.

MOTION: **Motion by Shane Wittwer to deny Hurricane City's request to fund building of the Hurricane Aquatic Center.**
Motion seconded by Ken Neilson and carried by a unanimous vote.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Brittany McMichael, Greater Zion Director, reported on current tourism statistics. TRT is up 1% over 2024 and up 14% over 2023. Hotel occupancy is down 1% from 2024 and down 0.1% from 2023. RevPar is at $94.97, which is a slight decline from 2024 but is an increase over 2023. ADR is up 3% from 2024, with an average daily rate of $146.10. Zion National Park visitation is up 7% over 2024 and 21% over 2023. St. George Regional Airport visitation is up 41% over 2024 and is in need of an expansion project. She also welcomed Linné Marsh as the Greater Zion Copywriter.

CONSIDERATION OF DIXIE CENTER SUBSIDIES FOR SUMMER CONFERENCES

Brittany McMichael reported that Jehovah's Witnesses are seeking to extend their agreement for their 2026 events to $7,500 per weekend for four weeks, with an option to extend the dates and rates for 2027, contingent upon a mutual agreement between the hotel accommodations and the Dixie Center in 2027.

MOTION: **Motion by Kevin Smith to approve $7,500 per weekend in summer through 2026 with the option to extend the rates into 2027, contingent upon Washington County approval.**
Motion seconded by Ken Neilson and carried by a unanimous vote.

CONSIDERATION OF SPORTS EVENT SPONSORSHIP REQUEST

Chad McWilliams, Greater Zion Sports and Adventures Sales Manager, presented Great Western Classic's request for $15,300 to market and promote its summer tournament on July 24–26, 2025.

MOTION: **Motion by Shayne Wittwer to approve up to $15,000 plus $300 per team, up to $20,000 to market and promote its 2025 Great Western Classic Summer Tournament.**
Motion seconded by Kevin Smith and carried by a unanimous vote.

CONSIDERATION OF SPORTS MARKETING AGREEMENT REQUEST

Chad McWilliams, Greater Zion Sports and Adventures Sales Manager, presented Trail Hero's request for $150,000 to market and promote their Trail Hero Off-Road event and Trail Hero Music Festival, September 29 - October 4, 2025.

MOTION: Motion by Shayne Wittwer to approve up to $100,000 to market and promote the 2025 Trail Hero Off-road event and Trail Hero Music Festival. Motion seconded by Ken Neilson and carried by a unanimous vote.

FUTURE TAB MEETING DATES DISCUSSION

The board discussed future meeting dates, deciding between August 14th and September 4th.

STAFF UPDATES AND OTHER BUSINESS:

No other staff updates or business was discussed.

MOTION: Motion by Ken Neilson to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Kevin Smith and carried by unanimous vote.

Minutes prepared by Trista Nielson
Adjourned at 12:00 PM