



Draft Minutes Steering Committee Meeting

Wednesday, October 1, 2025, AT 12:35 P.M.

Meeting Held at Festival Hall; Combined Rooms 5 & 6;
96 North Main St., Cedar City, Utah

Meeting Was Also Available to Board Members Via a Zoom Video Conference

Members In Attendance

Commissioner Paul Cozzens, *Chair*
Commissioner Wade Hollingshead, *Vice Chair* (Via Zoom)
Commissioner Victor Iverson (Deputized as Member)
Commissioner Gil Almquist
Commissioner Jerry Taylor (Via Zoom)
Commissioner Celeste Meyeres
Washington City Mayor Kress Staheli
Tyler Fails (Via Zoom)
Danny Little (Via Zoom)
Brad Last

Representing

Iron County Commission
Beaver County Commission
Washington County Commission
Washington County Commission
Garfield County Commission
Kane County Commission
Washington County Mayors
Beaver County School Board
Kane County School Board
Utah Tech University

Others In Attendance

Jen Wakeland (Via Zoom)
Darin Bushman
Carrie Schonlaw (Via Zoom)
Jen Wong
Allison McCoy
Andrea Escobar
Kim Cooper
Myron Lee (Via Zoom)

Representing

GOEO Economic Development Director
Five County Executive Director
Five County Deputy Director
Five County HR Director
Five County Chief Financial Officer
Five County CSS Director
Five County CAP Director
Five County Transportation Director

Others were in attendance but did not introduce themselves.

1. Welcome and Introductions of all in attendance.

Chair Paul Cozzens called the meeting to order at 12:35 PM. A quorum was established with Commissioner Victor Iverson deputized to ensure quorum. Commissioner Jerry Taylor participated remotely. Chair Cozzens welcomed Brad Last, new representative for Utah Tech University, replacing Henry.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Cozzens.

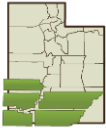
3. Approval of Minutes – August 13, 2025

Motion by Commissioner Celeste Meyeres to approve minutes from August 13, 2025.

Seconded, by Commissioner Gil Almquist. Motion carried unanimously.

4. HR Report – Jen Wong

- Jen Wong reported that one new employee has been hired in the Transportation Department and will begin on October 10.
- She explained that the CAP, HEAT, and Weatherization programs have been restructured and combined under the new Community Support Services division.
- There is currently one open position for a Child Care Coordinator in the Circles Program and another for a Program Administrator in Community and Economic Development.



- The importance of maintaining workplace neutrality was discussed.

5. Executive Director's Report – Darin Bushman

- **Program Consolidation:** Darin Bushman reported ongoing progress with the new Community Support Services (CSS) organization, designed to streamline programs, reduce administrative overhead, and strengthen service delivery across departments.
- **Staff Development:** He highlighted regular alternating leadership and agency-wide trainings, including a recent “Service First Mentality” session emphasizing customer service and teamwork.
- **Fleet Management:** The AOG is exploring a partnership with Enterprise Fleet Services to address aging vehicles through a structured replacement and resale program that leverages Enterprise’s large-scale purchasing power.
- **Community & Outreach:** Darin Bushman emphasized improving communication and engagement across the five counties, encouraging commissioners to share local events so AOG representatives can participate and maintain a strong regional presence.

6. Audit Summary / Discussion – Allison McCoy

- Auditors spent several days onsite reviewing federal and program funding documentation, verifying compliance, and confirming the agency’s internal controls and reporting procedures.
- The auditors recommended establishing a Loan Loss Allowance for uncollectible Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) debts.
- Adjustments are being made for approximately \$600,000 in year-end payables to align expenditures with the correct fiscal year.
- The Finance Department is also working with Polaris, the new accounting system, to generate automated audit-ready reports—expected to streamline the audit process for future years.
- Staff are finalizing a Schedule of Federal Awards to identify programs receiving direct or indirect federal funding for audit documentation.
- Audit presentation is scheduled for November 12, 2025.

7. AOG Program Presentation – Scott Buys

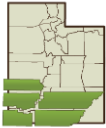
Scott Buys presented an overview of the **Mobility Management Program**:

- Serves seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals across five counties.
- Coordinates with senior centers and transit providers.
- **Key Initiatives:**
 - **Medical Voucher Program:** Expanding to \$40,000 in 2026 through new grant funding.
 - **Bus Shelter Expansion:** Addressing need in hot-weather areas.
 - **Travel Training:** Teaching clients how to use transit independently.
 - **Regional Mobility Council:** Brings agencies together 7–8 times per year to coordinate services.

8. Program Risk Review – Carrie Schonlaw

Carrie provided legislative updates regarding federal funding impacts from the temporary government shutdown, noting that most programs continue unaffected.

9. Approval to use Utah Revenue Recovery Program



Motion by Commissioner Almquist to adopt the Utah Association of Counties Revenue Recovery Program to collect outstanding RLF debts (~\$400,000). Seconded by Commissioner Taylor. Unanimous approval.

10. Approval of Letter of Support for LAA Program

Motion by Commissioner Meyeres to approve a letter supporting reinstatement of LAA Program funding. Second, by Commissioner Iverson. Motion carried unanimously.

11. Approval – Sublease of St. George HEAT Building

Discussion on subleasing current HEAT office to reduce costs (\$55,000/yr lease). Motion by Commissioner Taylor, second by Commissioner Hollingshead. Unanimously approved.

12. Approval – Realtor RFQ Submissions

Two proposals reviewed; NAI Excel selected with score of 92. Motion by Commissioner Meyeres, second by Mayor Staheli. Motion carried unanimously.

13. Approval – Employee Recognition Policy

Policy establishes \$25 gift cards and 8-hour PTO for recognition, billed to program budgets. Motion by Commissioner Almquist, second by Commissioner Meyeres. Approved unanimously.

14. Approval – Purchasing Policy Updates

Purchasing thresholds aligned with State of Utah. Added ‘close personal relationship’ clause to Code of Conduct. Motion by Commissioner Meyeres, second by Commissioner Iverson. Approved unanimously.

15. Approval – 2026 Meeting Schedule

Meetings for 2026 were laid out, including adjustments for UAC and Veterans Day conflicts (Sept. 16 & Nov. 18, 2026). Human Services Subcommittee to follow quarterly Steering Committee meetings. Motion by Commissioner Meyeres, second by Commissioner Taylor. Approved unanimously.

16. Congressional Staff Updates.

No update was provided.

17. State Agency Updates – GOEO Jen Wakeland

- Jen Wakeland introduced herself in her new role with the Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity (GOEO) and explained that the office is undergoing a reorganization, including new leadership appointments and the addition of a Deputy Director position.
- Rural Community Opportunity Grant applications are open, and staff are working closely with southern Utah communities to identify and support strong project proposals.
- GOEO will begin quarterly visits to regional airports across the state to evaluate local economic development potential—starting with visits to the St. George and Cedar City airports in November 2025 as part of a statewide engagement initiative.

18. Universities & Technical Colleges – Brad Last

- President Smeed, Utah Tech’s new university president, has a strong focus on community engagement and efforts to strengthen partnerships between the university and local organizations.
- The recent Statue Garden ribbon-cutting ceremony was highlighted, featuring statues of notable historical figures and marking the beginning of the university’s participation in the America 250 celebrations.
- The Cox Performing Arts Center, now renamed the America First Performing Arts Center, has been remodeled. Utah Tech has established an MOU with the Heritage Choir and the Southwest Symphony, providing them with dedicated performance space and the ability to



schedule events up to five years in advance. The project has received significant support from Washington County, the State of Utah, and private donors, with completion expected by March 2026.

- Utah Tech's move to the Big Sky Conference is now official, which he called a major and stabilizing development for both Utah Tech and SUU amid recent NCAA conference realignments.
- A new pedestrian and bike path project near Utah Tech University has been completed through a partnership between St. George City and UDOT. The project significantly improves safety and mobility across a busy roadway where several pedestrian incidents had previously occurred. Appreciation was expressed for the city's collaboration, and it was noted that while the university did not fund the project, plans are in place to install light poles once donor funding is secured, with the electrical infrastructure already in place.

19. Local Affairs Discussions, if needed.

20. Other Business as called by the chair.

21. Closed session, if needed.

Mayor Staheli made a motion to go into closed session for potential litigation. Second by Commissioner Meyeres.

22. Next Meeting – November 12, 2025

23. Adjournment– Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 2:09 PM.

These minutes were transcribed, typed, and edited by JayCee Finicum, Administrative Assistant at the Five County Association of Governments. These draft minutes will be approved by the Steering Committee at their meeting November 12, 2025.