

TOURISM TAX ADVISORY BOARD
PENDING MEETING MINUTES OCTOBER 30, 2025

Commissioner Victor Iverson called the meeting of the Tourism Tax Advisory Board of Washington County to order at 9:30 AM on Thursday, October 30, 2025, in Conference Room #182 of the Washington County Administration Building, 111 East Tabernacle, St. George, UT. Those in attendance included Tourism Tax Advisory Board Members: Dorothy Heers, Nate Wells, Dave Moody, Zac Nixon, Kevin Smith, and Shayne Wittwer. Other attendees included Deputy County Attorney Steven Scott, Commissioner Victor Iverson, Tourism Director Brittany McMichael, and Tourism staff members Matthew Watson, Chad McWilliams, Linne Marsh, Jamie Allen, Leslie Fonger, and Trista Nielson.

WELCOME

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

CONSIDERATION OF SEPTEMBER 4, 2025, MINUTES

MOTION: **Motion by Dorothy Heers to approve the September 4, 2025, Minutes.**
Motion seconded by Nate Wells carried by a unanimous vote.

AIRPORT UPDATE

Dustin Warren, Director of the St. George Airport, provided an update on recent developments. He reported strong growth at the airport, noting that as of 2025, passenger numbers have continued to increase year over year. The airport currently has 16 arrivals and departures each day.

Dustin also shared details about the upcoming terminal expansion, which will increase the facility from 34,000 square feet to just under 90,000 square feet. The new design will feature a flexible layout to optimize the use of existing space and improve passenger flow. Plans include four new jet bridges and shaded areas for equipment storage. The expansion project is expected to take approximately two years to complete.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Brittany McMichael, Greater Zion Director, reported on current tourism statistics. TRT is up 2% over 2024 through August, totaling approximately \$11.5 million. Hotel occupancy is down 3.4% from 2024 through September, with an average occupancy rate of 62.8%. RevPAR is down 2.9% from 2024. ADR is up 2% from 2024, averaging \$143 per day. Zion National Park visitation is up 1.6% over 2024, and the St. George Regional Airport visitation is up 39% over 2024.

NEW YORK MEDIA ACTIVATION REPORT & DENVER MEDIA ACTIVATION PREVIEW

Brittany McMichael shared an update on the recent media activation in New York and the upcoming activation in Colorado. The New York event brought together more than 40 journalists and influencers at Lightbox, a high-tech Times Square venue known for its immersive floor-to-ceiling digital walls. The space allowed the team to showcase Greater Zion in a dynamic visual environment.

The team will travel to Denver in the coming weeks for the next activation at Number 38, an outdoor complex where Greater Zion will again feature Coalatree products and meet with media outlets.

CONSIDERATION OF PRELIMINARY 2026 TRT & TRCCA BUDGET

Brittany McMichael presented the preliminary 2026 TRT and TRCCA budgets.

MOTION: **Motion by Kevin Smith to approve the preliminary 2026 TRT & TRCAA budget as presented.**
Motion seconded by Dorothy Heers and carried by a unanimous vote.

OCTOBER EVENTS UPDATE

Chad McWilliams, Greater Zion Sports and Adventure Manager, reported on the strong performance of October's events. Trail Hero, St. George Marathon, Huntsman World Senior Games, Red Bull Rampage, the Speed Gun Shooting Competition, the Bank of Utah Championship PGA, the Fall Tour Bike Race, and UTV Takeover each drew visitors to Greater Zion and delivered meaningful economic impact for the community.

MOTION TO ADJUST THE AGENDA TO ALLOW TIME FOR THE SPEAKER

MOTION: **Motion by Dorothy Heers to move agenda item 9 to agenda item 8.**
Motion seconded by Kevin Smith and carried by a unanimous vote.

CONSIDERATION OF DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT REQUEST

Leslie Fonger, Greater Zion Destination Development Manager, presented a request from La Verkin City to create a plan focused on improving its downtown area. The goal is to develop an attractive, walkable, and economically vibrant district that benefits both visitors and residents.

MOTION: **Motion by Kevin Smith to approve up to \$25,000 in TRT funds for the development and design of the La Verkin City Plan, with the condition that the city work with the Utah Office of Tourism on the final design.**
Motion seconded by Nate Wells and carried by a unanimous vote.

CONSIDERATION OF SPORTS EVENT FUNDING SPONSORSHIP REQUEST

Chad McWilliams reported on the Spartan Race's request for funding for its Zion Spartan Trifecta weekend event, which serves as the U.S. National Championship and features 5K, 10K, and 21K races. The event is set to begin in 2027 and will run for four years. The event will take place in March of each year at Sand Hollow Reservoir and is expected to attract approximately 9,000 participants in the first year. The funding request is \$250,000 per year over the next four years, starting with \$100,000 in 2026, \$150,000 in 2027, and \$250,000 in 2028 and 2029.

**MOTION: Motion by Shane Wittwer to approve funding as presented.
Motion seconded by Dorothy Heers and carried by a unanimous vote.**

CONSIDERATION OF MARKETING REQUEST

Jamie Allen, Grant Funding and Operations Manager, reported on the St. George Area Chamber of Commerce's request for \$30,000 to print and distribute 20,000 copies of its area Chamber Guide.

**MOTION: Motion by Kevin Smith to approve up to \$30,000 in TRT funds to print and distribute the 2026 St George Area Chamber Guide.
Motion seconded by Dorothy Heers and carried by a unanimous vote.**

BOARD AND STAFF UPDATES

Kevin Smith, CEO of Tuacahn Center for the Arts, announced that the center has launched a new docuseries that offers a behind-the-scenes look at how productions come together. The series is filmed in-house and is available on YouTube.

**MOTION: Motion by Dorothy Heers to adjourn the meeting
Motion seconded by Kevin Smith and carried by unanimous vote.**

Minutes prepared by Trista Nielson,
Washington County Deputy Clerk
Adjourned at 12:06 PM