



# TRUST LANDS ADMINISTRATION

SUPPORTING UTAH SCHOOLS AND INSTITUTIONS

## Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 18, 2025

10:00 a.m.

102 Tower – 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Boardroom

102 South 200 East

Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

### Board Members

#### Present at Anchor Location

Ms. Tiffany James, Chair

Dr. Mike Nelson, Co-Vice Chair

Mr. John Baza

Mr. Brian Tarbet

#### Remote/Online

Mr. Dan Simons

Mr. Bryan Harris, Co-Vice Chair

#### Absent

Mr. Mike Mower

### Attending Staff & Public

Michelle McConkie, Executive Director

Mike Johnson, General Counsel

Imaan Ahmed, Exec. Assistant to Exec. Director and Board

Stephanie Barber-Renteria, Deputy Director, Operations

Kyle Pasley, Deputy Director, Strategic Initiatives

Matt Thompson, AG

Andy Bedingfield, Managing Director, Energy & Minerals

Deborah Memmott, Director of Finance

Keli Beard, Legal Counsel

Marla Kennedy, Director of Communications

Joelette Organista, Communications Specialist

Chris Fausett, Deputy Director, Energy & Land Resources

Marcos Santana, IT Support

### **Attending Staff & Public (continued)**

Vince Wayodi, IT Support

Kat Staley, Lead GIS

Kim Christy, Land Trusts Protection & Advocacy Office (LTPAO)

Liz Mumford, Land Trusts Protection & Advocacy Office (LTPAO)

Jessie Stewart, Land Trusts Protection & Advocacy Office (LTPAO)

Kira Bennett, Utah State Board of Education (USBE)

Margaret Bird, ASTL

Sheri Mettle, Utah PTA

Trent Hendricks, Principal, Churchill Junior High

John Andrews, Snell & Wilmer

Romeo Ciuperca, PVT Materials

### **Welcome**

At 10:01am, Chair James welcomed the Board, staff, and visitors, and opened the meeting.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Baza moved to approve the minutes of the August 21, 2025 Board Meeting, with a correction that he is attending September 18, 2025 Board Meeting in person rather than virtually as previously noted. Mr. Tarbet seconded it. The vote was unanimously in favor, with Mr. Mower excused.

**Yea**

**Nay**

**Excused**

Chair James

Mr. Mower

Co-Vice Chair Mr. Harris

Co-Vice Chair Dr. Nelson

Mr. Simons

Mr. Baza

Mr. Tarbet

### **Confirmation of Upcoming Meeting Dates**

October 23, 2025 - Regular Meeting, Mr. Tarbet will join virtually

November 20, 2025 - Regular Meeting

December - No Regular Meeting

### **Trust Lands Funds in Action**

A presentation on "Trust Lands Funds in Action" by Principal Trent Hendricks from Churchill Junior High showcased the impact of Trust Lands funding on his school. The funding has been vital in implementing programs that strengthen school relationships and boost student engagement, which is crucial for junior high students. Principal Hendrick highlighted the demonstrable success of these programs, citing a remarkable 13% increase in students' reported sense of belonging at Churchill Junior High.

This significant improvement is a testament to the effectiveness of the strategies implemented, which include mentorship programs, collaborative learning opportunities, and student-led initiatives aimed at fostering a more inclusive and supportive school culture. Furthermore, the principal underscored the irreplaceable role of highly skilled and dedicated teachers in achieving these positive outcomes. He emphasized that Trust Lands funding plays a critical role not only in maintaining existing successful programs but also in providing the resources necessary to continuously improve and expand them, thereby ensuring that Churchill Junior High can continue to offer an enriching and impactful educational experience for all its students. The funding allows for professional development opportunities for teachers, access to innovative educational tools, and the flexibility to adapt programs to meet the evolving needs of the student body.

### **Social Media Minute**

Ms. Joelette Organista provided a social media update, highlighting 3 videos ("What We Do" featuring Russ Cazier (TLA) - 437 views, 19 likes, 1 new follower; "Educational Meme" - 5145 views, 35 likes, 9 new followers; "Who We Serve" - 748 views, 426 likes, 19 new followers).

The Board discussed the importance of adapting social media strategies to engage younger viewers and increase awareness. The TLA team monitors and analyzes audience engagement data, including but not limited to view counts, click-through rates, likes, shares, and follower growth. This analytical approach allows the team to pinpoint which content types and posting strategies are most effective. TLA consistently uses these insights to refine their posting schedules, experiment with new content formats, and tailor their messaging to align with current social media trends and audience preferences.

### **Public Comments**

There were no public comments from the boardroom or online.

### **Chair's Report**

Chair James has transitioned into her new role as Board Chair, which entails greater responsibilities and strategic oversight compared to previous role as a regular Board member. Ms. James expressed gratitude for the contributions of former chairs and board members.

Chair James revisited the Trust Lands Remapped agency structure initiative and highlighted its ambitious nature of preserving revenue of Trust Lands beneficiaries, improving workflow efficiency, and long-range strategic planning. Chair James stressed the critical need for close collaboration between the agency's

director and the board to ensure these ambitious goals are successfully met and to revisit results in six months.

### **Director's Report**

Executive Director, Michelle McConkie, announced that the permanent fund has crossed the \$4 billion mark, a significant milestone attributed to both TLA's contributions and investment activities. Chris Fausett, Deputy Director of Energy and Land Resources, provided an overview of the impact of wildfires on Trust Lands utilizing a [mapping application](#) created by Kate Staley, GIS Manager. Mr. Fausett's presentation covered the statewide fire situation, including the notable increase in human-caused incidents, and specifically addressed the effects on various Trust Land blocks, such as the France Canyon, Gap, Deer Creek, Monroe Canyon, and Big Springs fires. Almost 164,000 acres of land have been burned by wildfires with a total of 991 wildfires across the state. Mr. Fausett also highlighted the effectiveness of TLA's active timber management practices in mitigating fire damage to their lands and discussed the ongoing rehabilitation and reseeding efforts, emphasizing collaboration with other agencies.

### **Advocate's Report**

Ms. Stuart reported on the September 2 media event, highlighting the \$111M allocated to schools for the 2025-26 school year. Outreach reached 20+ news outlets statewide. Schools will see increased funds in 2026-27 due to Constitutional Amendment B. Other institutional beneficiaries will see their distribution increase from permanent funds this fall. A Trust Beneficiary Breakfast will be held on October 14 at the Capitol Complex for networking and Q&A. The Advocacy Office is creating individualized data sheets for 104 legislators detailing School Land Trust distributions in their districts.

Director Christy updated the Board on FY25 fund growth: Permanent funds now exceed \$4B, with a FY2025 Trust System Growth of \$383M. Trust Lands contributed \$126M, and SITFO investment growth was \$257M. Mr. Christy noted the Advocacy Office supported the Sept. 15 TLA's organizational changes and cautioned against seeking additional appropriations in a tight budget year.

### **Action Items**

#### **Item 10a.**

Mr. Andy Bedingfield, Assistant Managing Director of Energy and Minerals, presented a proposed 10-year lease agreement for Volcanic Materials Lease OBA (ML-54662) located in Millard County, Utah (640 +/- acres) with PVT Materials LLC. Mr. Bedingfield noted that PVT Materials already leases an adjacent parcel and has federal mine claims on nearby BLM lands.

The volcanic material comes from Pahvant Butte, a unique geologic feature formed by an eruption through Lake Bonneville 15,000 years ago. This process resulted in a fine-grained basalt with unique mineral properties that can be used as a pozzolan, a cement replacement in concrete. This replacement offers additional chemical, physical, and environmental benefits.

PVT Materials has previously conducted extensive exploration and drilling on the proposed lease area, providing TLA with data on material quality and depth. The proposed lease terms include a one-time \$7 per acre bonus payment (\$4,480), a \$4 per acre annual rental, and a royalty rate of \$1.20 per ton or 10% of gross sales, whichever is greater.

The TLA is confident PVT Materials can coordinate with the existing geothermal leaseholder, suggesting upfront coordination timelines be included in the lease, given the material's potential as an alternative to decreasing coal fly ash supply for lightweight cement.

Chair James accepted Mr. Baza's motion that the board approve the above-mentioned lease agreement, and Mr. Tarbet seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative with Mr. Mower excused.



Chair James	Mr. Mower
Co-Vice Chair Mr. Harris	
Co-Vice Chair Dr. Nelson	
Mr. Simons	
Mr. Baza	
Mr. Tarbet	

#### **Item 10b.**

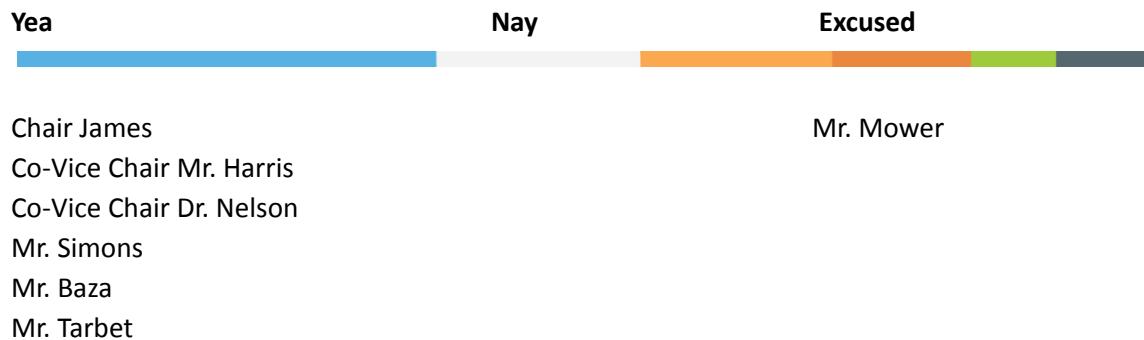
Michelle McConkie, Executive Director, presented a request to the board to establish three positions: Office Manager, General Counsel, and Deputy General Counsel. She clarified that this request does not involve new full-time employees or additional budget, but rather a reallocation of existing positions and funds within a new organizational structure.

The proposed positions and their details are:

- Office Manager: This is a new position for TLA, intended as an assistant to the operations director. The salary range is \$30 to \$48 per hour.
- General Counsel: This is an existing position currently classified as a managing director. The request is to formalize the title to General Counsel, with the existing employee, Mike Johnson, filling the role. The salary range is \$80 to \$108 per hour. The salary for the existing employee will remain the same, although the range itself might have slight adjustments from the previous managing director's range.
- Deputy General Counsel: This is a new position for TLA, intended to assist the General Counsel with managing non-legal team members such as law enforcement, records managers, and legal assistants. The salary range is \$72 to \$99 per hour.

Board members raised questions regarding existing office space and whether these positions would fit within the current configuration, to which Ms. McConkie confirmed that they would, with one extra office already established for the office manager. It was also clarified that these positions correspond to existing personnel, and the proposals fit within the existing budget with no new full-time employees. The salary ranges were also confirmed to be comparable to similar positions in other government agencies.

Mr. Tarbet made a motion to approve the establishment of the three positions as described, including the titles and salary ranges, which was seconded by Mr. Baza and unanimously passed.



**Item 10c.**

Executive Director Michelle McConkie stated that questions regarding item 10c would be addressed during its presentation. However, the vote on this item is anticipated to take place at the subsequent Board meeting on October 23, 2025.

Deborah Memmott, Director of Finance, presented a TLA budget proposal for the FY 2027 base budget and additional budget requests. Ms. Memmott explained that even though Trust Lands Administration is an independent agency, it is still statutorily required to follow the legislative process for its budget and must obtain legislative permission to spend its own funds. Any unspent funds at the end of the year are returned to the beneficiaries (permanent fund), not the general fund.

Ms. Memmott reviewed the budget timeline and process:

- July: Finalizing numbers from the prior fiscal year (ending June 30th), collecting unpaid invoices.
- First week of August: Submitting final numbers to the Department of GovOps Finance Division.
- August: Reporting performance measures to Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (GOPB) and Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst (LFA), completing accruals, closing and other financial reporting.
- September 5th: Budget requests for FY 2026-2027 are due to GOPB.
- September 18th-24th: GOPB schedules budget hearings with agencies. TLA's hearing is on Tuesday, September 23rd, with the Lieutenant Governor and Sophia DiCaro, head of GOPB. This is an information-gathering effort, not an approval process.
- September 30th: All additional information required by legislature and GOPB is due.
- Early December: The Governor's statewide budget recommendations are released, with a statutory requirement to be submitted at least 30 days before the legislative session.
- Mid-January: Legislative session begins.
- 1st Day of Session: Base budget must be submitted to the legislature.
- 10th Day of Session (noon): Deadline for passing the base budget.

Ms. Memmott presented FY 2027 Budget and FY 2026 Supplemental Budget Requests as outlined in the Board Memo 10c: In accordance with Utah Code 53C-1-303(1)(e), Board approval is needed on Trust

Lands Administration's operating budget before these numbers are submitted to the Governor. The Governor's office has requested FY 2027 budget numbers by September 30, 2025.

Chair James thanked Ms. Memmott and Ms. McConkie for reviewing the budget. Chair James looks forward to further discussion to better understand the agency's stance on each additional request.

**Adjourn**

At 11:56 am Mr. Baza moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Tarbet seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative with Mr. Mower excused.



Chair James Mr. Mower  
Co-Vice Chair Mr. Harris  
Co-Vice Chair Dr. Nelson  
Mr. Simons  
Mr. Baza  
Mr. Tarbet

**Respectfully Submitted,**

Imaan Ahmed

Executive Assistant to the Executive Director and the Board of Trustees

Audio of this meeting can be found at <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/files/1328867.m4a>