



STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Location: Festival Hall, Cedar City Utah, (Hybrid)

Attending:

Gil Almquist	Scott Bolander	Darin Bushman
Collette Cox (Virtual)	Paul Cozzens	Nolan Davis
Luke Dunn	Tyler Fails	Lyle Goulding
Garth Green	Stephanie Hill	Wade Hollingshead
Kevin Jones	Brad Last (Virtual)	Allison McCoy
Celeste Meyeres	Carrie Schonlaw	Carrie Sigler
Burke Staheli	Jerry Taylor	Melynda Thorpe
Melanie Torgerson	Gary Webster (Virtual)	Nathan Wiberg
Nannette Billings	Jeff Raisor	

1) Call to Order & Introductions

Chair Commissioner Paul Cozzens (Iron County) called the meeting to order at approximately 12:30 PM and led introductions of in-person and online attendees representing local governments, educational institutions, and legislative offices.

2) Pledge of Allegiance

Led by Commissioner Jerry Taylor (Garfield County).

3) Approval of Minutes (October 1, 2025)

Motion to approve the minutes made by Mayor Billings and seconded Gil Almquist; motion carried unanimously.

4) HR / Administrative

Executive Director Darin Bushman reported staffing updates including the upcoming retirement of Ross Burton in January 2026 and J.C. Finicum's transition into the Accounting Specialist position. The Community and Economic Development position remains open due to federal funding delays. Total staff count is 77.

5) Executive Director Report

Director Bushman highlighted several major initiatives: receipt of a new recreation planning grant for a recreational hub feasibility study. The AOG also applied for a RCOG grant to assist SUEA with their advanced manufacturing initiative. He also announced the restructuring of planning and local



administrative advisor functions to a single point-of-contact model. They recently had a review with GOPB on the Built Here Zions shuttle project. Director Bushman also discussed facility consolidations to reduce overhead; and ongoing technology and fleet modernization. He also discussed preparations for a Washington, D.C. congressional briefing promotional trip. He also shared the implementation of a 24-month leadership development program across departments.

6) Program Risk and Program Status

Carrie Schonlaw reported receipt of an IHC Foundation grant supporting malnutrition prevention for seniors. She also discussed the continuation of the Benefit Enrollment Center program, and impacts of the ongoing federal shutdown on HEAT and housing assistance programs. Temporary measures and local partnerships are in place to maintain service continuity. receiving an IHC Foundation grant to support

7) FY 2024 Financial Audit – Kevin Jones, CPA (Nathan Buckner & Company)

Auditor Kevin Jones presented the results of the FY 2024 independent audit. He reported that the financial statements received a clean, unmodified opinion, meaning they were found to be fairly stated in all material respects. Jones summarized overall trends in assets, liabilities, revenues, and expenditures and noted that the AOG remains in a sound financial position with a positive change in net position from the prior year. The audit also confirmed that the agency's accounting practices comply with generally accepted accounting principles and Government Auditing Standards.

Findings and Observations

- One significant deficiency was identified in the Microloan Program related to internal controls and oversight of loan write-offs and collection efforts.
- One state compliance exception occurred when meeting minutes were not posted to the state website within the required three-day window.
- No findings were issued under the Single Audit Act, and there were no disagreements or difficulties with management during the audit process.

Management responded that corrective actions are already underway, including assigning independent oversight of the microloan program and improving internal posting procedures.

Action: Motion to accept the FY 2024 Audit Report was made by Jerry Taylor and seconded by Wade Hollingshead. Motion passed unanimously.

8) Microloan Program Oversight

Discussion was had because of the audit to establish a Microloan Committee as an independent body to oversee the Microloan program. A motion was made by Nanette Billings and seconded by Burke Staheli to designate the Executive Committee (the five county commissioners) as the independent oversight body for the Microloan Program, with the Executive Director serving in an advisory, non-voting role. Motion carried unanimously.



9) Program Spotlight – Care About Childcare

Presentation by Carrie Siegler highlighting regional childcare support services across ten counties, including expansion of licensed programs and training for providers. She also noted that the Southern Utah Early Childhood Conference is planned for April 2026 at Southern Utah University.

10) CDBG Public Hearing Planning

Discussion was had regarding the 2026 CDBG first public hearing which will be held the first week in December via Teams and in-person at the St George office.

11) Fleet Replacement Discussion

A Discussion was had on the potential CDBG eligibility for fleet replacement and continued review of Enterprise Fleet as a potential fleet management partner and equity-recovery options. The committee supported pursuing funding opportunities through CDBG.

12) December Steering Committee Meeting

Consensus was to hold the December meeting in conjunction with the Public Health and Behavioral Health meetings in St George at the Abby Inn.

13) Congressional Staff Updates

Gary Webster (Senator Mike Lee) and Jeff Raisor (Senator John Curtis) both presented updates on behalf of the senators.

14) State Agency Updates

Collette Cox (GOEO) and Luke Dunn (DWS) both presented updates on behalf of their offices.

15) Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:30 PM.

Prepared by: Chat GPT/Darin Bushman

Reviewed by: Darin J. Bushman