

MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION ("CWC") EXECUTIVE/BUDGET/AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 3:30 PM. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED WITH A VIRTUAL OPTION AT THE CWC OFFICES, LOCATED IN THE BRIGHTON BANK BUILDING, 311 SOUTH STATE STREET, SUITE 330, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.

Commissioners: Mayor Erin Mendenhall, Chair

 Mayor Roger Bourke Mayor Monica Zoltanski Christopher Robinson

Bill Ciraco Ellen Birrell Emily Gray

Special Advisors: Jack Stauss

Stakeholders/Public: John Adams, Stakeholders Council

 Maura Hahnenberger, Stakeholders Council Eva Chan

23 CWC Staff:

Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director Sam Kilpack, Director of Operations Will McKay, Communications Director

Opening

1. <u>Chair Erin Mendenhall will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission.</u>

Chair Erin Mendenhall called the Central Wasatch Commission ("CWC") Executive/Budget/Audit Committee Meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. and welcomed those present.

2. Review and Approval of the Minutes of the October 20, 2025 Meeting.

MOTION: Monica Zoltanski moved to APPROVE the October 20, 2025, Executive/Budget/Audit Committee Meeting Minutes. Bill Ciraco seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment Public Comment Review

1. The Committee will Discuss a Public Comment from the CWC on the Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment.

Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, reported that the reason she initially asked the full CWC Board to attend the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee Meeting was to discuss the Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment ("EA"). She clarified that a draft comment has been written. Originally, the CWC was informed that the Utah Department of Transportation ("UDOT") public comment period would close on January 9, 2026, which is before the next CWC Board Meeting on January 12, 2026. However, she has been alerted that there was a clerical error and the UDOT comment period will be open until 11:59 p.m. on January 12, 2026. This means the CWC Board will be able to discuss the Big Cottonwood Canyon EA at that meeting as well.

The Executive/Budget/Audit Committee and others present discussed the first draft of the comment. It was reiterated that there will be additional review at the next CWC Board Meeting. The draft comment was shared. Ms. Nielsen explained that when she drafted the comment, she originally included a side-by-side comparison to the Big Cottonwood Canyon Mobility Action Plan ("BCC MAP"). She later determined that this was not the most effective use of the comment space, so she broke that information out into its own separate informational document. This can be seen in the BCC MAP Comparison document included in the Meeting Materials Packet.

Ms. Nielsen reported that the Big Cottonwood Canyon EA and the proposed actions appear to be consistent with what the CWC approved and recommended in the BCC MAP back in 2023. There seems to be broad consistency with the recommended actions. This includes decreased mobility during peak times, tolling, multi-modal accessibility, incorporating a transit-only lane, enhanced bus service, and mobility hubs. Ms. Nielsen clarified that the mobility hub at the gravel pit site will happen with or without the proposed action outlined in the Big Cottonwood Canyon EA.

The draft comment acts as a reminder that the systems in the Central Wasatch are interdependent and connected. Focusing on one system will impact the other systems. For example, focusing on transportation will also impact the recreation, economy, and environmental systems. The bulk of the draft comment requests the long-term protection of the natural resources found in the canyon in tandem with addressing the needed transportation improvements that the EA seeks to implement.

Chair Mendenhall suggested moving up the second paragraph on the second page. Putting that closer to the beginning would be beneficial. The last two paragraphs on the second page could be higher in the document and then the pillars could be mentioned further into the body of the document. She expressed support for the content of the letter. Ms. Nielsen asked if the paragraph about the six pillars should be included in this comment. Chair Mendenhall did not think this was necessary to include that language, as it relates more to the history and context of the CWC.

Commissioner Emily Gray agreed with the suggestions made by Chair Mendenhall. On Page 3, there is a mention of the Cottonwoods providing drinking water for nearly 500,000 people along the Wasatch Front. However, on Page 1 of the draft comment, it mentions over 450,000. She

thought there should be some consistency with the number included. Commissioner Gray expressed appreciation for the draft comment and all of the work that was done. Mayor Monica Zoltanski stated that she likes the comment but thought it was possible to mention coordinated buses in Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon. There is no desire to have a plan in isolation. It is important to encourage coordinated buses, planning, and implementation.

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Mayor Roger Bourke noted that concentrating the mobility hub in one place will concentrate the congestion in one place. He would like to see some advocacy for more dispersed pick up around the valley, rather than having everyone come to the gravel pit and then change modes. That would spread out the congestion or eliminate it significantly. Commissioner Bill Ciraco pointed out that this could make transportation less efficient. When there is less efficient transportation, there is less use overall. Commissioner Gray agreed that the mobility hub will be a significant draw.

Commissioner Ellen Birrell reported that she has spoken to a number of professionals, including Ted Knowlton from the Wasatch Front Regional Council ("WFRC"). She initially wanted to see direct access from strategically selected locations. It might be possible to focus on existing underutilized parking areas and allow those to be an economic driver for certain cities. There would be a portion of skiers willing to leave their vehicle closer to their home if it were possible to take direct transit to the ski resorts on peak days. According to Mr. Knowlton, he could support that suggestion, but could also support moving people directly to the intermodal hub, as there would only be one transfer. Commissioner Birrell explained that people are willing to transfer once

Special Advisor, Jack Stauss, appreciated the content of the draft comment on the Big Cottonwood Canyon EA. He referenced the comment made by Mayor Zoltanski about looking at Little Cottonwood Canyon simultaneously. Something else that needs to happen simultaneously is tolling in both canyons. If there is tolling in one, it needs to be in the other canyon as well, otherwise issues will be created. The comment from Save Our Canyons echoes a lot of what has been discussed so far during the meeting. It highlights the need for interconnected transit.

Commissioner Ciraco asked what an appropriate comment might look like as far as Little Cottonwood Canyon, since this is the Big Cottonwood Canyon EA. Commissioner Birrell mentioned the scoping process used in Little Cottonwood Canyon and the lack of a regional and holistic approach. It is important to remind UDOT to think regionally. Additionally, it is necessary to encourage UDOT to think about year-round solutions as well as short and long-term options. There can also be a phased-in approach that is taken over time. The regionality should be stressed.

Mayor Bourke pointed out that if there is tolling in one canyon, it will drive visitors to the other canyon. There has to be some level of coordination. Chair Mendenhall suggested language for the draft comment. "As the CWC takes a holistic vision of the Central Wasatch, we understand that any decision for a portion of the system affects the entirety of it. The CWC would support coordinated thinking about the system-wide impacts of any singular solution." Advisor Stauss reported that there is some interconnectedness mentioned in the EA, so it is appropriate to provide comment on Little Cottonwood Canyon during the Big Cottonwood Canyon EA comment period.

 Additional discussions were had about the interconnectedness of the canyons. Commissioner Ciraco believed the Little Cottonwood Canyon planning would naturally follow what moves forward in Big Cottonwood Canyon. He wants to make sure the CWC expresses support to move forward.

Ms. Nielsen reported that she will incorporate all of the feedback received into the second draft of the comment. She will send out the second version of the comment via email. There will be a chance to discuss and approve the comment at the CWC Board Meeting on January 12, 2026.

Transportation Discussion

1. <u>Staff will Request the Committee's Input on a Transportation Idea Brought</u> by a Member of the Stakeholders Council and a Member of the Public.

Ms. Nielsen shared a request made by a member of the public, Eva Chan, that was brought to CWC Staff. She requested that the CWC be the housing entity of a dedicated Working Group to increase high-occupancy vehicle ridership into Little Cottonwood Canyon. The Executive/Budget/Audit Committee was asked to discuss this request. Chair Mendenhall asked who created the request document that was included in the Meeting Materials Packet. Ms. Nielsen clarified that this was submitted by Ms. Chan. She reported that Ms. Chan is a concerned member of the public and is not a member of the Stakeholders Council. Commissioner Christopher Robinson asked if the document in the Meeting Materials Packet was filtered through the Stakeholders Council. Ms. Nielsen reported that the document from John Addams about a trust was introduced and discussed during the Economy System Committee Meetings. However, the request from Ms. Chan was brought to CWC Staff and is not affiliated with the Stakeholders Council or subcommittees.

Chair Mendenhall thought the Stakeholders Council should be asked to respond to the document requesting a Working Group. Ms. Nielsen stated that this can be reviewed by the Stakeholders Council first if that is what the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee feels is appropriate. Chair Mendenhall felt uncomfortable about a situation where a singular proposal from an individual was advanced without using the feedback structures in place, such as the Stakeholders Council. Additionally, she would like to hear from Ex-Officio Member Carlton Christensen. She wondered whether Utah Transit Authority ("UTA") might be interested in participating in a model like this with the CWC. Commissioner Robinson agreed with the comments from Chair Mendenhall. Ms. Nielsen noted that based on the feedback, this will be presented to the Stakeholders Council.

Chair of the Stakeholders Council, Maura Hahnenberger, expressed support for this item being discussed by the Stakeholders Council. However, the challenge is that there is no representation from UDOT and UTA at the Council level. Ms. Nielsen offered to reach out to UDOT and UTA.

Mayor Bourke commented that sensible ideas that reduce the number of vehicles in the canyons are worth looking into. He believes this request falls into that category. Putting it through the process with the Stakeholders Council makes sense, but he does not want it to be stalled because of the processes in place. Chair Mendenhall mentioned the comment from Ms. Hahnenberger. If UDOT and UTA do not feel it is necessary for their staff to participate in a Working Group, then

she does not want CWC Staff to spend time setting up a meeting that none of the key stakeholders will participate in. She stressed the importance of receiving feedback from UDOT and UTA.

Commissioner Birrell would be interested in hearing from Ms. Chan. With the lawsuits related to the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS"), it would be meaningful to hear more about the request that was submitted. Ms. Chan reported that after speaking to fellow skiers and people riding the bus, there are minor cost-effective changes that can be made to increase the use of high-occupancy vehicles in the canyon. It seems like a missed opportunity not to work on some low-cost solutions. She has written emails to UTA, UDOT, and Snowbird. Normally, she does not hear back, but when she does, there are instructions to speak to another party. This back and forth does not do anything to solve the existing problems. What is proposed is a minor refinement of the current transportation system. Ms. Nielsen reported that she will reach out to the key stakeholders and report back to the Committee with information.

Budget Committee Structure Discussion

1. <u>The Committee will Discuss the Potential Creation of a Budget and Funding</u> Committee.

Ms. Nielsen reported that a suggestion was made by Mayor Zoltanski to create a Budget and Funding Committee. She believes this should be discussed at the next CWC Board Meeting. The Budget and Funding Committee would be separate from the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee and would discuss long-term funding strategies, member jurisdiction contribution levels, the contribution formula, and other funding mechanisms, such as a CWC license plate or round-up donation to the CWC through private companies. There was support for the agenda item.

CWC Board Meeting Agenda Review

1. The Committee will Review the Tentative Agenda for the January 12, 2026, CWC Board Meeting.

 Director of Operations, Sam Kilpack shared the tentative agenda for the CWC Board Meeting on January 12, 2026. After the consideration of the Meeting Minutes from October 31, 2025, there will be Resolutions thanking Dan Knopp and Ellen Birrell for their service on the CWC. In addition, the CWC Board will consider a Resolution appointing new members representing Brighton, Cottonwood Heights, and Millcreek. There will be time allotted for public comments before the CWC Board Business is discussed. There is a Resolution naming Kirk Cullimore as a Champion of the Wasatch and thanking him for his past support. In addition, there will be a Resolution approving an employment contract with Will McKay, who was recently hired.

During the next CWC Board Meeting, there will be a Resolution amending the Stakeholders Council rules and procedures and CWC bylaws concerning public comment. The Stakeholders Council rules and procedures changes are administrative in nature. The CWC bylaws change will address an issue that occurred recently, where the CWC Board was not going to meet in time for a public comment period. With quarterly meetings, it becomes more difficult to make public comments within the specified timeframe. The changes to the bylaws would allow the

Executive/Budget/Audit Committee to submit comments on behalf of the CWC when necessary. Chair Mendenhall asked to review the draft changes. Ms. Kilpack shared the bylaws document.

Chair Mendenhall wanted to know how CWC Staff would check in with the CWC Board before submitting comments on behalf of the CWC. Ms. Kilpack reported that there would be an attempt made to call an emergency meeting or Commissioners would be invited to attend an Executive/Budget/Audit Committee Meeting. CWC Staff would not provide public comment, but the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee could provide comment rather than wait to convene the full CWC Board. Committee Members reviewed the drafted language for the bylaws.

Chair Mendenhall appreciated that the tentative agenda now includes a list of the CWC Board Members. The next item on the agenda is a presentation from UDOT. Devin Weder will discuss the Big Cottonwood Canyon EA and then the CWC Board will approve the public comment that the CWC will submit. After that is a presentation from Fehr & Peers on the draft update to the Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Feasibility Study. Staff will present the results of the public comment period. During the CWC Board Meeting, there will be a Stakeholders Council discussion. There is also a new Stakeholders Council Member to appoint from Alta Ski Lifts, so all four resorts will be represented on the Stakeholders Council. The CWC Board will discuss funding for the CWC and the potential creation of the Budget and Funding Committee. In addition, there will be a discussion about the State appropriations request for 2026-2027. CWC Staff will then provide an update on the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area Act ("CWNCRA").

 The CWC Board will appoint members and leaders to the various committees, since it has been a few years since that was officially done. Chair Mendenhall asked about the process for appointments. Ms. Nielsen reported that CWC Staff will ask CWC Board Members about the committees there is an interest to serve on. Committees should ideally have at least three CWC Board Members, but not a quorum of the CWC Board, which is five members. Chair Mendenhall suggested sending an invitation to CWC Board Members with the Meeting Materials Packet. This will give Board Members a chance to think about which committee they desire to serve on.

Ms. Kilpack reviewed the remainder of the tentative agenda. She reported that there will be a CWC Youth Council update shared as well as some Staff announcements. Ms. Nielsen pointed out that the CWC Board Meeting will be held shortly after the Central Wasatch Symposium. Chair Mendenhall acknowledged that there is a lot on the agenda, but she will focus on timeliness.

Stakeholders Council Discussion

1. <u>Stakeholders Council Chair Maura Hahnenberger will Discuss the Work of the Stakeholders Council and Request Guidance from the Committee.</u>

Ms. Hahnenberger reported that the Chair of the Economy System Committee, John Adams, is present at the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee and will share information about the one page document that was included in the Meeting Materials Packet. Ms. Kilpack reported that there have been discussions and data gathered over the last few months. The Economy System Committee realized that this was a significant undertaking. Before continuing to flesh out the idea of a canyons trust, there was a desire to receive feedback from the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee.

Mr. Adams reported that there is a Great Salt Lake Watershed Enhancement Trust in place, which is reactionary in nature. He has thought a lot about growth in the canyons, and the Economy System Committee has discussed various canyon funding needs. At a certain point, he started to think about the idea of a trust. Mr. Adams asked Committee Members whether the presented concept makes sense, if this is something that could potentially be brought to the CWC Board in the future, and if the CWC would be the appropriate entity to manage a trust like this. He explained that there are different sources of capital used to generate income, including built capital (ski resorts and other businesses), human capital (employees and wages), natural capital (canyons), and social capital (relationships and systems). He discussed extrinsic and intrinsic capital in the canyons.

Mr. Adams reviewed the presentation slides and pointed out that there is no defined capacity for the canyons, but there are unintended consequences related to continued growth. He saw the Mountain Accord as a shift from growth as the purpose to thriving as the purpose, whether or not there is growth that happens along with that. The goal of the trust would be to reinvest a portion of the wealth generated from the economy of the canyons in order to sustain the natural assets that support the tourism and recreation economy, and to support efforts to prevent further development in the canyons. He believes a trust would bring a broader mindset to long-term planning. Mr. Adams noted that the economy tends to be isolated from the ecosystem, but the intrinsic value of the canyons underpins the economy. That is something that a canyons trust could protect.

Chair Mendenhall needed to take a phone call and asked Mayor Bourke or Commissioner Robinson to take over the remainder of the meeting. She thought there should be a conversation with the CWC Board about the trust idea that has been presented. Mayor Bourke referenced the presentation slides and noted that this suggestion looks at the situation in a holistic manner. He would like to see the idea expanded further and then considered by the CWC Board.

Commissioner Robinson agreed that the trust concept is worthy of further discussion. Commissioner Birrell noted that Mr. Adams previously wrote something that mentioned strategic thinking in New York City to protect Central Park, because the park has intrinsic value. There is that same kind of intrinsic value in Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon. She though the example scenario was interesting. Commissioner Robinson suggested that this item be added to a CWC Board Meeting agenda in the future so there can be additional discussion.

State Appropriations Request

1. The Committee will Discuss the CWC's 2026-2027 State Appropriations Request.

Ms. Nielsen reported that the Meeting Materials Packet includes the 2026-2027 State Appropriation Request Outline. The request this year is larger than it has been in the past, with a total requested amount of \$2,413,000. The bulk of that is for the operational cost of a three-year Millcreek Canyon shuttle pilot program. It is possible to discuss this further in January 2026.

Commissioner Robinson asked about the likelihood of receiving appropriations for a Millcreek Canyon shuttle pilot program. Ms. Nielsen believes it is possible. CWC Staff recently had a

meeting with agency partners to discuss the draft update to the Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Feasibility Study. There are certain items that need to be worked out before it reaches an operational phase, so she will need to think about the best approach. There will be additional information shared with the CWC Board at the CWC Board Meeting on January 12, 2026.

Commissioner Robinson noted that it is difficult to receive a one-time grant that will create a structural operational deficit. If there is a request only for infrastructure money for something that will be self-sufficient after, that is easier than asking for operational money for the next fiscal year. There are questions about whether money will be wasted because it cannot transcend the next year. Commissioner Robinson wanted to make sure the lobbyists are fully on board and that there is an excellent narrative. He pointed out that the previous sessions have been fiscally constrained.

Mayor Zoltanski asked if there is an analysis of the cost per ride for a shuttle. Ms. Nielsen reported that the \$2.25 million related to a Millcreek Canyon shuttle is based on the cost analysis found within the draft update made to the Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Feasibility Study. It is approximately \$750,000 per year to operate at 15 minute headways, which is the operational level believed to be most effective at shifting behavior from personal vehicles to a shuttle. With three years of the pilot program, there would be sufficient time to build public-private partnerships.

Commissioner Robinson noted that it might be preferable to request \$750,000 for next year and return with additional requests for future years. He reported that there can be additional discussion at the CWC Board Meeting in January. CWC Board Members can weigh in on this proposal.

Central Wasatch Symposium Program Discussion

1. The Committee will Discuss the 2026 Central Wasatch Symposium.

The Central Wasatch Symposium Event Program was shared with the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee. Ms. Nielsen reported that this will be the second annual Central Wasatch Symposium and it will take place at Millcreek City Hall. She thanked former Mayor of Millcreek, Jeff Silvestrini, and current Mayor of Millcreek, Cheri Jackson. It was noted that Bev Uipi is the forthcoming CWC Board Member for Millcreek. During the symposium, there will be a welcome from Chair Mendenhall on Day 1. The keynote address will be from Shoshone Elder, Darren Parry. She looks forward to hearing him speak about consensus building, stewardship of the land, and communion with the land. There will then be a presentation on Considerations for Transportation Planning on Public Lands from the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest. There will be a break, exhibitor tables, and lunch. After that will be information from Fehr & Peers on the Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Concept discussed earlier. Dr. Jordan Smith from Utah State University will also present on Outdoor Recreation, the Central Wasatch, and Utah's Economy.

Dr. Scott Hotaling from Utah State University will focus on Resilient Ice: How Rock Glaciers will Shape the Future of Water in the Wasatch. Patrick Morrison and India Nielsen from the Utah Department of Outdoor Recreation will re-do a Breakout Session from the first year, which is A Crash Course in the State Legislative Process. Ms. Nielsen asked Committee Members to review the remainder of the Central Wasatch Symposium Event Program that has been shared.

 1 A lot of work and coordination goes into curating the Central Wasatch Symposium program.

- 2 Ms. Nielsen expressed appreciation for everyone who is participating and planning to attend the
- 3 event. Mayor Zoltanski asked who the audience is for the Central Wasatch Symposium.
- 4 Ms. Nielsen explained that the audience is anyone interested in the Central Wasatch Mountains.
- 5 The outreach has been extensive, and it included a press release, newsletter, posts on social media,
- 6 and communication with Communication Managers from member jurisdictions. In addition, there
- 7 have been radio ads, outreach with universities, outreach with the CWC Youth Council, and others.
- 8 There is a \$50 admission fee, but it is free to anyone who makes a request. The student ticket price
- 9 is \$10. Commissioner Robinson thanked CWC Staff for their efforts related to the event program.

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Ms. Nielsen reported that it has been 10 years of the Mountain Accord. The Mountain Accord Charter was signed in August 2015. In 2016, former Congressman Jason Chaffetz introduced the CWNCRA to Congress. The Mountain Accord is the theme for the Central Wasatch Symposium this year. She reminded those present that the theme last year was a spotlight on the four interdependent systems of the Central Wasatch. This year, there will be two panels that focus on the Mountain Accord, the lessons learned, and the work that can still be done. Mayor Zoltanski thought there should be information captured for future generations, so it is possible to check in with the Mountain Accord. With this assembly of the founders of the CWC, it would be beneficial to capture that on video and use it as an educational tool in the future. Ms. Nielsen expressed support for that suggestion. She reported that the symposium panels and presentations are audio recorded, but she likes the idea of filming the Mountain Accord portion of the symposium.

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New Commissioners

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1. The Committee will Discuss the Addition of New Commissioners.

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Ms. Nielsen stated that the CWC Board Members who will be added at the January meeting include the new Mayor of the Town of Brighton, Scotty John, the new representative from Millcreek, Council Member Bev Uipi, and the new Mayor of Cottonwood Heights, Gay Lynn Bennion.

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Other

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There were no additional discussions.

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Closing

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1. <u>Chair Mendenhall will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee Meeting.</u>

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MOTION: Monica Zoltanski moved to ADJOURN the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee

Meeting. Bill Ciraco seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the

42 Committee.

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44 The Central Wasatch Commission Executive/Budget/Audit Committee Meeting adjourned at

45 approximately 4:51 p.m.

1 I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central

2 Wasatch Commission Executive/Budget/Audit Committee Meeting held on Monday, December 15,

3 *2025*.

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Teri Forbes

- 6 Teri Forbes
- 7 T Forbes Group
- 8 Minutes Secretary

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10 Minutes Approved: