

RURAL UTAH INFRASTRUCTURE COALITION  
MEETING MINUTES

March 12, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

Carbon County Commission Chambers (Anchor Location + Electronic)  
751 East 100 North  
Price, Utah 84501  
(801) 712-7622

**Board Members Present:** Jared Haddock (Carbon County), Dennis Worwood (Emery County), Greg Jensen (Sevier County), Sonja Norton (Uintah County), Silvia Stubbs (San Juan County), Greg Miles (Duchesne County) virtual, Jack Lytle (Daggett County), and Scott Bartholomew (Sanpete County).

**Also in attendance:** Keith Heaton, Brian Barton, Stacey Herpel, Michael Hawley, Jon Stearmer, Melanie Sasser, Lynn Sitterud, Dan Hawley, Courtney Cox, Joel Brown, Phil Lyman, and Jonathan Rue.

**Attended telephonically:** Kelly Carter, Melissa Cano, Candace Powers, Jay Johnson, Doug Rasmussen, Heather Poulson, Craig Stenhouse, Duncan Klewak, Will Lane, Deborah Herron, Patrick Barnes, Johann Schmid, Aaron Reaven, Ann H., Ron Winterton, and John Laursen.

**Others Present:** (Please notify staff at 435-817-0025 of any spelling corrections or if you were present and not listed.)

**Public Meeting Participation Information:**

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://jonesanddemille.zoom.us/j/81812623532>

Or Join by Telephone:

1-253-215-8782 or

1-346-248-7799 or

1-669-900-6833

Webinar ID: 818 1262 3532

**1. Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance (Jack Lytle)**

Chairman Lytle welcomed everyone to the meeting on March 12, 2026 at 10:00 AM. Chairman Lytle recognized everyone in attendance and online. Chairman Lytle led the pledge of allegiance.

**2. Public Comment (Jack Lytle)**

Public comment was accepted verbally, during the meeting, telephonically by Zoom, and by electronic written submission at [stacey@7county.utah.gov](mailto:stacey@7county.utah.gov). Electronic written comments will be forwarded to the Board Members. All comments are summarized in the meeting minutes. A complete copy of any written comments submitted may be requested at the email address provided herein.

Chairman Lytle then turned time over to Melissa Cano for those wishing to make public comments electronically.

There were none at this time.

Chairman Lytle thanked Ms. Cano. Chairman Lytle then moved to the next item on the agenda.

**3. Approval of Meeting Minutes for February 12, 2026 (Jack Lytle)**

Chairman Lytle inquired about changes or updates to the minutes, there were none at this time. Chairman Lytle requested a motion to approve the minutes as written.

**Motion to approve the February 12, 2026 meeting minutes as written, by Commissioner Jensen and seconded by Commissioner Stubbs.**

Chairman Lytle called for a vote to approve the minutes as amended. **The motion passed unanimously.** Chairman Lytle moved on to the next agenda item.

**4. Norda Stelo and Wood Mackenzie Introduction (Norda Stelo Staff)**

Chairman Lytle turned the time over to Jonathan Rue. Mr. Rue thanked the board for allowing them to come introduce themselves. Mr. Rue stated that he represents Norda Stelo along with a couple of his colleagues online and their partner Wood and Mackenzie have a presentation to share with the board. We were selected to do the study and analysis of deep water ports on the Pacific Coast on behalf of the coalition. Norda Stelo is a full-service engineering and design company based all over the world.

Norda Stelo has 18 offices around the world. 1000 employees worldwide, and help with engineering and design for many different business sectors, more importantly to this board is the experience we have in ports and the development of ports, and also the experience in mining, metallurgy, and railways.

For this project, Norda Stelo will be looking at various ports and transportation, analyzing those and making recommendations to the Commissioners on further development and which ports make the most sense for you to put your time and effort into. We are focused on delivering solutions to our clients and our partners in the mining, rail, and port sectors to materialize their growth. We have a local presence in Salt Lake City and are looking for a long-term partnership. There is a feasibility study for you in developing your model to ship other commodities as well. This is Norda Stello and what we bring to the table. Next I will introduce Patrick Barnes with the Wood Mackenzie Global Metals and Mining Consulting team in our London office.

Mr. Barnes thanked the board and Mr. Rue. Mr. Barnes stated that he is joined here by Johann Schmidt, who leads the portion of their team that is based in the Americas, he is based in their Boston office. Mr. Barnes stated that he has been in the mining industry for 17 years, including a couple of stints with Rio Tinto based in Utah and he has been with Wood Mackenzie for about 12 years.

Mr. Barnes stated that Wood Mackenzie might not be a name you are aware of but it is the global leader in terms of companies that provide data analytics and commercial consulting for the metals and mining industry. Technically based in Scotland, but a lot of their headquarters staff are based in London. What Mackenzie does is publish information and has online tools and databases about nearly all the major metals and minerals, we advise a range of clients from mining and infrastructure companies to banks and private equity firms, financial institutions, as well as commodity traders, government agencies, and also industry associations and coalitions such as this one. I am here representing a much larger team of both dedicated consultants and experts that are focused on the individual minerals that we cover.

Mr. Barnes stated that we do a significant amount of work regarding infrastructure that is most relevant to this, and that includes buy-side and sell-side due diligence, port and rail transactions, power infrastructure and generally what we do in those jobs is we leverage our data and our experience to provide an informed view on the outlook for all the commodities. What is the volume of each commodity? What is the potential of that in the catchment area? What is the potential for additional projects to come online to help people understand the nature of an investment in infrastructure?

Mr. Barnes stated that together with Norda Stelo, in this particular job, our focus is mainly on the market demand advisory, which is to provide a view on the potential market demand for the different products that could be exported from the region via this asset that is being discussed, as well as a comparative analysis of the potential socioeconomic impact they could generate. We have done similar work across North and South America, Africa, Middle East, Europe, and Asia, but never in Utah.

We are happy to answer any questions about the project or the company at this time.

Mr. Rue thanked Mr. Barnes then stated that Norda Stelo had developed a proposal with Wood Mackenzie and that proposal was provided to Keith and Brian. He emphasized experience in all aspects of the study, their local presence in Utah and a vested interest.

Mr. Stearmer stated that since this item is on the agenda could we have the board do a quick vote to authorize the chair to sign the acceptance of the contract, where the public knows that we are talking about this, we have already previously approved it in the last meeting, it would be prudent if the board felt like the authorization could be formalized and we could take care of that during this agenda item.

Chairman Lytle inquired about a motion to amend item 4 of the agenda to include the consideration of the contract and signature on page 16 of the contract with Norda Stelo and Wood Mackenzie.

**Motion to amend item 4 of the agenda to include the consideration of the contract and signature on page 16 of the contract with Norda Stelo and Wood Mackenzie, by Commissioner Worwood and seconded by Commissioner Jensen.**

Chairman Lytle called for a vote to amend item 4 of the agenda to include the consideration of the contract and signature on page 16 of the contract with Norda Stello and Wood Mackenzie. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Lytle inquired about a motion to approve the contract and authorize for the signature with Norda Stello from the Chair.

**Motion to approve the contract and authorize for the signature with Norda Stelo from the Chair, by Commissioner Worwood and seconded by Commissioner Haddock.**

Chairman Lytle called for a vote to approve the contract and authorize for the signature with Norda Stello from the Chair **The motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Lytle thanked Mr. Rue and the team from Norda Stelo and Wood and McKenzie for their presentation and information today and asked if there were any questions at this time, seeing none he moved to the next agenda item.

## **5. County Project Updates (Board Members)**

Chairman Lytle stated that he will turn the time over to the board members for any project updates at this time.

There were none at this time

Chairman Lytle thanked the commissioners and turned the time over to Director Heaton.

## **6. Executive Director Report (Keith Heaton)**

Chairman Lytle turned time over to Director Heaton for the director's report and any project updates. Director Heaton thanked the chairman and the board. Director Heaton thanked everyone for being here today, expressed appreciation to Phil Lyman for being here along with Mr. Sitterud, Senator Ron Winterton, Joel Brown from Senator Lee's office, and others that have joined us in person and online. We appreciate the support that our senators give to us and especially these two individuals. We appreciate Norda Stelo, John Rue for being here and for that introduction, we are excited to work with them over the next several months. Our expectation is that it will be a great analysis and something that will be useful for us moving forward.

Director Heaton stated that it has been a busy month with port activity, numerous meetings with both the Longview and Oakland teams, with positive outcomes. The timing is looking exceptional for moving forward and he appreciates the vision this board has had on this project. He appreciates the Community Impact Board, who has worked hard to set aside this money and approved this project and partnering with us to move forward.

Director Heaton stated that on the railway project, he wanted to thank the co-chairs, Commissioner Lytle and Commissioner Miles, who made a trip to Washington D.C. a few weeks ago to meet with Ed Russo, the chairman of the White House Task Force on the Environment, with 50 other individuals at the Waldorf Astoria, as a result of this meeting, we do have another meeting scheduled for next Thursday at noon in Vernal. We have individuals coming in representing data centers and power generating facilities that want to develop in the Vernal area in conjunction with the railway and the refinery that is scheduled to be built there. This will be a tour of potential sites. We expect a number of developers and financing people to be coming in for that. As these meetings keep going, the details are still being worked out, as soon as we have information, we will share that with everyone. The meeting in Washington was successful and we look forward to a very successful meeting in Vernal next week. Regarding the railway, we are making progress with the Surface Transportation Board. They are working on this and it seems like it is taking a long time, but there is work being done and it is moving forward quickly, focusing primarily on endangered species items that were not addressed in the previous efforts. Some of those are being handled by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as well because we are going to be on tribal land and they have been very responsive and we are working quickly in a narrow window with some of these endangered species just because of the seasons - the times and seasons, so we are right on schedule as well with the Forest Service.

Director Heaton stated that last month we talked about the BUILD grant through the federal government, there was a motion that we could pursue that and we decided that we could not pursue that. Basically, timing constraints and complications in working with the federal government and registration in the SAM's program and some of those things just made the

timing impossible. We will be prepared next time this funding opportunity comes around if there is interest in moving forward with that or other federal grants in the future.

Director Heaton stated that next week he is invited to present at the Colorado School of Mines at a methane conference. The term methane is interchangeable with natural gas in this context. So they want him to talk about the port analysis that we are conducting and looking at Pacific access for liquid natural gas along with coal. The conference is being held in Golden, Colorado.

Director Heaton stated that he is still waiting to hear on the Jensen Water Project. Last he heard is that it was moving forward with the Water Conservancy District to determine how they will move forward.

Director Heaton stated that they have another meeting scheduled for the Greendale Resort Project next week with a potential developer, so that is moving slowly, but they seem interested so hopefully we can hold their interest and get some money from the private sector flowing.

Director Heaton stated that is all the updates at this time and he is willing to answer any questions at this time.

Chairman Lytle thanked Director Heaton for the update and all the work he has been doing. Chairman Lytle asked if there were any questions about the Executive Directors Report, seeing none, he then moved on to the next agenda item.

## **7. Engineers Report (Jones & DeMille)**

Chairman Lytle turned the time over to Brian Barton with Jones & DeMille for the Engineers Report. Mr. Barton stated that they sent out a memo yesterday to all the commissioners. This report includes funding coordination applications, supporting documents to support all those efforts, and budget tracking.

Mr. Barton stated that there were a few highlights. Director Heaton did a great job covering all of the major initiatives for the last few weeks. There is a lot going. The Longview visit was very informative and we look forward to working with Norda Stelo, Mr. Rue and his team as we move forward to really evaluate the best options for the coalition and Utah. We have been involved in switching gears to the Railway. We have been involved in helping DHIP as they interact with the Forest Service on a pending application for right-of-way for actual construction. We have prepared a plan of development that explains what the project is and allows the Forest Service to continue to move forward with their approval process. Director Heaton mentioned that we have ongoing discussion with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and we want to make sure that the approval process is as streamlined as it can be, we are taking a proactive approach.

Mr. Barton stated the question about the Jensen Pump Station. The Water Conservancy District is in process of selecting a consultant right now, so we anticipate that it will be done within the next couple of weeks. They are moving forward with urgency in trying to get the next steps in place.

Chairman Lytle thanked Jones & DeMille for their update and all the work they have been doing. Chairman Lytle asked if there were any questions for Mr. Barton, seeing none, he then moved on to the next agenda item.

## **8. Communications Report and Branding (Melissa Cano)**

Chairman Lytle turned the time over to Melissa Cano for the communications report and Branding. Ms. Cano thanked Chairman Lytle and stated that we have finalized the name and now we are going to go over branding and to pick the final logo and what the Commissioners. Ms. Cano stated that we are continuing the conversation from last month, we took a lot of the feedback from last month's discussion from various colors, tones, and designs and have narrowed it down to what we are presenting today.

Ms. Cano stated that we took that piece of feedback as well as highlighting what we liked, and then another option that tied in our roads, our rail, and landscape. Here are some of the original coloring tones. We grew upon that and added an additional logo. She noted that some liked the cog, and how she could incorporate that into the other color tones. She looked at some of the different earth tones and some deeper colors. Today there are two options to review. Not to say we cannot do additional logos for review, but based on feedback, we are trying to narrow down and focus on one or two logos for the board to choose from.

We are not married to this tagline, but wanted everyone to see what it could look like if we decided to go with a tagline or not. In some instances, we can spell out the Rural Utah Infrastructure Coalition or keep RUIC. This gives us two options with the colors that everyone was in agreement with. Ms. Cano stated that she will open it up to the board for discussion while she takes notes.

Chairman Lytle inquired about a motion to have Commissioner Lytle, Commission Haddock, and Commission Norton form a subcommittee to review logos and come back next month with a decision.

**Motion to have Commissioner Lytle, Commissioner Haddock, and Commissioner Norton review logos and come back next month with a decision, by Commissioner Worwood and seconded by Commissioner Haddock.**

Chairman Lytle called for a vote to form a subcommittee to review logos. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Lytle thanked Ms. Cano for their update and all the work she has been doing. Chairman Lytle asked if there were any questions about the Communications Report, seeing none, he then moved on to the next agenda item.

**9. Checking Account Updates and Issues (Smuin, Rich & Marsing)**

Chairman Lytle turned the time over to Melanie Sasser to review the current checking account issues. Ms. Sasser stated that this is the third checking account the coalition has had that we have recently opened that has had a fraudulent check go through the account, when we have not written or sent out any checks on this account. Everything has been ACH on this new account. Somehow our account number has been leaked again. It is clearly somebody who has written a check or who has access to the account. We have talked to Zions Bank and they are investigating and they stated that it is nothing on their side. Ms. Sasser stated that she has sent this information out to both of the Co-Chairs, the treasurer and Commissioner Miles suggested changing banks.

Chairman Lytle stated that this is a criminal act, but without evidence and not knowing who is doing this, we do not know who to prosecute. Law enforcement does do investigations and may have more skills than we know on how to find out who is doing this and how it is happening. If we have not filed an official police report or if the bank has not filed a police report, then we are not using all of our resources to resolve this. Whose responsibility is this, since it is our money? Chairman Lytle stated that we should defer to our attorney to help find out how to get an investigation started.

Jon Stearmer stated that there is local, state and federal law that deals with banking fraud. We can file a complaint with those organizations. Which is what he recommends.

Chairman Lytle stated that we need to look into this to try and resolve this issue and then asked what do we do next or continue to do or not do?

Ms. Sasser stated that she has looked at several banks to present. If we decide to stay with Zion we would have to implement positive pay, which basically every single transaction has to be approved before it goes through the account which is an additional fee of \$35.00 and can be cumbersome. There are additional banks that she talked to in the area that are on the qualified depository list for the Money Market or the Money Management Act with no fees, but then the positive pay would be \$50.00 or \$75.00 a month. We have gone to 100% ACH payments.

Commissioner Miles stated that he feels that given the circumstances that we have been through with the last few issues, he feels that this bank has not given us the adequate protection, especially given that we haven't written any checks out of this account, and we have already been dinged, so he thinks it is time to move financial institutions.

Mr. Stearmer stated that before we get into details about moving or which banking institutions we are talking about, we may want to save this topic for a closed session and treat this as an administrative matter of the chairs, finance, legal, and the director can take care of this matter so they can discuss which bank and why they want to do that instead of in an open and public meeting setting, obviously somebody is not liking our organization and they are seeing how they can take advantage of it.

Chairman Lytle thanked everyone for their discussion on this topic and their concerns and bringing this to the board's attention, with no further discussion he moved to the next agenda item.

**10. Presentation, Approval and Adoption of Monthly Expenses (Smuin, Rich & Marsing)**

Chairman Lytle turned the time over to Melanie Sasser for the presentation, approval and adoption of monthly expenses. Ms. Sasser presented the financial information and requested payment approval today. She went on to request payment approval amounting to \$75,089.77. If there is any discussion or review of any items included in the payment request today, she is happy to entertain or discuss those individual line items.

**SEVEN COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE COALITION PAYMENT APPROVAL**

March 12, 2026 at 10:00 am

Carbon County Commission Chambers

751 East 100 North

Price, Ut 84501

Expenses Previously Approved by Board :

Vendor	Check #	Invoice #	Amount	Description	Funding Source

Checks Currently Being Approved:

Vendor		Invoice #	Amount	Description	Funding Source
Smuin, Rich & Marsing	ACH	54256	3,950.00	Consulting Per Contract	General Grant
Keith Heaton	ACH	46	1,905.89	Director's Travel and Admin Expenses	General Grant
Stacey Herpel	ACH	0226	2,001.50	Contract Labor	General Grant
Public Employees Health Program	ACH	740585	1,843.08	Insurance Premiums - April	General Grant
Health Equity	ACH	sd87qux8	2.10	HSA Administration Fees - February	General Grant
Jones & DeMille	ACH	0140434	6,009.70	Program Management and Engineering	General Grant
Jones & DeMille	ACH	0140375	300.00	Program Management and Engineering - Jensen Unit Pump Station Planning	General Grant
Kunz PC	ACH	413	3,000.00	General - Legal Service	General Grant
Kunz PC	ACH	414	825.00	Uinta Rail Line - Legal Service	Uinta Basin Railway Project Grant - STB Regulatory and Other Legal Services - Phase 2
Venable LLP (1/2 Invoice)	ACH	2909636	10,000.00	Uinta Rail Line - Litigation Challenges to STB Decision	Uinta Basin Railway Project Grant - STB Regulatory and Other Legal Services - Phase 2
Jones & DeMille	ACH	0140435	11,900.00	Uinta Rail Line - Engineering	Uinta Basin Railway Project Grant - Program Management Services - Phase 2
Jones & DeMille	ACH	0140435	13,500.00	Uinta Rail Line - Engineering	Uinta Basin Railway Project Grant - Strategic Communications - Phase 2
Jones & DeMille	ACH	0140435	400.00	Uinta Rail Line - Engineering	Uinta Basin Railway Project Grant - BIA Draft ROD Prep - Phase 2
ICF Jones & Stokes, Inc	ACH	2026-012474	8,577.50	Uinta Rail Line - EIS - January	Uinta Basin Railway Project Grant - EIS - Phase 2
Jones & DeMille	ACH	0140380	1,500.00	Greendale Resort Planning - Engineering	Daggett County
Kunz PC	ACH	415	1,375.00	Ocean Terminal Planning - Legal	Bulk Commodities Ocean Terminal Planning - Phase 1
Jones & DeMille	ACH	0140437	8,000.00	Ocean Terminal Planning - Engineering	Bulk Commodities Ocean Terminal Planning - Phase 1
<b>Total Payment Approval</b>			<b>\$ 75,089.77</b>		

**Motion to approve expenses for February in the amount of \$75,089.77 was made by Commissioner Jensen seconded by Commissioner Worwood.**

Chairman Lytle called for the vote. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Ms. Sasser then reviewed the balance sheet which was completed by February 28, 2026. It shows the total assets and liabilities of the Coalition with the second page showing profit and loss statements for February. We also have included a profit/loss by class which shows the funding and expenditures by project. We have detailed information for activity that has happened through February by project as well. She then asked if there were any questions regarding the financial information.

**Motion to approve the financial report for February was made by Commissioner Miles seconded by Commissioner Worwood.**

Chairman Lytle called for the vote. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Ms. Sasser stated for information purposes only, then reviewed the project sheet. This does not require any approval from the Coalition. She stated that this concluded the financial update to the Coalition.

Chairman Lytle thanked Ms. Sasser and Smuin, Rich & Marsing for their work efforts and moved to the closed session.

**11. Motion for closed (executive) session pursuant to 52-4-205 (Litigation, personnel, real estate acquisition, &/or character/professional competency).** (Jack Lytle)

Chairman Lytle then requested a motion for a closed session.

**Motion to move into closed session for litigation was made by Commissioner Norton seconded by Commissioner Jensen.**

Chairman Lytle called for a roll call vote to move into closed session. Motion passed; closed session began at 11:56 AM.

SEVEN COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE COALITION VOTING

Carbon Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___
Daggett Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___
Duchesne Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___
Emery Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___
San Juan Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___
Sanpete Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___
Sevier Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___
Uintah Board Member	Yea <u>X</u>	No ___

Chairman Lytle requested a motion to move back into open session and exit the closed session.

**Motion to move into closed session for litigation was made by Commissioner Norton seconded by Commissioner Jensen.**

Chairman Lytle called for a roll call vote with motion passing at 12:32 PM.

SEVEN COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE COALITION VOTING:

Rural Utah Infrastructure Coalition

Carbon Board Member	Yea <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Daggett Board Member	Yea <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Duchesne Board Member	Yea <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Emery Board Member	Yea <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
San Juan Board Member	Yea <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Sanpete Board Member	Yea <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Sevier Board Member	Yea <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Uintah Board Member	Yea <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

**13. Motion to Adjourn** (Jack Lytle)

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Norton at 12:32 PM.

Rural Utah Infrastructure Coalition

A motion to approve the March 12, 2026 meeting minutes was made by Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_.

SEVEN COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE COALITION VOTING:

Carbon Board Member	Yea ___	No ___
Daggett Board Member	Yea ___	No ___
Duchesne Board Member	Yea ___	No ___
Emery Board Member	Yea ___	No ___
San Juan Board Member	Yea ___	No ___
Sanpete Board Member	Yea ___	No ___
Sevier Board Member	Yea ___	No ___
Uintah Board Member	Yea ___	No ___

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Co-Chair: Greg Miles

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Co-Chair: Jack Lytle

**(COALITION SEAL)**

ATTEST:

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Stacey Herpel