

MAG Executive Council

MINUTES | February 26, 2026 | 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.



MAG

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Location:

Provo Historic Courthouse, 3rd Floor Ballroom, 51 S. University Ave, Provo, UT 84601

Zoom: Link was sent to Committee members and posted online

ATTENDING

NAME

REPRESENTING

1. Elected Officials

Mayor Matt McCormick

Kamas

Mayor Matt Packard

Springville

Mayor Neil Brown

Genola

Mayor Celeni Richins

Wallsburg

Mayor Heidi Franco

Heber City

Mayor Brad Frost

American Fork

Mayor Marsha Judkins

Provo

Mayor Karen McCandless

Orem

Mayor Bill Wright

Payson

Mayor Eric Jensen

Pleasant Grove

Mayor Dan Olson

Santaquin

Mayor Ralph Severini

Hideout

Mayor Carla Merrill

Alpine

Mayor Cristy Simons

Salem

Mayor Paul Binns

Lehi

Mayor Therin Garrett

Mapleton

Mayor Rob Haddock

Elk Ridge

Mayor Ben Hillyard

Woodland Hills

Mayor Zack Stratton

Vineyard

Mayor Brittney Bills

Highland

City Council Member David Salazar

Eagle Mountain

Council Member Kendall Crittenden

Wasatch County

Council Member Megan McKenna

Summit County

Summit County Council Member Skyler Beltran

Utah County

County Commissioner Amelia Powers-Gardner

Utah County

2. MAG Staff / Internal

Michelle Carroll

April Crane

LaNiece Davenport

Jimmy Golding

Johnathon Knapton

Jessica DeLora

Linda Cole

OVERVIEW

The meeting discussed the success of the legislative working group, highlighting strong partnerships with entities like the League of Cities and Towns, UDOT, and UTA. The Executive Council approved the 2026 meeting calendar and ratified appointments for boards and committees.

Financial updates included a transition from a DOS-based system to Polaris Methods and a 2.6% average COLA increase. The new building in Provo is expected to be operational by October.

The Olympics Transportation Working Group aims to develop a sustainable transportation network.

Meals on Wheels faces a 240-person waitlist, and efforts to raise funds and reduce the waitlist were emphasized.

The meeting discussed the sales tax baseline set at 2026, with 5% of the growth between 2026 and 2028 allocated to the transit fund. This system adjusts to economic growth.

The legislative team was praised for its success, with increased participation from local officials and representatives. Next Legislative Session (2027) meetings will be held on Mondays to avoid conflicts.

Recent achievements include a successful giving season, a \$200,000 donation from a Park City foundation, and a 20th annual caregiver conference. The team also met with legislators to discuss transportation and transit issues.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 30, 2026.

Public Comment

There were no public comments sent before the meeting and no comments were given in person.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 25, 2025.

The motion to approve was made by Mayor Packard and was seconded by Mayor Franco

Approval of MAG 2026 Scheduled Meeting Calendar

The motion to approve was made by Mayor Brown and was seconded by Mayor Richins

Ratification of Appointments for 2026 MAG Boards and Advisory Committees

The motion to approve was made by Council Member Crittenden and was seconded by Council Member McKenna.

During the ratification of appointments for the 2026 MAG Boards and Advisory Committees, Michelle explained that all vacancies for MAG's boards and committees are routed through the Executive Council and that, while no new vacancies were being filled at this time, the full rosters for each board and committee were provided via linked staff reports. She briefly outlined MAG's governance structure, including the Executive Council, the Steering Committee, and the Budget and Audit Committee, as well as key planning and program boards such as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board, Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Board, Summit & Wasatch Regional Review Committee (CDBG), Revolving Loan Fund Committee, Mountainland Economic Development District, and the Social Services Block Grant Advisory Committee, along with the Advisory Council on Aging Services and the related Meals on Wheels 501(c)(3).

Financial Update and FY 2025 Audit

April Crane explained that when she became CFO in mid-2022 MAG was still using an outdated DOS-based accounting system, following a prior CFO who had been in place for 50 years, which left records difficult to access and processes antiquated. To modernize and improve transparency for program managers, MAG first migrated to Oracle NetSuite, but after struggling with it for about two years, determined it was not a good fit. MAG then began a second software transition to Polaris Methods, and is now about nine months into implementation, working to load and clean all historical data so it is accurate and auditable.

April highlighted that MAG manages many grants and complex funding streams ("a bowl of spaghetti"), and that one key, recent win has been better understanding by program managers and directors of how to administer grants within budget and compliance.

Regarding the FY2025 Audit, she noted that the two software migrations in roughly two and a half years have complicated data cleanup and audit readiness, but MAG is actively working with its auditor and software vendor to complete the audit. She confirmed that, because of federal grant

requirements, MAG must meet a March 31 Federal deadline, and that the Executive Council will receive a report on the completed audit at the April meeting.

COLA and Merit Increases Discussion

Michelle presented a 10-year historical chart showing how MAG has calculated and approved cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) and performance-based merit increases, explaining that MAG uses three indices—the Social Security COLA, the National Consumer Price Index, and the Mountain-Plains CPI—averaged to guide the COLA recommendation. For the current budget cycle, that average is about 2.6%, to be updated as new CPI data becomes available before the draft budget in April. She emphasized MAG’s management preference to preserve a meaningful performance-based merit component (this year’s range was 0–3%, with COLA applied across the board and merit tied to evaluations) and asked members what they are doing in their own jurisdictions so MAG can stay generally aligned. Several mayors, a commissioner, and a Summit County council member described their local practices, which included: flat merit caps around 2.5–3%, COLAs set based on CPI or available budget, “cost of labor” adjustments based on non-farm labor rates combined with targeted salary studies for hard-to-recruit positions, and total combined increase targets in the 4–5% range. Michelle noted that MAG is preliminarily modeling up to 5% total (COLA plus merit), similar to last year, but not everyone receives the full merit. She suggested a possible 2% COLA with merit in line with prior practice, stressed that COLA would start July 1 and merit in January (only half-year impact), and invited additional feedback from members as they work on their own budgets so MAG can bring back a specific COLA/merit proposal in the April draft budget.

Jurisdictional Cash Assessment

Michelle explained that this assessment is essentially MAG’s “member dues” and walked through the spreadsheet showing each county and municipality’s amounts based on population. She described what each column funds: Government Services (regional advocacy and legislative work), CED Services (required local match for Economic Development Administration planning and the Regional Economic Development Board), MPO match (Utah County transportation planning), Wasatch Back RPO (Summit and Wasatch transportation planning), Aging and Family Services (covering gaps in state/federal funding for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman, Meals on Wheels, and free Medicare counseling), and the General Assessment, which is set at \$0.35 per capita to support MAG’s administrative and regional coordination functions.

Michelle emphasized that the per-capita rates and special assessments are unchanged from the prior year except for normal population adjustments, and that draft invoices have already been sent to city and county finance staff early enough to be incorporated into local budgets. She underscored MAG’s goal of delivering a strong return on investment through grants, transportation funding, planning, and services, and previewed a planned annual “ROI sheet” that will summarize MAG investments received by each member jurisdiction. The assessment will be embedded in the draft budget in April and the final budget in May for approval.

New Building Update

Michelle reported that MAG has outgrown its current Orem office on 800 North and 600 East and also maintains a separate leased facility in Vineyard for weatherization and housing rehab staff, making it difficult to operate with 85 employees in two locations and without adequate meeting space for large bodies like the Executive Council. After a roughly two-and-a-half-year search, MAG purchased a new building in Provo's river bottoms that will allow all staff to be consolidated under one roof, provide room for future growth, and include tenant space that will generate lease income to offset building costs. MAG is doing a lease-back with the seller while the seller relocates, with the goal of being fully moved in by October and holding large meetings there by August. Michelle also recognized staff member Jessica Dolores for managing the internal building move committee, which is handling an RFP for space design, furniture needs, and AV setup, and she noted that MAG's existing Orem building was listed for sale within the past week, with the intent to stay there until the move is complete.

Olympic Transportation Working Group

LaNiece Davenport announced that MAG is one of six organizations invited to participate in a transportation working group for the 2034 Winter Olympics, chaired by UDOT Executive Director Carlos Braceras under the direction of the Olympic Organizing Committee. She explained that the group's mission is to design a transportation network that will both support successful Olympic operations and benefit Utah's broader mobility needs over the next 20–30 years, with an emphasis on enhancing bus, shuttle, and transit service rather than expecting large new federal capital earmarks for major road projects.

LaNiece outlined a forthcoming survey/form MAG will send to all cities and counties in Summit, Utah, and Wasatch counties, asking them to identify projects in three categories: (1) projects necessary to support Olympic venues or athlete/media housing, (2) projects that would be nice to have for the Olympics, and (3) projects that are good for the state generally beyond the Games. There was discussion about who should receive and complete the form; members agreed it should go to mayors (as chief elected officials) and also to key staff such as transportation planners and engineers, with a mechanism for mayoral review or signature so elected officials see and approve submissions.

LaNiece also demonstrated an online venue map (via the Wasatch Choice Vision interactive map, "Utah 2034" tab) to show where proposed Olympic venues are located, and members discussed how local road and transit proposals—such as park-and-ride lots, shuttle access, double-tracking FrontRunner, or potential improvements tied to facilities like the Heber Valley Railroad and Soldier Hollow—could be framed both as essential Olympic access projects and long-term community infrastructure. Several officials urged that Utah's strong record of reusing 2002 Olympic venues and delivering effective transportation investments be emphasized in Federal advocacy, and LaNiece invited ongoing feedback as MAG refines the project intake process.

March For Meals Update

Jimmy gave background on MAG's Meals on Wheels program, which serves homebound adults aged 60+ by delivering meals to their homes and providing congregate meals at senior sites. He explained that demand surged during the pandemic and has remained high even as one-time COVID funding ended, creating a serious funding gap. To help address this, MAG created a parallel nonprofit, Meals on Wheels of Summit, Wasatch and Utah Counties, which raised about \$750,000 in its first year and around \$400,000 so far this year, but there is still a substantial shortfall. Jimmy reported that, despite these efforts, MAG had to start a waiting list that peaked at about 550 people and currently stands around 240 individuals, some of whom had waited over a year—an outcome MAG is trying hard to avoid. He highlighted that Meals on Wheels is not just food but also daily human contact: roughly 60% of served seniors see only their volunteer in a given day, and volunteers often build long-term relationships, delivering highly customized meals (32 dietary options and further tailoring as needed).

Jimmy described March for Meals as a month-long outreach and fundraising campaign, inviting mayors and other elected officials to ride along and deliver meals on local routes so they can meet seniors, see living conditions firsthand, and help raise awareness. Several mayors and a long-time volunteer shared powerful personal experiences and strongly encouraged others to participate. He outlined additional fundraising components such as a Restaurant Rally (round-up or percentage-of-proceeds partnerships with restaurants and some grocery stores) and high-visibility events with Cosmo the Cougar, Willie the Wolverine, and Miss Utah to boost social media reach.

In response to questions, Jimmy noted that feeding everyone on the waitlist would require on the order of \$1.3 million annually, MAG's current structural shortfall is about \$550,000 per year (now temporarily covered by fundraising). One delivered meal averages about \$10, and they can provide city-level counts of current clients and waitlist totals, plus "cost-per-senior-per-year" figures, to support local fundraising or direct city sponsorships. He also confirmed that funding streams for congregate vs. home-delivered meals are separate, that current fundraising is focused on home-delivered clients, and that MAG can, with client consent, connect specific donors or cities to named seniors to cover their meals. Several officials also discussed pursuing corporate sponsorships, Giving Machine participation, and pending state legislation (later described by Johnathon) that would create a state match for locally raised Meals on Wheels funds

Legislative Update

Johnathon reviewed key state bills and budget issues affecting MAG's aging services, transportation, and economic development work. He highlighted close coordination with

legislators through MAG's new weekly legislative working group and noted that several MAG-initiated or MAG-supported priorities are moving forward.

On aging, he described efforts to secure a state match program to reward local fundraising for Meals on Wheels and to protect core state and federal funding for senior services.

On transportation, he outlined bills reshaping UTA governance, creating a new mechanism to grow state transit funding from future sales-tax growth, temporarily reducing the gas tax while backfilling local impacts, and resolving long-standing concerns around the transportation utility fee so cities can use it with clearer legal footing.

In economic development, he noted a major consolidation of multiple special districts and incentive tools into a single Regionally Significant Development Zone framework. He also stressed the importance of securing ongoing (not just one-time) funding for the Local Administrative Advisor (LAA) program and other technical assistance that supports smaller communities, and invited members to continue contacting legislators—particularly in support of Meals on Wheels matching funds and ongoing LAA program funding—as the Executive Appropriations budget list is finalized near the end of the session.

Individual Bill Discussions

SB 281 – Senior Services / Meals on Wheels Match Program (Sen. Stratton)

Creates a state match for locally raised Meals on Wheels funds.

Designed so funds do not come at the expense of other Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs).

Scales match support so smaller or rural AAAs that can't raise as much can still participate.

MAG and Sen. Stratton have iterated on the bill with input from other AAAs; MAG's working group took a position of support and members were encouraged to contact Sen. Stratton in favor.

HB 88 – Proof of Citizenship for Public Benefits

Would require proof of citizenship for a broad range of services that receive state funding, potentially affecting:

CDBG, single-family rehab, HEAT, Meals on Wheels, ombudsman visits, and others.

Lacks clear logistics for implementation and would create major barriers to MAG-administered programs.

Currently "circled" (stalled) in the House; lobbyists expect it is unlikely to pass this year, especially in the Senate.

MAG chose to monitor (rather than formally oppose) but noted strong concerns; the counties and ULCT have expressed opposition.

SB 197 – UTA Restructuring (plus HB 586 folded in)

Restructures UTA governance (details tracked at the cog/MPO level).

Now incorporates HB 586 – Transportation Funding Amendments, which:

Sets FY 2026 as a sales tax baseline.

Beginning in 2028, diverts 5% of the growth above the 2026 baseline into the Transit Transportation Investment Fund (TTIF).

Creates a growing, long-term state funding stream for transit investments (e.g., double-tracking FrontRunner) important for 2034 Olympics and beyond.

Passed House committee and is moving forward.

HB 575 – Motor Fuel Tax / Gas Tax Reduction (Rep. Roberts)

Supersedes an earlier gas-tax bill (by Sen. Buxton).

Temporarily reduces the gas tax by 6 cents for the second half of this year.

State will backfill local impacts with about \$12 million, holding cities and counties harmless.

Paired with efforts to increase refinery production, with the goal that pump prices remain lower even after the temporary tax reduction expires.

HB 425 – Transportation Utility Fee Amendments

Revisits last year's unresolved transportation utility fee issue.

Adds requirements for studies and allows entities to deduct the lowest-traffic day of the week from fee calculations.

This addresses religious institutions' concerns that they were effectively paying for Sunday use; Sunday can now be removed as the lowest-use day.

Has passed its second reading and is moving forward, providing a clearer path for cities to use a transportation utility fee.

HB 507 – Economic Development Amendments / Regionally Significant Development Zones

Consolidates multiple existing increment-financing tools (e.g., HTRZs, PIDs, HOPs, CCRZs) into a single tool:

Regionally Significant Development Zones (RSDZ).

Aims to streamline programs and improve transparency in how these incentives are used.

Participation is optional for cities (opt-in structure).

ULCT's position was pending further details at the time of the meeting; bill appears to be moving forward.

Budget & Program Funding Items (no bill number given)

Meals on Wheels and Aging Services: MAG is watching state budget lines to protect and, where possible, increase funding for senior nutrition and related aging programs.

Local Administrative Advisor (LA) Program:

Key tool supporting small communities with statutory and administrative compliance.

MAG is advocating for ongoing funding; current indications suggest funding may be restored but as one-time money.

MAG sent a letter of support signed by many mayors; Jonathan encouraged further outreach to legislators for ongoing funding.

Other Technical Assistance Programs: Early indications that proposed cuts may be avoided, but MAG will confirm after the Executive Appropriations list (expected around 6 p.m. the day after the meeting)

MAG Wins

Johnathon highlighted several major successes since the last Executive Council meeting. He reported a strong giving season, with continued momentum for Meals on Wheels fundraising (including large foundation support) and preparations for the upcoming March for Meals campaign.

He noted the successful 20th Annual Caregiver Conference, which provided key resources and support to family caregivers, and described MAG's participation in a cottage meeting with Senator Curtis focused on Social Security and aging issues, alongside college students and working-age residents.

Johnathon also summarized a productive trip to Washington, DC, where MAG leaders and mayors met with all members of Utah's federal delegation to discuss transportation and transit priorities (including Olympics-related needs)—joking only that the promised "MAG tattoos" didn't happen.

Finally, he emphasized the strong impact of MAG's new Legislative Working Group at the Utah Capitol, noting increasing weekly participation by local elected officials, regular attendance by partners such as UDOT, UTA, WFRC, and ULCT, and multiple legislators engaging directly with MAG's regional priorities. He announced that next year's meetings will shift to Mondays to align better with ULCT's LPC and county caucus schedules and to further improve turnout.

Other Business

Next meeting - April 30, 2026, at the Provo Historic Courthouse in the 3rd Floor Ballroom, 51 S. University Ave, Provo, Utah

Adjournment :

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Councilmember Crittenden and seconded by Mayor Wright.

