

Jordan River Commission Governing Board Meeting

December 4, 2025 | 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Location

Education Center at Conservation Garden Park
Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District
8275 South 1300 West, West Jordan, UT 84088

And remotely via Zoom

Meeting Attendees

Governing Board Members

Councilmember Don Shelton, Chair, South Jordan
Councilmember Bryn Johnson, Vice Chair, Draper
Ali Avery, North Salt Lake (Alternate)
Commissioner Skyler Beltran, Utah County
Sam Braegger, Utah Lake Authority (Alternate)
Tim Brown, Tracy Aviary
Councilmember Silvia Catten, Millcreek
Commissioner John Crofts, Davis County
Amanda Covington, Larry H. Miller Company
Senator Lincoln Fillmore, Utah State Legislature
Cory Fralick, West Jordan (Alternate)
Gina Grandpre, Saratoga Springs (Alternate)
Mayor Dustin Gettel, Midvale
Ajla Hadzialijagic, Utah Governor's Office (Alternate)
Lisa Hartman, Salt Lake County Mayor's Office (Alternate)
Bruce Holyoak, Murray (Alternate)
Michael Horrocks, Wasatch Rowing Foundation
Brad Knoles, Rocky Mountain Power
Holly Lopez, Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities (Alternate)
John Mackey, Utah Division of Water Quality
Todd Munger, Lehi (Alternate)
Betty Naylor, Gardner Heritage Farms
Rachel Otto, Salt Lake City (Alternate)
Mayor Kristie Overson, Taylorsville
Councilmember Alison Stroud, Sandy
Craig Thaxton, Jordan River Foundation
Councilmember Clarissa Williams, South Salt Lake

Commission Staff

Ren Griffeth, Administrative, Grant & Research Specialist
Caroline Johnston, Event & Volunteer Coordinator
Rachel Lyn, Communications & Outreach Manager
Amelia Miller, Communications & Outreach Intern
Frances Schneider, Education Programs Intern
Soren Simonsen, Executive Director & Commission Secretary

Visitors and Guests

Ryan Anderson, Salt Lake County
Brandon Biederman, PORT
Benn Buys, Utah Fairpark Area Investment & Restoration (UFAIR) District
Angelo Calacino, Salt Lake County
Dave Epstein, Jacobs Construction
Lorie Fowlke, Office of Senator John Curtis
Jon Glenn, Chair, Event Advisory Committee
Laura Haskell, Division of Water Resources
Aspen Johnston, Office of the Great Salt Lake Commissioner
Lauren Littlefield, Salt Lake County
Eric McCulley, McCulley Watershed Consulting Services
Emily Paskett, Salt Lake County
Scott Peters, Jordan River Foundation
Christine Richman, GSBS Consulting
Zack Shepherd, Office of Congresswoman Celeste Maloy
Robert Thompson, Salt Lake County
Dallen Webster, BARR
Kyle Wilson, Office of Congresswoman Celeste Maloy
Sandy Wingert, Utah Division of Water Quality
Will Younger, PROS Consulting
Josh Zimmerman, Utah Division of Water Resources

Meeting Minutes

Chair Don Shelton called the Governing Board meeting to order at 11:49 AM, following the conclusion of the Jordan River Watershed Council meeting (see <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/997101.html>)

1. Governing Board Welcome, Roll Call & Introductions

Chair Shelton welcomed Governing Board members and visitors, and asked those participating to use the links provided to record their attendance.

2. Commission Business

Chair Shelton adjusted the agenda to allow Governing Board Business items prior to presentations, due to time constraints for some attendees and their participation needed for a quorum.

- a. **[Action Item]** Consider Adopting the October 2, 2025, Governing Board Meeting Minutes

Dustin Gettel moved to adopt the October 2, 2025, Governing Board Meeting minutes. Michael Horrocks seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion of the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved by Governing Board members present.

- b. **[Action Item]** Consider Adopting a Proposed 2026 Governing Board Meeting Schedule

John Mackey moved to adopt the proposed 2026 Governing Board Meeting schedule. Michael Horrocks seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion of the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved by Governing Board members present.

c. **[Action Item]** Consider Adopting FY 2026 Budget Amendment #2

Soren Simonsen discussed the budget amendment, which has come about due to three grants recently awarded to the Commission by the Jordan River Foundation. He noted that the Foundation is a 501(c)(3) partner that has been operating for approximately 45 years, serving as the Commission's predecessor and now raising funds to help implement the Blueprint Jordan River.

The first grant includes a \$12,000 matching grant for the Recreation and Trails Program (RTP), which fulfills the required match for the RTP grant. This is in addition to a \$75,000 grant dedicated to transforming the MyJordanriver.org mobile website into a watershed-wide mobile application. A consultant, Swoon Creative, has been hired for the app development, and a working group has been organized with partners, including Seven Canyons Trust and Salt Lake, Utah, and Davis Counties. Soren expressed gratitude to the Foundation for contributing the necessary matching funds.

The second grant is for \$10,000 to continue the work of intern Francis Schneider through the following summer. This grant builds upon the \$2,500 previously received last spring to bring Francis on as an intern. Francis's work involves developing partnerships with the seven, soon to be eight, school districts within the Jordan River area.

The third grant is a \$19,000 award that the Foundation received from Northrop Grumman and passed through to the Commission. This prominent community industry is supporting the Commission's education outreach and efforts with school districts. The funds will be used to create curriculum and other program materials to engage elementary schools with learning and hands on activities to improve water quality in the Jordan River related to stormwater. This program will address topics covered in the watershed plan discussed earlier with Bob Thompson during the Jordan River Watershed Council meeting, specifically focusing on components that can be developed with school districts. The initiative will involve Day of Service opportunities, such as Martin Luther King Jr. Day in January, Earth Day in April, and the 9/11 Day of Service in September. The goal is to develop programs that get children out of their classrooms to learn how storm systems connect to the Jordan River watershed and the importance of keeping litter, chemicals, organic matter and debris out of the river to create a healthier watershed.

Soren concluded by expressing thanks to the Jordan River Foundation and Northrop Grumman for the three grants.

Dustin Gettel moved to adopt Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Amendment #2. Silvia Catten seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion of the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved by Governing Board members present.

d. **[Action Item]** Consider Reappointing Event Advisory Committee Members

- i. Ali Avery, North Salt Lake
- ii. Councilmember Silvia Catten, Millcreek

Betty Naylor moved to reappoint Ali Avery and Councilmember Silvia Catten for three-year terms on the Event Advisory Committee. Dustin Gettel seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion of the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved by Governing Board members present.

e. **[Action Item]** Consider Jordan River Commission Small Grant Proposals & Awards

- 1) Wasatch Adaptive Sports - Adaptive Biking Program (\$5,000)
- 2) Utah Outdoor Therapies - Odyssey House Project (\$5,000)
- 3) Glendale Neighborhood Council - 4th Annual Art @ the Gardens (\$2,500)

Soren Simonsen addressed the Commission's small grant proposals and awards, focusing on three specific requests. First was a request from Wasatch Adaptive Sports for their adaptive biking program around the Jordan River, a program the Commission has funded multiple times in the past. The second proposal was from Utah Outdoor Therapies, a new non-profit utilizing connection to nature near the Jordan River for people overcoming substance use and behavioral health disorders, which had a successful program at the recent Get to the River Festival. The final request was from the Glendale Neighborhood Council for their fourth annual Art @ the Gardens event at the International Peace Garden, which requested \$2,500. Soren noted that the Commission had sufficient funds, with \$20,000 budgeted annually for the grants, and the three proposals together would total around \$12,000. The staff did, however, briefly raise a point for the Board's consideration regarding the Commission's general preference against funding ongoing or sustaining programs, which applied to the Wasatch Adaptive Sports and Art @ the Gardens requests.

Michael Horrocks inquired about a substantial figure, approximately \$551,000, listed in the Wasatch Adaptive Sports materials for direct program delivery costs, wanting clarification on what such a large amount entailed, especially given the organization was only requesting \$5,000 from the Commission.

Soren explained that the funding requested from the Commission would be specifically dedicated to programs on the Jordan River, primarily cycling activities, and that the \$5,000 was a small component of the organization's larger budget.

Brad Knoles offered a strong endorsement for Wasatch Adaptive, noting the hands-on nature of their programs.

Don Shelton raised a question about whether another grant cycle would be paid out of the budgeted \$20,000.

Soren confirmed that the remaining funds would go towards the spring grant cycle.

Michael Horrocks moved to award all three Small Grant proposals. Brad Knoles seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion of the motion.

The motion was approved by the majority of Governing Board members present, with Senator Lincoln Fillmore opposed.

- f. **[Written Report Only]** Wasatch Adaptive Sports FY 2025 Small Grant Final Report (note: a copy of the WAS 2024-2025 Impact Report recognizing the Jordan River Commission is also included)
- g. Upcoming Commission Meeting & Event Schedule
 - i. Thursday, February 5, 2026, 10:00 AM – Governing Board Meeting

3. Presentations & Discussion

Chair Shelton resumed with the previous agenda items.

a. Technical Advisory Committee Report

Gina Grandpre, Vice Chair, reported on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), covering the last quarter of activity. She reported that the TAC met three times, including a field trip on September 8, 2025. This field trip highlighted innovative watershed, stormwater, and landscape projects in Salt Lake City, including visits to the University of Utah Research Park Landscape Lab, the 300 West bioswales and improved bikeway, and the Cornell Wetlands, which includes a stormwater treatment facility.

The regular TAC meeting that took place in October included a presentation on the Central Jordan River Reconnect Master Plan. Consultants provided an update on the progress of the plan, which focuses on a recreation and restoration corridor spanning from 5400 South to Highway 201. The plan aims to achieve better trail connectivity, ecological restoration, improved public access, and increased recreation opportunities, while also exploring long-term maintenance and funding strategies. Committee members provided feedback concerning trail safety, wildlife protection, habitat improvements, and public access needs. The meeting also included a discussion on public safety along the Jordan River, specifically addressing a rise in accidents involving e-bikes and other motorized devices on the Jordan River Trail. Proposed solutions included separating fast and slow users, improving signage, public education, and standardizing rules across different jurisdictions.

There was not a regular TAC meeting in November, which was replaced by the Salt Lake County Watershed Symposium, which many Committee members attended. The upcoming meeting will take place on December 18. Gina concluded her report on the last quarter and welcomed any questions.

b. Event Advisory Committee Report

Jon Glenn, Chair of the Events Advisory Committee (EAC), presented his quarterly report. He thanked the Commission for reappointing Ali Avery and Silvia Catten to the EAC and noted that there are additional vacancies that need to be filled. Jon reported on the success of the Get to the River Festival, which took place throughout September, spanning 32 days with 57 events, involving 31 community partners, across the 16 cities and three counties in the Jordan River area. The Festival engaged thousands of participants. He noted that Mighty Penguin had already provided a detailed report of the Festival at a previous meeting.

During the August meeting, the EAC elected India Nielson Barfuss from as Vice Chair. India lives near the Jordan River in Salt Lake City, and is frequently on the Jordan River Parkway. She works professionally with the Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation, and bring many capabilities and connections through her work there. Mighty Penguin provided an update on the planning and progress for the 2025 Festival, covering the media event, outreach, budget, scheduling, and the Celebration & Recognition event. The EAC also briefly discussed next year's City Nature Challenge and Golden Spoke events, and held a roundtable discussion on improving Committee member engagement in Commission events and enhancing social media outreach, including the potential use of a small promotional budget.

At the October meeting, the EAC received updates on Commission staffing changes and the Education Partner Program, followed by a post-Festival update from Mighty Penguin. A significant discussion involved a proposal to extend the contract with Mighty Penguin for fundraising, planning, and management of the Festival. The EAC voted to extend the contract for two additional years through the year 2027, after which a new Request for Proposals will be required. The contract increases Mighty Penguin's compensation to \$50,000 for the coming year and \$52,000 for the following year. Mighty Penguin's renewed goals include increasing fundraising capabilities, expanding grant opportunities, creating new sponsorship partnerships, and increasing media promotion. The EAC also brainstormed potential future partners and sponsors and discussed the upcoming City Nature Challenge, specifically focusing on strategies to boost engagement and increase participation along the Jordan River. Jon concluded by stating that the next EAC meeting is scheduled for December 11.

4. Director's Report

Soren Simonsen took a few minutes to recognize John Mackey, Director of the Utah Division of Water Quality, and present him with a small gift of appreciation for his many years of service to improving water quality and the environment, and his long commitment to the Jordan River, and the Commission and Watershed Council.

The balance of the Director's Report was postponed due to time constraints.

5. Adjourn

Michael Horrocks moved to adjourn the meeting. Dustin Gettel seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:23 PM.

A meeting recording, presentation and handout materials, and meeting minutes are available at <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/1039085>.

Meeting minutes were prepared by Ren Griffeth and Soren Simonsen, Secretary.

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