

Utah Inland Port Authority Board 2026

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Utah Inland Port Authority Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 4, 2026 - 1:30 pm
Washington City Council Chambers
111 North 100 East
Washington City, UT 84780

Board Members Present in Person: Abby Osborne, Jerry Stevenson

Board Members Present Electronically: Jonathan Freedman, Jefferson Moss, Paul Cutler

Non-Voting Board Members Present in Person: none

Non-Voting Board Members Present Electronically: Victoria Petro, Joel Ferry

Board Members Absent: Bill Wyatt

UIPA Staff: Ben Hart, Ariane Gibson, Larry Shepherd, Amy Brown Coffin, Kaitlin Felsted, Jenna Draper, Carol Watson, Diana Gardner, Stephen Smith, Lindsay Pedersen, Stephanie Pack, Doug Pierce, Amy Chanthalyxay, Lori Haslem, Nick Archambault, Mona Smith, Danny Stewart, Sebastian Abril, Sam Steffensen, Michelle Bohnen, Alicia Eggleston, Nadine Stevens-Hendry

Others in Attendance: Michelle Ebben, Jeremy Redd, Brooke Larsen, Jordan Hess, Sam Harvey, Kurt Ivie, Adam Snow, Neil Walter, Todd Brightwell, Rusty Hughes, Mori Kessler, Colin Jack, Gary Greene, Don Bean, Brent Bills, Richard Holmes, Heidi Gunn, David Stirland, Lorene Cox, Jay Springer, Deeda Seed, Annette Armstrong, Allison Barton, Jackie Baker, Joan Gregory, David Bennett, Boyd Davis, Jen Hart, Heather Dove, Kent Andersen, Brandi O'Brien, Paul Helms, Tussy King, Jared Stewart, Lenna Wilcox, Ryan Sullivan, Adrian Harvell, Jonny Vasic, Mark Nord, Brandy Grace, Steve Erickson, Eric Tholen

1. **Welcome**

Board Chair Osborne welcomed the board members, staff and public to this Utah Inland Port Authority Board Meeting.

2. **Approval of Minutes, June 25, 2026 Board Meeting**

Board Member Cutler moved to approve the minutes from the June 25, 2026 board meeting.

Board member Freedman seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously by all board members present.

3. Open & Public Meetings Act Training

Paul Helms, an attorney with Michael Best, provided the annual training for the UIPA Board on the Open & Public Meetings Act. His presentation included the following requirements: meetings are to be open, records created are public, proper notices are required for all meetings, closed meetings must meet proper purposes, and caution should be exercised in all board member communications so that the deliberation of all board actions is done in public.

4. Executive Director Report

Executive Director Ben Hart provided an executive director report. He thanked Washington City for their gracious welcome and noted that over four years ago, Washington County was the first local body that invited the Utah Inland Port Authority to establish a project area.

He mentioned a letter received from concerned citizens concerning the Great Salt Lake. He thanked the letter's author and 1,163 signatories for their input on how the port can contribute to responsible development around the lake. UIPA has for the last three months been working on an expanded natural resources policy and all feedback on that policy is welcomed. Many of the topics addressed in the letter are included in the draft policy.

Amy Brown Coffin, Chief Risk & Compliance Officer, presented the annual review of UIPA sponsored Public Infrastructure Districts. She shared the location of these PIDs, their date of approval, the composition of their boards of trustees, the bonds issued, and the active revenue sources for the repayment of any bonds. She reviewed the accomplishments, compliance, and transparency of each of the PIDs. She completed the presentation by sharing a list of the reports and other documents and items required for these PIDs to be fully compliant.

Jenna Draper, Associate Vice President of Regional Project Area Development, provided an update on activities in the Castle Country Project Area in Carbon and Emery Counties. In Emery County, Valar Atomics recently went operational with a test reactor, the first microreactor to go critical outside of a national testing lab. Valar's operations will be expanding into the Castle Country project area. In Green River, an agreement was signed for a test well to explore lithium extraction. This \$500 million test project within the UIPA project area will employ 300-500 during the construction phase and an ongoing staff of 80-160 people. In a community of 800 people, this is a significant economic win. In Carbon County, just outside of Price, Savage is building a new rail terminal to move goods and energy products. This \$20 million investment will create about 40 local jobs.

5. Presentation: Resolution 2026-39 Utah Association of Counties Agreement

Ben Hart discussed an agreement with the Utah Association of Counties. Many of the processes that make UIPA successful happen at the county level, including tax increment, property tax assessments, and parcel document recordings. Under the agreement, UAC will provide technical

assistance in the counties, particularly smaller counties where the requirements of the port's processes are burdensome to their small staff. This coordination with UAC also supports the legislated transparency requirements from SB206.

Brandy Grace, Chief Executive Officer of the Association of Counties, expressed that UIPA is a wonderful economic development tool and spoke of the additional property tax administrative responsibilities that UIPA project areas can generate and how UAC can assist with those processes.

6. Policy Updates

Amy Brown Coffin and Mona Smith, Environment & Sustainability Director, presented the following policies for review:

The first two policies, BP-01 - Open & Public Meetings and BP-03 - Communications & Media Policy are up for their annual review and since no revisions to those policies have been proposed, no board action is needed on them in this meeting.

Revising and drafting of BP-17 - Natural Resources is ongoing. Mona Smith discussed the effort to expand this policy beyond its initial focus on wetlands, incorporating three new pillars of Dark Skies, Water Conservation, and Low and Zero Emissions Buildings. These additions strengthen UIPA's commitment to sustainable development within project areas, providing a framework of standards and best practices within these key pillars. Where communities designate these standards within their project areas, stakeholders interested in benefitting from UIPA funding would need to abide by the standards and best practices. The dark sky standards aim to reduce light pollution in residential, ecological, and migratory bird areas. Water conservation standards aim to improve water budgeting, building and landscape efficiency, as well as overall watershed resiliency. Building emissions standards tackles building-related emissions to improve regional air quality.

7. Presentation: Island View Project Area Creation

Stephanie Pack, Associate Vice President of Regional Project Area Development, introduced the proposed Island View Project Area. West Point City passed a resolution in August of 2024 inviting UIPA to consider a project area in their city. The current proposal is to create a 40 acre project area within existing industrial zoning with plans for future project areas west of West Point in partnership with Davis County. The location is where SR177 (West Davis Corridor) will terminate at 1800 North. The island view project area directly aligns with the statutory goals and objectives to be considered as an inland port project area. There is a need to effectuate a public purpose, there is a public benefit to the proposed development of the project. It is economically sound and feasible to adopt and carry out the project area plan, and carrying out this project area plan will promote the goals stated by statute.

Boyd Davis, City Engineer - West Point City, said the project area represents a significant economic development opportunity for the city. He spoke of the transformational nature of the new highway that will open by 2028. He thanked UIPA and other partners and expressed the city's enthusiasm for the project area.

Kent Andersen, Economic Development and Community Development Director – Davis County, thanked UIPA and other partners for their support of this project. He noted the strategic nature of the site's location and transportation opportunities and its suitability as a job center for the area.

Targeted industries for the project area include light industrial, advanced manufacturing, aerospace and defense, life sciences, and other industries that create primary jobs.

This presentation is informational only. Consideration of the adoption of this project area will occur at a future UIPA Board Meeting.

8. Presentation: Resolution 2026-40 Creation of Greater Washington Project Area Plan & Budget

Danny Stewart, Associate Vice President of Regional Project Area Development, provided a presentation on the plan for the Greater Washington Project Area in Washington County. This new project area will initially include the 320-acre Phase 1 of the Sunrise Valley Industrial Park near the Washington County Landfill where some buildings are already operating and other construction is underway. He thanked Mayor Kress Staheli and members of the city council as well as Rusty Hughes, the city's economic development director.

The creation of the Greater Washington project area will help address the City's pressing need for the development of the Purgatory Road project. This is a planned major transportation corridor that will connect this industrial area and the county landfill to Utah State Route 9 and State Route 7, and will take heavy industrial traffic and landfill traffic out of rapidly growing industrial areas and off the main streets of Washington City. Targeted industries for this project area include, advanced manufacturing, aerospace and defense, technology, life sciences, product manufacturing, corporate headquarters, and other industries that create primary jobs and diversify the local economy.

9. Public Comment

Board Chair Osborne opened up the public comment period.

David Sterling, Board President for the Washington County School District shared the district's opposition to the proposal by Washington City to establish the Greater Washington Inland Port Project Area. He expressed concerns over the potential loss of tax revenue to the school district and the possible future need for the district to raise taxes.

Allison Barton, asked the board to vote against supporting project areas in Washington or Davis counties to protect against air, noise, and water pollution.

UIPA Executive Director Ben Hart addressed the school district representatives and thanked them for coming to express their concerns. He expressed the port's willingness to enter into an agreement with the district to help allay its concerns about future tax revenues.

10. Approval of Resolution 2026-39 Utah Association of Counties Agreement

Board member Stevenson moved that the Utah Inland Port Authority Board adopt Resolution 2026-39, the Utah Association of Counties Agreement.

Board member Cutler seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a unanimous vote of all board members present. (Jonathan Freedman was not present for this vote)

11. Policy Updates

As the board proposed no updates to the policies reviewed in this meeting, no vote was needed.

12. Approval of Resolution 2026-40 Creation of Greater Washington Project Area Plan & Budget

Board member Cutler moved that the Utah Inland Port Authority Board adopt Resolution 2026-40, a Resolution of the Utah Inland Port Authority Board Adopting the Greater Washington Inland Port Project Area Plan.

Discussion: Board Member Cutler asked if there were dissenting votes among local officials to their resolutions in support of the Greater Washington Project Area. Washington County adopted a resolution in 2022 and Washington City adopted a resolution in June of this year. There were no dissenting votes from the city council. Board Member Cutler asked Ben Hart to discuss the implementation of an agreement with the school district. Ben stated that UIPA will never do anything in an area that the local community does not support. He indicated a willingness to enter into an agreement to give the local entity assurances that UIPA will not act without local approval. He discussed the process for reaching an agreement and bringing it back to this board for its approval.

Board Member Stevenson spoke to the taxes raised from industrial development and the relatively low financial impact this activity has on school districts because unlike housing development it does not directly lead to new students to be educated.

Board Member Petro spoke of growth in her city council district of Salt Lake City that creates additional needs for services. She described the need for policymakers to do a cost-benefit analysis regarding growth and decide if it is best for their communities. She recognized that some of the difficult decisions are choosing between whether we can educate children now or have jobs for them in the future. She thanked the school board members for coming and drawing attention to the challenges they face.

Board member Stevenson seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a unanimous vote of all board members present. (Jonathan Freedman was not present for this vote)

13. Closed Session

At 2:53 pm the board voted to move into a closed session meeting held at the Washington City Council Chambers, 111 North 100 East, Washington City, UT 84780, and via electronic meeting, for the purpose of a “strategy session to discuss the purchase, exchange, or lease of real property” as allowed and described in Section 52-4-204 of Utah Code and sections 52-4-205 of the Open and Public meetings act. Board member Stevenson made a motion to move into closed session. Board member Moss seconded the motion.

Vote:

Jefferson Moss - yes
Jerry Stevenson - yes
Paul Cutler - yes
Abby Osborne - yes
Jonathan Freedman - absent

The closed session ended at 3:14 pm.

14. **Adjourn**

Board Chair Osborne adjourned the meeting.

Board Chair Abby Osborne

Written Public Comments submitted during and after the meeting:

Deeda Seed - Salt Lake City - August 3, 2026

Letter to the Utah Inland Port Authority Board of Directors
Data Center Development in the Great Salt Lake Basin

Dear Members of the Utah Inland Port Authority Board,

We write as Utahns who care about the future of the Great Salt Lake — its wetlands, its wildlife, its water, and the health of the millions of people who live in the region.

Over the past year, the Utah Inland Port Authority has become directly entangled in some of the most consequential development decisions facing the lake. The Tooele Valley Public Infrastructure District (TVPID) project — which includes a 500-megawatt data center, a truck stop, and a wastewater discharge permit that would send up to 260,000 gallons of concentrated brine per day into wetlands feeding Gilbert Bay — depends on UIPA's financing tools to move forward. So do other project areas across the state that either already host or could someday host similar water- and power-intensive computing facilities.

In June, UIPA stated publicly that it "prioritizes protection of the Great Salt Lake, is not actively recruiting data centers, and does not offer incentives for data centers." We take that statement seriously, and we want to see it made real. But the record so far raises a hard question: the TVPID developer, Chuck Akerlow, has told reporters his project "wouldn't be possible without the incentives and financing provided by the port authority." If UIPA's own financing is what makes a data-center-anchored project viable, then a policy that only withholds a direct per-project rebate — while still supplying the tax differential, Public Infrastructure District sponsorship, and Authority Infrastructure Bank loans that make the surrounding project area work — is a distinction without a difference to the lake, the aquifer, and the communities living nearby.

UIPA does not have zoning authority, and we are not asking the Board to attempt something outside its legal power. What UIPA does have is real financial leverage — the same tools already used, in project area plans across the state, to exclude other categories of development the Board has decided are not a good fit for a given area. We are asking the Board to use those same tools, deliberately and in writing, to protect the Great Salt Lake basin.

We call on the UIPA Board to:

- Adopt a binding, board-approved policy — not just a public statement — that UIPA will not sponsor a Public Infrastructure District, approve a project area plan, or grant an Authority Infrastructure Bank loan for any project area where a data center, server farm, or similar advanced computing facility is a stated or reasonably foreseeable anchor use, anywhere within the Great Salt Lake basin.
- Apply this exclusion basin-wide and prospectively, so that every future Great Salt Lake basin project area plan carries the same restriction that other UIPA plans already apply to high-water-use or speculative development — rather than leaving the question to case-by-case discretion.
- Make wetland-mitigation funding commitments mandatory, not optional, for any Great Salt Lake basin project area, with the percentage of tax differential directed to wetland protection scaled to the water intensity of the proposed development.
- Require full disclosure of water use, cooling technology, energy consumption, source of energy, and whether its electricity will come from the grid, before a project area plan is adopted — including whether a facility will use evaporative or closed-loop cooling, projected daily water withdrawal, and expected wastewater composition, including what chemicals will be used in the water of the cooling system — rather than allowing these details to surface only later, in a separate state discharge permit process, after UIPA's financing decisions are already made.
- Commit that the Board's statutory five-year review of project area differentials will trigger a mandatory reassessment of incentive eligibility and infrastructure support whenever a project area's actual development diverges from what was represented at adoption — closing the door on "logistics hub" project areas that, in practice, become data center campuses.
- Require full beneficial-ownership disclosure for project area applicants, so the public can know who is actually building what on land that benefits from public financing tools, and so that claims about which parcels do or do not receive UIPA support can be independently verified.
- Formally align Great Salt Lake basin project area review with Governor Cox's May 2026 executive order prioritizing the lake, air quality, water quality, and transparency in data center decisions — adopting it as binding review criteria for the Board's own financing decisions, not leaving it to state permitting agencies alone.

- AI data centers are well known to be epicenters of electronic waste, including many components that are sources of PFAS chemicals. How this toxic waste will be managed must be established before construction permits are issued.

The Great Salt Lake is not a resource Utah can afford to gamble on the hope that voluntary statements will hold. We ask the Board to put its policy in writing, apply it consistently, and use the financial tools already at its disposal to make sure that "we don't recruit data centers" is a commitment the public can hold you to — not just a line in a press release.

We respectfully request a response from the Board, and we ask that this letter and the accompanying signatures be entered into the public record at the Board's next meeting.

Sincerely,

The undersigned (1163 signatories)