

APPROVED
BOARD OF STATE HISTORY MEETING

April 16, 2026

12:00 pm

Hybrid

Utah Historical Society, Museum of Utah

North Capitol Building, 450 N. State Street, Helen Papanikolas Conference Room, SLC, UT

Virtually, via Zoom

ATTENDEES:

BOARD

Spencer Hall, Chair

Emily Larsen, Vice Chair

Molly Cannon

Emma Moss

Axel Ramirez

Robert Burch

UTAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Jennifer Ortiz

Kevin Fayles

Alycia Rowley

Greg Walz

Veronica Solano

Mark Melville

Kimberly Kronwall

Holly George

Emily Yankura

Tim Glenn

Lisa Barr

Kylin Cummings

Bryce Romleski

Brianna Dzierzanowski

Wendy Rex Atzet

Jessica Proctor

Brandi Burns

Haille Van Patten

Monique Davila

Fatima Amjad

Michelle Hill

Sabrina Sanders

Cassie Johnson

Jordan Kiyak

Carly Bagley

Nicole Sanders

Christian Poutre

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Kat Potter

PUBLIC

None

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Following the establishment of a quorum, the April 16, 2026 meeting of the Board of State History was called to order at 12:07 PM, with Spencer Hall welcoming all in attendance.

The Board welcomed eight newly hired part-time Museum of Utah educators: Cassie Johnson, Michelle Hill, Jake Caetano, Ariana Babbitt, Mariella Flynn, Angel Faull, Marantha Larsen, and Etiana Coley Mells.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were received.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 22, 2026 BOARD OF STATE HISTORY MEETING MINUTES

Molly Cannon made a motion to approve the January 22, 2026 meeting minutes. Emma Moss seconded the motion. Alycia Rowley called for a vote: Spencer Hall: Yes. Emily Larsen: Yes. Molly Cannon: Yes. Emma Moss: Yes. Axel Ramirez: Yes. Robert Burch: Yes. The motion passed.

CCE DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Kat Potter, Deputy Director, Dept. of Cultural and Community Engagement, provided the following updates:

- **Leadership Transition:** CCE Executive Director Donna Law will be transitioning to a new role at Southern Utah University (SUU), remaining with CCE through July 3, 2026. It is anticipated that the Governor's Office will select Donna's replacement in May.
- **Office Move:** CCE staff currently at the Highland Building in Millcreek will move to the Tax Commission building on North Temple in August 2026.
- **Legislative & Budget Highlights:**
 - Compensation: State employees received a 2.5% COLA plus performance-based one-time funding.
 - Funding Allocations: \$100K for *Volunteer for Good* (Eastern Utah); \$500K for a statewide literacy campaign (in partnership with the First Lady's Foundation); \$1M one-time funding for the *Great American State Fair*.
 - Legislature-requested Budget Cuts: \$65K cut to UHS; \$650K cut to the STEM Action Center (affecting school grants); \$1.2M cut to Arts Grant programs (though \$1M was redirected to a major public art acquisition fund).
 - Black Historic License Plate Fee: Annual DMV fee increasing from \$25 to \$50. UHS continues to receive \$2 per plate; remaining new revenue supports Olympic infrastructure and public art acquisitions (\$3.50).
- **America 250 Utah Updates:**
 - Local communities are encouraged to brand existing events under America 250 (website: America250.utah.gov).
 - The Pen Is Mightier: *Writing a Revolution, Communicating in the Pursuit of Life, Liberty, & Happiness* exhibit currently open on the 4th floor of the Capitol.
 - Time capsule items sent to Washington, D.C.
 - July 3–5 Anniversary Weekend: Utah Symphony concert on the Capitol steps (July 3), Capitol lit red/white/blue, local parades/fireworks (July 4), and neighborhood pop-up gatherings (July 5).
 - Great American State Fair: National Mall event in Washington, D.C. (June 25 – July 10); CCE is collaborating with the Office of Tourism to design Utah's pavilion.
- **Utah Division of Arts & Museums Director Transition:** Director Vicki Bourns is retiring. The job posting closes today at 6:00 PM, with the goal to have the position filled in June before Donna Law's departure.

GIFT ACCEPTANCE POLICY

Jessica Proctor presented a draft Gift Acceptance Policy for the Board's review. The new policy outlines acceptable/unacceptable non-collection financial gifts, grants, and contributions, and defines expectations and legal standards for non-profits. The draft has been reviewed and approved by UHS' General Counsel. This policy does not cover historical objects, manuscripts, or collection artifacts, which remain under the Collections Development Policy.

Molly Cannon made a motion to approve the UHS Gift Acceptance Policy. Emma Moss seconded the motion. Alycia Rowley called for a vote: Spencer Hall: Yes. Emily Larsen: Yes. Molly Cannon: Yes. Emma Moss: Yes. Axel Ramirez: Yes. Robert Burch: Yes. The motion passed.

UTAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROGRAM UPDATES

Marketing & Communications - Haille Van Patten

- **Audience Growth:** Significant social media reach expansion (+522% on Instagram, +377% engagement on Facebook). Newsletter subscriptions grew by 113 organic sign-ups in March alone.
- **Media & Advertising:**
 - KUTV segments covering Seraph Young, Olympic legacy, Women's History Month, and National History Day.
 - Upcoming ads in Utah Life Magazine (May/June issue) and Back to the Future: The Musical Playbill (Broadway at the Eccles in June). Radio ads launching on NOW 97.9 and Coast 103.
 - The Parachute Wedding Dress campaign performance on Meta/Pinterest has been the most popular to date.
- **Rebrand:** Transition to the new UHS brand identity is underway, with a 9–12 month phased approach through April 2027.

Local History Services - Lisa Barr and Monique Davila

- **Oral History Grants:** Partnering with Utah Humanities on \$3,000 grants. Recent projects include Friends of Antelope Island. Grant portal reopens in May.
- **Trainings & Webinars:** Launched webinars covering historical thinking foundations and methods. Upcoming sessions with State Archives in April and a photo conservation workshop with Marriott Library.
- **Fieldwork & Partnerships:** Consulted with Salt Lake City Sister Cities collection and partnered university students with the Lehi Historical Society for marker research. Partnering with State Archives and State Library to assist public libraries with non-library historical objects.

Education & Engagement - Brandi Burns

- **UHS 130th Anniversary (2027):** Project underway to update the institutional history written by Gary Topping in 1997, beginning with oral history interviews with past/present leaders.
- **Youth Engagement:**
 - Youth Advisory Council returning; orientation set for September 22, 2026.
 - National History Day (NHD) Utah State Contest scheduled for April 24, 2026 at Westminster University.
- **Engagement:** Women's History Month toolkits supported 17 partner-hosted events across 9 counties (200+ attendees). Civic Season (June 19 – July 4) toolkits are expanding to 29+ signed-up venues.
- **Utah History Summit:** Scheduled for September 22, 2026, prior to the WMA/UMA Conference, serving as a networking and state-of-the-field event for practitioners.

Membership & Development - Jessica Proctor

- **Membership Metrics:** Current total: 668 members (8% increase since July 2025); 78 Seagull Circle members. Membership revenue is up 26% year-over-year (\$20,000 total).
- **Board Participation:**
 - 63% of board members are paid members (goal is 100%).
 - 45% of board members have joined Seagull Circle (one-time campaign active through end of 2026).
- **New Initiatives:**
 - UHS joined NARM (North American Reciprocal Museum Association), offering reciprocal benefits at participating museums (e.g., UMFA) for upgraded membership tiers (\$100+).
 - Digital UHS membership cards launching in June 2026.
 - UHS Member Month (August): 20% store discount for members. Partnering with "We Are Utah" gallery participants for special member events:
 1. Topaz Museum: Chartered bus tour to Delta.
 2. Kanab Museum / Perry Lodge: Walking food history tour with Paiute Tribal participation.
 3. Brigham City Museum: Artisan leather-crafting night in honor of the Brigham City Co-op.

Museum of Utah - Tim Glenn and Kimberly Kronwall

- **Exhibit Installation:** Over 60% complete; 42 artifact cases remaining for installation. Lighting and AV setup currently underway. Preview events begin in 6 weeks.
- **Facility Operations:** Operations team and host staff settled into the North Capitol Building. The museum store has been open since late January.

- **Collections Move:** Artifact relocation from valley facilities begins April 27, 2026, extending into early 2027. Fire suppression testing and space preparation completed.

DIRECTORS UPDATE

Jennifer Ortiz presented UHS Updates.

- **Made by Us Research (Gen Z Engagement):**
 - Research highlights that 44% of 18–29 year-olds did not vote in 2024, and only 16% feel U.S. democracy is working for their generation. However, 90% care deeply about their local communities.
 - Gen Z seeks authentic, in-person connection and safe spaces for civic dialogue over digital saturation
 - History organizations hold higher public trust than media or government agencies.
- **Strategic Application:** UHS is tailoring its 2026-2027 Youth Advisory Council to focus on UHS membership and young adult engagement, leveraging history as a platform for civic connection.

OTHER BUSINESS

City Creek Trail / State Street Connection: Spencer Hall noted legislative match funding was secured for the City Creek pedestrian trail project connecting the Capitol to Temple Square, designed by the team behind New York's High Line.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 1:32 PM, followed by an in-person walk-through tour of the Museum of Utah exhibit spaces for board members present.

NEXT MEETING

The next Board meeting is scheduled for August 6, 2026.