

Regular Meeting

Moab Tourism Advisory Board (MTAB)

Held at Grand County, Utah Commission Chambers
125 E. Center
Moab, Utah 84532

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6DB8ldzfC4>

MINUTES

June 9, 2026 | 3:00 p.m.

**** Time stamps (HH:MM:SS) correspond to the video****

Regular Meeting

Members in attendance: Wendell Williams, Sharon Kienzle, Cora Philips (Chamber), Felicia Baty, Jason Taylor (City Council), Howard Trenholme, Lori McFarland, Brian Martinez (County Commission)

Members in attendance remotely:

Non-members in attendance: Mick Soleta (MOT), Ali Harford (MOT), Bega Metzner (MOT/MMVFC), Jessica Kunzer-Pearson (Camp4)

Non-members in attendance remotely: Stephen Beneski (Gravel Adventure Field Guide)

Opening Items

Call to Order (00:01:07)

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- Lori McFarland said the upcoming Camp4/Tourist shoot was going to work with High Point Hummer & ATV for the off-roading content.

Citizens to be Heard (00:02:50)

- Josh Surkes with Paddle Moab spoke on the record about a recent news article that covered the low water in the Colorado River in a negative light; he said he was led to believe the article would be about housing. He emphasized Moab's importance as a river destination.
- Denise and Justin Ricks with Mad Moose also introduced themselves; they applied for grant funds through the Special Events Marketing Grant.

Discussion and Action Items

1. Tax Collection Reporting/Reserve Account Update (00:07:09)

- Wendell Williams introduced the board to the tax reporting numbers they were given for the meeting, and pointed out that TRT and total sales tax revenues were up over last year. Brian Martinez mentioned that this was the first time in four years that Moab had a positive year over year quarter.
- The board discussed how Moab is comparing to competitors (specifically Washington County), and restaurant taxes. The board also asked about how budget projections are calculated; Brian suggested that the county clerk could speak to the board about specific numbers and projections.
- Lori also asked for clearer reporting around the car rental revenues, which combine three tax rates (motor vehicle tax, short term leasing tax, and off-highway vehicle rental). She asked that the three rates be split out individually.
- Mick Soleta also presented budget numbers, showing total revenues and office expenditures. He then added that there is \$3.4 million in unappropriated funds/in reserves.

2. Director's Report (00:28:54)

- Mick gave the board an update on the branding project, saying that Camp4 was shooting its campaign that week. He also attached Madden's most recent ad reporting presentation to the board agenda and encouraged the board to review it.
- Board members asked about recent travel shows (like IPW) and mentioned seeing more bus tours in town recently.

7. Colorado River Update (moved up) (00:38:22)

- Jason Taylor spoke to what Josh Surkes did during the citizens to be heard section. He said the local news article about low water was written in a negative light, and that the river is still a fun activity for visitors to do this year. In high summer, with low water, the river is especially good for families to do together, he said.
- The board discussed how to best promote the river despite drought declarations and news about low water.

5. MOT Staffing Presentation/Review/Approval (moved up) (00:50:36)

- Mick gave a presentation on his goals for staffing the Office of Tourism. He first asked for an administrative assistant, who would support all administrative tasks in the office. Lori asked what the biggest asset an admin in the office would bring; Mick answered that an admin would be able to allow current staff to focus more on marketing tasks, rather than administrative work like answering the visitor phone line and managing the Special Events Marketing Grant.
- Cora motions to approve the proposed full-time administrative assistant position within the Moab Office of Tourism. Sharon seconded.

- Jason asked if the administrative assistant would help with the film office, especially if the film office created a film incentive.
- Howard emphasized his support for staffing the office with historically similar staffing levels.
- Motion passed unanimously.
- Mick then presented the second half of his staffing ideals, which included a staff member to head data and community relations and a staff member to oversee paid media. The paid media staff would be on a contract, and thus potentially remote; board members asked about the specifics of hiring a remote contractor to assist with paid media.
- Cora motioned to approve \$120,000 in marketing staffing support through Spring 2027. Felicia seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Mick continued to say that he was also considering global markets staffing support.

3. Gravel Adventure Field Guide Update with Stephen Beneski (01:19:32)

- Stephen Beneski with the Gravel Adventure Field Guide presented an update on where Moab's GAFG was at, going over routes and showing the board a design draft. 24,000 books will be printed, with a distribution to 130 bike shops across the country. 7,000 books will stay in Grand County for local bike shops to pass out for free.
- Wendell asked that the board review the draft guide and send him any comments.

8. Special Events Marketing Grant - Round 2 Awards Review/Approval (moved up) (01:29:21)

- The Round 2 subcommittee presented its scores and funding recommendations for the second round of the Special Events Marketing Grant. Felicia disclosed event partnerships with VistaHost hotels.
- Jason motioned to approve funding for applications 1-12. Cora seconded. Motion passed 6-1 with Lori abstaining.
- The board discussed four applications, all of which applied for ineligible expenses. Ultimately the board decided to not fund any expenses related to salaries, creative wages, or infrastructure, such as contract services, event photography, and travel. They adjusted each of the four applications to remove ineligible expenses.
- Jason motioned to approve the second batch of applications with updated funding recommendations. Howard seconded. Motion passed 5-2 with Lori abstaining and Sharon absent.

4. Moab Film Fund Presented by Commissioner Martinez (01:47:08)

- Brian presented the idea of creating a Grand County film incentive to support more film productions in this area, which Washington County and Park City both do as well. Bega expressed her support for the idea, adding that often one of the first questions she gets from film makers is what the state or local incentive is.
- Brian and Mick suggested the board vote to form a subcommittee to figure out the details of what the incentive could look like.
- Howard motioned to create a subcommittee consisting of Brian, Bega, Mick, and Wendell, with up to three board members; Howard amended his motion to include Brian,

Bega, Mick, Wendell, and Felicia to form a proposal to use TRT funds for a film incentive program. Cora seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Holiday Festival Review/Approval (01:56:02)

- Brian presented his ideas for another holiday festival to continue the momentum from last year and stay top of mind for travelers planning their trips during the holidays. He asked for more funds to create more light displays, a drone show, and PR with Campstories. The board expressed their support for the event and emphasized that it was a legal use of promotional tax dollars.
- Jason motioned to approve \$175,000 for the Moab Holiday Festival event and PR activation, event production, and other related expenses. Sharon seconded. After brief discussion on the bridge lights, the motion passed unanimously.

9. Mitigation Grant Discussion - Review/Approval Special July Meeting (02:02:27)

- The board will need to review the county's grant application for a new state grant that uses mitigation TRT revenues; Brian said he believed the board could review it in August.

10. Restaurant Tax Review/Bonding (02:03:10)

- Brian said there are groups lobbying against the restaurant tax, in particular Maverick, who want the tax to become a "general" tax. He encouraged the board to think about bonding the restaurant tax for a specific project to protect its revenues.

11. OMPA Annual Training (02:05:49)

- Wendell reminded board members to file their disclosures and open public meetings trainings.

12. Board Member Reports (2:06:43)

- Sharon said that the MIC is now showing Sand Flats videos on demand, and wanted to remind everyone that the MIC does not encourage visitors to go to Mill Creek. Mick added that the MOT doesn't either; the MOT only promotes trails in its Outdoor Adventure Guide.
- Howard said there was no significant update from the airport on the new airlines, and encouraged the MOT to begin marketing the new flights for this fall.
- Ali quickly discussed her sales mission to Australia and New Zealand; she went with staff from Ski Utah, who encourage ski/national park trips to the state.
- Wendell expressed his gladness with the energy that tourism brings to town, and expressed how much he likes sharing Moab's beauty with visitors.

Adjourn.