

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=w5YRiyXNB3Q>

MINUTES

May 12, 2026 | 3:00 p.m.

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

Regular Meeting

Members in attendance: Wendell Williams, Lori McFarland, Brian Martinez, Alex Borichevsky, Felicia Baty, Howard Trenholme, Cora Philips, Rebecca Monceaux

Members in attendance remotely: Jason Taylor

Non-members in attendance: Ali Harford (MOT), Mick Soleta (MOT)

Non-members in attendance remotely: Virginia Pierce (Utah Film Commission), Lesley Rowbal (KHM), Elitsa Yaneva (Campstories)

Opening Items

Call to Order (00:06:42)

Opening Items (00:06:48)

Citizens to be Heard (00:07:42)

- Theresa King with the Moab Happenings asked that the board consider advertising with the Moab Happenings, as the publication is distributed in Salt Lake City and Grand Junction as well as Moab.

Discussion and Action Items

1. Rural Film Incentive Program with Virginia Pierce (00:11:56)

- As Moab thinks about how to support film in the area, the board heard from Virginia Pierce at the Utah Film Commission. Virginia shared spending data from recent films

created in the Grand County area, including Horizon and Godzilla. Board members asked about local spending and using local vendors, and were excited about the idea of hosting more film events in Moab.

- Board members also discussed the benefits of having a film incentive: this year, the Utah film incentive was cut by millions of dollars.

2. Approval of Minutes: April 2026 (00:31:31)

- Cora motioned to approve the minutes. Seconded by Alex. Motion passed 7-0, with Howard abstaining.

3. Special Events Marketing Grant Update (00:32:40)

- Mick announced that the second round of the special events marketing grant funding is due May 31, for events taking place July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027.

4. Q1 Paid Media Results with Madden Media (00:34:13)

- Lesley Rowbal with Madden Media joined the meeting to give a brief overview of Moab's Q1 paid media results. Mick noted that Lesley was in Moab the prior month, and gave a more in-depth presentation, which is available to view on Youtube.
- Overall, ads performed very well and above Madden's benchmarks. Total impact from Q1 advertising was at least \$5.6 million. Retired Travelers were the most engaged audience, driving the highest click through rates.
- Lesley also touched on how Madden worked with AI: as travelers turn to AI to plan trips, Madden has worked with the Moab team to create more content that AI will pick up. The board discussed how to strengthen local businesses and Discover Moab on search authority: Felicia asked if link referrals would help, or if businesses should link to Discover Moab more.
- Lesley also showcased the work Madden is doing for email marketing and video content creation.

5. Proposal To Invest Additional Funds to Drive Visitation in July and August 2026 and Winter Campaign Discussion (00:56:37)

- Mick mentioned that one of the department's goals is to flatten the highs and lows of visitation in Moab, including promoting the dip in the summer months. Lesley said the industry in general is expecting a slower summer.
- Lesley presented Madden's recommendations for a summer-specific campaign, using tactics like Meta Prospecting, Expedia, and Programmatic ads.
- Brian Martinez mentioned that he believed summer is Moab's greatest opportunity to boost travel. Howard Trenholme asked if the department had the funding in the budget, and was assured that they do.
- Howard moved to approve \$236,000 in additional paid media funding to support the proposed campaign to drive visitation in July and August 2026. Seconded by Lori. Passed unanimously.
- The board then discussed hotel pricing strategy, and how hotels respond to fewer travelers or travelers who book more last minute trips.

6. Review and Approve 2026/2027 Utah Office of Tourism Cooperative Marketing Grant Proposal (01:21:01)

- Mick gave an overview of the co-op grant; the department has applied for many years. This year, the MOT decided to try something new, and apply for grant funds for three creative projects that partner with other counties. Those partnerships include a project with San Juan County to promote stargazing, and a project with Washington County to promote national parks in international markets.
- Board members discussed other ideas for statewide partnerships. Howard asked about further partnerships between the MOT and UOT, and encouraged the MOT to run advertising around Moab's 125th anniversary in 2027. Alex also suggested creating mountain biking campaigns with other counties with popular biking trails.
- Lori moved to approve the UOT Cooperative Marketing Grant proposal. Seconded by Cora. Passed unanimously.

7. Utah Office of Tourism Fiscal Year 2027 International Opt-In Marketing Programs (01:40:42)

- The MOT again presented the opportunity to participate in every opt-in program available with the UOT.
- Howard motioned to approve \$135,000 for the Utah Office of Tourism's Fiscal Year 2027 International Opt-In Marketing Program. Seconded by Alex.
- Mick gave more background information, adding that the UOT spends millions of dollars to engage global markets, and this is an opportunity to ensure Moab is represented. Board members asked about specific markets, like China: Mick said that while some of these markets are newer, the MOT follows the UOT's global markets lead.
- Motion passed unanimously.

8. Marketing Toolkit for Moab Businesses (01:47:41)

- Postponed: Wendell said the MOT is already creating a marketing toolkit for businesses within the branding project.

9. Letter of Support for Friends of Arches and Canyonlands National Parks (01:48:21)

- Mick said he wanted to let the board know his process for creating grant letters of support, which is to send the ask to the commission administration so the commission can vote on whether or not they would like to sign the letter. He also encouraged the board to think about developing an official process for writing letters of support, which Brian said the commission is working on as well.

10. Arches Shuttle (01:54:46)

- Brian presented the latest on a free shuttle into and through Arches National Park, created as a partnership between Grand County, the National Parks, the Department of Interior, and the City of Moab. He asked the board if they would recommend using mitigation funds to help fund the shuttle.

- Howard asked about the shuttle's route; Brian said he wasn't sure what it would look like yet.
- Howard made a motion recommending the use of TRT mitigation funds for an Arches shuttle. Seconded by Lori.
- In discussion, board members asked for more details about the shuttle. Jason asked if Grand County's funding would pay for all of the shuttle. Cora asked if the shuttle would be a contracted business or under the city, and where the shuttles would be stored and placed. Brian said the contractor would be in charge of figuring out the details, and said the state was considering funding the project as well. Howard reinforced his support of the shuttle, saying that community members have been thinking about a shuttle for years. Brian said he hoped the shuttle could be running by September.
- Motion passed 7-0 with Cora abstaining.

11. Sales and Use Tax Reporting (02:06:44)

- Mick worked with Gabe Woytek at the county to provide up to date sales and use taxes. Board members looked at the data, saying that they were concerned about restaurant taxes being down, and asked about the possibility of presenting tax data for the month it was collected instead of the month it was paid to the county.

12. Who Is Moab Update (02:10:22)

- Wendell encouraged board members to watch the Who Is Moab videos.

13. Board Member Reports (02:10:50)

- Wendell said May was an impressive month, but that Moab is slowing down a bit.
- Felicia also said the summer pace is slowing down, even year over year.
- Cora encouraged board members to attend the chamber's event that evening, and spoke to other chamber events like the upcoming nuclear energy engagement session.
- Howard said the Rocky Mountaineer struck an oil truck on the tracks, which impacted capacity. But in general, Rocky Mountaineer sales are up.

Adjourn