

TOURISM TAX ADVISORY BOARD
PENDING MEETING MINUTES JUNE 25, 2026

Brittany McMichael called the meeting of the Tourism Tax Advisory Board of Washington County to order at 9:35 AM on Thursday, June 25, 2026, in **Conference Room #182, at 111 East Tabernacle Street, St. George, UT 84770**. Those in attendance included the Tourism Tax Advisory Board: Kevin Smith, Dorothy Heers, Shayne Wittwer, Dustin Warren, David Moody, and Zac Nixon. Other attendees included Deputy County Attorney Steven Scott, Tourism Director Brittany McMichael, and Tourism staff members: Ed Aurrecoechea, Joyce Kelly, Linné Marsh, Jamie Allen, and Leslie Fonger.

WELCOME

Brittany McMichael welcomed all attendees and confirmed that a quorum existed for voting on action items.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES FOR APRIL 30, 2026

MOTION: Motion by Zach Nixon to approve April 30, 2026, Meeting Minutes
Motion seconded by David Moody and carried by a unanimous vote.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Brittany McMichael reported that transient room tax through April 2026 is \$6.5M, up 13.2% versus 2025, with April posting one of the highest months on record. Hotel occupancy remains flat versus 2025, though slightly down versus 2024. Short-term rental occupancy is up 6% year-to-date, while RevPAR across all lodging is up 3.9% versus 2025, with Short Term Rental (STR) RevPAR particularly strong at up 31% versus 2025. ADR overall is up 3.7% through May, and STRs now represent approximately 40% of total TRT collections. Restaurant tax through April is \$2.2M, up 5% versus 2025. National Park visitation is up about 3%, with nearly 2 million visitors recorded through May.

PR efforts in Q1 yielded 12 top placements, 556.9 coverage impressions, 3 press visits, and 20 media interactions, with strong national coverage from *Forbes*, *Outside Magazine*, *Lonely Planet*, *Travel + Leisure*, and *golf.com*. The park-and-ride announcement generated local coverage, and SunTran ridership into the park is performing very well. The "No Greater Feeling" campaign is tracking exceptionally well with 15 million impressions and 196.8K clicks, with visitors taking an average of 26.8 days from the introduction to the area to planning a visit.

MARKETING UPDATE

Ed Aurrecoechea presented on the expanding creative asset library built through intensive photo and video shoots, fueling multiple campaigns including "No Greater Feeling," the FIFA World Cup 2026 effort (which generated approximately 10,000 website visits in its first 3–4 days), and partnerships with Outside TV and Utah Tech's Brooks the Bison series. Physical visitor guide

demand has surged and is projected to run out in less than two months, while the Zion Corridor Park & Ride Google listing is tracking strong engagement with over 500 clicks every weekend. The tourism office received external validation from Expedia, naming St. George a top summer destination.

FILM UPDATE

Joyce Kelly reported that three recent productions, Netflix's *Barbecue Showdown*, Netflix's *Untamed* Season 2, and *Blood on the Promontory*, generated substantial local economic impact, collectively bringing millions in local spending and thousands of room nights. She also outlined a multi-country co-op project ("All Things International") targeting the UK, Germany, France, Italy, and Australia with influencer visits, co-branded itineraries, and Michelin guide coverage. Every promoted activity is tied to tour operators and concrete calls to action to convert interest into bookings. The "All Things International" project will move forward if Kelly secures funding from the Utah Office of Tourism Cooperative Marketing Grant.

CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING REQUESTS

CONSIDERATION OF DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT REQUEST

Leslie Fonger presented a destination development request from La Verkin City to approve \$35,824.15 to add lights to the Zion Corridor Trail at Cottonwood Hollow. The Cottonwood Hollow segment of the Zion Corridor Trail runs between two tall block walls behind residential backyards, creating a dark canyon-like passage that could be a safety issue for trail users.

MOTION: Motion by Kevin Smith to approve \$35,824.15 of TRCCA funding the destination development request for lights at the Cottonwood Hollow trail section of the Zion Corridor Trail.

Motion seconded by Dorothy Heers and carried by a unanimous vote.

CONSIDERATION OF SUNTRAN HOLIDAY COVERAGE REQUEST

Heath Hansen presented a request to approve \$7,200 to be paid to St. George Shuttle for coverage of the Zion SunTran route on July 4 and 5, 2026. SunTran does not run on federal holidays. These are some of the busiest days in Zion National Park. St. George Shuttle has the capacity to shuttle visitors on July 4 and 5, 2026.

MOTION: Motion by Shayne Wittwer to approve \$7,200 of TRT funding to St. George Shuttle for holiday coverage of the SunTran Zion Route on July 4 and 5, 2026. In addition, the Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office has permission to approve funds for future holiday coverage for the SunTran Zion Route at their discretion for the remainder of 2026.

Motion seconded by Dustin Warren and carried by a unanimous vote.

CONSIDERATION OF ZION REGIONAL RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN REQUEST

Heath Hansen presented Zion Forever Project's request for \$80,000 per year for two years (2027 and 2028) to support Phase 2 of the Zion Regional Recreation Management Plan (RRMP). RRMP Phase 2 will consist of a detailed inventory and digital infrastructure plan for all recreation assets in Washington County—identifying overcrowded sites, under-used areas, and funding priorities for dispersing visitation throughout the county.

MOTION: Motion by Shayne Wittwer to approve \$80, 000 of TRT funding to be granted to Zion Forever Project in 2027 and 2028 for use on RRMP Phase 2.

Motion seconded by Dave Moody and carried by a unanimous vote.

CONSIDERATION OF EVENT SPONSORSHIP REQUEST

Jamie Allen presented a request for funding from the SoulPhil Music Foundation for a one-night, free concert by Jenny Oaks Baker at the OC Tanner Amphitheaters on September 5, 2026. SoulPhil Music Foundation requests \$ 10,000 dollars to offset costs and keep the concert free for attendees.

MOTION: Motion by Kevin Smith to approve up to \$5,000 in TRT funding to for the Jenny Oaks Baker concert on September 5, 2026.

Motion seconded by Dorothy Heers and carried by a unanimous vote.

The next meeting will be held on August 27, 2026.

MOTION: Motion by Dorothy Heers to adjourn.

Seconded by Kevin Smith and carried by unanimous vote.

Minutes prepared by Linné Marsh,
Washington County Deputy Clerk
Adjourned at 11:40 AM

