

Utah Search and Rescue Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

Fishlake, Utah

June 5, 2026

Members Present

Sheriff Nathan Curtis	Board Chair, Sevier County Sheriff
Jim Porter	Board, Co-Chair, Utah Sheriff's Association
Sheriff Chad Jensen	Cache County Sheriff's Office
Kris Hamlet	Utah Division of Emergency Management
Tara Behunin	Citizen-at-Large

Other Attendees Present

Keenan Price	Utah DPS/DEM Legal Counsel
Angelia Crowther	Utah Division of Emergency Management
Tanner Patterson (virtually)	Utah Division of Emergency Management
Genevieve Keys	Utah Division of Emergency Management
Julia Surkis	Utah Division of Emergency Management
Kam Kohler	Wasatch County SAR
Jorge Vazquez	Department of Natural Resources

The meeting opened at 11:04 am by Sheriff Nathan Curtis with a welcome and introductions.

Review and Approval of March 25, 2026 Minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes as they are

Moved by: Sheriff Chad Jensen

Second: Jim Porter

Motion Carried: Unanimously

Formula Discussion

Tanner Patterson presented a spreadsheet tool, designed to help counties understand the end-of-year reimbursement formula. Users can input specific county data—including population, SAR incidents, total victims, and volunteer hours—to visualize how different variables affect reimbursement eligibility for search, training, and equipment costs. Tanner Patterson highlighted that late reports act as a primary negative variable, demonstrating that even a few late reports can significantly reduce the total equipment reimbursement percentage.

Formula Fairness and Caps: The board discussed the equity of the current reimbursement formula, particularly regarding whether it disadvantages rural

counties. Tanner Patterson explained that the formula's ratios for SAR incidents and volunteer hours effectively favor smaller counties, rather than penalizing them. Regarding the use of reimbursement caps, the group noted that such caps are not currently in the state code and that reimbursements are typically issued until available funds are exhausted, rather than as a fixed amount per agency.

The board debated the potential for future rule changes and the reintroduction of reimbursement caps to manage fund depletion and ensure rural counties with lower population and higher searches are favored. The consensus among the members was to take time to test the new spreadsheet tool and evaluate how current variables impact reimbursement levels. Consequently, the board decided to postpone any motions on this issue until the next meeting, allowing stakeholders time to review the data, and have Angelia, Tanner, Kris, and Tanner meet between now and next USAR meeting and discuss the past coordination and USAR formula caps & they way it is currently. They will come prepared to talk further in detail to help show how caps or the way the formula currently is written in the rule support local SAR financially at the county levels.

Bring motion to the next meeting after playing with the worksheet and discussing the SAR formula and Rule further at the next meeting.

Outdoor Recreation Mitigation Grant Overview

A Division of Recreation representative introduced the Outdoor Recreation Mitigation Grant, which assists 3rd through 6th class rural counties strained by tourism and outdoor recreation. The board discussed eligibility logistics and data accuracy. Angelia Crowther raised concerns about accidental duplicate reimbursements across programs for the same equipment, prompting discussion on using grant IDs and state auditor verification for transparency.

The Division is detailing eligible expenses for search and rescue, EMS, and road repairs tied to visitor safety. The group noted that fire departments managing EMS have distinct funding landscapes and insurance requirements that application guidance must address. As the Division finalizes application procedures, outreach will target legislators, county leaders, sheriffs, and SAR commanders. DEM offered its liaison network to help notify local emergency managers.

It was discussed that streamlining applications via a single multi-grant portal would be helpful. Members emphasized clearly communicating prerequisites, like Transient Room Tax adoption, in outreach efforts.

Discussing location data collection, the board noted the system auto-fills in-county vs. out-of-county status. Crowther suggested mapping this data to track search activity density. To relieve county manpower constraints, board members suggested automating application routing to sheriff offices. They also highlighted ongoing compliance and training issues with roster and agenda submissions.

USARA Marketing

Angelia Crowther reported on the success of distributing promotional posters and magnets at the UAC conference. The materials were well-received, and the board noted that they plan to secure and distribute additional supplies to aid stakeholders and increase awareness.

Genevieve Keys presented mockups for a website redesign provided by Tyler Technology, which includes a quoted cost of \$4,000. The group discusses concerns regarding the scope of services, and recommends pausing the project to explore other options and gain more clarity on what the vendor provides before moving forward.

The board discussed the use of QR codes on posters, trail safety signs, and avalanche beacon checkers to direct users to resources. Participants discuss their current dependence on Tyler Technology for website maintenance, noting that this relationship was historically driven by state purchasing requirements for financial processing. The group considers investigating whether other vendors could support their needs, as there is interest in determining if the state's approach to funding and procurement has evolved to allow for more flexibility.

Genevieve presented KSL Radio & Podcast Bundle "Keep Your Family Safe" and "Summer Safety" for the USARA Card and outdoors safety campaign. This will include in-person interviews, Youtube spotlights, public safety service soundbites for Podcasts, commercial breaks for the Uinta Triangle Podcast and Utah's Cold Cases Podcast. The campaign will run June-September. The board ultimately decided on the Radio & Podcast Bundle which would cost around \$14,500.

Motion: To approve funding towards KSL News Radio \$10,000, and Podcast Bundle \$4,500 and for it to start in July which will be the next fiscal year. Also, consider updating the USARA Card website early next spring.

Moved by: Sheriff Chad Jensen

Second: Tara Behunin

Motion Carried: Unanimously

Review of Applications for Reimbursement

***A comprehensive report detailing all reviewed applications is appended to the minutes following every quarterly session. Subsequent to the preliminary administrative assessment, individual members of the SAR Advisory Board are designated specific counties for evaluation. Any applications requiring further deliberation are brought before the SAR Advisory Board during their scheduled meetings.**

Voting will occur at the end of the application reviews for approval, denial, or that needs further research for approval.

Applications “Not Pre-Reviewed”

Pages 8-9 of the spreadsheet

Wasatch County

2602-1115-2

Search: \$3428.52

Approve: Missing receipts and description of damages to equipment were found.

2602-5020

Equipment: \$1765.72

Approve: clarification was provided on missing receipt (garmin case). Equipment was not being requested but accidentally included in the description.

2602-5021

Equipment: \$7625.11

Approve: Clarification was provided and equipment is only used by SAR.

26UC03512

Search: \$402.63

Approve: Amounts didn't add up, Admin got clarification and the change was made.

Salt Lake County

SLC025Equip063

Equipment: \$845.43

Approve

Iron County

26-00364

Search: \$105.38

Approve

2026104

Search: \$41.90

Deny: Law enforcement assist vs. SAR specific activities

Motion: Motion to deny based on non-compliance

Moved by:

Second:

Motion Carried: Unanimously

26-00739

Search: \$50.01

Deny: Law enforcement activity vs. SAR specific activities

Motion: Motion to deny based on noncompliance

Moved by: Kris Hamlet

Second: Tara Behunin

Motion Carried: Unanimously

Cache County

25-c11017

Search: \$473.02

Approve

25-c11896

Search: \$46.66

Approve

26-c502

Search: \$85

Approve

Wasatch

2603-1047

Training: \$785.08

Approve

2601-5012

Training: \$5600

Approve

Applications “needing additional review”

Pages 8-10 of the attached spreadsheet.

Washington County

25W008291

Search: \$215.04

Approve: Thought it was a duplicate but it is not.

26W000916

Search 317.22

Approve: Added up receipts and correct amount is \$317.32 which is the amount that was approved.

Summit

25-L27055

Search: 5426.96

Hold: Follow up on activity that was done on the fire and other items being requested.

Summit County

26-L04570

Search: \$49.23

Deny: Vehicle recovery (expense for the tow) not victim rescue

Motion: To deny based on noncompliance

Moved by: Kris Hamlet

Second: Tara Behunin

Motion Carried: Unanimously

26-L05445

Search: 162.60

Hold: Fuel to respond to get the vehicle unstuck - how much fuel was used to get motorist out vs. getting deputy out - SAR was used to get deputy unstuck who was responding to a stuck motorist

Kane County

20251218001

Equipment: 46.96

Deny: Supplies to maintain a dry suit vs. new equipment

Motion: To deny based on noncompliance

Moved by: Kris Hamlet

Second: Sheriff Chad Jensen

Motion Carried: Unanimously

202501128002

Equipment: \$9.59

Approve

20260112002

Equipment: \$137.55

Approve

Grand County

EQ 01312026 Snowmobile Trailer LED Upgrade

Equipment: \$118.36

Hold: Follow up to see if this is an upgrade or added lighting to the trailer.

Duchesne County

M26-0744

Search: \$473.19

Hold: Food was purchased through credit, get proof of payment that it was paid by the county. Then approve.

Iron County

2026067

Training: \$711.72

Approve

2026074

Training: \$40.24

Approve

Applications that are pre-reviewed and ready for approval

Spreadsheet with a list of pre-reviewed applications that have met all requirements and are ready for approval from the board. Pages 1-7 are pre-reviewed and ready for approval with no concerns or issues.

Motion: To approve all applications “ready for approval”, “not pre-reviewed,” and “needs additional review” that were discussed and approved by the board that are compliant.

Moved by: Tara Behunin

Second: Jim Porter

Motion Carried: Unanimously

Next meeting: September 3, 2026, 10:00 am, Taylorsville State Office Building

Motion: To Adjourn

Moved by: Chad Jensen