

MINUTES FOR THE
BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD
Wednesday, May 13th, 2026

1. Roll Call

The following members of the Business Advisory Board were present:

Sheridan Mordue - Chair
Andy Robertson
Brittany Reese
Jeff Carleton
Mazhar Kathi
Pook Carson
Bryce Wurtsbaugh

Isaac Atencio - Vice-Chair
Abudjaannah Soud
Jocelyn Kearl
Scott Lytle
Kandi Tessen
Kim Stowe

Also Present:

Peter Makowski, Department of Economic Development; Will Wright, Department of Economic Development; Ibrahim Ramazani, Department of Economic Development; Austin Kimmel, Salt Lake City Council; Liz Ward, Department of Economic Development; Katherine Matheson, Department of Economic Development; Kristen Lavelett, Downtown Alliance; Minerva Jimenez, Department of Economic Development; Luis Garcia, Department of Economic Development; Shyann Hugoe, Community & Neighborhoods; Makaylah Maponga, Public Lands.

Absent:

Alfonso Brito

2. Approval of the minutes

- a. Review and Approval of April 8th, 2026, BAB Minutes.

Mr. Carleton made a motion to approve the minutes of March 11th, 2026. Ms. Reese seconded the motion. Upon roll call, the motion passed unanimously.

3. Briefings by the Staff

A. Briefing by SLCPD.

Detective Ezra Bitseedy provided an update on behalf of the Salt Lake City Police Department and introduced the new Downtown Police Squad. Detective Bitseedy noted that as the weather

gets warmer, activity throughout the city increases as more people gather and spend time outdoors. He encouraged Board members to reach out to the Police Department if any issues arise, emphasizing that the new Downtown Squad is available to assist businesses and community members.

Members of the squad introduced themselves and explained their roles. The squad has been operating for approximately two months and focuses on supporting businesses experiencing issues related to homelessness, increasing police presence in the downtown corridor, and helping residents and visitors feel safer. The team also works to reduce crime, disrupt narcotics distribution, and address public safety concerns in the downtown area.

B. Report from the Director.

Colin Gibbs, Director of the Business Development Division, provided updates on several ongoing efforts. He recently met with Amy from Veneto and a representative from the Utah Restaurant Association. During the meeting, they discussed ways to better support local businesses and asked that the City help spread awareness that businesses experiencing challenges can reach out to the Utah Restaurant Association for assistance.

They also discussed recent liquor law changes affecting businesses near Liberty Park. Amy shared that she is exploring options for obtaining a liquor license for her new pizza restaurant in the area and was interested in whether the provisions of HB 597 could help her secure a license.

Mr. Gibbs also introduced Brian Pantle, who has returned to the City after spending several years pursuing other professional opportunities. Mr. Pantle has returned to serve as the City's Technology & Innovation Strategic Industry Advisor. He shared that he is excited to be back with the City and looks forward to working closely with the Business Advisory Board to help support and serve the business community.

4. Business Items

A. Mayor's FY27 Recommended Budget

Ben Luedtke, Deputy Chief Financial Officer, presented an overview of the Mayor's FY27 Recommended Budget, which focuses on maintaining core city services while addressing rising operational and infrastructure costs caused by inflation. The proposed budget includes investments in public safety, emergency response, community services, infrastructure maintenance, parks, and sustainability efforts. The presentation highlighted that the City's General Fund expenditures are proposed at approximately \$498.9 million, representing a 1.57% increase from the previous year. Inflationary pressures were emphasized throughout the presentation, including significant increases in the costs of firefighter equipment, asphalt, and traffic signal replacements.

To help balance the budget and reduce impacts on residents, the administration identified approximately \$13.2 million in efficiencies and cost savings through vacancy savings, reduced overtime, cuts to low-use programs, and consolidating service contracts. The proposed budget

also includes a property tax increase estimated to generate \$13.5 million in additional revenue, which would cost the average homeowner with a \$624,000 home about \$9.87 per month. Additional proposed increases to water, sewer, stormwater, street lighting, and waste and recycling rates were presented to support long-term infrastructure improvements and public utility operations. The presentation concluded with information on upcoming public hearings and opportunities for residents to provide feedback before the budget adoption process is completed.

B. Neighborhood Business Improvement Program (NBIP, aka Façade Grant)

Shyann Hugoe, Community Development Grant Specialist, provided a brief overview of the Neighborhood Business Improvement Program (NBIP), also known as the façade grant program. The program offers grants of up to \$50,000 to businesses located within certain low-to-moderate income census tracts in Salt Lake City. Funded through the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, the grants are intended to improve the appearance and functionality of commercial properties and help strengthen neighborhood business corridors. Applications for the program are accepted throughout the month of May.

Ms. Hugoe explained that NBIP funding can be used for exterior building improvements such as painted murals, façade upgrades, ADA accessibility improvements, and bringing portions of buildings up to City Code standards. Both business owners and property owners are eligible to apply, with priority often given to small and local businesses, as well as businesses owned by women, minorities, and veterans. Businesses willing to contribute toward project costs may also receive additional consideration during the selection process.

C. Public Lands Fleet Block Open Space

Makaylah Maponga, Public Lands Planner, presented plans for the Public Lands portion of the Fleet Block project, focusing on the development of a new public open space designed to serve as a civic gathering area in Salt Lake City's Granary District. Ms. Maponga reviewed the project timeline, community engagement efforts, and the overall vision for the site. Public input gathered through surveys, focus groups, and community conversations emphasized the importance of creating a universally accessible and welcoming space that supports community gatherings, cultural identity, public art, climate resilience, and multimodal connectivity. The project team noted that over 610 community members participated in online surveys and approximately 90 individuals participated in focus groups and community conversations.

Ms. Maponga explained that the Fleet Block site is intended to function as a "public square" rather than a traditional park, emphasizing flexible event spaces, public art, markets, performances, and everyday social interaction. The proposed concept plan includes gathering plazas, shaded green space, walking loops, amphitheater-style seating, water features, native landscaping, flexible event areas, and interactive public art installations reflecting themes of social justice, equity, and community resilience. The project also aims to improve pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections throughout the surrounding neighborhood while creating a climate-responsive urban oasis with dense tree canopy, stormwater features, and cooling spaces. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2027, with a ribbon cutting expected in early 2028.

5. City Council Announcements

Austin Kimmel, Public Policy Analyst for the City Council, provided updates on recent and upcoming City Council actions. Mr. Kimmel shared that the Salt Lake City Council voted unanimously to rename the honorary stretch of 500 South as "Dolores Huerta Boulevard." The change follows the City's decision to remove the previous honorary designation recognizing Cesar Chavez.

Mr. Kimmel also reported that the Council approved a new Community Clean Energy Program, which provides residents and businesses with opportunities to support renewable energy projects through their utility bills. The program is expected to add approximately \$4 per month to participating customers' bills, and individuals may opt out if they do not wish to participate.

Additionally, Mr. Kimmel noted that the City Council will be looking to appoint a new board member following the recent resignation of former Councilmember Lopez-Chavez. He also shared that the Council is currently focused on the FY27 budget process as budget season continues.

6. BAB Member Announcements

A. BioHive & BioHive Live Update, Mr. Robertson

Andy Robertson provided an update on BioHive and BioHive Live, highlighting the continued growth of Utah's life science industries and BioHive's role in building, branding, and connecting the state's biotechnology and health innovation ecosystem. The presentation noted that Utah's life sciences sector supports approximately 180,000 direct and indirect jobs, generates an estimated \$21.6 billion statewide economic impact, and offers wages roughly 48% higher than average. BioHive's initiatives focus on workforce development, community building, student engagement, and promoting Utah's life sciences industry on a global stage through programs such as Women in Tech & Science, Founder Fellowship, HealthTech Hub, and BioHive Student Chapters across six universities. The presentation also highlighted major networking and industry events including BioHive Week, BioHive Live, and the Best of BioHive Awards Gala, which bring together entrepreneurs, researchers, students, investors, and companies to strengthen collaboration and celebrate innovation within Utah's growing biotech ecosystem.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.


sheridan.mordue@slc.gov (Sep 23, 2026 10:24:24 MDT)
Sheridan Mordue - Chair

This document and the recording constitute the official minutes of the Economic Development Business Advisory Board meeting held on May 13th, 2026.