

MINUTES FOR THE  
BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD  
Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 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  
Abudujaannah Soud  
Jocelyn Kearl  
Scott Lyttle  
Kandi Tessen  
Kim Stowe

Also Present:

Peter Makowski, Department of Economic Development; Will Wright, Department of Economic Development; Colin Gibbs, 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; Dee Brewer, Downtown Alliance; Ryan Mack, Visit Salt Lake.

Absent:

Alfonso Brito

**2. Approval of the minutes**

- a. Review and Approval of May 13, 2026, BAB Minutes

Mr. Carleton made a motion to approve the minutes of May 13th, 2026. Mr. Robertson seconded the motion. Upon roll call, the motion passed unanimously.

**3. Briefings by the Staff**

**A. Briefing by SLCPD.**

Detective Ezra Bitseedy, Salt Lake City Police Department, provided an update on public safety efforts in the downtown area. He reported positive feedback regarding the department's foot

patrol squad, noting that their visible presence and relationship-building efforts with businesses and community members have been well received. Detective Bitseedy acknowledged a seasonal increase in activity as warmer weather brings more people outdoors and encouraged businesses to report concerns so officers can respond proactively. He highlighted the department's commitment to maintaining a consistent foot patrol presence and addressing emerging issues through available overtime and public safety resources.

## **B. Report from the Director.**

Colin Gibbs, Director of the Business Development Division, congratulated Scott Lyttle for advancing to the final round of the District 4 City Council appointment process and thanked him for his willingness to serve the community. Mr. Gibbs also provided an update on the proposed Sugar House Special Assessment Area, noting that the City Council recently approved the Resolution of Intent. Property owners will have until August 18, 2026, to submit formal protests, and the assessment area will move forward unless owners representing at least 40% of the assessed property value oppose the proposal.

Mr. Gibbs announced that the Economic Development Loan Fund (EDLF) application cycle is scheduled to open on June 29, 2026. The program will accept up to ten applicants, with startup businesses eligible for loans up to \$100,000 and established businesses eligible for loans up to \$350,000. He encouraged board members to help spread awareness of the program throughout the business community. Mr. Gibbs also reviewed updates to the Business Advisory Board guidelines, including attendance requirements, ethics expectations, and member conduct standards. Board members were reminded that the attendance policy, which allows for removal after repeated unexcused absences, will be actively enforced beginning in July. He further noted that members will be asked to review and sign a civility pledge at a future meeting and encouraged members to familiarize themselves with both board responsibilities and staff duties outlined in the updated guidelines.

## **Business Items**

### **A. Downtown Alliance**

Dee Brewer, Executive Director of the Downtown Alliance, provided an overview of preparations for the 2027 Salt Lake Temple Celebration and reopening. The Downtown Alliance estimates the event could bring an additional 20,000–25,000 visitors per day to downtown Salt Lake City, increasing daily visitor activity by roughly 25%. While significant, Mr. Brewer emphasized that the increase will be spread throughout the day rather than concentrated in short periods, allowing downtown businesses and infrastructure to absorb the additional demand. Restaurants, hotels, retail stores, and attractions are expected to benefit, with restaurants projected to see a 12–18% increase in business. Downtown parking and transit capacity are expected to be sufficient, supported by TRAX service and church-operated shuttle buses from remote parking locations.

Mr. Brewer also highlighted several transportation and construction challenges associated with

the event. Portions of North Temple, West Temple, and westbound South Temple will be closed for approximately six months around Temple Square, while ongoing Delta Center renovations and Salt Palace redevelopment may create additional traffic impacts. To maximize the economic benefits of the celebration, the Downtown Alliance plans to create a welcoming visitor experience through hospitality kiosks, enhanced wayfinding, downtown marketing, and more than 200 performances, art installations, and cultural events. The Alliance is also coordinating with businesses, residents, and tourism partners to encourage visitors to explore downtown, support local merchants, and maintain a vibrant and accessible downtown environment throughout the celebration period.

## **B. Visit Salt Lake**

Ryan Mack, Chief Communications Officer for Visit Salt Lake, provided an overview of the organization's role in promoting Salt Lake County as a destination for conventions, meetings, sporting events, and tourism. Visit Salt Lake describes itself as a Destination Sales and Experience Organization (DSXO), focused on recruiting, retaining, and activating visitors through conventions, meetings, youth sports tournaments, leisure travel, and special events. The organization generates more than \$500 million in annual economic impact through these efforts and is funded primarily through hotel-related taxes and tourism assessments. Mr. Mack highlighted the growing success of Sports Salt Lake, which focuses on youth and amateur sporting events and now accounts for roughly one-third of all bookings. He also noted that 61% of people in Visit Salt Lake's target markets are not yet familiar with Salt Lake as a destination, leading the organization to invest heavily in marketing and branding efforts, including the new "America's Mountain City" campaign.

Mr. Mack emphasized the importance of tourism and conventions to the local economy, reporting that Salt Lake County welcomed a record 13.75 million visitors in 2025 and generated \$6.15 billion in visitor spending, supporting more than 56,000 jobs and producing \$575 million in tax revenue. Visit Salt Lake is increasingly focused on creating memorable visitor experiences through signature events such as the Winter Roundup skijoring competition, hospitality awards, and curated local attractions that encourage repeat visitation. He noted that visitors provide critical economic benefits for local businesses by spending money at restaurants, hotels, shops, and entertainment venues throughout the county. Mr. Mack also addressed concerns regarding the planned three-year closure and redevelopment of the Salt Palace Convention Center, explaining that while the news may appear disruptive in the short term, the project is viewed as a long-term investment that will modernize downtown's convention infrastructure and strengthen Salt Lake City's competitiveness as a destination for conventions and events over the next several decades.

## **C. Open Meetings Act Training (OPMA) & Absence Procedure Review**

Business Advisory Board members viewed the annual Open and Public Meetings Act (OPMA) training video and received guidance from City Attorney Sara Montoya regarding compliance requirements. Montoya emphasized that the Business Advisory Board is a public body and must conduct its business in an open and transparent manner. She reminded members that board decisions, deliberations, and actions must occur publicly and in accordance with Utah's Open

and Public Meetings Act. She also offered ongoing legal support to board members, and staff should questions arise regarding meeting procedures, public notice requirements, or potential closed meeting issues.

Following the training, the Board discussed attendance expectations and reviewed absence procedures to ensure continued compliance with board bylaws and public meeting requirements. Members were reminded of the importance of regular attendance, proper notification when unable to attend meetings, and maintaining transparency in board operations. The discussion served as both an annual compliance review and a refresher on the Board's responsibilities as a public advisory body.

#### **4. City Council Announcements**

Austin Kimmel, Public Policy Analyst for the Salt Lake City Council, provided updates on recent Council actions and upcoming policy discussions. He announced that following the District 4 vacancy process, the Council appointed Jennifer Napier-Pierce to serve the remainder of the term through January 2028 after the selection process ultimately came down to a coin flip between the final two candidates. Mr. Kimmel also noted that the Council is reviewing a zoning text amendment to align city regulations with recent state law changes requiring mobile food businesses to be permitted in zones where restaurants are already allowed.

Mr. Kimmel highlighted a recent Council briefing on Opportunity Zones and invited Economic Development staff to provide additional information on the program in the future. Director of Economic Development Lorena Rizzo-Jensen explained that Opportunity Zones are federal economic development tools designed to encourage private investment in qualifying areas through tax incentives. She noted that developments such as the Post District and projects in the Granary District benefited from the previous Opportunity Zone program. Ms. Rizzo-Jensen shared that Salt Lake City submitted recommendations for seven eligible census tracts, with Ballpark, the Power District, and the Northwest Quadrant identified as top priorities due to their readiness for investment. The recommendations were developed in collaboration with Salt Lake County, the Wasatch Front Regional Council, the Community Reinvestment Agency, developers, nonprofits, and community stakeholders before being submitted to the Governor for consideration and potential recommendation to the U.S. Treasury.

Mr. Kimmel also reported that the City Council approved a Resolution of Intent to establish the proposed Sugar House Special Assessment Area, marking an early step in the creation process. Discussion highlighted strong support from property owners and community leaders, with anticipated investments focused on marketing, events, beautification efforts, holiday lighting, and ambassador services similar to those provided by the Downtown Alliance. Finally, Mr. Kimmel provided an update on the City's FY 2027 budget process, noting that the Council is nearing completion of budget deliberations and awaiting final revenue projections before adopting the budget later this month.

#### **5. BAB Member Announcements**

Board members highlighted a recent Utah Business article featuring Eats Bakery & Coffee,

recognizing the business's successful transition from farmers markets and food truck operations to a brick-and-mortar location and its growing impact within Salt Lake City's small business community. Members also shared updates on local catering businesses and discussed opportunities for increased visibility and collaboration within the hospitality and events industry.

Additionally, Ms. Kearl promoted the upcoming Utah Arts Festival, encouraging businesses and community members to participate in one of the state's premier cultural events. The festival was recognized as an important opportunity to support local artists, attract visitors to downtown Salt Lake City, and contribute to the area's economic activity and vibrancy.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

  
sheridan mordue (Sep 23, 2026 10:24:08 MDT)

Sheridan Mordue - Chair

This document and the recording constitute the official minutes of the Economic Development Business Advisory Board meeting held on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026.