

MINUTES FOR THE  
BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD  
Wednesday, July 8<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; Peter Nelson, Salt Lake City Sustainability; Glade Soward, Salt Lake City Sustainability, Jennifer Newell, Mayor's Office, Dr. Bree Conley, Salt Lake City School District.

**ABSENT:**

Alfonso Brito

**2. Approval of the minutes**

- a. Review and Approval of June 10, 2026, BAB Minutes

Mr. Carleton made a motion to approve the minutes of June 10th, 2026. Mr. Atencio seconded the motion. Upon roll call, the motion passed unanimously.

**3. Briefings by the Staff**

**A. Briefing by SLCPD.**

The Salt Lake City Police Department provided an update to the Board, highlighting the continued success of the department's foot patrol and the positive feedback received regarding increased police presence. The department encouraged Board members and businesses to communicate concerns or identify areas that may benefit from additional foot patrol attention. SLCPD also noted that preparations were underway for the July 24th celebrations and reported that department operations were generally going well with no significant new developments. In response to a Board member's question, SLCPD provided clarification regarding current operations and police presence near the Gateway area.

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

Peter Makowski, Assistant Director of the Business Development Division, provided updates on the work of the Department of Economic Development. Mr. Makowski reported that the Economic Development Loan Fund (EDLF) recently reopened for applications, receiving 10 applicants during the application window. The Department is moving toward a quarterly application cycle to better manage demand and staff caseloads, noting that not all applicants ultimately advance through the loan process. Mr. Makowski also highlighted a recent visit from a group of site selectors hosted in partnership with EDCUtah. The group toured Salt Lake City and visited the University of Utah's Center for Medical Innovation, among other locations, to learn about the City's growth, entrepreneurship, and life sciences ecosystem. Mr. Makowski emphasized that hosting site selectors provides an opportunity to showcase Salt Lake City's quality of life, local businesses, and economic assets to companies considering relocation or expansion.

Brian Pantle, Technology and Innovation Strategic Industry Advisor, provided an update on his participation in the BIO International Convention in San Diego, where he joined State and regional partners to promote Utah and Salt Lake City's growing biotechnology and life sciences sector. Mr. Pantle noted strong interest from companies and highlighted Utah's position as one of the nation's fastest-growing biotechnology ecosystems, resulting in several new business recruitment leads and opportunities for follow-up. Luis Garcia, Project Coordinator, also provided an update on the Construction Mitigation Grant Program, which supports storefront businesses impacted by City-led construction. For FY26, the program received 76 applications, of which 62 were approved. Sugar House had the largest number of applicants with 21, followed by the 600 and 700 North construction area in Rose Park with 17. Mr. Garcia added that the Department is exploring a new business support program that could expand assistance beyond businesses affected specifically by City-led construction.

## **4. Business Items**

### **A. Community Clean Energy Program**

Glade Soward, Senior Energy Climate Program Manager, and Peter Nelson, Sustainability Program Manager, provided an overview of the Community Clean Energy Program, a new initiative being developed through Utah Renewable Communities in partnership with Rocky

Mountain Power. The program is intended to expand access to renewable energy for residents and businesses in 16 participating Utah communities, including Salt Lake City. Mr. Soward and Mr. Nelson explained that participating customers will remain Rocky Mountain Power customers, with the clean energy program appearing as an additional line item on their utility bills. The program will operate on an opt-out basis, with customer notifications beginning around November and program charges expected to begin in January. Initial costs for businesses are projected to result in roughly a 4% to 9% premium depending on energy use, while residential customers would pay a flat monthly charge. Customers will be able to opt out without a termination fee during the initial implementation period, with fees applying later for those who leave the program.

Mr. Soward and Mr. Nelson also explained that the program is designed to support the development of new renewable energy resources, including solar, wind, geothermal, and hydroelectric power. The participating communities will help select projects through a competitive process, with Rocky Mountain Power entering long-term power purchase agreements with third-party energy developers. Based on projected participation, the program could eventually support approximately 500 to 600 megawatts of new renewable generation. Board members asked questions about future rates, termination fees, program participation, infrastructure development, and how costs and benefits would be separated between participating and non-participating customers. Mr. Soward and Mr. Nelson emphasized that the program is structured to prevent cost shifting and that future rates will remain subject to review by the Utah Public Service Commission. He concluded by seeking feedback from the Board on how best to engage and educate businesses, including potential branding, outreach materials, and ways businesses could promote their participation in the clean energy program.

## **B. School Attendance Program**

Jennifer Newell, Senior Advisor to Mayor Mendenhall, engaged the Board in a discussion about creating a citywide culture that supports regular school attendance for K–12 students. Ms. Newell clarified that the effort is broader than providing incentives and is focused on strengthening collaboration between Salt Lake City, the Salt Lake City School District, families, businesses, and the community. Dr. Bree Conley, Equity Director for the Salt Lake City School District, explained that chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% of the school year, or about 18 days, and reported that approximately one in four district students are chronically absent. The district has set a goal of reducing chronic absenteeism from 28% to 10% by 2029 and has already seen the rate decline to approximately 25%. Ms. Conley emphasized that absenteeism can affect academic achievement, graduation, workforce readiness, family employment, and students' sense of connection to their schools.

The discussion highlighted several causes of chronic absenteeism, including transportation barriers, family economic instability, health and mental health challenges, and disconnection from school. Board members discussed the particular challenges facing elementary students who depend on their families for transportation and high school students, especially ninth and tenth graders, who experience some of the highest rates of absenteeism. Ms. Newell and Ms. Conley emphasized that businesses can play a supportive role through simple, positive interactions with students and by reinforcing the importance of attending school without taking a punitive

approach. The School District also introduced its “Every Day Counts” attendance initiative and discussed opportunities for businesses to display campaign materials, encourage students through everyday conversations, and help build broader community awareness that consistent school attendance is important to students’ long-term success and the future workforce.

### **C. Business Advisory Board Civility Pledge**

In the interest of time, this item was tabled and will be discussed at the September BAB meeting.

### **5. City Council Announcements**

Austin Kimmel, Public Policy Analyst with the Salt Lake City Council, provided a brief update to the Board. Mr. Kimmel noted that the City Council would receive a briefing on the Climate Positive 2030 Plan at an upcoming meeting. He also highlighted a new state law, effective May 6, that allows municipalities to consider alcohol waiver requests on a case-by-case basis for certain businesses located within restricted distances of community locations such as public parks, playgrounds, and libraries. The waiver does not apply to proximity restrictions involving schools or churches. Mr. Kimmel shared examples of businesses seeking waivers near Liberty Park and the Sprague Library in Sugar House and encouraged interested business owners to contact the City’s Planning Division to begin the process. Requests ultimately require City Council approval before the Utah Department of Alcoholic Beverage Services can grant the applicable license.

### **6. BAB Member Announcements**

No BAB Announcements.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

  
sheridan mordue (Sep 23, 2026 10:23:50 MDT)

Sheridan Mordue - Chair

This document and the recording constitute the official minutes of the Economic Development Business Advisory Board meeting held on July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026.