Sugar House Park Authority
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Sugar House Park Authority | September, 2026, MINUTES
Date/Time: Thursday, September 10, 2026, 6:00 – 9:00 pm
Location: In person & Online

Attendees	Anchor Location
Board Members Present: Roxanne Christensen (President), Richard Layman, Siavash Ghaffari, Shehan Jaro, Jacqueline Rosen, Kim Shelley, Maxwell Stocking, Eric Forbush **Board Members Absent:** Patrick Leary **Staff Present:** Jeniffer Goodman, Diane Booth **Public Present:**	**Sugar House Garden Center** 1602 E. 2100 S. Salt Lake City, UT 84106 If you have questions or require additional assistance, please contact Jeniffer Goodman at (385) 468-1800.

Agendas, recordings, and meeting minutes can be accessed on the Utah Public Notice site at utah.gov/pmn/.

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order by President Roxanne Christensen at 6:00 PM.

Public Comment
President Roxanne Christensen opened the floor for public comments.

No public Comment made.

Approval of Special Events

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Event Approvals Table

Name/Organization/Event	Pavilion(s) or Field(s)	Document Reference	Reservation Date(s)	Board Decision
Subtoberfest/ Rand Construction	Big Field Pavilion	Portfolio 1	10/9/2026	Motion: Maxwell Stocking Second: Jacqueline Rosen Approved unanimously.
*Jingle Bell Run/ Arthritis Foundation	Big Field Pavilion	Portfolio 2	12/5/2026	Motion: Richard Layman Second: Siavash Ghaffari Approved Unanimously
*Region 6 XC Championships	Big Field/Big Field Pavilion-Fabien Lakeside-Parley's Creek	Portfolio 3	10/2/2026	Motion: Richard Layman Second: Siavash Ghaffari Approved unanimously.
*U of U OBGYN Dept BBQ	Parley's Creek	Portfolio 4	9/17/2026	Motion: Richard Layman Second: Siavash Ghaffari Approved Unanimously
*Sugar Beet Challenger School Fall Picnic	Sugar Beet Pavilion	Portfolio 5	9/22/2026	Motion: Richard Layman Second: Siavash Ghaffari Approved Unanimously

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Reservation Season & County Systems Discussion

- Current reservation season: May–September
- October events regularly appear; suggestion to consider extending season.
- Diane noted:
  - County system is standardized across facilities.
  - County is exploring extending reservation season into mid-October due to warmer falls.
  - Further review required to determine whether County Council approval is needed.
- Discussion about possibly starting earlier (April) due to improved spring weather.
- Diane will research and report findings in October meeting.

Walking Tour
Board Members walked the park loop to discuss issues and improvements happening around the park.

Culinary Water Line Replacement

- A future culinary water line replacement project was flagged as likely requiring temporary closure of this roadway/lane, which currently serves as an exit.
- Described as a multi-year-out project; the new line is planned to run beneath the road to simplify future repairs.

- **Joe Hill Memorial / Historical Markers**
- The Joe Hill memorial marker was installed for a past Labor Day; participants recalled approximately two years of deliberation given Joe Hill's status as a historically controversial figure, but noted no significant public backlash occurred after installation.
- Nearby interpretive signage/posters reflect a series of design compromises, including ADA accessibility requirements and input from the Sons and Daughters of Utah Pioneers regarding placement.

Pond Conditions

- Pond appearance has improved recently, attributed in part to recent rainfall; no odor or visible wildlife mortality was observed at the time of the walk.
- Aerators are seasonally installed (removed when water levels get too low to avoid stirring sediment).
- The pond was last dredged around 2010 prior to a dredging performed this year (2026); botulism risk was cited as a driver for past dredging.
- Responsibility for pond water levels/drought management ties into County flood control and public utilities decisions, given the pond's connection to the broader watershed.

New Softball Field

- Field is being sodded ahead of fall so turf can establish before spring; softball season is expected to begin around February.
- Shaded dugouts are planned but not yet installed on either side of the field.
- Fencing reduces open grass space usable for other purposes, though the overall field area remains large.
- Open question raised: whether the field will be booked through the same reservation system as other Park Authority fields, or a County system, and how casual/pickup use (e.g., kickball) would be accommodated.
- General expectation that it may take about a year for usage/demand to ramp up before booking conflicts become an issue.
- A temporary Connex storage trailer will sit in the parking lot for equipment during this phase and will be removed afterward; no permanent storage structure is planned.

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New Sugar Beet Pavilion (Planned 2027–2028)

- Funding: pavilion construction is being funded by the City, with the County budgeting for it in FY2027; participants indicated design work would occur in 2027 with construction expected in late 2027 or 2028, contingent on County funds becoming available.
- The current amphitheater/fire-pit feature at this pavilion was described as a safety concern.
- Grading/retention work will be needed due to the site's hill.
- A separate bike path connection was proposed as part of this project to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists on the loop path, potentially similar to an existing bend/connector near 13th Street.
- This pavilion was noted as one of the more costly to maintain due to vandalism and damage; noise from an adjacent highway was also discussed, including that effective noise mitigation via trees requires multiple layered rows, not a single line of trees.
- A future sand volleyball court was discussed as preferable for cost and usability; nets would be user-supplied.

Existing Playground Condition and Funding

- The current playground's condition was discussed as deteriorated.
- Funding for playground replacement has not yet been secured.
- Idea raised: reach out to U.S. Representative Blake Moore's office, noting he reportedly lives near the park and has previously helped secure park funding elsewhere.

Pedestrian Bridge Railing Replacement

- Funding is secured this year to replace the railing on the pedestrian bridge; the existing railing does not meet current code.
- Scope: replace railing only; the existing concrete bridge structure will remain.
- Project will also add a connecting sidewalk from the bridge, routed around the basketball court to the parking lot and restrooms, to reduce pedestrians cutting directly across the basketball court.

Highland High School Construction Project

- School district construction project involves grading and a retaining wall up to the shared property boundary; participants were clear that no parkland is being lost — the school is building up to its own existing boundary line.
- The project will include new tennis courts, that will be more visible from the park than before; public access to the courts was uncertain during discussion — participants believed access may be limited to school hours since the courts belong to the school.
- Per the construction contract, the district has up to 24 months to complete the project and will not finish this year; the district compensates the Park Authority annually during construction for lost rental revenue on the affected pavilion.

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- Future use of that pavilion after construction has not been decided; it was noted as one of the more heavily vandalized/problematic facilities, and converting it to open space (rather than rebuilding a pavilion) was discussed as one option.
- A previously steep, unusable slope in this area is being regraded and a retaining wall shortened/lowered as part of the project, per an earlier Park Authority decision.

- **Tree removal/replacement**
  Approximately 12 trees were removed on the Park Authority's side of the property (with additional trees removed on the school's side, for a combined total described as roughly 40); the district is replacing trees at a 2-for-1 ratio, which would yield roughly 24 new trees for the park. A potential partnership with Tree Utah and school students for planting was discussed, with attention to tree placement for long-term survival.

Walking Tour Recap

- Pond: Reported to look better than in recent weeks; water level still low.
- Softball field construction: Underway and looking good; area was seeded this fall. Field is smaller than originally expected but still has room for other activity.
- Sugar Beet / "antenna" space: Board discussed possible options, including connecting this area into the main park.
- Old playground: Noted to be deteriorating faster than expected — two slides and a tunnel have been lost/made inaccessible over the past year or two. Board discussed pursuing funding to address this, especially given safety/access concerns for children playing there.
- Retaining wall / "hidden grove" area: Work is underway; contractor reportedly has about 24 months and funding in place. A separate discussion touched on a possible dog park or an accessible path along the river/ice-area side.
- Pedestrian bridge: The Board previously reported securing funding from Salt Lake City, and confirmed a full match is now in place. The County will manage design/construction; an architect will need to confirm railing type and spacing per code.
- Culinary waterline project: The County's project manager (Dan) is continuing design work, currently near 90% design completion. The Board raised a concern that road/parking-lot repair near the ballfields (needed because of related digging) may not be included in the waterline project's scope or its ~$4.3 million budget, and that the Board may need to fund that separately if it wants the work done at the same time.

County FY2027 Budget Items for Sugar House Park

- Roxanne reported that Patrick Leary had responded by email to questions about the County's proposed FY2027 projects for the park. Key points:
- Four projects are planned; Salt Lake City has already approved its 50% match for these in a prior budget cycle.
- The projects still need to be included in, and approved through, the County's own budget process (Mayor's recommendation, then County Council vote, expected in December 2026). Funding would become available in January–February 2027 if approved.

- The figures discussed represent total project cost (not just the County or City share).
- Scope under discussion for 2027 design includes: playground orientation/placement, a possible sidewalk, a walkway connection down to the parking lots, and repaving of the parking lots (not the roads).
- The new playground's original design included shade structures, which were cut from the approved budget; shade coverage is now planned to be added back in as a separate design element.
- Salt Lake City Public Utilities water meters will be installed at each restroom building to separately measure building water use versus irrigation use. Dan (County project manager) is expected to share more detailed plans in October, including the requirement — driven by Public Utilities/fire code — to run a separate fire line from the culinary line, and to add roughly three new fire hydrants in areas not currently covered.
- Legal standing / grant-track eligibility: This remains unresolved. As of this meeting, the park's status had not changed since August; the question of whether the park is eligible for "Track 2" versus "Track 4" funding is still pending a legal determination and affects what grants the Board can apply for.
- County operations contract: Noted to expire in 2027; the Board plans to begin discussing renewal/renegotiation in the next couple of months. Staff will locate the last signed version of the contract for reference.

Minutes Approval

Approval of August 2026 Minutes

Motion: Jacqueline Rosen

Second: Siavash Ghaffari

Funding, Matching Obligations & Budget Cycles

- County and City operate on different budget cycles, often creating delays or misalignment in capital project funding.
- Matching obligations between City and County are 50/50, but only when funds are available; neither entity is required to match immediately if funding isn't present.
- Funds previously allocated by one party may sit unused until the partner can match, sometimes up to 12–18 months.
- City Council holds budget authority and can reallocate funds if the County doesn't match in time.

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Financial Statements

July 2026 (final)

- Cash position: just over $1,000,000 as of July.
- Net operating result: an operating loss of approximately $20,000 for July, driven mainly by an insurance premium expense (Utah Local Governments Trust) of roughly $12,000 that had not been recorded in the preliminary figures shown the prior month.
- Notable July expenses: ~$3,500 (half of a ~$7,000 invoice) for the annual audit via Square; ~$500/month bookkeeping fee; general liability insurance ~$3,500 and property insurance ~$8,528 (together ~$12,000+); legal fees from the Board's attorney (~$620 plus a separate ~$1,715 invoice related to Salt Lake City/County and Land and Water Conservation Fund matters); a monthly admin fee to Action Real Estate for the garden center; and higher-than-usual repairs/maintenance (~$1,300–1,400) due to a one-time spring yard-care invoice plus the usual ~$480 building-cleaning fee.
- The Starlink internet subscription was downgraded (data-only plan) after a rate increase, since usage did not justify the higher-tier plan.
- Liquidity: reported as very strong — assets were described as roughly 20+ times liabilities overall, and about 6 times liabilities excluding construction-in-progress assets.
- Accounts receivable: two open County/City invoices near month-end totaling roughly $140,000 (largely paid since, per the August update).
- Accounts payable: roughly $28,000 open at end of July, driven mainly by the insurance premium invoices (~$12,000) and an outstanding Salt Lake City Police invoice from May (~$3,170, reflecting a higher billing rate before a schedule change) plus a partial July invoice (~$1,500).

Motion: To approve the July 2026 financial statements.

Motion: Siavash Ghaffari
Second: Jacqueline Rosen
Vote: Approved unanimously.

August 2026 (preliminary)

- Bank balance increased by approximately $270,000, largely due to the City paying two invoices totaling roughly $299,000 (net of a prior ~$20,000 credit).
- Of the increase, roughly $33,000 relates to the Hidden Grove pedestrian railing project, and roughly $200,000 relates to the City's 50% share of this year's operations funding.
- As of August 31, the Wells Fargo operating balance was approximately $611,000. Treasurer Shehan Jaro recommended keeping roughly $200,000 in the operating account and moving the remainder into PTIF (Public Treasurers' Investment Fund), which is currently compounding at about 4%, until funds are needed. The Board did not vote on this but indicated it would follow this recommendation and review the change in a future statement.
- A reporting/accounting error in County-reported salary figures was noted by Patrick as being corrected; the Board expects to see updated figures next month.
- Garden center rental activity roughly broke even in July on reservation fees. Staff noted a distinction between when payments are received versus when the rental event actually occurs, and plans to report booking/occupancy dates alongside payment dates going forward for clarity.

Garden Center / Building Management

- The building is being professionally managed by Action Real Estate; overall management (cleaning, upkeep) was described positively, and the building was noted to currently be "spotless."
- The Salt Lake City School District has not signed the parking-lot use agreement discussed in prior meetings, despite months of informal conversation, and there is no enforceable agreement in place with the District.
- At least one prospective long-term renter reportedly declined to book because of uncertainty over whether the parking lot would remain available; the Board discussed whether this cost them that booking.
- Discussion/decision: rather than actively market the garden center for new long-term bookings while the School District possibility remains open, the Board discussed continuing to honor existing/likely reservations and revisit active marketing once the District's plans are clarified. Richard Layman cautioned against creating unnecessary conflict with the District by marketing aggressively in the meantime, while also supporting efforts to get clearer commitments from the District.
- The Board discussed possible future building improvements (repainting, wall repair, water heater), noting these are being tracked for a future spreadsheet-style comparison of cost versus benefit, to help decide how much (if anything) to invest given the building's break-even status and the fact that it was already in need of work when the Park Authority took it over.
- Rental pricing has not changed since the current management arrangement began; the only discount offered is 20% for nonprofits. Possible future pricing changes (e.g., a separate cleaning fee) may be proposed by the management company.

General Updates

- Security: Only three incident reports for August; described as routine (people gathering, no notable incidents).
- Feedback: No new requests regarding bike racks; one request received for lighting at the pickleball/football (unclear which) court so it can be used later in the evening. Overwatering/dust was mentioned as a recurring concern.
- Tree Utah: A tree-planting event is being planned for October (date to be finalized, tentatively around October 3), timed to avoid conflicting with other park events. Details and a waiver will be shared once finalized; the event is open to volunteers.
- A recent volunteer planting event (apparently at Jordanelle) was described as successful, with strong volunteer turnout.
- Website/social media: August website traffic was reported as lower than July's. The Board briefly discussed whether AI web-crawler traffic could be inflating visit counts elsewhere, but noted the park's own numbers were down, suggesting this likely wasn't a major factor here (unconfirmed). Most visitors reportedly find the site by searching general "Sugar House" terms rather than searching specifically for the event garden/venue, suggesting the Sugar House name itself drives a lot of passive traffic. A February dance competition held at the venue was highlighted as a success, with the organizer planning to return next year.

Motion to Adjourn:
Siavash Ghaffari
All Approve

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Meeting Adjourned

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