Utah Board of Water Resources
Board Briefing and Action Meeting
August 20, 2026, 8:30 AM
Department of Natural Resources Auditorium
1594 W. North Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84114

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

CHAIR MIKE DAVIS called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM and board members introduced themselves.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR SHALAINE DEBERNARDI acknowledged the departure of former Great Salt Lake Commissioner Brian Steed and noted that the Governor appointed Commissioner Hannah Freeze and she will officially join as a new Board member representing the Great Salt Lake interests once confirmed by the Senate. She then acknowledged DIRECTOR JOEL WILLIAMS was presenting to a legislative committee and would be at the meeting soon. She then introduced herself and staff.

LEILA AHMADI introduced new staff member HYUNWOO KANG.

DISCUSSION OF BOARD PROJECTS:

Project Number	Applicant	County	Project Manager

FEASIBILITY REPORTS:

RE506	**Moab City**	**Grand**	**Ethan Stayner**

ETHAN STAYNER presented the report.

DALE BUXTON asked about the direct financial impact of the project on consumers, inquiring whether the $13.64 figure would be passed directly onto residential and commercial customers.

MICHAEL BLACK explained that as an enterprise fund, all water infrastructure costs are expected to be covered by that fund. The immediate direct impact on customers would likely be slightly less than that amount initially because the city plans to draw down existing reserves to help complete the project. The city's cost share is in the enterprise account and available now.

JULIETTE TENNERT asked about more information explaining what the (GOEO) grant is.

MICHAEL BLACK the grant was intended for rural communities and was awarded to the city several years ago after city officials petitioned legislators directly to help secure funding while

gearing up for the project. Due to previous project delays, the city applied for and received an extension on the grant contract. The city has until the end of 2027 to utilize the funds and complete construction. We are confident that we will meet the 2027 deadline.

RE510 Moon Lake Water Users Association (Coyote Canal) Duchesne Ann Baynard

WILLIAM MERKLEY noted prior to presentations regarding RE510 through RE513 that these four items represent a multi-year coordinated initiative. He stated that local partners, including the Duchesne County Water Conservancy District and technical consultants, spent eight years developing this series of up to seven projects targeting seepage, unlined earthen canals, and system losses. He voiced full backing for these efforts in Duchesne County.

ANN BAYNARD presented the report.

DEX WINTERTON expressed appreciation for the board's support and stressed the importance of the projects being presented today.

RE511 Moon Lake Water Users Association (Yellowstone Canal) Duchesne Ann Baynard

ANN BAYNARD presented the report.

RE512 Uintah Basin Irrigation Company Duchesne Brad Caldwell

BRAD CALDWELL presented the report.

LANCE HENDERSON thanked the board for considering the project and noted that the funding would increase assessments by less than a dollar per share, which shareholders are willing to pay to prevent water loss.

WILLIAM MERKLEY asked if the funding agreement from Uintah Indian Irrigation Project (UIIP) has been finalized.

While there is a carriage and operation and maintenance contract in place, the funding agreement has not been completed. The funding agreement will be completed before the board commits funds.

RE513 South Boneta Irrigation Company Duchesne Brad Caldwell

BRAD CALDWELL presented the report.

RANDY BROTHERSON expressed appreciation for the board's consideration and help.

BLAINE IPSON asked about the company's ability to cover their share, and the impact on the repayment to shareholders.

The company shareholders are prepared to cover the additional costs and about half of the repayment will be covered by the reduced operation and maintenance costs.

COMMITTAL OF FUNDS:

RE488 North Creek Irrigation Company of Mt. Pleasant, Inc. Sanpete Ann Baynard

ANN BAYNARD presented the report. She discussed that the original report had recommendations based on the authorized repayment terms, and not an updated financial feasibility. Staff's updated recommendation is that the board commit 8.3% of the project cost, up to $500,000, from the Revolving Construction Fund and that the project be purchased at 0% interest over approximately 25 years with annual payments of $20,000.

There was discussion about the system and need for upgrades, benefit to the shareholders and their ability to repay. Also, the general requirements for shareholder and/or board of directors votes required before companies enter into purchase agreements with the board, based on individual applicant's articles of incorporation and bylaws.

SPECIAL ITEMS:

RE508 Centerfield City (Small System Secondary Meter Grant) Sanpete Ben Marett

BEN MARETT presented the report.

RE509 Brookshire Irrigation Co. (Small System Secondary Meter Grant) Salt Lake Marisa Egbert

MARISA EGBERT presented the report.

The board and applicant discussed metering requirements and exemptions at length, and how the board can help ease the burden for these smaller systems.

BRIEFING INFORMATION TO THE BOARD:

STATUS OF FUNDS:

SHALAINE DEBERNARDI presented an update. She apologized that there is not a written report at this meeting, due to the difficulty closing out the last fiscal year and validating information. She provided background on the revenue added to the various funds every year, regular expenses paid from the funds and balances expected to be available for new projects. The unobligated amounts available are approximately $11 million in regular Revolving

Construction Funds (not including dam safety), the dam safety grant funds have been increased to $10 million annually, the Conservation and Development Fund has approximately $120 million available for new projects and the Small System Secondary Meter Grant funds were cut in the last legislative session from $2 million annually to $1million.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

JOEL WILLIAMS Interim meetings are this week. I was at the capital today and gave two presentations. One was about our future water projections in the State Water Plan. It was nice to highlight the work of our staff. The state water plan is out for public comment right now and closes on the 23rd, then they will get it finalized so that it can be published by the end of this year. The second presentation was about recommended studies. We are interested to see what kind of studies might help as we look to our future.The proposed studies include a five-year analysis of secondary metering data and landscape conversion water savings, supply and demand analysis, agricultural water budget improvements, supply augmentation and diversification strategies and expanded groundwater research.

ATTORNEY GENERAL UPDATE:

SARAH SHECHTER will discuss the Great Salt Lake litigation during a closed session.

SPENCER JONES moved for a recess at 10:34 AM, DANA VAN HORN seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Board members will convene at 10:45 AM.

CHAIR MIKE DAVIS reconvened the meeting at 10:52 AM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

DANA VAN HORN moved to approve the minutes from the JUNE 25, 2026 board meeting. SPENCER JONES seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

BOARD ACTIONS (see project list above):

RE506 Moab City

DANA VAN HORN moved the board authorize 52.1% of the project cost, up to $3,000,000, and that the bonded indebtedness be returned at 3.72% interest over 15 years with annual payments of approximately $287,000 (including reserves). DALE BUXTON seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

RE510 Moon Lake Water Users Association (Coyote Canal)

WILLIAM MERKLEY moved the board authorize 32.3% of the project cost, up to $829,000, and that the project be purchased at 0% interest over 25 years with annual payments of

approximately $33,160. SPENCER JONES seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

RE511 Moon Lake Water Users Association (Yellowstone Canal)

WILLIAM MERKLEY moved the board authorize 31.4% of the project cost, up to $702,000, and that the project be purchased at 0% interest over 25 years with annual payments of approximately $28,100. SPENCER JONES seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

RE512 Uintah Basin Irrigation Company

WILLIAM MERKLEY moved the board authorize 10.2% of the project cost, up to $233,000, and that the project be purchased at 0% interest over 25 years with annual payments of approximately $9,320. BLAINE IPSON seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

RE513 South Boneta Irrigation Company

MARISA EGBERT noted that the cost sharing table in the presentation was in error and the $366,000, which is a grant amount, had been listed as the applicant's share, whereas the applicant's true cost share is actually $57,000.

WILLIAM MERKLEY moved the board authorize 27.6% of the project cost, up to $323,000, and that the project be purchased at 0% interest over 20 years with annual payments of approximately $16,150. DALE BUXTON seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

RE488 North Creek Irrigation Company of Mt. Pleasant, Inc.

BLAINE IPSON moved the board commit 8.3% of the project cost, up to $500,000, and that the project be purchased at 0% interest over approximately 25 years, with annual payments of $20,000. DANA VAN HORN seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

RE508 Centerfield City (Small System Secondary Meter Grant)
BLAINE IPSON moved the Board authorize and commit 50% of the project cost, up to $240,000, as a Small System Secondary Meter Grant. WILLIAM MERKLEY seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

RE509 Brookshire Irrigation Co. (Small System Secondary Meter Grant)

JULIETTE TENNERT moved the Board authorize and commit 50% of the project cost, up to $150,000, as a Small System Secondary Meter Grant. WILLAM MERKLEY seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

JOEL WILLIAMS drought conditions across the state have persisted. They have not necessarily worsened or improved, but have persisted. We have seen the monsoon moisture come in and affect certain areas and help some areas. I think those that receive it are grateful. And then there's also the double whammy that some areas where they've had a fire, and then you get a monsoon on top of it, and you get the horrible debris flows and flooding. It's been tragic for some of those communities that have already faced a horrible emergency with the fire, and then to have to face another with the flood. And as always with these emergency situations the kind of outpouring of effort to communities to come together has been encouraging. And then there've been the tragic fatalities with firefighters, the four on the Utah-Colorado border, and then the two helicopter pilots that sadly perished. We meet regularly with our DNR partners, including Forestry, Fire, and State Lands, and get those updates from them. And they've done an incredible job facing an unprecedented fire year with record-setting fires in just the scale of it. Jamie Barnes, Director of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands, noted that we hope fire activity subsides with the official end of the season in late October.

Conservation updates: Our ongoing conservation webinars have been very successful. Recent sessions covered watering trees with drip systems and managing pests and weeds. The next webinar is scheduled for September 26th at 12:00 PM and will focus on maximizing the features of smart irrigation controllers. All webinars are recorded and available for viewing afterward. Second, due to last year's budget adjustments which reduced funding for secondary metering and water conservation rebates, we have decided to phase out the toilet rebate program. Indoor water savings are less impactful than outdoor savings, as indoor water is treated and returned to the system, whereas outdoor use results in permanent depletion. Shifting our remaining resources allows us to focus on higher-impact outdoor programs. We will continue accepting toilet rebate applications through October 31st and are actively spreading the word so interested residents can submit their applications before the deadline. We have several upcoming conservation events where our team will be hosting a booth:

Conservation Garden Park Festival: August 29th in West Jordan
Latino Conservation Week: September 12th at Tracy Aviary
Delta Community Night Out: September 14th at Delta City Park

Attending these community events allows us to engage in direct, person-to-person conversations. These interactions are often far more impactful than online or billboard advertising, as community members can learn helpful information and share it directly with their neighbors. Thank you to our conservation team for doing a great job representing us at these events.

There's an Upper Bear River Tour for the Bear River Commission on Sept 11th. Staff members Jake Serago and Tom Moore will be attending.

The Colorado River Authority Board met earlier this week. The final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was released on July 31st, establishing sideboards and a framework for river

operations. The overall plan is designed for a 10-year period, with specific operational plans to be developed at two-year intervals. We are still waiting to receive the Record of Decision and the initial two-year operating guidelines, which are expected to be released any day now. I will keep you updated as soon as we receive further details.

The next Board Meeting is October 8th, the plan is to be down in Blaine's area and have a tour including Sevier Bridge Dam, and we'll have additional details come out for that. The tour will be on October 7th, the day before the board meeting.

In addition to the leadership changes at Water Resources, I wanted to share a few updates regarding leadership at the department leve. Joel Ferry has announced he is stepping down as Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources to spend more time with his family and on his farm. Todd Adams will be retiring from his role as Deputy at the Department of Natural Resources, effective September 1st. With these transitions, there will be several changes ahead. Jamie Barnes will be taking over as the new Commissioner over Natural Resources. She will be looking to fill a few key positions, including a new Finance Manager following Roger Lewis's retirement, as well as a new Deputy to replace Todd Adams.

JOEL WILLIAMS & SHALAINE DEBERNARDI discussed the upcoming implementation of the Unified Water Infrastructure Plan (UWIP) requirement starting in FY 2027. This process involves evaluating the Conservation and Development (C&D) fund at the close of the fiscal year to determine any excess funds—accounting for authorized loans, grants, and pending applications—to be transferred into the state's Water Infrastructure Fund. Staff noted that this involves balancing active commitments and expected projects while coordinating with the Legislature and the Division of Finance. Additionally, they reviewed the agency's recent budget requests submitted to the Governor's office for the upcoming fiscal cycle, which include:

- **UWIP Funding:** A request for dedicated grant funding to support projects currently included in the prioritized UWIP list.
- **Watershed Council Staffing:** A request for four new positions (three roving planners and one administrative helper) to assist the state's 12–13 volunteer-run watershed councils with coordination, administration, and scheduling efficiency.
- **Aqueduct Resilience Funding:** A request of $358 million to continue vital seismic upgrades for major aqueducts crossing fault lines along the Wasatch Front.
- **State Water Plan Resources:** Approximately $300,000 requested to expand ongoing water modeling, public working groups, and advanced data coordination following the publication of the updated state water plan.

BLAINE IPSON moved to close the meeting to discuss pending or reasonably imminent litigation pursuant to Utah Code Section 52-4-205(1)(c). SPENCER JONES seconded the motion. All voted in favor of a closed session (roll call vote). Entered closed session at 11:28 AM.

Returned to open meeting at 11:43 AM.

CHAIR MIKE DAVIS no action was taken during the closed session. If there’s nothing to further discuss, I'm looking for a final motion to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT:

DANA VAN HORN moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:44 AM. All voted in favor.