OHV ADVISORY COUNCIL
FY27 Q1 OHVR PRE-SCORING MEETING
DIVISION OF OUTDOOR RECREATION
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DRAFT Meeting Minutes:

Minutes Of The Meeting Held on September 4, 2026 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

HOST: ***Utah Department of Natural Resources***
Division of Outdoor Recreation
1594 W. North Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84116
Trail Head Conference Room
(Virtual meeting)

ATTENDEES: Jason Blankenagel (Chair), Brody Johnson (Vice-Chair), Cheryl Butler, Russ Cazier, Sheriff Nathan Curtis, Brett Davis, Dave Jacobson, Nicole Nielson, Scott Wheeler, Alexander Davenport, Jenna Jorgensen, Brett Mciff, Brett Stewart, Chelsea Phillippe, Caroline Weiler, Deirdre Miller, Evan Beitsch, Jacob Hinton, Maureen Casper, Jason Curry, Rachel Toker, Nicole Hanna, Patrick Morrison, Todd Royce.

MEETING MINUTES:

(0:00) Jason Blankenagel, chair, calls the meeting to order. Everyone in attendance virtually and in person introduced themselves.

(6:19) Brody Johnson motioned to approve the July 14, 2026 meeting minutes. Sheriff Curtis seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

(7:25) Evan Beitsch, RTP Administrator, provided an operational overview of the program and presented survey results gathered from both committee members and grant applicants:

- Funding Overview**:** Non-motorized RTP received 32 applications requesting nearly $4M, with 15 projects approved totaling roughly $3M. Motorized RTP received 12 applications requesting $1.2M, with 9 projects approved totaling 842,000 with roughly $1.7M.

- Funded Priorities: Key funded project categories included equipment purchases (especially for motorized trail maintenance), new trail development, trail maintenance, facility/signage support, and trail education.
- Survey Results: Committee members and applicants highlighted high priorities around increased public access, trail maintenance, rural community assistance, and network connectivity.
- Application Adjustments: Applicants expressed frustration over lengthy application requirements. The division plans to streamline applications for upcoming cycles to request shorter, more concise answers and raw data rather than long narrative responses.

(17:43) Evan opened up the floor for feedback, comments, or questions. Evan provides more insight and clarification.

- Jason Blankenagel asks clarifying questions about the survey and if most respondents were awarded or not rewarded. Evan states that 79% of respondents were awarded and the remaining percent were not awarded.
- Jason also clarifies that on the non-motorized applicants, were they federal agencies, non profits or local governments. Evan states that it was pretty diverse across the board.
- Alexander gave praise to the program.
- Brody asked about large equipment purchases and some kind of tracking. Evan states that Caroline will discuss more on that with compliance. The team wants to make sure that awardees are being compliant.
- Scott asks about coordinating the OHV and RTP at the same time for more efficiency. Evan shares that both of these applications are closing on the same dates and that this has been resolved.
- Jason Blankenagel asks if we are seeing changes in the allocations we get for RTP each year. Evan states that it is staying about the same year to year.

(25:46) Chief Todd Royce presented updates regarding the Division of Law Enforcement following its consolidation:

- Reporting & Collaboration: DLE is aiming to improve communication with the Advisory Council by sharing data on outreach, community policing, and ranger hours tracked through their UKG system. Chief Royce offered the

council options for quarterly or bi-annual reports and invited council members on ranger ride-alongs.

- Accident Tracking & Safety: Brody Johnson and Scott Wheeler raised questions regarding accident tracking, including helmet/seatbelt usage and safety class completion. Chief Royce noted that while serious incidents or multi-vehicle crashes are consistently tracked through statewide accident forms, non-reported incidents (where individuals go directly to the hospital without law enforcement involvement) remain heavily underreported.
- Ranger-Public Interface: Lieutenant Jacob Hinton noted that data is currently being compiled on in-person and online safety course metrics to project upcoming goals for educating riders.

(37:33) Patrick Morrison and Caroline Weiler (Grants Compliance Officer) outlined updated compliance policies and monitoring efforts across division grants:

- Stricter Performance Standards: Patrick Morrison discussed enforcing tighter contract timelines and progress/final report submissions. Unresponsive grantees or those requesting repeated extensions without progress will face stricter enforcement to ensure responsible stewardship of public funds.
- Site Visits & Inspections: Caroline Weiler detailed her role in checking projects 10 years post-award to ensure ongoing good standing. Focus areas include evaluating site conditions, verifying machine and equipment usage, and establishing clear inspection guidelines for motorized equipment.

(59:43) Rachel Toker summarized the updated policy guidelines for the current grant cycle:

- Funding & Category Thresholds: Annual grant funding has reached $6 million. Applications requesting $350,000 or more will require 10-minute presentations with 5-minute Q&A sessions at review meetings, and must be scored by the full council.
- Trail Work Cap Discussion: Council members and Director Jason Curry voiced concerns that capping trail work could limit large-scale, high-impact trail development projects that benefit from economies of scale. Discussion continued and the conversation was tabled to be had in the upcoming months.
- Search & Rescue & Tourism Increases: Search and Rescue flat-rate funding models were increased, and OHV Tourism request caps were raised from $50,000 to $75,000.

- Equipment Purchases for Nonprofits: Nonprofits may now request up to $15,000 per machine or piece of equipment (previously restricted), subject to heightened scrutiny regarding project necessity and organizational capacity. Two competitive bids are required for any single non-profit purchase item over $10,000.

(1:27:55) Rachel Toker reviewed the application evaluation workflow for the current grant cycle:

- Application Breakdown: 30 applications were submitted requesting a total of $2.4 million against $6 million in available funding. Each evaluator has been assigned 7 to 8 applications.
- Review Platform & Form Updates: Evaluators were provided an Excel/Google Doc reference sheet and access to the Salesforce portal. A new option, "Requires Additional Discussion," was added to the evaluation form to flag uncertain projects for full council deliberation rather than forcing a strict pass/fail score.
- Letters of Land Manager Support: Cheryl Butler emphasized that official letters of support from land management agencies (e.g., USFS, BLM) should be mandatory deal-breakers prior to project approval.
- Review Deadlines:
    - September 18: All reviews and scores due in Salesforce.
    - September 21: Draft agenda distributed.
    - September 23: OHV Advisory Council review meeting in Vernal, Utah.

(1:55:24) Director Jason Curry provided divisional updates and legislative context:

- Legislative Sunset & Restricted Account: The Advisory Council's sunset clause will be extended by 10 years via upcoming legislation. Language will also be updated to explicitly include council oversight of the division's restricted account. Additionally, legislation will seek to remove statutory fee caps on snowmobile/OHV registrations to allow fee adjustments as needed.
- Divisional Restructuring: Following Wade Allenson's departure, the division is hiring a new Deputy Director over motorized operations to manage trail crews, community outreach, and OHV program management. Council member Brody Johnson volunteered to sit on the hiring selection panel.
- Wildfire Season Impacts: Severe wildfires in high-elevation forest areas will require extensive trail clearing, hazard removal, and erosion control. Director Curry advised the council to remain selective with current grant awards to

ensure funding remains available for upcoming fire-rehabilitation grant requests next year.

- Reciprocity Rule: Effective September 8th, street-legal out-of-state OHVs must also purchase an non-resident OHV permit.

(2:17:13) Brody Johnson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sheriff Curtis seconds the motion. The meeting is adjourned.