

10.22.2026 TLA Board Meeting Recording -1

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Meeting minutes, Trustland funds, Student learning, Classroom resources, Math support, Teacher training, Social media, Land lease, Public comment, Nuclear project, Revenue report, Real estate, Wildfires, Topsoil erosion, Fire management

SPEAKERS

Elizabeth Trostle, Leo Hardy, Jim Davis, Marla Kennedy, Michelle McConkie, Joelette Organista, Mike Nelson, Speaker 1, Angela Pontius, John Baza



Mike Nelson 00:03

Had to turn on my microphone. Welcome to the monthly meeting of the School School and Institutional TrustLands Administration. My name is Mike Nelson. I'm the chair of the board of trustees, and we welcome all of you to this meeting. Our first item of agenda is to approve the minutes of the meeting of September 17th, about a month ago. Those have been distributed to the board and reviewed. Do I hear a motion on that,



John Baza 00:45

mr. Chairman? I'll make a motion to approve the minutes of the September meeting.



Mike Nelson 00:49

We have a motion to approve the minutes. All in favor? Aye. Oh, a second. Thank you. Second. Second. Thank you, Brian. All in favor? Aye. You. For your information, the upcoming meeting dates are in December and January. Sorry, november 19 and january 14. There is no meeting on december 26. There won't be any presence if you come. So, so we'll now proceed with our meeting. First presentation will be the Trustland Funds in Action, given by Marla Kennedy, the Director of Communications for the TLA.

M

Marla Kennedy 01:34

Thank you, Chair Nelson, and other board members. I always say, fellow board members. Well, maybe one day I'll be up there. I'm very excited to introduce to you Angela Pontius. She's here from Stansberry Junior High, Stansberry High School. Oh, sir. Stansberry High School, and I love to see educators with her background. She has been working in K to 12 education throughout her career in Utah, Ohio, Virginia, she got an education at Ball State and also from Florida, and has had over two decades of of working here. And was kind enough during the the school year to drive up and tell you all what the wonderful things that you do and the funding that that results in does to her school. So I won't spill any thunder and give you Principal Pontius.

A

Angela Pontius 02:37

Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I'm excited to share with you how we are utilizing our funds at Stansberry High School. This is my first year at Stansberry, and so this actually allowed me an opportunity to learn a little bit more about how we are using these funds. So I appreciate the opportunity. Our investment, of course, is in student learning, and through a number of ways, we are able to use these funds to support student learning. First and foremost, people in support. We use a lot of our funding for staffing that helps our students. We also have classroom resources, other systems throughout our school, and then of course, supporting our teachers and their learning as well. So let's take a deeper dive into each of those. So investing in our people, we use our funds to invest in additional student support through our credit recovery teacher. This allows our students who may be credit deficient to be able to have a dedicated adult in the building to help them make progress towards graduation. We also provide two math aides in our building. These math aides collaborate with our lead math teachers in the classroom, and then they also provide tutoring hours before and after school for math support, we have what we call refocus aides, and so this team actually is in the hallway. So they are helping to connect with students, helping them feel connected to our school, encouraging them to go to class, helping with our attendance barriers, and all of this is, of course, supporting their academic success. Our funds also support one math teacher. We chose to invest in additional math teacher to help keep our math class sizes low, and this also allows us to help offer our math lab class. So again, more dedicated support in an area we know that our students are needing that support, and lastly, it covers a half a counselor FTE, and this again allows us to have more additional support for our social emotional learning and anything that our counselors can provide, whether that be here at Stansberry, or if that's looking beyond, and what comes next for them after high school. We also provide classrooms with needed supplies and items that they need. So in math classrooms, we're utilizing classroom calculator sets that they are using not only for class but also for assessments. We have our iPads that are being used in our video production classes. In ELA, most recently, a classroom set of books was purchased, a Fahrenheit 451, and we're using that in our classrooms, specifically in our 10th grade classroom. Our physics lab, great success story in buying supplies for them to be able to complete different labs and projects, but those items that we've purchased are also being used across our entire science department, and we've seen lots of growth, especially in our AP science classes. And lastly, all of this helps in everyday instruction, and so our teachers work collaboratively to use our supplies that we have to enhance learning across their departments. We have invested in a software called SmartPass, and so this helps us to stay organized and safe throughout our school day. So students have to put in for a SmartPass anytime that they want to leave the classroom, and this helps us to monitor student movement throughout our school, and also helps us with supervision and transitions. We also utilize what we call the 3010 rule, which means that students do not use a pass in the first 30 minutes nor the last 10 minutes of class. So that helps us to protect our instructional time. We also invest in our teachers, and so we've put a special emphasis on supporting our AP teachers, and that they attended the AP summer institute, and so they are there doing professional learning for themselves, so that way they can bring back strategies and tools to help them support students in those AP classes.

A

Angela Pontius 07:02

So to summarize, it is a continued commitment to student opportunity and removing barriers, so that way every student has access to quality education. So academic progress, this is our credit recovery, math tutoring, and classroom supports, student belonging. So our attendance counseling and our consistent systems of organization and safety, and then lastly our strong instruction, classroom resources, and teacher professional learning. Thank you for all that you do to support our Utah students and public education.

M

Mike Nelson 07:44

We have any questions for our guest? Seeing none. Thank you very much for your attendance. Next, the presentation is the social media minute with Gillette Organista.

J

Joelette Organista 08:09

Okay, I'm gonna show you just one video. Hopefully the volume is good. Welcome back to another episode of What the Heck Happens on Utah TrustLands. This is what 35 acres of land looks like. That's a lot of space. So, what do we use that space for? Recently in Moab, it was used for the Mud Springs Trail System opening and Nike's mountain biking race. With a big amount of riders, teams, and families coming in, they need space. So, that 35 acres of TrustLands were leased for the event. And here's the cool part: the money from the lease goes directly to Utah public schools. It's a win for the event, a win for the community, and a win for the schools. And that's what's happening on Utah TrustLands. Awesome. So I wanted to highlight an event that I went to on September 11th. It was the Nike's trail system opening, which was really cool because it was in Moab, and I love traveling for my job. And so it was really cool to see the community, two commissioners, and a lot of students come to this grand opening, and what was really awesome about it was I was able to educate people about the lease. Obviously, that's on TrustLands that's used to have all the teams for for their preparation for mountain biking. I don't know a lot about mountain biking, but just what I've heard from that event is that you need a lot of space for your teams, for your bikes, for food, for families, and so it was really cool to educate families there about the TrustLands and and be a part of something so cool like that. And so that's what the video was all about.

M

Mike Nelson 09:57

I have one question, if I may. Yes. So is that are those teams sponsored by the schools?

 Joelette Organista 10:03

The teams, the teams are all yeah are all from high schools around the state of Utah. So all the way into Bountiful to all the way to Tuolumne, even people from high schools from Moab. So it was really cool to see a lot of families that were traveling far come together for this really big event, and they were very happy about the space that, obviously, the TrustLands administration leased.

 Mike Nelson 10:27

Thank you. We are now ready for the public comment period, and at this time, members of the public are welcome to provide comments, and the board has allotted, I believe, 15 minutes for public comments. And each presenter is permitted one opportunity to speak, and may provide remarks for up to three minutes. Members of the public can also participate electronically. Those who wish to do so should use the raise hand feature during the meeting. The board meeting's public comment portion is not intended for question and answer discussion. Trustland staff are available for dialog outside of board meetings. In compliance with the building and fire code, the maximum occupancy for the load for the TLA boardroom is 49 people. I don't see a big crowd building up here, but we encourage also online participation at each one of these meetings, so that more people can participate. So we'll turn the time over to Marla Kennedy, our director of communications, for public comments. Is

 Marla Kennedy 11:51

there anyone in the room who wishes to speak? Okay, we'll move online right now. Dr. Leo Hardy. One moment, Dr. Hardy. Why we unmute you?

 Speaker 1 12:20

Dr. Hardy, could you please unmute yourself?

 Leo Hardy 12:29

Can you hear me now? I'll

 Marla Kennedy 12:30

just remind those that are online, if they wish to speak, raise their hand.

L Leo Hardy 12:35
Can you hear me?

M Marla Kennedy 12:37
Yes, Dr. Hardy.

L Leo Hardy 12:39
Thank you. Good morning, Director McConkie and members of the board. My name is Leo W. Hardy, M.D. I'm a physician that works at Castleview Hospital in Price, Moab Regional Hospital in Moab, and Ashley Regional Medical Center in Vernal. I'm also a neighbor to the individual, Mr. Chad Shimons, who lost his 640-acre grazing lease that is at the center of the Valor proposed 640 acres and expanded 9,000 BLM acres. I'm also a resident of Carbon County. I live there. I also I live on Cole Creek Road, immediately across the street from Mr. Shimon's. Earlier this morning, our coalition, that's the Coal Creek Coalition of Carbon County, formally submitted the state's July 9, 2026 Economic Development Board packet directly into the agency record for Lee Sula, 2095. This official state record establishes that Valor Atomix is not developing a small benign test site, but rather a 1.3 billion dollar centralized gigasite deploying standardized high temperature microreactors to directly power intensive industrial data centers, independent atmospheric scoping evaluations from Arizona State University and the Desert Research Institute in Reno, Nevada, demonstrate that this facility represents an unprecedented 20 to 28 gigawatt sensible thermal waste heat flux directly over our agricultural valley, our culinary watersheds, several of my neighbors' farms, my farm just north of the town of Wellington, and just east of the town of Price. Sitla cannot maintain that its fiduciary duty ends with executing a surface lease while disclaiming all oversight of regional environmental impacts, water depletion, and cross county jurisdictional conflicts. More. Critically, this state document reveals a severe jurisdictional discrepancy. The state-approved Valor under Emery County, yet SULA 2 2095, and now active surface drilling are situated on Section 16 in Carbon County. Furthermore, the state's conditional 106.7 million dollar tax incentive explicitly mandates local incentive participation approved by the state. Sitla cannot maintain that its fiduciary duty ends with executing a surface lease while disclaiming all oversight of regional environmental impacts, water depletion, and cross-country jurisdictional conflicts. We request that the board acknowledge our supplemental filing, place these state documents into the permanent SULA 2095 docket, and require full transparency regarding the true industrial gigasite scale of this massive project before any further surface authorizations proceed. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

M Marla Kennedy 16:04
Thank you. Next up, we have Elizabeth Trostell. Hold on for a second, Elizabeth, while we unmute you.

 Michelle McConkie 16:21
Hello.

 Marla Kennedy 16:22
Yes, we can hear you. Go ahead, Elizabeth. Elizabeth, we can hear you.

 Elizabeth Trostle 16:40
Are you?

 Marla Kennedy 16:41
Yes, we can hear you.

 Elizabeth Trostle 16:44
Thank you so much for your time. Are you able to hear me okay now?

 Michelle McConkie 16:50
Yes.

 Marla Kennedy 16:51
Yes. Yes.

E

Elizabeth Trostle 16:52

Okay. And I'm here as a concerned Carbon County resident, a mother of five, and a neighbor who lives directly next to Chad, who who lost his lease, and I'm I'm less you know my my property borders the property across the street where the proposed Valor project is. I don't believe that you understand, or worse, don't care how upsetting it was to learn that a nuclear-related project could be moving forward so close to our home and many other residents without us being directly notified. My family lives here. Our children sleep here. Our son was valedictorian of his high school class. We are just so devastated to understand what is being proposed our homes and not knowing about this at all. I listened to both the August 20 and the September 17th meetings, and I was deeply troubled by what I heard. Not one person spoke in opposition to the project or even raised concerns about its potential impact. And meanwhile, those supporting valor appeared to be aware of the process, while many of us living nearby had no idea what was being planned. What concerns me even more is that Tony Martinez personally told me that NPR had let it out of the bag and ruined their plan. That statement raises serious questions about transparency and whether the public was ever meant to have a meaningful opportunity to speak before these decisions move forward, that should deeply concern the board, because how were we ever to know that nuclear was going in on this land? And if Valor Atomics is committed to transparency, why wasn't there a clear public announcement in July or August that they were attending Sitla meetings, that they were looking to lease Sitla land. Why weren't neighboring properties owners and Carbon County residents given the meaningful opportunity to learn about Possil and voice their concerns before the board voted? Or was that the whole point? I hope Sitla will consider changing its policies to require written notice by mail mail to property owners and residents living within at least one proposed nuclear-related development. Families deserve to know when a project of this magnitude is being considered near their homes, with enough time to ask questions and to understand the potential, and have their voices heard before decisions are made. Transparency should be a standard practice, not something residents have to fight for. I also have serious questions about the long-term responsibilities associated with this. Agreement. What happens to the spent nuclear fuel and radioactive materials if there is an accident or contamination beyond the property? Who is legally and financially responsible? What insurance and final guarantees are in place to protect neighboring families if the company cannot cover the cost? And if this is a new type of agreement for Sitla? What independent nuclear safety, environmental, and legal expertise did you obtain before approving it? Sitla manages TrustLands for the benefit of our Utah students, our Utah schools, and I have five of them. And I'm so thankful for all that you guys do. I understand the importance of generating revenue for education, but are we doing,

M

Marla Kennedy 20:50

Elizabeth? I think we lost you for a second, but you have 15 seconds remaining.

E

Elizabeth Trostle 20:54

Okay, okay. We are not asking you to ignore economic development. Our families should have to should not have to discover decisions affecting their homes after those decisions have already been made. I respectfully ask for Sitla to pause further commitments under this agreement and obtain independent reviews, making the findings available to the public and reconsider this lease before moving forward. And I really appreciate your time. Thank you so much for for your time to hear my concerns, and many blessings to you.

M

Marla Kennedy 21:29

Thank you, Elizabeth. Okay, we don't have anyone else in the room or anyone else online who wishes to speak. That's it, mr. Chair.

M

Mike Nelson 21:41

Thank you to those members of the public who spoke. We thank them for their participation. The next item on our agenda is the director's report by Michelle McConkie, executive director.

M

Michelle McConkie 21:57

Thank you, Chair Nelson, and trustees. This is over. So I'm going to start out by talking about the revenue for our first quarter of fiscal year 2027, and then I'm going to turn the remainder of my time over to my colleagues Jim Davis and Chris Fausett. And Jim is going to talk about the wildfires that were on TrustLands this summer. We thought that might be an interesting topic for all of you to know. Of course, it was a really hard fire year, and we're going to talk about how that affected TrustLands directly. And then Chris is going to talk about something we've been wanting on the agenda for a bit. And I appreciate Chris really digging in and getting some great information on large federal, state land exchanges that we've done and the impacts of those economically to the fiduciaries and to the beneficiaries, and what those they take a long time to do. And we wanted to walk through a little bit of the process and then give you all some insight into what those have actually done for the trust. So I'll start out first quarter revenues for Q1 for 2027. We're at now. You all get these reports from Deborah Memmot, our finance director, every month. But I wanted to give a little more context. We are at 25.08 million total. The five-year average for Q1 has been 28.24, so we're a little bit down. I thought it was really interesting. I had Eric Bame look through these numbers, and that's actually Q1 in the last five years represent a little under 20% of our overall our overall revenue, and the 10-year average Q1 is 25.44 million. So we're more about pretty close on target to our 10-year average, and 10-year average Q1 21.63 of the total revenue typically. So again, we're a little bit down. Last year was a record-breaking year, but we are a little bit down this year. I think anyone who has looked at the real estate market, and I know some of you, that is that is your job to work in the real estate market. It's softening interest rates. Raises have have have changed a few things, and that we're certainly feeling those effects as well as anyone. But it's a really great time to focus on planning over this next little bit as we're waiting to see what happens with the market, I'm reminded that a lot of the planning we did during the large downturn in 2008-2009 is what helped us to have some of these really great years the last decade. So that during that time period is when we spent time getting entitlements and working on improvements and other things in what is now Desert Color, for example, so our real estate team is working very hard. They're doing a great job. It's a little bit of a tough market right now, but we're gonna we're gonna see what happens. And the great thing is, we are not just a one shop, a one business shop. We've got a lot of different things that are going on on our land. And we've had really strong returns on minerals, and our oil and gas is holding steady. We're about we're about exactly where we were this time last year on oil and gas. So I'm happy to answer any questions on that, or if not, I'll turn my time over to Jim. Yes, please.

J

John Baza 25:18

Yes, I have a question. I know that price inflation is affecting all of us in one way or another, and these are revenue numbers. I'm sure price inflation is affecting our expense side as an agency, but does it have any impact on revenue stream? And if you can't answer this, I'm happy to follow up with Deborah at a later time.

M Michelle McConkie 25:44

So let me make sure. So, are you are you talking about expenses? If we're if those are also going, yeah, I

J John Baza 25:49

think basic things like commodities and fuel prices. I know those are affecting all consumers, but would it have any effect on Sidla's revenue streams?

M Michelle McConkie 26:00

Certainly, commodity prices do. As oil and gas, I mean, oil and gas commodity prices have been higher, and that's helping us. And I'm I'm not sure if I'm going to be able to answer that question. I mean, some of our some of our costs, our expenses, certainly have gone up. I mean, we have a we have fleet. We have to put fuel into those, you know, costs associated with real estate development also going up. So yes, we do have those as well. But I'm happy if there are more specific things, more specific questions you had. We can we can be in touch or we can

J John Baza 26:37

yeah just just curious about the economy overall is affected. You talked about a softening market in real estate.

M Michelle McConkie 26:46

Yes.

J John Baza 26:46

Maybe some of that has to do with consumers being more reluctant to purchase property. But yeah, just curious how the economy is affecting our revenue stream.

 Michelle McConkie 27:00

Said minerals have actually been doing quite well. We we have coal revenue for that is that is inching up for the first time in quite a few years, and some of that I think Chris will talk about is because of a new coal mine expansion that we've been part of. Oil and gas again holding steady. It's about the same place it was this time last year, so it's looking it's looking pretty good, and otherwise, our other commercial leasing, those kinds of things, often have built-in. Well, they do always have built-in escalators, and so those do kick in as the time comes under the contract. It's usually every three years.

 John Baza 27:38

Okay. Well, thank you for that.

 Michelle McConkie 27:40

Thank you. Any other

 Mike Nelson 27:44

questions?

 Michelle McConkie 27:48

Okay, looks like Jim is coming up, and we'll turn it over to him to talk about wildfires.

J**Jim Davis 28:10**

Yes, please. Can you guys hear me all right? Now you can. While they're bringing this up, Well, first, good morning, mr. Chair, Trustees. Grateful to be here with you. I'm excited to talk to you about kind of a downer of a topic, right? Fire impacts on TrustLands are no fun, but they are a reality, and we work hard to anticipate and to recover after fire has come to the state, I want to I want to thank Kate Staley who helped who created this story map for us. We need lots of maps, and we need good maps. And Kate and the GIS professionals make them. We are well equipped from a mapping standpoint, and grateful for it. I want to talk about. I want to give you a big picture, and then we'll walk through a couple of fires, and then I'll talk to you a little bit about the work that our forester and our range managers do to recover after fire has come to the state. Here you can see some rough numbers: 53 fires across the state, nine of them impacting trust lands, 558,000 acres burned across the state, about 5,800 of those were trust lands. It was a rough fire year, not the roughest ever, the roughest in I think 20 years. I think the most recent worst one was back in 2007, which was a heck of a year. I need to be closer. Okay, thank you. I'm a mumbler too, so let's start with the Dutchman Fire. So this is on the west side of Utah Lake. There. 143 acres. This fire didn't impact any homes, which was good because it's kind of on that fringe of the urban-rural divide. The bad news is that most of what burnt was TrustLands here. Next, I want to go to the Wild Goose Fire. This, excuse me, the Wild Goose Fire is down. This would be the town of Holden over here. That's Scipio Reservoir. Yeah, 12,600 acres in total. 350 of those were on trust lands. You can see just the trust ownership within the the footprint of the wild goose fire, and that is a heck of a photo of a column of smoke. The cherry fire is here, so this would be Little Sahara. This is our Tintic block. Eureka is over here, and as you can tell, gosh, some of these fires, you know, bump into their neighbors. 33,000 acres on this one. About 950 of those were on TrustLands. This was one of those fires. We had several like this that had bad erosional events afterwards. It's a cruel irony how the heavy rains come after the fire, but that was something that happened at the Cherry Fire. I'm going to skip over Cottonwood. We're going to spend some time on Cottonwood, so we'll come back to that one. That was an interesting fire. The Stookie Fire, Tuolumne, the Onakai Mountains, the town of Tuilla is just up here, so Stookie's kind of midway between like Tuilla and Delta, this was a natural fire lightning strike, if I recall. 12,000 acres in total, 1000 acres on trust lands. Yeah, just across our scattered typical land ownership pattern there, and the Iron Fire. Again, there was this, and it was it was a rough a rough year for North Central Utah. This this area just south and west of of Utah Lake. I got a couple of photos of the Iron Fire here. I'll click through 41,000 acres in total, 2000 acres on TrustLands, and just the ash and debris flow that come through this drainage. You can see this this tree was turned to ash in part here. What else did I want to tell you about the Iron Fire? Oh, this one took off fast. This this fire was driven by high temperatures and high winds. This thing bloomed 24,000 acres in the first 36 hours of this fire. Coordinated drops of fire retardant and a dozer line were able to stop this thing, but just within a mile of the town of Eureka, this got pretty close to town. It was spooky. Let's see. There was another photo here I wanted to show you. This is a photo that Scott Chamberlain took. He was out on the fire after, as soon as it was safe to to get onto the property, he was up there.

J

Jim Davis 33:47

That's a quarter in the center of the picture there, and the the story here is that there there used to be an inch, maybe two inches of topsoil here. That's a that's the root cluster from a bit of bunch grass, and you can see that after the fire, all that all that root structure was destroyed, and and then the wind and the rain just washed off all that nice soft topsoil, and we're down to this gravelly layer, which is going to be tough to to get a reseeding going on, just the kind of just to illustrate the kind of combination of impacts that come after a fire. All right, the Cottonwood Fire. This is the one. This one got a lot of coverage in the news. You probably heard about it, saw about it. The town of Beaver is here. These are the communities of Junction and Circleville. This fire started down here at the campground, and it took off quick. 97,000 acres in total, but only 1000 acres of trust lands. Sorry, I got to look at my notes. One of the features of this fire was the the direction of the wind and the way it was kind of funneled up through the canyon. A real chimney effect effect. Fresh air coming in from the bottom and just billowing smoke coming out the top, it really drew in a lot of air. This is an interesting photo. This was there was a lodge. This was on the BSA camp property, and when the fire came through, one of the windows fell out of the lodge, broke on the ground, and then as the fire continued, it melted the glass. It's kind of the rippling you can see as the glass melting to the to the shape of the gravel that it landed on. Here's a tree worth admiring. I I don't actually know what happened here, but I think the story goes something like an ember fell at the base of this tree, burnt up all the needles, the dried needle pile underneath some of the grasses, and just was getting to some of the outer branches of this tree. But the tree survives. We all hope to be that tree, don't we? Yeah, picture the hillside. You can just see the the completeness of the burn. There's a little bit of foliage in here. There's a little bit of needle still left on this tree, but it just wiped things out. Some cabin lots up there. Going to be a while before these places are gorgeous again. And still, in the midst of the fire, some places that remained untouched relatively, and this is a testament to to good management.