

**THE UTAH LAKE AUTHORITY
REGULARLY HELD MEETING**

May 30, 2024, at 9:00 AM-11:00 AM

Board Members Roll

Thursday, May 30, 2024

Seat	Organization	Name	Initials	Alternate	Initials
Chambers of Comm	Utah Valley Chamber	Curtis Blair			
Utah DEQ	Utah DEQ	John Mackey		Jodi Garberg	
Utah DNR	Utah DNR	Joel Ferry		Ben Stireman	X
Genola	Genola	Marty Larson	X		
Governor's Office	GO UTAH	Kamron Dalton			
Governor's Office	UVU	Hilary Hungerford	X		
Lehi	Lehi	Mark Johnson	X		
Lindon	Lindon	Carolyn Lundberg	X		
Orem	Orem	LaNae Millett	X		
Provo	Provo	Michelle Kaufusi		Isaac Paxman	
Saratoga Springs	Saratoga Springs	Chris Carn	X		
Utah County	Utah County	Tom Sakievich		Lisa Shepherd	X
Utah House	Utah House	Brady Brammer			
Utah Senate	Utah Senate	Mike McKell			
Vineyard	Vineyard	Julie Fullmer			
Visitors					
Elliot Mott					

1. WELCOME & CALL TO ORDER/INSPIRATIONAL THOUGHT

Vice-Chair Carolyn Lundberg called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

Mark Johnson shared his reflections on leadership inspired by a Memorial Day service and a past League of Cities and Towns meeting. He recalled a keynote speech by Captain Michael Raja of the USS Benfold, emphasizing the importance of doing small tasks and leading by example. Mr. Johnson noted how Raja would pick up discarded paper or complete minor chores on the ship, demonstrating leadership by performing tasks others might see as beneath them. This approach left a lasting impression on Mr. Johnson, who was taught the value of paying attention to small details and taking initiative in leadership roles.

2. CHAIR AND BOARD MEMBERS' REPORTS/DISCLOSURES/RECUSALS

Members had nothing to report.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Elliot Mott spoke about the outdoor activities in their area, highlighting his experiences as a cyclist and the reputation of the Jordan River for poor water quality. He urged the board to take action to improve water quality in Utah Lake and mentioned the benefits of engaging with the Jordan River Commission. Elliot also suggested simple improvements for the Spanish Fork River to enhance recreational opportunities, advocating for minimal expenditure to create a water trail from Spanish Fork Sports Park to the lake. He emphasized the importance of water quality for outdoor enthusiasts and encouraged the board to include these considerations in their recreation plans.

Vice-Chair Carolyn Lundberg thanked Elliot and assured him that improving water quality in the

lake was a top priority. She mentioned ongoing initiatives and offered to share more details at the end of the meeting.

4. CONSENT ITEMS

4.1 Approval of the April 3, 2024 ULA Board Meeting Minutes

4.2 Approve March and April, 2024 Monthly ULA Budget Reports

LaNae Millett motioned to approve the consent items. Chris Carn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. STAFF AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

5.1 Conservation and Restoration Efforts

Addy Valdez provided updates on several projects, including planting native vegetation with over 6,000 plants in partnership with UVU, organizing planting parties with various cities, and receiving additional funding for water restoration initiatives. She highlighted the success of volunteer efforts, ongoing shoreline restoration, and the installation of duck nesting habitats in Provo Bay. She also discussed the impact of educational and engagement improvements, such as stormwater seminars and community events like the bow fishing tournament and field trips.

Chris Carn inquired about the expansion of the duck program.

Addy Valdez responded that the focus was currently on Provo Bay due to its protected nesting habitat, with plans to potentially expand in the future with more funding and partnerships. She mentioned the challenges of transplanting new plants and the ongoing monitoring efforts to ensure their success.

Vice-Chair Carolyn Lundberg asked about the success rate of the transplants.

Addy Valdez explained that it was too early to tell, but monitoring efforts would provide data in the fall. She also shared updates on other initiatives, including the Russian Olive removal project and potential funding for projects near the Spanish Fork to improve its condition.

Mark Johnson discussed his visit to a sewer treatment plant in Lindon and the efforts to clean water before it reenters the lake. He expressed concern about the impact of fires on water quality and the need for better policies to prevent future issues. He emphasized the importance of addressing the big picture to maximize the effectiveness of conservation efforts.

Addy Valdez discussed efforts to improve water quality in the Spanish Fork area despite the challenges from higher watershed levels. She emphasized the importance of working with local landowners and partner agencies to enhance practices within their control, though acknowledging the need for better forest management policies to prevent issues caused by fires.

Mark Johnson highlighted the handover of control to federal agencies during fires and the subsequent lack of follow-up. He stressed the importance of verbalizing concerns to ensure lessons are learned and better practices are implemented.

Ben Stireman explained the state's initiatives to manage fire risk and reduce fuel loads through new crews focused on preemptive measures. He acknowledged the limitations in influencing federal practices but emphasized ongoing state efforts to manage from the mountain down to the lakes and rivers. He offered to bring in experts to provide more detailed information if needed.

Mark Johnson raised concerns about the invasive nature of Russian olives and their management.

Addy Valdez outlined the best practices for their removal, including cutting and treating stumps with glyphosate, and emphasized the importance of ongoing maintenance to prevent regrowth.

Sam Braegger added that a vegetation management plan for the lake would be developed to ensure a well-organized approach to these efforts.

5.2 Communications and Outreach

Anna Hall shared her enthusiasm for her second board meeting, briefly introduced herself, and provided updates on her activities. She highlighted the success of recent field trips involving 13 schools and presenters and the ongoing preparations for future trips. Anna discussed her daily work on social media, including creating spreadsheets, tracking patterns, and ensuring accurate messaging. She mentioned engaging posts related to the Russian Olive removal project and her involvement in capturing photos during field visits with Addy Valdez. Ms. Hall also mentioned her progress toward obtaining a drone pilot's license to capture aerial footage of the lake. She excitedly spoke about the upcoming festival with a beach theme, new signage, stickers, and collaborative efforts to organize more outreach events throughout the year.

Mark Johnson inquired about the agency's drone usage.

Sam Braegger confirmed they had a DJI Mavic drone and explained the requirement for a license for government operations. He mentioned his own experience with a drone pilot's license and the value of the drone for capturing footage for various projects.

5.3 Events, Programs and Sponsorships

Heather McEwen introduced herself, mentioning her recent hire in March and her involvement in several events since joining. She provided details about the upcoming Utah Lake Festival on June 8, from 10 AM to 2 PM, confirming vendor participation and food trucks. She noted the high water levels and the need to coordinate with the state park to ensure the safety of attendees. She shared updates on the Paddle with Care event, which focused on water safety and honored the memory of the girls who lost their lives at Utah Lake in 2020. The event saw a significant increase in participants, with a route from Sandy Beach to Lincoln Beach Marina. She mentioned plans to change the route to an in-and-out format in future years to simplify logistics for participants. She discussed the progress of the sponsorship program, thanking those who have already met with her. She highlighted the importance of sponsorships for supporting current and future events. She also mentioned her efforts in revitalizing the Adopt-a-Shoreline program, contacting all current participants to confirm their involvement, and updating the website with new inquiries.

5.4 Operations and Recreation

Sam Braegger praised the staff for their hard work and fast learning. He introduced the interns, highlighting their contributions to updating the website and managing data. He mentioned the board pocket guide, which contains essential resources for board members, and offered Utah Lake Authority logo lapel pins and hats to the board members. He then discussed the auditor's report, explaining the audit process under the Independent Entities Act and the board skills matrix form that members need to fill out. He highlighted various committees and workgroups, including the vegetation work group led by Addy Valdez and the planning work group, emphasizing their collaborative efforts. He mentioned the small grants program funding projects in Saratoga Springs, Vineyard, Santaquin, and the Paddle with Care event. He shared updates on the visitation analysis project, which involves installing visitation counters at 27 public access points to track usage and prioritize management. He also discussed the upcoming recreation access plan to inventory and manage lake access points and amenities for the next 5-10 years. He reported on the progress of the management plan, noting that

many short-term goals have been achieved, and some mid-term goals are already in progress. He mentioned efforts to secure grants, including Ms. Valdez's success with the WRI grant and ongoing grant writing discussions.

5.5 Annual State Auditor

Sam Braegger addressed the state auditor's report, explaining that there were four items needing improvement. He detailed actions taken to resolve issues, such as finding misplaced paperwork, ensuring proper separation of duties in financial reconciliations, and implementing a process for reviewing and signing timesheets.

Mark Johnson inquired if the time sheets were for hourly or salaried employees.

Sam Braegger confirmed that all staff are paid hourly and are required to track and submit their hours. He clarified an issue with posting meeting agendas and minutes. He acknowledged that they had failed to upload the approved meeting minutes for March 29, 2023. To prevent this from happening again, he and Ms. Valdez developed a simplified help sheet outlining the necessary steps and timelines for posting agendas and meeting minutes. He assured the board that they had addressed the exceptions noted by the auditors and implemented measures to avoid similar issues in the future. He invited any further questions and offered to provide additional information if needed. The State Auditor's Office had been helpful, and he looked forward to working with them on the next annual audit in the fall.

Vice-Chair Carolyn Lundberg praised the engagement of the public and stakeholders and commended Ms. Braegger for ensuring transparency and proper processes.

5.6 Executive Director Report

Luke Peterson expressed gratitude for the staff and their hard work. He discussed several requests for proposals (RFPs) to address the management plan, including one with a market research firm, Y2 Analytics, to understand public perception and usage of the lake through surveys, focus groups, and interviews. He announced a partnership with Harmon Brothers, known for their viral advertising, to create an advertising campaign to change public perception of Utah Lake. This campaign, coupled with market research, aimed to launch the next spring. He highlighted the collaboration with UVU on the Nature Center project, noting the federal funding request ranked as the first priority. He shared optimism about securing funding that would help support the Nature Center. Additionally, he mentioned a federal request to Congress to support recreation access improvements and planning, which was well-received among numerous applications.

Mark Johnson asked about the Nature Center funding.

Luke Peterson confirmed it would go to UVU, with the center potentially housing Utah Lake Authority offices. The funding details and potential need for state funding were still being worked out.

Ben Stireman inquired about the federal funding timeline.

Luke Peterson explained the process was delayed this year but remained hopeful for approval soon. He elaborated on the recreation access proposal, which included master planning for beaches and access improvements at various points.

6. GUEST PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS/AWARDS

6.1 Walkara Way Project Update

6.1.1 Landowner Update

6.1.2 FFSL Updates

Ben Stireman mentioned an important recent RFP for the Utah Lake study, which had been appropriated \$1.5 million in the last legislative session. The RFP, focused on water quality, invasive vegetation, carp removal, and re-establishing submerged aquatic vegetation, was put out last week and will close on June 25th. He emphasized that the study's objectives were aligned with the legislation's clear directives. He encouraged board members to recommend any qualified contractors who might be interested in submitting proposals before the June 25th deadline.

6.2 Open and Public Meetings Act Training

Paula Faerber provided training on the Open and Public Meetings Act. She emphasized the importance of proper notice, public attendance, transparency in transacting business, and maintaining good records. He highlighted recent legislative changes, including the updated definition of meetings and the new provision allowing entirely electronic meetings without an anchor location, provided proper notice is given. She explained the prohibition against predetermined actions, stating that board members cannot agree on an action outside a meeting in a concerted and deliberate way. She clarified that while discussions are allowed, any collaboration on voting should happen in an open meeting to ensure transparency. She also discussed the criteria for closing meetings, emphasizing that such sessions should be for specific purposes like discussing real estate purchases or the character of individuals. She outlined the requirements for closing a meeting, including a two-thirds vote, recording the session, and ensuring no action is taken in the closed meeting except to reopen it.

Mark Johnson and other board members asked questions about the nuances of the law, particularly regarding actions outside of meetings and the process for closing sessions. Paula clarified that while individual discussions are allowed, there should be no collaboration on predetermined actions.

Paula Faerber concluded by reminding the board of the importance of adhering to the Act, maintaining transparency, and consulting legal counsel if there are any questions or uncertainties about the process.

6.3 Utah Lake Wetlands Preserve

Mike Mills gave an update on the Utah Lake Wetlands Preserve, which consists of two units: the Goshen Unit and the Benjamin Unit. The preserve is managed as a wildlife refuge and was established as part of the Central Utah Project Completion Act of 1992. The Act aimed to mitigate environmental impacts by creating a large block of wildlife habitat on the southern shores of Utah Lake. The preserve includes approximately 7,500 acres of acquired land and 15,500 acres, including surrounding public land managed by other agencies. The Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission oversees the preserve, working in partnership with the state's Division of Wildlife Resources to manage and maintain the land. He mentioned that the management of the preserve will soon be transferred to the state of Utah following the completion of a comprehensive management plan and an environmental assessment. The preserve supports various recreational activities, including bird watching, duck hunting, and education programs for local students.

Mark Johnson asked how pricing is determined for acquiring wetlands. Mike explained that a federal appraisal process is used, involving comparable sales and negotiation with landowners. The average time from initial interest to completed purchase is about three years.

Ben Stireman inquired about water rights associated with the preserve.

Mike Mills stated that they have acquired some water rights and irrigation company shares, totaling about 750 acre-feet, but acknowledged that more water is always needed. He noted that managing water levels, particularly during low water years, can be challenging, especially in the Goshen Bay area.

Mark Johnson also asked about regulating activities such as ATV use on the preserve.

Mike Mills explained that they use fences and gates to control access and prevent motorized vehicles from entering. They provide designated walk-in access points and have not experienced significant issues with ATVs.

7. WORK SESSION

7.1 HB 335 and MOU Discussion

Luke Peterson addressed the board regarding HB 335, which had delayed their meeting as they sorted out its implications. He expressed relief that the issues had been resolved and explained that the primary impact of the bill was similar to their previous funding structure, with the addition of adopting beneficial accounting practices. The funding for their budget would now be managed by FFSL, and they would need to ensure compliance with certain accounting standards to continue receiving grants.

Ben Stireman elaborated on HB 335, explaining that it introduced new requirements for how state funds are issued and expended. He mentioned that the bill required 90% of the funding to be provided upfront but necessitated a detailed budget breakdown. This approach allows the Utah Lake Authority to place funds in an interest-bearing account, which is beneficial. One concern addressed was the prohibition against using the same state funds to match other state grants, ensuring funds are used appropriately for their specified purposes.

Ben Stireman and Luke Peterson noted that these changes bring more oversight and align with federal grant practices, ultimately improving stewardship of the funds.

7.2 Discussion for Expending Remaining Legislative Appropriation Funds With FFSL

Sam Braegger explained that the funds in question came from two one-time appropriations in fiscal years 2023 and 2024, referred to as Shoreline Enhancements and UIC Improvements. The total remaining funds amount to just under \$2.5 million. Sam outlined six proposed projects for these funds:

1. Visitation Analysis Project: Securing counter equipment for tracking lake visitation at 27 access points.
2. Mitigation and Conservation: Preserving \$2 million for acquiring land or other solutions for the mitigation bank, partnering with agencies like ACM Blue and the Mitigation Commission.
3. Lake-wide Signage Plan: Develop consistent signage for trails and access points in collaboration with various cities and agencies, with an allocation of \$130,000.
4. Recreation Access Plan: Implementing a comprehensive plan for lake access and amenities.
5. Fencing Repairs: Repairing and replacing fences at specific access points, including Milepost 13, Mulberry Beach, Swede Lane, and Mill Race.
6. PCB Testing: Partnering with the Division of Water Quality to update the PCB advisory on carp and channel catfish, leveraging carp removal efforts for necessary sampling.

Vice-Chair Carolyn Lundberg and other board members expressed support, particularly for the signage plan, which aims to create a unified and easily recognizable branding for lake access points.

Sam Braegger clarified that the \$130,000 allocated for the signage plan would primarily cover the plan's development, including branding and guidelines. Additional funding would be pursued later for the actual production and installation of new signs as needed, especially at access points currently lacking proper signage or requiring replacements.

8. PRESENTATION OF FINAL FY2025 BUDGET

8.1 Final budget presentation and discussion

Mark Johnson motioned to open public comment. Lisa Shepherd seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Luke Peterson presented the proposed budget, noting changes since the initial draft. He emphasized the inclusion of more detailed line items for revenue and expenses to enhance transparency and facilitate better management of grants and additional funding sources. Significant updates included:

- Revenue Items: Introduction of sales tax income and breaking down other income sources more precisely.
- Expense Updates: Adjustments to benefits due to a better understanding of costs, increased allocations for mileage, office supplies, travel, and food due to a larger staff, and adjustments to insurance and consulting services costs.
- Specific Projects: Increase in funding for the Utah Lake Festival and symposium, expansion of school outreach programs, and changes to the small grants program's funding schedule.

Mark Johnson asked for clarification about the expense budget, ensuring it represented the maximum allowable spending and inquiring about the process if expenses were to exceed the budget.

Luke Peterson confirmed that the budget represented the maximum, and any need to go over would require board approval. He also explained that accounting for grants might necessitate a budget amendment in the future.

Marty Larson motioned to close public comment. Mark Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

9. ACTION ITEMS

9.1 Approve Final Budget for FY2025

Chris Carn motioned to approve the proposed FY2025 budget as stated on the agenda. Lisa Shepherd seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

10. CLOSED SESSION

11. ADJOURNMENT

Marty Larson motioned to adjourn. LaNae Millett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Vice Chair Carolyn Lundberg adjourned the meeting.