



# Utah Transit Authority

## Board of Trustees

### MEETING MINUTES - Draft

669 West 200 South  
Salt Lake City, UT 84101

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Wednesday, September 20, 2023

12:30 PM

FrontLines Headquarters

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#### Budget Work Session

**Present:** Chair Carlton Christensen  
Trustee Beth Holbrook  
Trustee Jeff Acerson

Also attending were UTA staff members.

#### 1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Chair Carlton Christensen welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order at 12:34 p.m.

#### 2. Safety First Minute

Mike Hurst, UTA Director of Internal Audit, delivered a brief safety message.

#### 3. Discussion Items

##### a. Board of Trustees Office 2024 Budget

Chair Christensen was joined by Annette Royle, UTA Director of Board Governance; Shule Bishop, UTA Director of Government Relations; and Mr. Hurst.

Ms. Royle, Mr. Bishop, and Mr. Hurst reviewed information for their respective departments. Presentations began with a review of 2023 commitments completed and commitments in process, followed by information on 2024 base budget services and an analysis of each department (strengths, needs, opportunities, and challenges).

The directors spoke about strategic alignment activities, and outlined the proposed 2024 board office operating budget, including expenses by department and category. They concluded by detailing the 2024 board office operating budget changes summary, budgeted full-time equivalents (FTEs), and 2024 capital investments.

Discussion ensued. Questions on the need for a staff increase in government relations, equal employment opportunity (EEO) investigations, board office budget totals, and accounting for wages were posed by the board and answered by staff.

Trustees recommended communicating key strategic milestones through agencywide coordinated messaging.

Jay Fox, UTA Executive Director, requested an opportunity to review the government relations strategic plan with the executive team.

Chair Christensen called for a recess at 1:26 p.m. to address a technical issue.

The meeting reconvened at 1:31 p.m.

**b. 2024 Budget Work Session Follow Up**

Mr. Fox was joined by Viola Miller, UTA Chief Financial Officer; Brad Armstrong, UTA Director of Budget & Financial Strategy; Troy Bingham, UTA Comptroller; David Wilkins, Assistant Attorney General; Nichol Bourdeaux, UTA Chief Planning & Engagement Officer; Paul Drake, UTA Director of Real Estate & Transit-Oriented Development; and Monica Howe, UTA Fares Director.

Staff addressed several questions raised during the previous 2023 budget work sessions on topics including:

- Fuel hedging
- Distinction between FTEs and headcount
- 2023 carryforward in the 2024 operating budget
- Legal expenditure details
- Operations changes in fuel expense
- Transit-oriented development (TOD) working capital
- Real estate utility expense
- Cash payments for fares
- Cash fare strategy
- Mobile app fees
- Fare collection costs

Discussion ensued. Several questions were posed by the board and answered by staff. Topics of inquiry included:

- Alternative ways to approach fuel hedging
- Accounting for FTEs
- Number of part-time employees
- Tort litigation costs
- External legal counsel budget projection
- Industry approach to fuel cost tracking
- TOD revenue projections
- Farebox strategy and associated timeline
- Processing costs for cash fares compared to other fare media
- Ticket vending machine (TVM) capacity
- Fare payment interchange fee rates

Mr. Armstrong committed to provide the board with more information on the number of part-time employees and Ms. Howe committed to provide the board with more information on fare payment interchange fee rates.

The trustees recommended formulating a strategy for fares, including cash fares, and Chair Christensen requested regular updates on headcount numbers.

Chair Christensen called for a recess at 2:16 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 2:22 p.m.

#### **2024 Alignment of Five-Year Service Plan to Operational and People Resources**

Mr. Fox was joined by Cheryl Beveridge, UTA Chief Operating Officer; Kim Shanklin, UTA Chief People Officer; Mary DeLoretto, UTA Chief Advisor to the Executive Director; Ms. Miller; and Ms. Bourdeaux.

Ms. Bourdeaux reviewed the 2023-2027 UTA Service Plan, changes to service plan phasing, and service planning and resource coordination efforts.

Ms. Beveridge and Ms. Shanklin outlined recruitment, training, and first-year “go to work” efforts as they relate to service implementation. They spoke about constraints, active strategies, and ideas under consideration in each area. Ms. Beveridge highlighted improvements to operator working conditions, and Ms. Shanklin shared data on employee retirement and voluntary turnover.

Discussion ensued. Several questions were posed by the board and answered by staff. Topics of inquiry included:

- Service restoration prioritization
- Public feedback on routes in south Utah County
- Hiring practices (i.e., hiring for the agency versus a business unit)
- Recruitment versus retention efforts and associated efficiencies
- Ensuring a good fit for job candidates
- Vehicle spare ratios that limit training opportunities
- Rail training opportunities (rail yard or unused sections of track)
- Centralizing core training
- Impacts of business unit size on hiring and retention
- Establishing connections and building commitment with new hires
- Operator restroom project status and related collective bargaining agreement requirements
- Retirement volume and voluntary turnover rates across the transit industry
- 2022 voluntary turnover rates
- Voluntary turnover targets
- Post-retirement rehiring requirements
- Definition of “part-time” employment

Discussion ensued, during which the board requested an update on the operator restroom project and data on the impacts of employee working condition improvements. Chair Christensen also asked that data on employee turnover be included in the monthly financial update in board meetings, and Trustee Acerson suggested staff establish a process to capture knowledge from retiring employees.

Mr. Fox recommended the tentative budget reflect an increase of \$100,000 to the Bayard contract for recruitment services (\$200,000 total) and funding for a bus operator training simulator.

#### **Operator Safety Efforts**

Mr. Fox was joined by Ms. Miller, Ms. Beveridge, Ms. Shanklin, and Ms. Bourdeaux.

Ms. Beveridge reported on safety equipment used on buses, including safety barriers.

Mr. Fox then spoke about employee care efforts, system coverage (i.e., resource assignments), and training as they relate to operator safety. He outlined processes/resources currently in place as well as measures needed in the future.

Ms. Miller noted a discussion with the board on 5310 grants will be scheduled at another time.

Discussion ensued and included a conversation on fleet usage limitations caused by assigning buses with operators protective barriers to specific routes.

The board requested staff gather information from AC Transit on how the video equipment it installed has reduced operator assaults. They also requested information on female police officer recruitment efforts.

#### **4. Other Business**

- a. Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 27th, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

#### **5. Adjourn**

A motion was made by Trustee Holbrook, and seconded by Trustee Acerson, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried by a unanimous vote and the meeting adjourned at 4:04 p.m.

Transcribed by Cathie Griffiths  
Executive Assistant to the Board Chair  
Utah Transit Authority

This document is not intended to serve as a full transcript as additional discussion may have taken place; please refer to the meeting materials or audio located at <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/sitemap/notice/859225.html> for entire content. Meeting materials are also accessible at <https://rideuta.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

This document along with the digital recording constitute the official minutes of this meeting.

Approved Date:

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Carlton J. Christensen  
Chair, Board of Trustees