

Regular Meeting

Moab Tourism Advisory Board (MTAB)

Held at Grand County, Utah Commission Chambers
125 E. Center
Moab, Utah 84532

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T08_tHDDABw

MINUTES

April 14, 2026 | 3:00 p.m.

**** Time stamps (HH:MM:SS) correspond to the video****

Regular Meeting

Members in attendance: Cora Phillips (Chamber of Commerce), Jason Taylor (City of Moab), Brian Martinez (County Commission), Alex Borichevsky, Felicia Baty, Rebecca Monceaux, Wendell Williams (Chair), Howard Trenholme, Sharon Kienzle

Members in attendance remotely: Lori McFarland (Vice Chair)

Non-members in attendance: Mick Soleta (MOT), Ali Harford (MOT), Bega Metzner (MOT)

Non-members in attendance remotely: Jessica Kunzer-Pearson (Camp4/Tourist), Tori Bernard (Madden)

Opening Items

Call to Order (00:03:38)

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- Howard disclosed that he works for the Canyon Spirit
- Lori disclosed that the Outside x Jeep partnership media buy worked with High Point Hummer

Citizens to be Heard (00:05:51)

- No citizens to be heard

Discussion and Action Items

1. Presentation from Margot Zen, Lead Guest Experience at Canyon Spirit/Rocky Mountaineer (00:06:04)

- Margot Zen introduced the board to the work that the Canyon Spirit (formerly the Rocky Mountaineer) is doing in this area, including the new route that links Moab to Salt Lake City. The train operates April through November, and has been operating for five seasons. The train is aiming to grow to 25,000 guests per year in the next two years.
- Board members expressed their appreciation for the train bringing visitors to the community.

2. Approval of minutes: March 10, 2026 meeting (00:27:39)

- Cora motioned to approve the minutes, Alex seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Introduction to newest member of MTAB, Felicia Baty (00:28:17)

- Felicia Baty works for VistaHost, a hotel management company that oversees four properties in Moab. Felicia works as a sales manager.
- Board members asked about hotel trends and pricing. Felicia said that hotel revenue is trending upward in 2026. She also explained that hotel managers work to create demand through pricing changes every day. She explained the “looking” and the “booking” windows that travelers follow when planning trips, and how hotels work to capture visitors.

4. Introduction to and information from new Director, Moab Office of Tourism, Michael Soleta (00:33:52)

- Mick Soleta previously worked in the office as an assistant marketing director.
- Board members expressed their excitement over Mick’s new position. Mick said in his new role, he said he sees the office focusing on seven functions: marketing, data, community relations, international/global markets, strategy, administrative, and film. Marketing is paid, earned, owned, and shared.
- Sharon asked about adding more staff; Mick said he’s looking at a long term plan for the office to make it sustainable for the long run.

5. Special Events Marketing Grant - Review subcommittee for round 2. Applications open May 1. (00:40:13)

- Board members discussed Round 1 of the grant, including how to make guidelines clear that only advertising costs are eligible for the grant and that applicants need to show their entire marketing budgets. Jason and Cora also discussed their thinking behind how they scored applications from Round 1. Board members emphasized again that only advertising costs, not marketing costs, are eligible for grant funds.
- Sharon, Wendell, and Alex volunteered to review grant applications for Round 2.
- Howard emphasized that extra funds in the budget not allocated for the grant be used for other marketing purposes.
- Howard motioned to approve a subcommittee of Sharon, Wendell, and Alex. Jason seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Discuss and Review Mitigation Grant (00:55:04)

- Brian reminded the board that recent TRT law changes developed an “Outdoor Mitigation Grant,” funded by TRT. Grand County is eligible to apply for the grant; since it is funded by TRT, Brian requested that the board be involved in the county’s application. The county is looking to apply for funds for mitigation costs including search and rescue and roads.
- He asked that the board put together a meeting in July to discuss the grant.

7. Branding Overview (01:04:41)

- Wendell emphasized that the branding project with Camp4/Tourist goes far beyond creating a new logo; it encompasses the entirety of MOT’s voice.
- Mick went through what’s been done so far, noting that Phase 1 (research) is completed, and Phase 2 (visual identity and brand narratives) kicked off in February. In March, the team completed a messaging guide: the messaging centers around “immediate awe and unfolding depth,” the idea that Moab is impressive when you first see it, but holds so much more. Phase 2 includes logo, photography, and more brand messaging. Phase 3 will begin once Phase 2 finished.

8. TRT/Sales Tax/TRCCA Review (01:12:32)

- The Grand County Clerk/Auditor prepared data reports for the MTAB.
- Wendell noted that 2025 numbers have an “uptick” in monthly sales and use tax revenues after October 2025.
- Board members pointed out that tax data reflects collections from two months prior: numbers paid in March reflect taxes collected in January. Board members discussed how to make the data standardized and easier to digest.

9. Board Member Reports (01:18:19)

- Jason said that the city is in budget season: the city is still focusing on beautification, particularly around downtown Moab.
- Cora mentioned the Chamber’s upcoming golf tournament, and is excited to work with the Office of Energy Development. Their partnership will include events about nuclear energy.
- Rebecca said the Red Cliffs Lodge renovation is officially completed, and she’s excited for the remainder of the year.
- Wendell said March was a busy month, especially during Easter Jeep Safari. He also mentioned events for Child Abuse Prevention Month.
- Howard said that the airport board asked for funds for signage at the airport. He also spoke to the decision of the airport board and commission to contract essential air services with Skywest. He encouraged creating a marketing plan for the flights that could start in the fall; Skywest offers \$25,000 in matched marketing dollars to airports each year. He also said the board could think bigger than essential air service. He added that he’s excited about the Canyon Spirit, and feels optimistic about the future.
- Felicia said that she’s also optimistic about the future with spring numbers, though she’s working to plan for a slight summer dip.

- Alex said his spring business has been up, which he attributes in part to a low-snow ski year. He's planning for summer numbers to dip, but believes fall will be up again. He also mentioned that the golf course could be a tourism asset: it's a long-lived and beautiful course.
- Sharon said MIC visitation is steady, and said the center has longer hours for springtime. Arches and Canyonlands both experienced surges in visitation. She also mentioned that the MIC can sell national park passes. She detailed a few MIC events, including a movie night and its annual lecture series.
- Brian said he's working on understanding the reserve account, and how many dollars are earmarked for mitigation versus recreation, film, and convention. He was also interviewed as a Moab expert in a few pieces of ebiking media, some that Campstories pitched. He said the proposed changes to restaurant taxes were defeated, and he said the Board should look at protecting the tax as it is through bonding. He also praised the branding project and "Who is Moab" videos.
- Lori said she was excited about the springtime surge in visitation, and places some of the success with the MOT's and the state's advertising efforts. She also mentioned a new offroading Youtube channel that's using Moab as a backdrop.