

Board Meeting Special Session –October 2022

Thursday, October 13, 2022 – 5:30 PM

Location: Virtual ([Link to Video](#))

Minutes

In Attendance

Voting Members:

Randy Atkin, Mike Christensen, Chris Stout, John Pearson

Excused Voting Members:

Austin Whitehead

Non-Voting Members:

Curtis Haring

Meeting Called to Order at 5:30 PM

Agenda Items Discussed

Executive Director activities report/Membership update – Curtis Haring

Curtis presented his updates to the board over the previous two months (due to a lack of quorum, no official meeting was held in September).

Curtis noted that in the past two months he had published the “Bikes on Transit” survey, that UTRU was featured by the Salt Lake Tribune and Fox 13, that he created a UTRU TikTok account (RideUTRU) and encouraged people to start filming their experiences, published the quarterly newsletter, and that he presented the advocacy training to UTA and that they were excited.

On that note, UTA presented the idea to Curtis that he start reaching out to cities and counties to help get additional resources so that it doesn't look like UTA is just using us as a tool. At the time of the meeting, he had not had the opportunity to reach out as of the time of the meeting due to planning around the annual convention. Chris asked if the funding Curtis is going after is for UTRU on the whole, which it is not – though Curtis did note that the budget for the advocacy training did include a general “Administration” line item in the budget.

Curtis has also started to reach out to banks and credit unions in an attempt to take advantage of community resource grants and is hoping to bring in more grants through that sourceⁱ.

Mike suggested that we talk to Intermountain Health Care and the University of Utah medical programⁱⁱ.

Both Curtis and Mike attended the Wasatch Front Regional Council's introductory Citizen Advocacy group. Curtis also noted that he had some contact with people in the Ogden area that seemed interested in learning more about UTRU and was going to continue working those contacts.

Curtis met with Michelle Ipson, who is a graduate student at the University of Utah. She has a grad project that wants to target a specific organization that is involved in improving air quality and work to find ways to increase membership numbers. They are currently still trying to work out the details and Curtis will remain in communicationⁱⁱⁱ.

Upcoming events include the upcoming annual convention, attempting to schedule a meeting with Rod Dunn (President of ATU)^{iv}, and Ellen Burrell^v, who is a Councilwoman for Cottonwood Heights and is interested in having UTRU to present to cities and counties about transit.

Post convention, Curtis will start to put together the "Women on Transit" survey^{vi}.

Membership numbers: We had 161 new Twitter followers (currently at 488) in the previous two months; 1 TikTok follower (brand new and is Curtis); 33 new members sign up through the website (108 members); 14 people who wish to receive the newsletter but don't consider themselves members; and 11 people pay dues over the past year.

Chris gave a financial updated and noted that UTRU was short in order to pay Curtis, so Chris added an additional \$2,000 into the account. Chris notes that donations are 100% tax deductible. He wants to make sure we start looking at increasing membership in order to support Curtis and the work he is doing. The goal is to have 1,200 people donate \$5, it would cover Curtis part-time for a year.

Curtis also noted that he started a new job that will cause him to be working evenings. Curtis plans to dedicated mornings to working on UTRU, so there should be no change in his ability to perform, however it will mean that a new meeting time and date will need to be figured out once the new board is elected^{vii}.

John noted that he had some funds available to donate and plans to do so.

John also was planning to hear back from the UCAIR grant in October or November, and he noted that \$2,000 were put into the grant specifically set aside from UTRU. Curtis added that the donations from members are great, but that the majority of funding is going to be coming from high-dollar donors.

October Annual Meeting Discussion – Curtis Haring

Curtis started off by noting that the annual convention will be taking place in two days on Saturday, October 15. Everyone on the call had already nominated themselves to be on the board for the following year, with the exception of Chris, who has a permanent seat. Two individuals outside of the board also applied and, presuming they will be elected, be sitting on the board in November.

Curtis asked Chris to provide a brief history of UTRU while Curtis is figuring out balloting. Mike would be asked to do it too, however, because he is running, we would pass him up. That being said, everyone running would have 2 minutes to present.

Chris noted that in our bylaws, we stagger the elections so that there is always at least three people who have already served a year. Because we are “restarting” the board, we need to assign some individuals to be on a 1-year term and some to be on a 2-year term.

Curtis pointed out that Mike, Randy, and John are starting their second term and Randy noted that, perhaps, they didn’t need to run at all. Curtis countered that, because they were appointed and not elected, they do need to have a vote. With this in mind, Randy suggested that we do some elections on 1-year terms on Saturday and some on 2; Chris suggested that we do rank-choice voting with the top vote getters serving 2-year terms with the top 4 serving 2-years. Curtis closed on this by stating that this plan wasn’t in the rules, but that a floor amendment should handle this.

Voting will take place with a Google Doc and that the check to make sure that voting is valid is that the ballot will be sent to the email address the person used to pay their dues through PayPal and that, on the ballot itself, a person manually enters their email address. So a person would have to gain access to a person’s email address in order to “steal” a vote. Curtis went on to explain how the ranked choice voting will work with Google Docs and that voting will be open for about 15 minutes and then close. Curtis will then tally votes and announce them while Chris is speaking.

John asked as part of the general discussion about the possibility of a “takeover” by UTA management and if there are any safeguards against it. Chris noted that there will always be himself and a person appointed by him to help combat this, along with the fact that we are able, in our bylaws to determine who is and is not a member.

Open Forum - All

Randy asked about what response we have related to cuts related to the December cuts and wonders how it might relate to the gondola issue. Curtis noted that the official statement in the Tribune that it wasn’t surprising but was disappointing; he also noted that the writing has been on the wall as far as those cuts as UTA has been eliminating individual trips due to a lack of operators for the past six months.

Curtis feels that we need to use the cuts as a way to advocate for transit and show the consequences of an underfunded system.

Curtis notes that the gondola is a UDOT decision, not a UTA one and that UTA probably would have preferred buses as they can be much more easily integrated into the current system.

Randy notes that the ski buses were the only routes that were consistently near capacity were the ski routes and that making those cuts were a poor decision on UTA's part. Chris noted that the starting wages for drivers is \$21/hr. and tops out at \$26/hr., and that this causes real problems for not only driver recruitment, but also driver retention; this speaks to the fact that UTA needs to have more resources allocated.

Chris is concerned that the cut routes will allow for higher pay for drivers, but that it will prevent the ability to expand service to areas that previously had higher frequency service. Chris also recognizes that we need to continue to build the organization in order to expand our ability to advocate for transit and that we are not there yet.

Motion to Adjourn

*Chris motions to Adjourn
John seconds motion
Motion passes: 4-0 (Austin Absent)*

Action Items

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- ⁱ Curtis to continue reaching out to banks and credit unions for community resource grants.
 - ⁱⁱ Curtis to investigate grants from Intermountain Health Care and the University of Utah hospital network. John also requested a reminder from Curtis to contact people on the board at the U, specifically Harriot Hopp.
 - ⁱⁱⁱ Curtis to follow up with Ally Ipson in November regarding grad project.
 - ^{iv} Curtis to schedule meeting with Rod Dunn
 - ^v Curtis to schedule meeting with Ellen Burrell
 - ^{vi} Curtis to prepare draft Women on Transit Survey
 - ^{vii} Curtis to set new Board time/date meeting schedule post-convention