

**MINUTES OF THE  
UTAH STATE MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL MEETING  
November 3, 2025, 12:00 Noon  
Utah Retirement Office  
Hybrid Meeting**

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**Council Members Participating in Person:**

Mr. Marty Peterson, Chair, Professional Firefighters of Utah  
Mr. Rod Hurd, Vice Chair, Utah Education Association  
Mr. JJ Allen, Utah League of Cities and Towns  
Ms. Heather Anderson, Utah Association of Special Service Districts  
Ms. Sheri Dearden, Utah Association of Counties  
Mr. Larry Millward, Utah Retired School Employees' Association  
Ms. Lisa Nance, Utah Public Employees' Association  
Ms. Sheri Nelson, Utah Association of Retired Public Employees  
Mr. Zane Woolstenhulme, Utah Association of School Business Officials

**Council Members Participating via Video Conferencing:**

Ms. Anna Lewin, Utah Education Association  
Judge Kara Pettit, Utah Judicial Council  
Mr. Brandon Wolf, Utah School Employees' Association

**Excused:** Ms. Cinda Allen, Utah Education Association  
Mr. Scott Wilberger, Utah Peace Officers' Association

**Staff Participating in Person:**

Mr. Ryan Ashcraft, Retirement Planning Director  
Mr. Kory Cox, Director of Legislative & Government Affairs  
Ms. Liza Eves, Senior Associate General Counsel  
Mr. James Hammer, Employer Services Director  
Mr. Dee Larsen, General Counsel  
Ms. Stacie Petersen, Executive Assistant  
Mr. Kendall Rima, Managing Director – Retirement  
Mr. Dustin Seely, Retirement Director

**Guests Participating via Video Conferencing:**

Ms. Debra Valentine, State Division of Human Resource Management  
Mr. Jason Putman, Professional Firefighters of Utah

**Guests Participating in Person:**

Mr. Donavan Minutes, Professional Firefighters of Utah

**Welcome**

Chair Marty Peterson called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m. and welcomed Council members, staff, and guests.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Chair Marty Peterson asked for approval of the October 6, 2025, Membership Council Meeting minutes.

**ACTION:** Mr. Larry Millward moved, seconded by Ms. Heather Anderson, to approve the minutes of the October 6, 2025, Membership Council Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Report from Member Organizations**

Chair Marty Peterson asked the Council members to provide a report from their organizations. He stated the cancer screening center for firefighters is open. On a national level, upcoming legislation may require Worker's Comp to settle cases within one year or automatically rule in favor of the employee. Additionally, there is concern over legislation removing governmental immunity for firefighters working in EMS roles, which is a major concern for those across the state.

Mr. Zane Woolstenhulme reported the business administrators discussed if USBA and USSA should be part of the URS Membership Council, as it was rumored that they had made such a request. Mr. Dee Larsen stated he would provide him with more information during the legislative update that answers that question.

Ms. Heather Anderson stated that Mr. Kory Cox will be presenting at their upcoming annual conference.

Mr. Larry Millward asked how he should answer his constituents' question regarding the "Social Security windfall" which refers to the Windfall Elimination Provision. Mr. Dee Larsen directed him to instruct them to contact the Social Security Administration directly about their Social Security benefits as administration of those benefits does not fall within URS purview.

Mr. JJ Allen reminded all that tomorrow is Election Day. He stated about 75% of the Utah League of Cities and Towns attention is still on housing with the state just releasing their housing plan. The remainder of their attention is on property taxes.

Ms. Anna Lewin said they are anxiously awaiting to see what comes out of the legislative session. Local legislators will attend a local November UEA meeting to give constituents an opportunity to share their priorities and concerns directly. Her district is looking at moving to a 4-day school week to save money, as multiple other ways to raise money have failed.

There were no other legislative reports from the Council Members.

## **2026 Legislation Preview**

Mr. Dee Larsen and Mr. Kory Cox provided an update on the 2026 Legislative Session. The Retirement and Independent Entities Interim Committee has wrapped up its meetings and approved the annual URS bill with one addition: it is proposed that school boards,

superintendents, and a State DHRM representative will join the Membership Council, increasing its size to 18. The definition of bona fide termination will also be clarified—though not changed—to reinforce that individuals must stop working to meet the statutory retirement requirement.

A discussion was held regarding the Tier 2 retirement plan, focusing on the hybrid vs. 401(k) options. New hires have one year to make a one-time, irrevocable choice, or they default into the hybrid plan. URS occasionally receives requests to switch plans after the deadline, which is not allowed by statute. Common concerns include the required employee contribution for the hybrid plan and the potential for higher returns with a 401(k). There are early legislative discussions about possibly making the 401(k) only plan the default option.

Mr. Cox said a couple of groups are looking at moving dispatchers and employees of the State Fire Marshal's Office from the Public Employees' Systems to the Firefighters' Systems.

### **Introduction to the Retirement Benefits Department**

Mr. Dustin Seely provided an overview of the Retirement Benefits Department, including providing detailed responsibilities of the following subdepartments:

- Customer Service
- Retirement Counselors
- Retirement Benefit Processors
- Survivor Benefit Processors

### **Other Business**

Mr. Marty Peterson asked council members attending virtually if they would like their lunch reimbursed by URS, as lunch is provided as a courtesy for attending in person. He asked that they reach out to him or Mr. Kory Cox with their thoughts.

### **Adjournment**

**ACTION:** Mr. Larry Millward moved, seconded by Mr. Rod Hurd, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

The next Membership Council Meeting will be on December 1, 2025, at 12 noon. This will be a hybrid meeting.