

Wind River Visitors Council (WRVC) Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 20, 2025
Headwaters Arts and Conference Center, Dubois

PRESENT: Anne Even – Lander; Dave Furman – Dubois; Charene Herrera – County; Krista Lobera – Lander; Suzanne Osegueda – Dubois; Helen Gordon – Hudson; Jay Merritt – Shoshoni; Erika Yarber – County (arrived 10:07 a.m. via Zoom)

ABSENT: Hal Herron – Riverton; Bryce House – Riverton

WRVC STAFF: Helen Wilson, Alex Watts, Ruby Ratliff

GUESTS: Budd Betts – Dubois

CALL TO ORDER: Board President Krista Lobera called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. A quorum was present.

REVIEW AND APPROVE AGENDA: Helen Gordon moved to approve the Agenda. Anne Even seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

SWEARING IN OF NEW BOARD MEMBER, JAY MERRITT (SHOSHONI): Jay Merritt took the Oath of Office and was welcomed as a Wind River Visitors Council Board Member.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 25, 2025 MINUTES: Helen Gordon moved to approve the September 25, 2025 minutes. Suzanne Osegueda seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 3, 2025 MINUTES: Anne Even moved to approve the October 3, 2025 minutes. Charene Herrera seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Helen Gordon presented the Treasurer's Report.

Suzanne Osegueda moved to approve the Financial Report. Dave Furman seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Wayfinding Signage: Dubois, Hudson, Lander, Riverton, Shoshoni

Helen Wilson shared updates on the regional wayfinding signage project. She

presented photos of completed signage installations in Dubois, Lander and Riverton and noted that a strategic plan for Hudson and Shoshoni are underway.

Denver International Airport

Helen reported that the new Wind River Country campaign is currently displayed in Denver International Airport. She noted that the advertisement is receiving positive engagement and visibility.

Website Rebuild

Helen provided an update on the website rebuild. Work is in progress on design, structure and content development, with the project continuing on schedule.

Wind River Country Heritage Quest: A Digital Discovery

Helen shared progress on the Heritage Quest audio tour. She also presented the stickers, magnifying glasses and water bottles that will accompany the project.

Semiquincentennial Webpage

Helen highlighted the semiquincentennial webpage, which includes a countdown and related content to support the 250th anniversary of the United States.

4th of July Influencers

Helen reported that two influencers will be brought in for July 4, 2026, as part of the semiquincentennial marketing efforts. Planning for their itineraries is underway.

1838 Rendezvous Site

Helen shared updates on efforts to improve the visitor experience at the 1838 Rendezvous Site. She discussed coordination with Riverton's leadership to address cleanup and visitor-readiness needs.

Podcast

Helen talked about the new "Stories in the Shadows" haunted history walking tour podcast in Lander, as well as upcoming podcasts, including a two-part "Pushroot Valley Harvest" podcast which will air in November and December.

Fall Hospitality & Tourism Summit

Helen reported that the Fall Hospitality & Tourism Summit had strong attendance by both staff and board members. She noted positive feedback from participants about the sold out event.

Wyoming Governor's Hospitality & Tourism Convention

Helen shared that she will attend the Wyoming Governor's Hospitality & Tourism Convention along with any new Board Members who are able to attend.

Board Leadership Symposium

Helen reported that she, Helen Gordon and Krista Lobera will attend the Board Leadership Symposium.

Audit

Helen provided a brief update on the audit, noting that the process is ongoing and the final report has not yet been received.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (PERSONNEL): Helen Gordon moved to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters at 10:37 a.m. Dave Furman seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

At 10:56 a.m. the regular session resumed.

After returning to regular session, the Board took action regarding the Executive Director position title. The Board voted to change Helen Wilson's title from Executive Director to Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to align with industry standards and to accurately reflect the scope of the position. Dave Furman moved to approve the title change. Helen Gordon seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Helen Gordon moved to approve a five-percent salary increase for Helen Wilson, as budgeted. Charene Herrera seconded. The Board discussed the motion. During the discussion, Dave Furman proposed creating a subcommittee to ensure that the Board is aligning the CEO's salary with industry standards. Dave Furman, Helen Gordon and Erika Yarber volunteered to serve on the subcommittee. Krista Lobera reminded the Board that there was a motion and a second on the floor. The motion for the salary increase carried unanimously.

Dave Furman then moved to form a human resources subcommittee consisting of himself, Helen Gordon and Erika Yarber to develop a rubric for the CEO salary. Suzanne Osegueda seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

WYOMING OFFICE OF TOURISM—BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Helen Wilson informed the Board that an at-large seat on the Wyoming Office of Tourism Board of Directors will be opening. She noted that she previously applied for a position two years ago, though a hotelier from Teton County was ultimately selected. Helen introduced Budd Betts, an attending member of the public, who currently holds the at-large position but will term

out at the end of the year. She requested the Board's support and welcomed recommendations.

Budd Betts stated that he would be happy to submit Helen's name to the Wyoming Office of Tourism subcommittee responsible for compiling candidate recommendations. Krista Lobera volunteered to draft a letter of support from the Wind River Visitors Council, and Erika Yarber volunteered to assist in securing letters of support from the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes.

JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT AMENDMENT: Helen Wilson presented a memorandum prepared by legal counsel, along with a 1993 Attorney General opinion and W.S. 39-15-211.

Helen explained that there had been misunderstandings among some municipalities. She reported that she spoke at the Riverton City Council and Shoshoni Town Council meetings and met with Mayor Oler to clarify what the WRVC is trying to accomplish and answer questions. She reiterated that the intent of the amendment is solely to ensure that the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) complies with the Uniform Municipal Fiscal Procedures Act, which the WRVC is required to follow under state statute. The Board discussed that the WRVC must meet the same fiscal accountability and audit standards as other government entities and that aligning the JPA with state law will support transparent, consistent and legally compliant operations.

Helen referenced the 1993 Attorney General opinion, reading the statement: "a municipality's input as to the specific amount expended is limited to its representation on the joint powers board." She noted that this opinion provides long-standing guidance on the Board's role in budget oversight. She also read from W.S. 39-15-211(a)(ii)(B)(I): "If the amount is collected under a tax imposed countywide, expenditures of this amount shall be made in accordance with the Municipal Fiscal Procedures Act by a joint powers board."

The Board discussed that the proposed amendment is intended to clarify and formalize these statutory requirements, ensuring that the WRVC administers lodging tax revenues in a manner that is fully compliant, transparent and consistent with state law and best practices.

Anne Even suggested that conversations with legal counsel occur one-on-one with the members of the JPA so that specific questions can be addressed. Krista Lobera volunteered to reach out to the WRVC's attorneys to request that these meetings are scheduled.

TAD REPORTS—FOLLOW UP: Helen Wilson provided an update on the TAD program and reported that the WRVC continues to encounter challenges related to consistency, process and oversight. She noted that the WRVC is responsible for ensuring that all TAD expenditures comply with state statute and align with the purpose of the TAD program, and that the current system needs clearer structure to support that responsibility.

Helen explained that there have been inconsistencies in how municipalities administer their TAD programs, including instances where required application forms were not used. She also noted that questions have arisen regarding whether certain expenditures meet TAD eligibility requirements. Helen presented an update on expenditures in question within the Dubois TAD report and emphasized that the WRVC must be able to verify that all TAD funds are spent appropriately and in accordance with statute.

Helen discussed options for improving the process, including issuing checks directly to applicants after projects are reviewed by local advisory committees, or establishing formal memoranda of understanding with municipalities to ensure that the WRVC can adequately document and oversee all TAD expenditures. She emphasized that the WRVC is responsible to taxpayers for the proper use of these funds and that a more consistent and transparent system is needed.

To address these issues, Helen recommended forming a subcommittee. Krista Lobera, Suzanne Osegueda, Dave Furman and Anne Even volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no comments from the public.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Board, Helen Gordon moved to adjourn the meeting. Dave Furman seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.