

Officer Signature Aurora RosasDate 12-18-2025

## BEAR RIVER HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL 2025-2026 Meeting Minutes

<b>Date:</b> Thursday, November 20, 2025	<b>Start Time:</b> 8:30PM <b>End Time:</b> 9:25PM	<b>Location:</b> Dialpad Meetings: 1-888-602-7505	
2025-2026 Policy Council Members' Attendance		YES	NO
	Brigham Representative		
David Lengenfelder*	Tremonton Representative	X	
	Hyde Park Representative		
Kalista Leishman*	Logan Representative	X	
Jessica Crook* (Treasurer & UT HSAC)	Hyrum Representative	X	
Aurora Rosas* (Vice Chair)	Smithfield Representative	X	
Karli Leonardi* (Secretary & ID HSAC)	Malad Representative	X	
Annika Knorr*	Paris Representative		X
Kristin Fellows*	Preston Representative	X	
Yasmeen Ayala*	Nest/Koop Representative		X
Sharandy Appiah*	Fishpond Representative	X	
Cindi Hill	Board Representative	X	
	Community Representative		

### \*Trained & Seated Policy Council Members

Members needed for a Quorum: 5	
Number of Voting Members who attended the meeting: 7	Number of Non-Voting Members who attended the meeting (including the Policy Council Officer conducting the meeting): 1
Do we have a Quorum? YES	
<p>Meeting Called to Order By: Aurora Rosas (Policy Council Vice Chairperson)  Meeting Facilitated By: Terrah Smith (Administrative Assistant)  Additional Staff in Attendance: Sarah Thurgood (Executive Director), Kristie Curtis (Family Services Coordinator), Steph Wood (Centerbased Coordinator), Cherie Pierce (Health &amp; Wellness Manager)</p>	

### 1. Vote to approve the termination of an employee – Cherie Pierce

Policy Council approves all hiring and terminations. Hiring is easy; we provide everything about the person to be hired for Policy Council review. Terminations work differently. Our policy outlines that if there is the need to terminate a staff member, which does not happen often, we pull together the Policy Council Officers, who make up the Executive Committee, for an Executive Session prior to the Policy Council Meeting with all members. We provide the Executive Committee with all of the documentation on the person we are proposing to terminate. They can see any write-ups, ask questions and get details about the reason for the proposed termination. We do this with the Executive Committee to have more than one person aware of the situation. They vote at the end of the meeting to recommend having the termination go forward to be approved by the entire body of Policy Council or not. Unfortunately today we had an employee we needed to terminate, so the Executive Committee met this afternoon. We went over all of the details and documentation and the Executive Committee did recommend termination of this employee be brought before the entire Policy Council. Policy Council was provided with a written statement recommending this termination which was signed

by the Policy Council Officers just before this meeting began. The email included information regarding the process for terminating staff as well. We cannot go into specific detail about the termination with the entire Policy Council because we protect the privacy and confidentiality of all employees, even those that are leaving the program. If there are questions, they will be answered without all of the details being shared. Policy Council was asked if they had any questions. No questions were asked. Members of the Executive Committee were asked if they wanted to share anything regarding the decision to recommend this termination. Information regarding this termination will also be shared with the Board. One Executive Committee Member shared they were on the call earlier and went through all of the documents. This is not something that is taken lightly. It has been discussed and looked into and they feel it is the right decision to terminate. Another Executive Committee Member shared that it was explained that this staff member was trained and then problems occurred. They were retrained and the issues continued to occur. They weren't accepting feedback or making progress toward correcting the issues and were insincere with their responses to the feedback they were receiving. This Executive Committee Member feels that for everyone's sake (anyone working with this person, the parents and the children, because it would be an uncomfortable situation to walk into every day), it would be best to terminate. The Policy Council Vice Chairperson stated that the Executive Committee met in an Executive Session and reviewed and discussed all of the information presented by Sarah Thurgood, Kristie Curtis and Cherie Pierce. Their vote was unanimous and they are recommending the termination of an employee. Having heard this information and being provided with the signed document from the Executive Committee stating they recommend moving forward with the termination, Policy Council was asked if they felt comfortable moving forward with the vote. One Policy Council Member asked to abstain from voting and was able to do so.

**Motion to approve the termination of an employee**

**Motion: Karli Leonardi**

**Seconded: Kalista Leishman**

**Approved: Yes**

**2. Vote to approve the November 2025 Lateral Staff Transfer Requests – Steph Wood**

Steph had a few staff that wanted to transfer to lateral positions, one from an on-call Teacher Assistant to a Teacher Assistant and one from an on-call Teacher to a part-day Teacher. Cristina Gomez is also transferring from being a Health Specialist to being both a Health Specialist and the Receptionist at the Logan Center in a hybrid position. She was the receptionist before and now will be helping at the front desk at the center and working with the health team on those duties. Everyone loves Cristina and we are so excited to have her back at the center. Policy Council shared that pick up and drop off has gone so much better at the Logan Center since having Cristina back. Policy Council was asked if they had any questions. No questions were asked.

**Motion to approve the November 2025 Lateral Staff Transfer Requests**

**Motion: David Lengenfelder**

**Seconded: Kalista Leishman**

**Approved: Yes**

**3. Elect the 2025-2026 Policy Council Chairperson for the remainder of the Policy Council Year – Terrah Smith**

Policy Council elected a Chairperson in September, Destiny, who had to resign from Policy Council so we need to re-elect for this position. As a review, all elected Policy Council Officers will remain in their positions from now until next September when the new Policy Council will elect their officers for the new Policy Council Year. Typically the Chairperson from the previous year is asked to attend that meeting to help train the incoming members as they elect their officers. All Policy Council Officers are asked to follow the Code of Conduct which means being professional and working together toward problem solving. The main duties of the Chairperson include:

-Approving Policy Council agendas put together, and emailed to them, by the Administrative Assistant,  
 -Conducting Policy Council Meetings,  
 -Do not vote at Policy Council Meetings unless there is the need to break a tie,  
 -Signing policies and documents approved during meetings to record Policy Council approval,  
 -Automatically holding a seat on the Board. They attend Board meetings as a voting member. Board Meetings are held the fourth Tuesday of each month at 5:00pm. Board meets in person but there is the also option to join the meetings by calling in if that is easier. The Policy Council Chairperson will share a short report at that meeting about what happened at the last Policy Council Meetings. They can also share the Policy Council's thoughts about items that were voted on.  
 -They will be consulted regarding scheduling interim meetings.  
 Policy Council was asked if anyone had questions about this officer position and for volunteers to put forth their name to be the Chairperson for the remainder of the year. Aurora Rosas volunteered. Other nominations were asked for. No other names were put forth. Aurora was asked to leave the call during the voting process. She rejoined the meeting after the voting was completed. Congratulations, Aurora! You were elected as the Chairperson. The Administrative Assistant will reach out with information to get Aurora trained and ready to attend Board Meetings. Their next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, November 25.

**Motion to approve Aurora Rosas as the 2025-2026 Policy Council Chairperson for the remainder of the Policy Council Year**

<b>Motion: David Lengenfelder</b>	<b>Seconded: Karli Leonardi</b>	<b>Approved: Yes</b>
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**4. Elect the 2025-2026 Policy Council Vice Chairperson for the remainder of the Policy Council Year – Terrah Smith**

Because Aurora was previously elected as the Policy Council Vice Chairperson, is now the Chairperson and cannot hold both positions, we need to elect a new Vice Chair. The main duty of the Vice Chairperson is to conduct a meeting in the place of the Chairperson if they are unable to attend. Anytime someone is asked to conduct a meeting that hasn't been doing it consistently, the Administrative Assistant gets them information and works with them to make sure they are comfortable doing so. We do not ask the Vice Chair to attend a Board Meeting in place of the Chairperson. Policy Council was asked for volunteers to put forth their names to fill the Vice Chairperson position for the remainder of the year. Other elected Policy Council Officers stated they were willing to fill this position but then we'd need to elect for their other positions. Both stated they would prefer to stay in their current positions. Another Policy Council Member stated they do not have the capacity to do so at this point. Because we weren't aware of the need to elect a Vice Chairperson at this meeting tonight, we can also table this election to be revisited at the December meeting to allow everyone time to think about it. Policy Council decided to table this election until next month.

**The election of the 2025-2026 Policy Council Vice Chairperson for the remainder of the Policy Council Year was tabled until next month**

<b>Motion: David Lengenfelder</b>	<b>Seconded: Jessica Crook</b>	<b>Approved: Yes</b>
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**5. Policy Council Community Representative Recommendations – Terrah Smith**

In the Policy Council Composition, it outlines that Policy Council is made up of a majority of elected parents who have children enrolled in the program. We can also have up to five Community Representatives serve on Policy Council. We do not have anyone serving in this capacity on our Policy Council this year. Community Representatives are voting members on Policy Council and represent the community served by the Head Start agency. They can include parents of children who were formerly enrolled in Head Start as well. Each year a Community

Representative wants to be part of the Policy Council, they complete an application and the current Policy Council needs to approve them. Policy Council was asked to think about if they have anyone they could suggest to serve as a Community Representative on our Policy Council. Information can be emailed or texted to the Administrative Assistant to look into.

**6. Vote to approve the 2025-2026 Bear River Head Start Policy Council Goals – Terrah Smith**

Our currently elected Policy Council Officers set the Policy Council Goals for the year during their Officer training. The goals were included in the packet sent to Policy Council.

They are:

1. Policy Council Representatives will have ongoing cross-communication with their Parent Committees.
    - Policy Council members are encouraged to attend Parent Committee Meetings (PCM's) and be willing to share how they went at PC meetings.
    - Information will be shared with program parents/guardians through:
      - Policy Council Reports at PCM's
      - Parent Committee Meeting Reports to parents/guardians
      - [www.brheadstart.org](http://www.brheadstart.org) website
    - The Policy Council will brainstorm ideas to help build awareness and encourage parent/guardian attendance at Parent Committee Meetings.
    - Staff will keep parents/guardians informed of upcoming PCM's. Some suggestions include posting flyers at each center of upcoming PCM's as well as sending reminders via phone call, text, email, putting flyers in children's boxes at school and including the information in the weekly/monthly newsletters, etc.
  2. Policy Council Officers and all Policy Council members will make sure there is a quorum at every Policy Council meeting. The Policy Council will have meaningful discussion and maintain balance of the Policy Council agenda/meeting. The Policy Council will stay on task and follow the agenda.
  3. Policy Council will do their best to review all Policy Council emails/packets and familiarize themselves with the [brheadstart.org](http://brheadstart.org) website. Policy Council members will be trained using the Policy Council online Learning Management System (LMS), or other training methods, and can refer back to it as needed.
  4. Policy Council members will share information about recruitment to potential Head Start children and families. Policy Council can help spread the word to others about how to apply for Bear River Head Start (BRHS) enrollment and employment at Parent Committee Meetings and in the community.
  5. Policy Council members will be prepared to share about upcoming community events and resources at both the Policy Council and Parent Committee Meetings. Policy Council members will work toward overall child well-being and positive child and family outcomes.
- Policy Council was asked if they had any questions or comments about these goals that have been set by the Policy Council Officers for this year. No questions were asked.

**Motion to approve the 2025-2026 Bear River Head Start Policy Council Goals**

**Motion: David Lengenfelder**

**Seconded: Kalista Leishman**

**Approved: Yes**

**7. Vote to approve the October 16, 2025 Policy Council Meeting Minutes – Aurora Rosas**

Policy Council was asked if they had any questions or discussion about these minutes. No questions were asked or changes made to the October 16, 2025 Policy Council Meeting Minutes.

**Motion to approve the October 16, 2025 Policy Council Meeting Minutes**

<b>Motion: David Lengenfelder</b>	<b>Seconded: Kalista Leishman</b>	<b>Approved: Yes</b>
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**8. Vote to approve the October 23, 2025 Interim Policy Council Meeting Minutes – Aurora Rosas**

Policy Council was asked if they had any questions or discussion about these meeting minutes. No questions were asked or changes made to the October 23, 2025 Interim Policy Council Meeting Minutes.

**Motion to approve the October 23, 2025 Interim Policy Council Meeting Minutes**

<b>Motion: David Lengenfelder</b>	<b>Seconded: Jessica Crook</b>	<b>Approved: Yes</b>
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**9. Vote to approve the November 13, 2025 Interim Policy Council Meeting Minutes – Aurora Rosas**

Policy Council was asked if they had any questions or discussion about these meeting minutes. No questions were asked or changes made to the November 13, 2025 Interim Policy Council Meeting Minutes.

**Motion to approve the November 13, 2025 Interim Policy Council Meeting Minutes**

<b>Motion: David Lengenfelder</b>	<b>Seconded: Jessica Crook</b>	<b>Approved: Yes</b>
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**10. Vote to approve holding Interim Policy Council Meetings prior to the next scheduled Policy Council Meeting, as needed – Aurora Rosas**

Policy Council was asked if they had any questions or discussion about this agenda item. No questions were asked or discussion had.

**Motion to approve holding Interim Policy Council Meetings prior to the next scheduled Policy Council Meeting, as needed**

<b>Motion: David Lengenfelder</b>	<b>Seconded: Kristin Fellows</b>	<b>Approved: Yes</b>
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**11. Approval of the 990 Informational Tax Return falls under Board responsibility and is listed as information only for Policy Council – Sarah Thurgood**

Completing a 990 Tax Return is a requirement for our grant. Andy Hernandez, our Fiscal Officer, prepares this each year and submits it. Policy Council clarified if they needed to vote to approve the 990. No; it's just for your information so Policy Council is aware.

**12. CACFP Civil Rights Training – Sarah Thurgood**

Every year, one of our requirements in Performance Standards, licensing and CACFP is to provide training for our Policy Council and Board about CACFP Civil Rights. The information does not change year-to-year and was provided in the packet sent to Policy Council for this meeting. It outlines what we must ensure is happening in our programs regarding the CACFP Food Program. The information also has to be posted in our centers. Policy Council was asked if they had any questions. No questions were asked.

**13. Budget Committee & Fiscal Reports – Sarah Thurgood**

We had our Budget Committee Meeting this week. We've been having quite a few of these meetings the last while. As you can see from our reports, there are some concerning trends emerging in the budget so we have been meeting a lot to talk about those things. At the Budget Meeting we went over some of the things we are cutting back on such as mileage reimbursement. (See the minutes for item 14. for more information.)

**14. Vote to approve the change of the mileage reimbursement rate to \$.50 per mile through the end of the Fiscal Year, January 31, 2026 & then readdress – Sarah Thurgood**

In years when we have had plenty of funding, such as the additional COVID funding, our fiscal staff have always promoted having our mileage reimbursement rate be equivalent to the IRS federal rate which typically increases each year. We did increase our mileage reimbursement rate from \$0.25 a mile a few years ago and it has been \$0.70 per mile this year, which is the IRS rate. However, in our Fiscal Policies, it states we *may* reimburse at the federal rate. We can choose to reimburse at a different rate if needed. As we have reviewed our budgets, one of our problems is that we are paying a lot in mileage reimbursement for staff as they travel in their own vehicles. Some of it cannot be helped. We also have company vehicles that can be used. This will also be discussed with Board, but until we can really analyze our budgets, we are going to need to bring the mileage reimbursement rate to \$0.50 per mile instead of \$0.70 cents per mile. This concern is not because our Coordinators are not tracking their spending well; they are. We need to get a better trend for money saving measurements. We have also absorbed some positions to help with this. We may not leave the reimbursement rate at this level long-term but will do so through the end of the fiscal year which is 01/31/2026. This is an easy way for the program to save money without affecting anything that will cut into services for children and families. If our staff don't want to use their own vehicles, they can use company vehicles. Our fiscal staff found that some staff who were traveling large amounts of miles were making more on their mileage reimbursement than their daily wages. We've got to fix that. Policy Council asked about the approximate savings for changing this rate. That is a good question and we have asked Andy to look further into this to find out how much we will save. What we can see at this point is that we have a small number of staff members, mostly substitutes that are traveling to different centers. They are the staff that are being paid more in mileage reimbursement than their daily wages. This change won't cut the amount down by half but based on last month's numbers the amount saved would be about \$3,600 for each two week pay period which is a significant amount of money. There aren't a lot of staff doing this but this will make a positive outcome in the budget. Andy is digging into the budget to see what the impact really will be. Another concern is that when the reimbursement rate went up, we needed to provide further training to our staff about how to watch this. Most costs have also increased over the last while, food, rent, gas, electricity, etc. We just need to be watching this more. Policy Council inquired if there are laws, or if our policies state we need to reimburse by cents per mile or if there is another system of reimbursement we could implement. The policies state reimbursement is per mile but we are not held to a particular amount. If we cannot, we are not required to reimburse for mileage at all. When our rate was \$0.25 per mile that was hard for our staff. There are staff that do home visits and are commuters for their jobs. We don't want to make it hard for them who are traveling all the time. We recognize that and budget for it since that is their full-time job. We don't want to make it too difficult for them that this isn't worth it and is too much wear and tear on their cars. However, we also don't want this to be something that is a secondary money maker for staff that is outside of what we have budgeted to pay through regular payroll. Although it was not mentioned in the Fiscal Report, Sarah asked Policy Council if they were willing to vote to approve the mileage rate change so it is approved by both governing bodies. Policy Council moved forward with a vote, showing they had the information presented to them and approved moving the mileage reimbursement rate to \$0.50 per mile until the end of the grant year, January 31, 2026 as long as Board also approves this rate change. We want it documented that Policy Council was informed about this need. We will make a determination at the end of the grant year, whether we want to keep the rate at \$0.50 per mile or move it to a different amount.

**Motion to approve the change of the mileage reimbursement rate to \$.50 per mile through the end of the Grant Year, January 31, 2026**

<b>Motion: David Lengenfelder</b>	<b>Seconded: Kalista Leishman</b>	<b>Approved: Yes</b>
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**15. Program Performance & Director's Reports – Sarah Thurgood**

For the Program Performance Report, everything is on track. We're hitting all milestones and the data looks really good.

Sarah addressed the concerns with funding throughout the meeting. The corrections for our Preston Center drop off and pick up have been well received and they seem to be helping. We appreciate having a classroom in the Preston Pioneer Elementary School. It's a great place for us to be and we want to be good neighbors.

**16. Board Report – Cindi Hill**

Board reviewed most of the same items that Policy Council did last month. They got a new Board Member, Susan Findlay, and also welcomed Josie Smith onto Board as a regular member. Josie was Policy Council Chair last year. Board received legal training from our lawyer, Gary Anderson. He always reviews conflict of interest, duties of Board Members, etc. Sarah gave Active Supervision and Mental Health Team updates. Board approved the ERSEA Recruitment and Enrollment Policy, Policy Council Bylaws as well as the Head Start Data Protection Policies and Board Meeting Minutes. Board needs to elect a new Vice Chair, but because there weren't many Board members in-person at the meeting, it was tabled and will be done at the meeting next week. Board also needs to select a Budget Committee Member. That was also tabled and will be taken care of next. Board approved the Continuation Grant Application and the 990 Informational Tax Return. They also received all of the usual reports.

**17. Policy Council Concerns & Other Discussion Items – Policy Council Representatives**

Any Policy Council Member can bring up items for discussion during this agenda item. Policy Council was asked if they had anything to discuss. No questions were asked or items brought up for discussion.

**18. Community Report – Policy Council Representatives**

Policy was asked but no items were shared during this agenda item.

**19. Parent Committee Meeting Report – Policy Council Representatives**

Policy Council was asked if they had anything to discuss for the Parent Committee Meeting Report. A Parent Committee Meeting was held yesterday and they had a representative from the USU Nutrition Program present to the parents.

**20. Calendar Review – Terrah Smith**

- Wednesday, December 3: Early Head Start Socializations: Preston area from 10am-12pm at the Larsen-Sant Library; Brigham City area from 2-4pm at the Brigham City PHS Center; Cache/Logan area from 4-6pm at the Logan PHS Center
- Thursday, December 4: Early Head Start Socializations: Soda Springs area from 10am-12pm at the Soda Springs Library; Malad area from 1-3pm at the Malad PHS Center
- Friday, December 5: EHS Centers closed
- Tuesday, December 16: Budget Committee Meeting at 10am (Policy Council Treasurer to attend)
- Thursday, December 18: Policy Council Meeting at 8:30pm
- Monday, December 22-Friday, January 2: Winter Break; all staff off & centers closed
- Monday, January 5: Class & Services resume
- Friday, January 9: EHS Centers closed

**21. Vote to adjourn the November 20, 2025 Policy Council Meeting – Aurora Rosas**

Sarah thanked Policy Council for attending the meeting tonight. With no other business to conduct, the November 20, 2025 Policy Council Meeting was adjourned at 9:25pm.

**Motion to adjourn the November 20, 2025 Policy Council Meeting**

**Motion: David Lengenfelder**

**Seconded: Kristin Fellows**

**Approved: Yes**