

UFOP Special Meeting Transcript

December 13, 2023 at 7:08 p.m. Mountain Time

Attendees

ben sears, BJ Nicholls, Dale Gray, James Kirkland, Jean Acheson, Jen, Jennifer Asleson, keith welch, Lee Shenton, Martha Hayden, Mike Stringham, Phil Policelli, ReBecca Hunt-Foster

Transcript

This transcript was computer generated from a Google Meet virtual meeting, and was edited by BJ Nicholls to correct transcription errors and add clarification notes

BJ Nicholls: and if anyone wants to - down in the corner, there's a little icon that's for activities. It's little square with a triangle and circle. I put a poll in there if you want to register your vote.

BJ Nicholls: Also in chat, I put some information from the bylaws for the special meeting.

Lee Shenton: We kind of realized that those leaders in Moab have to live forever. So we decided that the mailing address for UFOP Gastonia would no longer be my home or mailbox.

Mike Stringham: Let me tell you it's hard to be immortal.

BJ Nicholls: I hear you..

BJ Nicholls: It's 7:10. So I don't know this... this is probably all of us but we might end up with a few stragglers.

James Kirkland: Anybody from St. George?

BJ Nicholls: Not seeing anybody.

Martha Hayden: Steve said he couldn't come. But he said Craig might. They vote yes.

Lee Shenton: I think we then know who's gonna host the next annual meeting.

BJ Nicholls: That's up for question. One idea that I've got is that Castle Country would go for it. With heavy participation by UFOP veterans of putting on the annual meeting. It would give that chapter a big visibility boost but we need to see who all would be on board in that chapter.

Lee Shenton: Yeah, that's pretty much how we started but on the other hand we've hosted if you look at it at the last four annual conferences, so probably somebody had that opportunity.

BJ Nicholls: Yep.

BJ Nicholls: Yeah, we figured it would be a good excuse for us all to descend on Josh Lively and crew and give them some love and affection.

James Kirkland: Josh is the replacement for me in the Cedar Mountain Formation.

Jean Acheson: Plus, it's good and centrally located for everybody to get to

Lee Shenton: Yeah.

James Kirkland: You have a big thing is if they can find a venue for the meeting that's reasonable Lee. Price has been a problem in the past or at least that's what I hear, last time they had the meeting there. That the college wanted to charge them a ton of money for the venue.

James Kirkland: And they were looking at some other places. It got weird and we ended up in Green River. Because it was the only place we could get a space big enough for the meeting that wasn't expensive, they donated the space in the John Wesley Powell Museum. So you have to pay for it all. and unfortunately the museum there doesn't have a room for everybody.

Jen Asleson: How many attendees are we talking about?

Mike Stringham: 200 And we had 200 at our last meeting.

Lee Shenton: And no, thank you for the false props there, but we had 123 for the 2016 meeting and 98 for the 2019 meeting.

James Kirkland: Yeah around a hundred a bit more.

Mike Stringham: Is that right?

Lee Shenton: Yeah.

James Kirkland: Yeah, that's healthy.

Jen Asleson: Around a hundred, okay.

James Kirkland: Healthy museum healthy meeting.

Jen Asleson: And that's for how many days?

Mike Stringham: Three

Lee Shenton: Yeah.

James Kirkland: Basically one day probably in the room. I mean everybody does it differently, how it fits for their own thing. But, part of a day or a full day for lectures, and for various members to relate what they're up to and some of the things that we are up to as scientists. And then a day for field trips. Certainly field trips with Josh will be pretty easy.

Jen Asleson: Yes.

James Kirkland: I think Maybe I'll do a lot. But basically I think the meeting itself is two days we could have in front or behind the field trip day. And there's at least one day where we really need a room.

James Kirkland: I mean, it's been a while.

Jen Asleson: Yeah, let me check around but we should be able to find something I would think. What's the date, time of year?

James Kirkland: The chapter kind of picks the day, but generally in the spring. They've often wanted it around Memorial Day just because you get a three day weekend. So it makes it easier for people to get away.

James Kirkland: but the other people of course have other plans for Memorial Day weekend,...

Jen Asleson: Yep.

James Kirkland: Down St. George, we have meetings in April. Different time because you don't want it to get too hot. Price certainly, maybe before the gnats is probably the best window?

Jen Asleson: Yeah..

James Kirkland: And in June perhaps, but then that's the problem with the college because the college is in session.

Jen Asleson: yeah, the county has a big building out there by the Fairgrounds it could easily hold a couple hundred people so we would just need to see...

James Kirkland: Yeah.

Jen Asleson: if the date would work because they've got staff but I asking them to work over holiday weekend might be a bit challenging.

James Kirkland: Was maybe you can talk to someone down there that's on the staff to join UFOP.

Jen Asleson: Yeah. There's always that chance. Yes.

James Kirkland: Yeah, but yeah, I mean basically if you can get a good deal on a place at a particular date at my control when we have the meeting, but certainly,...

Jen Asleson: Yeah.

James Kirkland: generally there for a Friday or Sunday field trip,...

Jen Asleson: Uh-huh.

James Kirkland: Of course, a lot of people want to head out, on Sunday get night for Sunday being at home. but generally, Friday for people to get there early you can have a field trip and then an evening, social get-together. Is pretty good, maybe to have a keynote speaker or something. Someone wants to chat.

Jen Asleson: Okay.

James Kirkland: You guys have a fair bit of flexibility.

Jen Asleson: Okay.

James Kirkland: So it's in Josh, of course, who will be here tomorrow. So we can chat about things as well.

Jen Asleson: right

James Kirkland: As you will tag Josh for a lot of stuff for this. I know when he's free.

Jen Asleson: Yeah, a lot will depend on when he's available. Certainly.

James Kirkland: Yeah. right

Phil Policelli: I'd like to throw in one thing that we do on Saturday. We often have a banquet. That's when we usually have a keynote speaker. And beforehand an informal social event.

James Kirkland: Yeah.

James Kirkland: the banquet had a lot of costs for people,...

Jean Acheson: Yeah.

James Kirkland: basic because that is one of the most expensive things on most of these meetings. What did we do in Green River ...remember?

BJ Nicholls: Ray's. We went to Ray's Tavern.

Jean Acheson: Yep.

James Kirkland: But everybody paid for their own burgers.

Jean Acheson: But yet you end up with most of us who are going to be staying there. So we have to eat in a restaurant so it's not like it's cheap anyway.

Jennifer Asleson: Yes, yes.

James Kirkland: Yeah, Josh is a wiley character. I mean he'll figure out some stuff. No doubt.

Jen Asleson: Yeah, he's got a lot of good ideas. So. You can talk to them tomorrow.

James Kirkland: Absolutely.

Jen Asleson: But yeah, we'll also brainstorm with them and I'm sure we can put together something. What do we do on Saturday?

James Kirkland: Generally, that's when we do business meetings in the morning. Usually a meeting where people chat about what their chapters have done over the year try to keep that pretty tight. Some people want to go into detail. They can do a talk during the talk sessions. And generally that's 15 minute chats. We really encourage members you fob to talk about things that they've been up to or things. They've gone and seen or what have a few folks like myself can kind of fill in some.

Jen Asleson: Yeah.

Lee Shenton: We also gave awards during our two meetings.

James Kirkland: Yeah, Kevin Bylund got an award I think.

Lee Shenton: Yeah, that's good. Yeah.

James Kirkland: meeting And what is it? Is it Jim Jakes? Kevin works with him a lot. They both got something

BJ Nicholls: Yeah, Jim Jenks.

James Kirkland: Jim Jenks. But yeah, we should certainly think about what we want to do for that. You don't have to do it every year, but there are people that certainly have gone beyond the call of duty. Lee, you would be in that category of my mind.

Lee Shenton: And not even close - a lot of people did more than me.

James Kirkland: You do a lot. you've been a part of the Moab group for a long time

Lee Shenton: This is a cheap segue to announce the direct within it all of you at the September 25th, groundbreaking of the Utahraptor State Park Visitor Center. And honestly, it was me and about a dozen other really important people throwing shovels full of earth laid out in front of us.

James Kirkland: Yeah, I liked our state parks director whose talk we didn't mention the internment camp. It didn't mention paleontology with all motorcycle race tracks ATV Trails camping. It was all recreation.

Lee Shenton: Yeah, he gave her a really good talk at our most recent meeting here in Moab. and he's gonna be on January 31st again...

James Kirkland: This is the state director?

Lee Shenton: ...too to give an update in the State Park

James Kirkland: But you're time adjusting, right? Josh Hansen,...

Lee Shenton: Josh Hanson Yeah.

James Kirkland: No, I was talking about the state director of state parks.

Lee Shenton: Sorry.

James Kirkland: He's retiring at the end of this week so I'm really curious who the governor's gonna replace them with. Hopefully it'll be someone that'll be a little more interested in interpretation. Not just for Recreation.

James Kirkland: See who they get. I love to see him getting Megan, but I don't think they get Megan to leave Moab. Good, I think.

BJ Nicholls: let's do the business at hand and then maybe if Mike needs to bail you can vote and now.

BJ Nicholls: So did everyone read the intro? Jen has been our official Statewide Vice President since the last annual meeting. And normally she would be in line to step up to become President at the following meeting, but we've had this little pandemic thing to kind of stink up the works. But she is anxious and interested and has the time and energy to, I would call it, jumpstart UFOP. I think especially at the Statewide level we need to get our act together and then we also need to check on the chapters and provide support where the chapters need them. Jen's interested and willing to lead that effort to help us get the next annual meeting going. Of course. We'll all get everybody who's willing to come on board and help with that effort. I know I'll be helping with getting the online registration and everything that we need to do with the communication side. I'd be happy to help with that.

Ben Sears, Phil Policelli and I called this meeting to propose that we have the Special Meeting to elect Jen as the Statewide President. It makes sense to me that we're voting to install her until which would be at the next annual meeting. And then we can have an official election there with more members present.

BJ Nicholls: If that sounds like a reasonable proposal. A call for everybody to vote. I set up a poll under the activities thing. It may be just easier for everybody to unmute and say aye or nay. So, I'm an "aye".

Jean Acheson: Aye.

keith welch: Aye.

ben sears: Aye.

BJ Nicholls: and Lori votes "aye" which mean's we're unanimous Jen you are Statewide President elect.

Jennifer Asleson: Thank you very much.

Jean Acheson: Hey.

Mike Stringham: right

Jennifer Asleson: And the crowd went wild,...

Jean Acheson: Woohoo!

Jennifer Asleson: right?

Lee Shenton: So I have a question having..

Lee Shenton: What we just voted on was to do the right thing and a point then as the Statewide UFOP President until the whenever happens now question is If she is only Statewide president In fact for whatever it is, three, four five six months. Does that mean that she is ineligible to run for president for the next term also?

James Kirkland: If we make it two years to your term.

Lee Shenton: I'm just wondering about the bylaws.

James Kirkland: Finally made change the bylaws some time back would make it two years.

BJ Nicholls: Yeah, I believe the bylaws term limits don't specifically apply because this is a special election. At least I will stipulate that. My proposal for the election that this is a situation extra to the bylaws provide the clause for the special meeting. And they allow us to do lots of things with that special meeting. So I would posit that this term that Jen is occupying would not preempt her from being officially elected president at the annual meeting.

BJ Nicholls: We haven't had a limit on people being voted in as president for multiple terms. Dale knows that. Dale has generously served as "President for Life" many times.

Dale Gray: Yeah, yeah

BJ Nicholls: So I don't recall any term limits in the bylaws, but generally the bylaws the understanding is that the vice president is generally elected as the President at a subsequent meeting. And I believe Jim's right. I would have to really reread the bylaws, but I think the term was two years but I don't recall for sure. I'd have to look at the bylaws. There is a link in chat. If you go to the UFOP site there's a menu item for if you click on the one that says archives that links to a PDF with the current bylaws. And also to the Articles of Incorporation, I don't think we have anything about officers and in the Articles of Incorporation, but I'm kind of playing the Secretary role even though I don't really know how to do it.

Phil Policelli: Just to chime in for a second Jim. You might be thinking of the chapters. At least the Great Basin chapter. We typically ask the president and all the officers to serve for a two-year term. Not sure that we've done it in the past with the state.

James Kirkland: I know the original state thing of course rotated. So the president. Was the chapter that hosted the annual meeting? Since the annual meeting has bounced around a lot more randomly over the last decade.

James Kirkland: I'm hoping that Rebecca and John will be bringing in new warm bodies. We're wanting to work with Dasha quite a bit from up in Vernon on a number of projects because she's a go-getter and we need some of these go-getters. Start moving up the food chain. As us old farts, die off.

Dale Gray: Yeah, the problem at Vernal is the advisors. Tim and John's idea of a chapter for UFOP was to have a business meeting on Thursdays before we usually have the talks at the Museum. And that would be a business meeting before the talk and everybody attended to talk and then everybody would leave. And John has no support for us at all. He's getting all his money through the friends of the museum. And so he calls those guys to do everything and then if they don't have enough guys there then he calls his friends from Colorado or from the Museum in Moab to come up and do the work. And not asking anybody that actually volunteers there to do the work.

Dale Gray: So they just basically dropped out and Steve you just says he doesn't want any more volunteers and there's basically three in the lab and four in the collections. So they just kind of washed their hands of the whole thing. As far as I'm concerned. They didn't tell me that but when I talked with them about how to bring the chapter back and when we can start having meetings that's what they said. We'll just have a meeting and then we'll go to the speaker and that's good.

Dale Gray: We basically lost everybody, none of those guys are really interested.

James Kirkland: I see Rebecca's online. Yeah. Hey, any thoughts on that?

ReBecca Hunt-Foster: Yeah, hi.

ReBecca Hunt-Foster: I didn't see it that way. I mean, we haven't had a meeting in a while and I know there was a pandemic and I haven't been able to get anything going in the park really because we keep getting caught up and consultation hell every time we try to dig something up out of the ground. So yeah, We haven't done anything lately at the monument because we've just been stuck in paperland. Hell and red ink and then we had MTE and so we were busy dealing with it. I felt like we had a lot of support for that which I appreciated.

James Kirkland: They're much what I get, is that Steve? Yeah Sroka's not really wanting to do much up in the immediate area...

Dale Gray: He wants to do lots of things. John's one. He goes down to Moab and goes to Colorado and goes to Germany and stuff like that and Steve can't when he doesn't get any help. He can't really do anything. He can't leave um. The museum is prime for him. And he's so understaffed that he can't go off and do anything if everybody else goes off before him. So it's not the desire and of course he knows because of his back surgery his cancer. He can't go out in the field very much. but John doesn't ask anybody to go out and feel anyway, he doesn't plan and he asks his Favorite volunteers. Let's go out and dig up this and nobody else is considered.

ReBecca Hunt-Foster: Okay, I don't think he sees it that way. I think maybe we need to sit down and have a conversation up here on that because...

Dale Gray: Yeah, I'm sure he doesn't see it that way, but that's the way it's going...

ReBecca Hunt-Foster: Okay,...

Dale Gray: So he needs to be informed somehow.

ReBecca Hunt-Foster: Okay, but sometimes we feel like it's the Dale and Mary Beth show too. So you all go out to thank...

Dale Gray: I'm doing things with her that with the logs and stuff like that. But when they went down to do the jacketing on Jorgensen, I was never asked to go down there so we have no video of the jacketing of the block that we just lifted out with a helicopter. You didn't even ask me to come out to see the helicopter till the last minute, but I'd already made a commitment to Mary Beth. So there's a lot of internal stuff going on. That's not pretty and it's not helping the museum. It's not helping UFOP. I don't know what to do with UFOP as we haven't had contact with UFOP people since the pandemic.

ReBecca Hunt-Foster: Yeah, I mean we haven't had a meeting since the pandemic, so maybe we need to have a meeting but I thought I'm not in charge of this.

Dale Gray: That's what I talked to John and Steve about it and they were like, just bring them in. We have a meeting and then we'll go and that's all we wanted.

Jennifer Asleson: So this is Jennifer sorry guys. So I think one of the goals is to try and get all of these chapters up and going and so it sounds like there's a little bit of work to do and a little bit of conversation, but hopefully we can get going and my goal is to be able to visit all of these different. Chapters and talk to

people in person and see what we can do. So Let's take this as a good starting point from here, and hopefully I get my feet under me pretty quick and get started moving us forward.

James Kirkland: Yeah, I was really helping. We could have run that license plate [special plate with earmarked funding] through UFOP. But now the state's not doing that anymore. So that's not an option. For a long-term stable funding train for the organization and for paleo and Utah. **But** maybe we can get something else going because it's been a real problem with UFOP but no one really wants to take responsibility for things. I'm just a state advisor, I believe right now. I'm ready to shoot myself because I've got so many deadlines coming up. Basically we've got to figure out how to get the UFOP statewide organization back up to a level as it was when I first was working in Utah. That was such a strong group, and all the chapters around.

James Kirkland: And I think Josh will get Price [Castle Country Chapter] really strong as well. But we need a paleontologist and Moab. You can't plan anything, and legally do it if you don't have a paleontologist.

ReBecca Hunt-Foster: The position has been hired. I don't know when the person is starting.

James Kirkland: Yes. There is a BLM position. Have you talked to her? I really don't know when that will be...

ReBecca Hunt-Foster: I know what's going on, but they haven't announced it yet. So I'm not gonna be the person to talk about that.

James Kirkland: Yeah, I heard she told everyone SVP.

ReBecca Hunt-Foster: When they make it more public we'll let them talk about that, but somebody will be starting.

James Kirkland: Yeah. If she wanted to be involved with you.

ReBecca Hunt-Foster: I think they definitely will want to be but they probably are not starting till after the beginning of the fiscal year. This is the same thing that happened to me when I started. They hired me in October and wouldn't let me start till January. So I'm assuming that's the same game that's going on right now. But once they start I'm sure that they'll be happy to participate.

James Kirkland: Wow, that's good news. Yeah. Hopefully they are.

Dale Gray: With the state organization one of the primary problems is the Treasurer. We have people screaming for their membership money and we get no response from the Treasurer. And I tried to fix that. And they said yes, we'll do that and it never happened. And If you can't manage the money,...

James Kirkland: Are they here?

Dale Gray: ...you just don't have an organization.

BJ Nicholls: No, Tim's not here.

James Kirkland: I know he really nixed when we're trying to raise money for the Utahraptor block.

Dale Gray: As usual...

James Kirkland: He certainly doesn't want to move to the next level which I would like.

BJ Nicholls: No. He had no opinion on that. It's not...

James Kirkland: He said he just didn't want to since the IRS would be breathing down on UFOP.

BJ Nicholls: That was Phil.

James Kirkland: This was Tim. At his house when I talked to him one time about this whole thing.

BJ Nicholls: Yeah, when you start dealing with that much more money, the accounting load increases to where organizations like ours go to an outside service to start doing their accounting because...

James Kirkland: Yeah, absolutely. I agree.

BJ Nicholls: So if we're guaranteed a lot of money coming in we could take that on. But when it's just a notion, setting things up would be premature.

James Kirkland: Yeah, I mean it's ...

Jennifer Asleson: Yeah.

James Kirkland: [For the license plate funding idea] They were looking to start a whole parallel organization, which I thought was a lot that was gonna fly, but they didn't get another nonprofit started from scratch. For that fundraising anyway. You've only got four years.

Dale Gray: There's what Jen needs to do. I guess good luck Jen.

Jennifer Asleson: Yeah. Yeah. Nope. I did talk to Josh some and I've talked to BJ. I really appreciate all the support and the goal is to get this moving so we can get that solved and get the chapters up and going again.

James Kirkland: Absolutely.

Jennifer Asleson: So if you see an email from me asking to come visit, hopefully I can get some face to face with folks and start learning more and moving forward.

James Kirkland: It sounds good. Is Tim still the treasurer?

Jennifer Asleson: All right.

James Kirkland: I mean we're saying the treasurer is the problem but is Tim the treasurer still?

BJ Nicholls: We haven't had someone else elected to be Treasurer. So he's still the Treasurer. We don't have a secretary because Joe Dabelko passed. So, that's one way to kind of open up a spot I suppose. But I think it's just we need to organize an annual meeting and get someone. We need to line people up who have the necessary talents and the skill set. Who wants to build these roles? So that's part of what we need to do.

James Kirkland: Note that we could go something like, Western Interior [Western Interior Paleontological Society] does? Yeah, they have enough money that they have an accountant.

Mike Stringham: Funny

James Kirkland: Just because knowing I mean, I'm not even The Treasure of my own house. I'm not good with money and I don't like to be around it. Thank you Phil because you did well [as Statewide Treasurer].

ReBecca Hunt-Foster: Yeah, we couldn't have pulled off MTE without Phil and BJ and so many people's help. Thank you guys.

James Kirkland: Yeah, I came off so well.

Phil Policelli: Yeah, you're welcome.

James Kirkland: So, what's the order of business? I thought it was a calendar for me to look at or a list of things that...

BJ Nicholls: Yeah, that was the only order of business that we called for. The meeting is to get Jen established as President. We've talked about how we should ask people to think about, maybe put together their needs and ideas for the chapters and the organization. And then I'm suggesting maybe we have a meeting in January. To get everybody in a virtual meeting from all the chapters. Maybe beforehand we can put together a hit list of topics we want to talk about. Officers, recognition, and all the things that are issues that are presently causing problems now. With Castle Country Chapter all I know is they have a President. I don't know if they've got any other officers and last I'd heard they still didn't have a checking account. So I hope that's been rectified. But those are the kinds of things that we need to kind of get a handle on.

Lee Shenton: A BJ can I add one more item to your list? Rebecca we love you dearly and your departure exposed a very significant flaw in our system. If the chapter does not have an institution in the area [to provide a paleontology advisor]. The BLM office no longer has a paleontologist and it leaves it up to them like me to try to recruit speakers. I could tell you that's been an issue. So put that on your list, please.

ReBecca Hunt-Foster: Sorry about that. I'm always happy to help...

Lee Shenton: No, we're happy for you.

ReBecca Hunt-Foster: If I can help on this, reach out.

Lee Shenton: I'm just saying that it would have been nice if the BLM had followed through by hiring a paleontologist. Like they told me for six months. They were going to after your departure.

ReBecca Hunt-Foster: Don't worry. They have Lee, they just have to announce it publicly...

Lee Shenton: Okay, hopefully it'll be soon, like January.

ReBecca Hunt-Foster: But they have hired somebody so. Hopefully fingers crossed. I'll get in touch with you about it. You're welcome.

Lee Shenton: All right. Thanks.

BJ Nicholls: And we'll probably want to revisit the bylaws. There are things in the bylaws... like we talk about a "webmaster" and people aren't webmasters anymore. That kind of went away in the 90s. So I

think we need and look at what we've got defined in the bylaws and maybe have a vote to update the bylaws at the next meeting as well.

BJ Nicholls: So I guess we've kind of done what we came here to do. We can follow up from here, but as far as I'm concerned, let's applaud Jen and get ready to tackle the next year. I'll call our special meeting closed unless anybody has an objection.

James Kirkland: I'm getting ready to have some dinner.

Mike Stringham: Yeah.

Dale Gray: Thanks for putting this together BJ to get this going again, and I'm sure Jennifer has the energy and she has to lead us. I tried but I couldn't make it.

BJ Nicholls: Thank you everybody. I really appreciate you coming and yeah, let's get our act together. I mean we've got a lot of cool things happening around here. Thank you, Jen.

Jennifer Asleson: Thank you.