



Oregon Travel Information Council
1500 Liberty Street SE, Suite 150
Salem, Oregon 97302

MINUTES
Quarterly Travel Information Council Meeting
Wednesday December 16, 2015
Oregon Travel Experience Offices
Salem, Oregon

Council Members:

Gwenn Baldwin, Chair

Kathy Watson, Secretary (phone)

Charlotte Lehan (phone)

David Lohman

Mike Marsh

Bob Russell, Vice Chair

Mike Drennan

Ed Washington

Ryan Snyder

OTE Staff:

Nancy DeSouza, Executive Director

Diane Cheyne, Sign Program

Annie von Domitz, Community Assets

Tim Pickett, Operations Director

Jason Nash, Rest Areas

Maddie MacGregor, Communications

Convening: The public meeting of the Travel Information Council was called to order by Chair Baldwin at 1:03 p.m. Chair Baldwin noted attendance for the record.

Introductions: All in attendance in person, except councilors Watson and Lehan by telephone.

Introductions: Self-introductions were made.

Approval of prior minutes:

▪ **October 19, 2015** – Approved as amended:

- Page 2, Chair’s Update: correct to: “... the relationships at various levels of the staff.”
- Page 3, Chair’s Update: correct to: “... but the agency is getting the work done...”
- Page 3, Sponsorships: correct to: “Russell reiterated that TIC needs flexibility...”
- Page 5, Performance Measurement Status: correct to: “DeSouza and Pickett...”
- Page 8, Capital Maintenance Plans: correct to: “Oak Grove...”

November 3, 2015 – Approved as amended:

- Page 1, Introductions, correct to: “All Council members...”

Public comment: None submitted.

Public Hearing on the OTE 2015-17 Biennial Budget:

At 1:12 p.m., Chair Baldwin opened the Public Hearing on the TIC/OTE 2015-17 Biennial Budget and established a quorum.

There was no public comment submitted in writing or in person. Chair Baldwin called the Public Hearing to a close. DeSouza gave a summary on Policy Option 1, advanced by the Finance Committee to create a limited duration part-time Accounting Manager position to meet workload needs. Pickett explained the proposed costs. Drennan noted that the full biennium cost is capped at approximately \$106,170. Baldwin clarified that this would be a limited duration position that would not automatically carry forward to the 2017-19 biennium.

Drennan moved to adopt the budget with the Policy Option #1 amendment. Marsh seconded the motion. The amended budget was unanimously adopted by the Council.

TIC Committee Reports:

Finance Committee: Drennan reported on prior Finance Committee meetings and advised the Council to read minutes from the Finance Committee meetings to keep up with the details of their work.

Drennan summarized the October 20, 2015 Finance Committee meeting, noting that members had reviewed specific impacts of discontinuing the travel information kiosk at Lincoln City and the travel information structure at the Woodburn Premium Outlets. There was a \$72,000 write-off for removing the Woodburn kiosk. The write-off of the Lincoln City kiosk was approximately \$3,000.

Chair Baldwin and Russell offered kudos to the committee and staff, and said the quality of the work was outstanding. Lehan asked about the impact to the budget from the Government Camp paving project. Pickett reported a total of \$14,000 was allotted for the paving project, with \$10,000 contributed by Clackamas County and \$4,000 from OTE, plus the overage costs that will be less than an additional \$4,000. Lohman also offered kudos for the committee's work, noting that Drennan's contributions were highly valuable. Washington noted there were many pages of financial data, and the summary was helpful.

Regular telephonic meetings for the Finance Committee will be the fourth Wednesday of each month at 2:00 p.m. Drennan encouraged TIC members to attend the meetings if they would like more information in detail. DeSouza reminded Council members that if they choose to call in, to please let her know for proper public noticing of the meeting if a quorum of the TIC will be present on the call.

Heritage Tree Program Committee: Washington reported that to date only one tree has received nomination approval for the Class of 2016 Heritage Trees – the Philander Lee Oak Tree, in Canby.

Washington said that a Heritage Tree Tour at the annual Oregon Heritage Conference (organized by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department) will take place at their May 4-6, 2016 event in Salem. He said this would be a great opportunity for other Council members to participate. Washington thanked von Domitz for her hard work in moving the program forward. The annual Statewide Heritage Tree dedication will be scheduled in April 2016 (date and location to be determined). Washington praised committee members for their professional skills and contributions.

Historical Marker Committee: Lehan reported that she was appointed Chair of the committee at the last meeting and supported Washington's assessment that committee members are professionals with

stellar skills. At the last meeting, they reviewed the Historical Marker Committee OARs. There will be a draft of revisions forthcoming. Lehan commended Pickett for the legal edits. She added that the nominating process will be streamlined and much easier. The committee is focusing on a strategic plan, which will include a proactive approach to nominations. Chair Baldwin thanked Lehan for taking on the responsibility of chairing the committee. Washington suggested that both the Heritage Tree and the Historical Marker committee members attend and present to a future TIC meeting. Russell said this was a welcome idea.

Rest Area Committee: Russell reported that the committee convened for the first time on November 2, 2015, and is excited about moving forward the important work of the Council. Members include Russell, Washington, Watson, Marsh, and Snyder. Russell was appointed Chair of the committee.

The committee created two phases of proposed work: Phase One: items needing immediate action and Phase Two: long-range planning. Phase One items include: Government Camp/Clackamas County travel information kiosk project; Government Camp paving project; Grove of the States Restoration project; ADA access; LED replacement lighting; landscape and janitorial RFQs; family bathrooms at Government Camp; and the OPRD request for Valley of the Rogue Rest Area/OTE operation. Phase Two items include: The role of tourism in rest areas; state agency alignment in rest area plans; amendments to the OTE strategic plan; performance measurements; coalition development; and capital maintenance planning. Each member of the committee will tackle specific items on the list. The committee will meet monthly, on the first Thursday. The next meeting is scheduled for January 7, 2016 at the Oregon Trucking Association office.

Chair Baldwin requested that the agenda for the Rest Area Committee be circulated to the full Council so that members can keep up with the large amount of work being performed. Russell agreed and said that OTE staff will be kept quite busy.

Executive Committee: Chair Baldwin discussed the government relations contract with The Victory Group that expires December 31, 2015, and that the committee recommended that Council issue a new single-source two-year contract to the same contractor to ensure continuity of service. This will be discussed by Council for action later in the meeting today.

Baldwin noted that Council had already discussed the Government Camp paving project, but that work was needed to build legislative support for resolving any current issues. The committee has scheduled a meeting to begin the OTE Executive Director's performance evaluation for January 11, 2016 at 11:00 a.m. The committee will meet again on March 23, 2016 at 2:00 p.m., and make its report to the full Council at the April 2016 quarterly meeting.

Discussion ensued about the Government Camp paving project. DeSouza noted that the parking lot substrate was in poor condition, which could affect the repair's longevity.

Chair's update: Chair Baldwin reported on the lawsuit that has been using up a large part of Executive Director DeSouza's time. The scheduled December mediation between the plaintiff and DOJ, has been cancelled. There will be a status conference with the judge in January, where motions for summary judgment are expected.

Baldwin called a break at 2:01 p.m., and reconvened the meeting at 2:05 p.m. She welcomed Craig Campbell from The Victory Group.

Executive Director's report: DeSouza said that interview panel selected a candidate for hire for the office support position, is now checking references, and hopes to have a January 4 start date.

DeSouza distributed a Secretary of State Audit Follow Up Form noting that the requirements of the 2012 audit had been completed. She gave kudos to Pickett and OTE staff for the recent Moss Adams financial review report. Drennan added that the report came back with complimentary statements about it being the cleanest report he had ever reviewed. He added congratulations to Pickett and OTE staff for their work.

DeSouza reported that OTE staff are researching how other states are handling rest area sponsorships. Baldwin said that she had visited an Arizona rest area on a personal trip and related how sponsorship signage was handled. She plans to visit Ohio rest areas soon for more comparisons. Drennan had questions about how vending was handled by ADOT. Baldwin said that although vending was enclosed within a small structure, the machines were modern, clean and high-tech.

DeSouza and Pickett are seeking Oregon Commission for the Blind vending upgrades within OTE rest areas to ensure they are in good repair, welcoming and easy to use by travelers. Drennan noted he had recently stopped at the Santiam Rest Area and attempted to use a machine but could not get it to work properly.

Von Domitz and DeSouza attended the DMO conference and the Oregon Tourism Commission meeting in Medford the prior week. DeSouza was pleased with the level of understanding of TIC by staff and Commission members. There was discussion of OTE's eventual operation of the Siskiyou Welcome Center Rest Area. Snyder said it was good to see recognition for OTE's contributions come forward at the meeting.

Von Domitz discussed plans with Mt. Hood Territory/Clackamas County Tourism to install a digital information kiosk at the Government Camp Rest Area. DeSouza commended their ongoing partnership with OTE and noted that Danielle Cowan would be at the Council dinner that evening.

DeSouza updated on the OAR revisions status, and will convene the Ad Hoc Rules Committee after the first of the year.

Council had discussed potential sign fee increases at the October meeting. DeSouza said that Cheyne has expressed that timing and details of any increases are extremely important. Russell wondered if work should not start soon, particularly if Council wants to see it in the next budget cycle. Russell advised smaller and more frequent increases. Baldwin named Russell and Drennan as advisors in developing a process that would have longevity. DeSouza will speak with Cheyne, Pickett, Russell, and Drennan about the process timing and details.

DeSouza revisited the October discussion about coordinating with heritage organizations across the state, including with Oregon Parks, the Oregon Historical Society, ODOT, and others. Lehan said the challenge would be in pulling together all of the organizations, but she feels there is potential within OTE rest areas to highlight regional historical sites and features. She feels there might be a possibility of a combined panel within kiosks that displays a map of local sites. DeSouza said that discussions could be scheduled for possibly February or March 2016. Von Domitz, Washington, Lehan and DeSouza could investigate partnerships. Lehan mentioned that tribal relationships remain a very important aspect of partnering on any projects.

Staff reports:

Grove of the States Restoration: Annie von Domitz reported significant progress on the project plan. A project team is in place, the communication plan is ready, and several key project partners have been identified and approached. Friends of Trees is committed to securing the new tree stock and coordinating

the planting and relocation of grove trees. The project budget has been approved by Council, and OTE can now move forward and meet with ODOT officials about tree removal.

Von Domitz said there are several removal proposals before the project team. One involves Aquatic Contracting, an organization that helps restore riparian areas. The company may be able to remove the trees endangering the health of the Grove specimens with the root balls intact, and reuse them in stream restoration projects. This would negate the expense of stump-grinding, thereby reducing the cost of the project. If the trees are removed by more traditional logging methods, the value of the trees would not cover the costs of removal.

Von Domitz said that southbound French Prairie Rest Area will be closed to travelers for a few hours to ensure safety during tree removal, and project members will be on hand to answer questions. Russell said that the Audubon Society should be contacted ahead of any tree removal. Lehan suggested that the PNW Extension and Research Center might be able to offer small woodlot management classes or awareness/education and outreach as a project partner. The principles of overcrowding could be demonstrated. Drennan congratulated Von Domitz on her work so far.

Update and Capital Maintenance Plans/Rest Areas: Pickett reported on plans for rest areas. He said that Nash had developed the background and performed reviews based on several models. Nash has broad experience with projecting costs on deferred maintenance and that each rest area has unique issues. The biggest costs will be for water, sewer and parking infrastructure. Expanding rest area parking is outside of these projections. Russell said that truck parking facility issues are not unique to Oregon, and many states face the same problems, which is an enormous safety issue. Nash said there may need to be an independent study conducted. Baldwin agreed that an analysis would help define specific rest areas that could accommodate parking upgrades.

Nash said that electrical repairs and upgrades to all rest areas might be 10 to 20 years out, so placeholders have been built into plan projections. Drennan asked if LEDs were more cost effective. Nash said that LEDs work more efficiently than ballasts and bulbs, and conform to energy efficient directives. The Rest Area Committee will need to prioritize any replacement schedule.

ADA accessibility and family restroom facilities are also factored into the plan. Washington asked what the lifetime of an LED was compared to ballasts or bulbs. Nash said that LEDs could last up to 20 years while ballasts and bulbs might make it to five years, depending on regional conditions. Lohman suggested that it might be helpful if DeSouza were to compose a letter to ODOT Director Matt Garrett and refer to the 20-year plan, as well as citing OTE's fiscal responsibility. DeSouza said that has already been part of the interagency discussions and would continue.

(At 2:45 p.m. Watson lost her phone connection and was unable to reconnect. She was excused from the remainder of the meeting.)

Update and Capital Maintenance Plans/Signs: Cheyne reported that she had completed a 30-year and beyond projected plan. Capital expenditures are over the \$5,000 threshold, and capital maintenance is expenses under \$5,000. Cheyne said planning can be complicated since there will be situations where sign boards need replacement but the supports do not. She discussed the large number of signs that will need replacement and the costs of maintaining and repairing older signs. Russell said that there should be financial calculations completed based on actual costs in order to recoup the dollars needed to run the program. Cheyne said OTE could price itself out of business if it raises fees too high.

Cheyne completed an outline for the next three years, including a replacement schedule for 30-years out, and will send this to the Council. Baldwin agreed that it would be cost-prohibitive to expect signs to pay

for themselves and that projections should factor in the costs of removing signs. Cheyne said fees will be based on mileposts location instead of exit number, which is more precise. Pickett and Russell discussed previous sign revenues and systems versus the current model and updating with the 2013 ODOT traffic counts to ensure that permit fees are assessed correctly.

New business (action and voting items):

Government relations consulting contract: (**Prior to Council discussion on the Government Relations consulting contract with The Victory Group, Craig Campbell was excused so that members could deliberate on Campbell's current proposed contract with TIC.*)

DeSouza said the TIC Executive Committee recommended that the agency's government relations contract be awarded on a sole-source basis to The Victory Group to ensure continuity of services through the end of 2017. If this contract is approved by Council, it is not renewable and may be cancelled at any time.

Russell moved for the Council to approve The Victory Group contract as presented. Marsh seconded the motion. The Council voted unanimously to approve the contract.

Janitorial and Landscaping Services Contracts: Nash presented three janitorial contracts that require Council approval and discussed overall janitorial and landscape contracting and staff work.

Russell moved to award the Cabin Creek, Manzanita, and Santiam Rest Area janitorial contracts as presented. Drennan seconded the motion. The Council passed the motion unanimously.

Election of 2016 TIC Officers: DeSouza led a brief review of the current officers. Baldwin noted that she had contacted all of the Council members about putting forth names for election, but no one other than the current officers wished to run at this time. Baldwin opened nominations.

Marsh moved the slate of Gwenn Baldwin, Chair; Bob Russell, Vice-Chair; Kathy Watson, Secretary; and Mike Drennan, Member-at-Large. Snyder seconded the motion. The Council elected the slate unanimously.

DeSouza explained that Drennan's term on the Council was officially over on June 30, 2016, and is willing to continue serving until replaced by the Governor. Baldwin encouraged the other Council members to consider officer positions in the future. DeSouza will contact Council members eligible for reappointment several months before their terms expire to determine their willingness to continue to serve on the Council. She will work with the Governor's Executive Appointments Office to facilitate the process and also to request staggering of terms to avoid forced turnover of more than two members each year.

Meeting Calendar for 2016: Baldwin explained that the Council generally had quarterly meetings, two in Salem and two in other areas of the state. Baldwin suggested that one TIC meeting per year might be scheduled to align with that of the Tourism Commission.

The Council set the next meeting for April 6, 2016, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the OTE Salem office.

Remaining meeting dates and locations will be set early in 2016, with Bend and Eugene as possible sites.

Information and policy discussions:

Legislative update: Craig Campbell from The Victory Group reported on current and upcoming work, with issues regarding the Government Camp Rest Area high on the priority list. It was agreed that truck and tour bus access must be preserved. DeSouza reminded the Council that Highway Funds cannot be used to repair or expand parking areas outside of the TIC-permit area. Potential stakeholders include the US Forest Service, Summit Ski Area (the parking lot permit holder), Clackamas County, nearby ski areas' management, ODOT, members of the federal delegation, and key legislators.

Campbell continued with other legislative calendar items, including a discussion on long-term rest area funding that could be tied to a state transportation package.

(Lehan was excused and disconnected from the call to meet another commitment.)

Legislative planning: Baldwin reported on the status of proposals for a statewide transportation package. She noted that the TIC Executive Committee would meet in 2016 to begin planning for the 2017 Legislative session.

Other business: DeSouza explained the evening's dinner schedule and guest list.

Adjournment: Chair Baldwin adjourned the regular quarterly meeting of the OTIC at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Watson,
Secretary