



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

MINUTES
Oregon Travel Information Council
Quarterly Meeting – June 06, 2016
Downtown DoubleTree, Bend,
Oregon

Council Members:

Gwenn Baldwin, Chair
Kathy Watson, Secretary
Ed Washington
Mike Marsh

Bob Russell, Vice Chair
Mike Drennan
David Lohman

Absent:

Charlotte Lehan

Ryan Snyder

OTE Staff:

Nancy DeSouza, Executive Director
Jessica Carbone, Office Assistant

Tim Pickett, Operations Director

Guest:

Craig Campbell, Victory Group

Convening: The public meeting of the Travel Information Council was called to order by Chair Baldwin at 9:00 a.m. Baldwin noted attendance for the record.

Approval of minutes: Secretary Watson presented the April 6, 2016 Quarterly Meeting minutes. Council proposed two amendments: the correction of the plural possessive on “At the Councils’ request,” and the removal of an extra “o” at the end of that sentence. Drennan moved to approve the minutes as amended. Marsh seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Comment: None. Watson noted she appreciated the formatting of the Council packets for ease of use.

Business Meeting:

Committee Reports:

- **Finance Committee:** Chair Drennan reported that Mike Marsh will be the new Chair of the Finance Committee. He reported that finances are very good, and revenues are slightly behind budget. Net operating profits through the end of April are \$561,000. Year to date, \$512,000 has been spent on capital expenditures. Unrestricted cash is \$1.8 million. Some upcoming larger investment projects include the potential restroom expansion at Oak Grove, parking lot work at Boardman, and the well at Deadman Pass. Accountant Diane Welter is reconciling cash accounts. There also will be adjustments to accounts to align with the state's new definition of capital expenses. The committee categorized the LED lighting project at French Prairie as a capital expense, and discussed the requirements and pace of sign replacements. Because the second half of the biennium has more capital expenditures planned, there may be a dip in cash, but reserves will remain stable.
- **Heritage Tree Committee:** Washington reported that there has not been a committee meeting since the last Council meeting. The Annual Statewide Tree Dedication was at the Philander Lee Oak Tree in Canby and was well attended. Catherine Mushel, the second Maynard Drawson Award winner, was honored at the Portland Arbor Day Festival.

Lohman joined the meeting at 9:15 a.m.

- **Historical Markers Committee:** DeSouza reported that the committee met on May 10, 2016. They are moving forward with the Triple Nickel marker and are working on text and have nearly full funding. There is a tremendous amount of support for this marker from various groups. The planned installation in Cave Junction will be next June. The committee also is researching an Indian Marathon marker for Grants Pass, with a discussion of taking the topic of the marathon and incorporating it into a marker about the Redwood Highway. Baldwin asked if there had been any discussion of duplicate signage about the Triple Nickels in Pendleton. Carbone replied that it is under consideration by the committee. Overall, the committee is looking at interpretive plans and options for funding new markers. Annie von Domitz is working on performance measures for the program. Watson spoke of her discussion with Sue Densmore from the Oregon Caves, and the possibility of coordinating the Triple Nickel ceremony with them so they could create a fundraising event at the same time. Carbone reported that another focus of the committee is maintenance and repair and ensuring the markers have updated interpretations. There was discussion of the agency's accounts for marker repair and the possibility of some funding through grants from the Oregon Community Foundation. DeSouza said that with Charlotte Lehan no longer on Council, the group would welcome an official Council representative on the committee, although it is not required. Baldwin recommended postponing recommendations from the Council to the committee until vacancies on Council are filled.

- **Rest Area Committee:** Russell reported that the committee has been working on sponsorships for the Grove of the States, which will help set the pattern for overall rest area sponsorships, and discussion of possible marketing plans. Russell reported on work to define performance measures. Jason Nash has developed an inspection form for rest areas to be used both in the performance appraisal of the staff and for reporting overall program and agency performance. Public perception of the rest areas will be reported from comment cards and the toll-free phone number. A new “safety” rating was added to the comments cards starting July 1. Other components of safety performance measures will include information regarding rest area exclusions by Oregon State Police and information from staff incident reports. The final measure will be economic development and local impact of rest areas. Cost per user of the rest areas information will help us to talk about performance and also may be useful when pricing sponsorship options and for refining our model for capital investment and reserves. Russell said that the restroom counts are the most cost effective measurement. Travel Oregon may be interested in partnering on license plate reading technology to discern the origin and type of vehicles entering the rest areas. The committee is on track to have reportable measures ready for the 2017 legislative session. Drennan asked about staff turnover; DeSouza said the Cabin Creek/Getting Creek pair of rest areas had all new staff, and it is working well. The remainder of the staffing is stable.

- **Executive Committee:** Chair Baldwin reported on the minutes from the April 6, 2016 meeting regarding the performance evaluation of the executive director and the May 3, 2016 meeting with legal counsel regarding pending litigation. The committee also met June 2 to discuss the legislative placeholder bill and adopted minutes.

- **Chair’s Update:** Baldwin updated on pending litigation, which is still under judicial consideration and may be subject to appeal. TIC appointments and reappointments are being discussed with the Governor’s Office. The successor to Charlotte Lehan is not restricted to the 5th Congressional district, as Russell can fill that slot.

Executive Director/Staff Reports:

- **Staff Performance:** DeSouza reported the agency is busy and functioning well. The OTE policy group has completed the staff performance evaluation process for the year and, with HR Manager Jeremy McQuain’s guidance, she is confident this is the most fair and effective process used by the agency to date. On a scale of 0-10 possible points, “proficiency” was given a score of 5. The range of scores for those receiving increases was 5.1 – 6.7 (the highest score given). Merit increases for above-proficient evaluations go into effect July 1, scaled to the TIC-approved 3% merit pool. McQuain will be updating selected job descriptions to accurately reflect position requirements and ensure appropriate salary levels.

The Council recessed at 10:05a.m. and returned at 10:20 a.m.

- **Sponsorships Rules and Grove of the States:** ODOT's administrative rule on sponsorships awaits final approval by the Transportation Commission and subsequent filing with Secretary of State to become effective immediately. The project packet for the Grove of the States awaits ODOT final approval, and the RFQ for tree removal will be issued soon. Planting with Friends of Trees is scheduled for February 11, 2017, with the Grove rededication ceremony to be scheduled for next August. DeSouza explained how the sponsorships of the Grove are expected to proceed, including repaying agency funds for the initial tree removal, purchase of new trees and other costs.

Regarding sponsorships for rest areas, DeSouza and Pickett explained that current statute may bar the agency from receiving any funds that originated in transient lodging taxes at the state or local level. Local DMOs that may wish to invest in our rest areas in support of their missions may be unable to transfer those funds to OTE without a statute change. Campbell suggested that if the DMO spent the money directly on the improvement, it may be permissible. The Council discussed the statutory history and intent of Travel Oregon in proposing the friendly amendment to the 2012 bill. Staff will research and report back to Council.

- **Government Camp:** Clackamas County Tourism is moving forward with an electronic kiosk at this location, and staff are monitoring the condition of access and egress to the rest area. DeSouza noted that potential relocation of the rest area is under initial discussion and is an important alternative to consider.
- **Capital Improvements:** Staff and the Rest Area Committee are discussing priorities for rest area projects, and will hire Branch Engineering to research the capacity of the existing sewage system at Oak Grove and provide an initial concept design with options and cost parameters for Council consideration. Affordable, replicable rest area building design and façade options will be discussed.

New Business:

Action/Voting Items:

- **Agency Contracts/Sign Maintenance and Installation:** AAG Lucinda Jackson completed the legal sufficiency review of the sign maintenance and construction contract with only minor changes to terms with Coral Construction. Invitations to bid went to 20 potential contractors and Coral was the sole respondent for a one-year contract to align the contract period with biennial budgets. Marsh asked why other contractors didn't bid, and Pickett said few contractors have the proper large-scale equipment and structure to do the work. Russell asked to clarify earlier Council questions regarding the contract, and Pickett confirmed that \$290,000 was budgeted for capital installation of signs by agency staff and a combination of vendors including ODOT, Coral and Oregon Corrections Enterprises. Baldwin clarified that ODOT would be the provider where it is the most cost effective and asked how the \$415,000 compared with the current contract amount. Pickett said price increases varied between 8-10% per line item. The last time the contract was put to bid was four years ago. The Council discussed the options of comparing the cost effectiveness of using ODOT to complete some of the work done by Coral and whether it would be cost effective to invest in OTE staff to be able to complete the work.

Russell moved to approve the not-to-exceed contract with Coral Construction for \$415,000 for the purpose of aligning the contract with our fiscal year. Marsh seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Sign Fees Review and Recommendations for January 1, 2017 Changes: DeSouza proposed a timeline to operationalize the annual sign fee review. In addition to potential across-the-board percentage increase options, staff asked Council to review fees that have never been changed for customer-driven replacements. There are two ways a sign's annual permit fee can change: by percentage or dollar rate increase, or by higher traffic counts moving the signs to a higher-priced band (tier). At Russell's request, staff contacted ODOT, which verified that traffic count changes are an appropriate way to justify pricing changes so long as the sign was assigned a specific mile point and ODOT traffic count. Diane Cheyne is in the process of reviewing each sign in the system's mile point and correcting as needed. After discussion of cost of materials and labor, Drennan moved a proposed 3% across-the-board annual sign permit fee increase for public comment. Russell seconded. Lohman noted there were relatively few complaints from the last fee increase. Pickett said that staff did expect some negative feedback. Marsh said this move is very fair considering costs and the strengthening economy. Chair Baldwin called the question to vote. The motion was unanimously approved.

The discussion turned to proposed changes to the program's service fees, and the viability of imposing installation fees for new signs. The mainline plaque relocation fee was reduced from the staff-proposed \$150 to \$125, to be consistent with the methods used to calculate the other fees. Russell moved to amend the proposed fee increases and to add installation fees at the same rate. Washington seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Council broke for lunch at 11:59 a.m. Council returned from lunch at 12:43 p.m.

- **Election of EC Member-at-Large to succeed Drennan:** Watson moved to appoint Ed Washington to the Executive Committee. Marsh seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.
- **Extension of the Information Center IAA with ODOT:** DeSouza presented an updated interagency agreement drafted by ODOT, which proposed extending the agreement for five years with the ability to amend during that period. Marsh moved to approve the Information Center IAA with ODOT. Russell seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Information/Policy Discussion:

- **Legislative Update:** Campbell updated on the work and major topics for the 2017 session. The Governor, Senate President and Speaker of the House have listed a transportation funding package as a main focus of the 2017 session. If IP 28 passes, there is concern there will be no transportation package. Senator Hensell is interested in legislation to require anti-sex trafficking posters in TIC restrooms for awareness and access to a toll-free helpline. Since multiple groups are responsible for public rest areas in the state, Campbell will suggest to the

Senator's staff that they gather all the groups together to discuss the topic. Council reviewed the TIC legislative placeholder language to clarify prior legislative intent regarding the governing role of the Council and the staggering of members' terms of office.

Other Business:

DeSouza officially thanked outgoing TIC Member Drennan for his support and service on the Council. She also thanked Charlotte Lehan for her service, since her term also will end before the next Council meeting.

Baldwin said there is a recommendation to align TIC officer elections more closely with term start dates, which are generally effective on July 1 in a given year. She suggested a vote to change operating guidelines at the September meeting.

Adjourn:

- Next Meeting September 20, 2016 – OTE Offices, Salem
- December 6, 2016 – Forest Grove (part of the meeting will be in conjunction with the Oregon Tourism Commission)

1:45 p.m. – Meeting adjourned.
