



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

**MINUTES**  
**Oregon Travel Information**  
**Council Quarterly Meeting - September 20, 2016**  
**OTE Offices, Salem, Oregon**

**Council Members:**

Gwenn Baldwin, Chair

Kathy Watson, Secretary (by phone)

Ed Washington

Ryan Snyder (by phone)

Bob Russell, Vice Chair

Mike Drennan

Mike Marsh

**Excused:**

David Lohman

**OTE Staff:**

Nancy DeSouza, Executive Director

Jason Nash, Rest Area Division Administrator

Annie von Domitz, Heritage and Community Assets Manager

Jessica Carbone, Office Assistant

Tim Pickett, Operations Director

Diane Cheyne, Field Operations Administrator

**Guest:**

Craig Campbell, Victory Group

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**Convening:** The public meeting of the Travel Information Council was called to order by Chair Baldwin at 9:01 a.m. Baldwin noted attendance for the record.

**Public Hearing:**

- **Staff Report on Sign Fee Proposal:** DeSouza delivered an updated staff report on the Council-proposed 3 percent sign permit increase and other proposed fee changes. The Sign Fee workgroup recommended that the Council adopt the permit fee increases and changes to replacement fees, but defer any decision on installation fees to allow more thorough review of both the need and the potential impact on small businesses. Staff will survey those who would

be most affected by a new installation fee before next year's review. Snyder commented that as a customer of the sign program, he feels the installation fee would be a small burden on most of the businesses that want a sign, and not charging an installation fee is leaving revenue on the table. Watson feels it is very important that fees are based on the actual costs involved. Russell replied that her comments are well taken. The Sign Fee workgroup felt that recouping the agency's cost, including the signs that are fully depreciated, was a major concern. Baldwin noted that when preliminary data was reviewed, one sign group's installation cost so greatly increased their initial cost that further research was needed. The recommendation of the workgroup is that Council approve the proposed changes except for the installation fees, which will be reviewed next year.

- **Public Testimony:** There was no one present for testimony at the meeting, but three letters were received during the public comment period, which Council reviewed. Russell asked if responses had been sent to these letters and Cheyne said yes. She also will send those customers letters informing them of the outcome of the meeting
  
- **Discussion and Council Vote on Proposed Fees:** Marsh asked for data supporting the need for the 3% increase. Pickett said that revenue expansion is slowing; cost increases are expected due to higher minimum wages, increased fees by external providers, PERS costs for state employees and higher fees from the DAS motor pool. Russell said these numbers are covering inflation at 1.5% a year and that is very reasonable. Snyder asked about the prior fee adjustments, and while there were large percentile jumps, few had large dollar increases. In response to a question from Washington, Pickett explained that the letters to customers at implementation includes the increase in percentage as well as the dollar increase.

*Russell made a motion to approve the 3% general increase for sign fee, implement replacement fee changes and defer implementation of installation fees until staff has provided additional data for consideration. Drennan seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.*

### **Business Meeting:**

**Approval of minutes:** Secretary Watson presented the April 6, 2016 Quarterly Meeting minutes. Council proposed these amendments: to correct the spelling of "Waston" to "Watson" from the election of EC Member-at-Large; change "purposed" to "proposed" on the first line of paragraph three of page five; remove the word "she" from the second line of the second paragraph on page 6; to change the word "though" to "through" on line 15 of the third paragraph of page 2.

*Marsh moved to approve the minutes with proposed changes. Russell seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.*

**Public Comment: None.**

**Committee Reports:**

**Finance:** Chair Marsh thanked former Chair Drennan for his service to the committee. Staff has reconciled, with documentation, all accounts except one. There is a solid list of assets as defined by DAS. Finances are looking good. Revenues are generally ahead of budget. We have a ratio of Assets to Liabilities of 1.62:1. We are close to the budget and categories that show variance is usually to the positive. There is lower capital investment than averaged in the past due to events that will be discussed by the Rest Area Committee. The Budget processes for the 2017- 2019 biennium have begun. Staff budget worksheets will be turned in at the end of September. There will be a management review in November before going to Council for review. Drennan noted that because of the reclassification of assets there was a large entry to our retained earnings of \$1,752,102.88; it was a prior period adjustment that does not affect income, but does affect capital account as of the July 1 statement.

**Heritage Trees:** Washington reported on the latest meeting of the Heritage Tree Committee. The committee met at Portland State University where Professor Catherine McNeur shared information on the course she developed using the Portland heritage trees. A new member was accepted to the committee, Nate Pedersen, representing Central Oregon. The committee's new chair is Arne Nyberg. At the last meeting the Drake Homestead Grove of Ponderosa Pines in Bend was accepted into the next class of Heritage Trees. The next meeting will be at the OTE offices, on October 14. Drennan asked if there were any Portland Heritage Trees that should be nominated for State Heritage trees. Von Domitz said that there are possibly a few, but the criteria for the two programs are very different. Our program focused on the historical connection and the city focuses more on beauty, size and visual significance.

Baldwin asked how the development of the programs metrics was going. Von Domitz said that metrics are being developed for the Heritage programs as a whole and that the first measure is on partner satisfaction by surveying our partners regarding the development process and ongoing value. Second, marker maintenance standards are on a five-year review. The third measure looks at partner and volunteer investment by recognizing sponsorships, in-kind investments and time. These would be compared to what it would cost for us to do the program without those donations. Lastly, public awareness and engagement would be measured by counting yearly nominations, how many brochures are handed out, website visits, speaking engagements and earned media.

Baldwin inquired if there was work being done to pursue new trees nominations. Von Domitz replied that the tree program will always have more limited available nominations because the trees have to exist, whereas markers can be created to interpret history of a location or event even if the physical presence is no longer there. The committee often talks about the importance of keeping the program relevant by not relaxing the standards just so there are trees to accept. If there comes a time nominations have stopped, the committee has discussed revisiting previously nominated trees, or public outreach. The Maynard Dawson award was created in part to ensure that even if there no nominations awarded in a year, there would always be an annual award to present.

Drennan asked if the Grove of the States had Heritage status. Von Domitz replied that once the Grove turns 50 it will become eligible and she is currently working on the nomination.

**Historical Markers:** Von Domitz reported that the next meeting will be November 4 in Arch Cape near Cannon Beach. The committee will meet with community group there who would like to help replace the Cannon Beach marker with a more modern interpretive panel for which they are working to secure a county grant. The current routed marker is in poor condition.

The Salemtowne volunteers just completed an extremely productive field trip to the Burns-Vale area on which they worked on 11 markers in three days. A new committee member, Kelly Cannon-Miller with the Deschutes Historical Society, has been appointed. The committee approved a first draft of the text for the Triple Nickles marker which will eventually be sent into Sea Reach for the design portion by the end of this month and is tentatively planned for a May dedication.

The committee is also taking on the project of revamping all of the Oregon Trail Kiosks in TIC rest areas along I-84. The Eastern Oregon Visitors Association is excited about it. A group including members from Portland State University and the Oregon Historical Society recommended putting together listening sessions and possibly a workshop at the next Heritage Conference to discern preferences for language and interpretation. Tribal members, historians and tourism groups will be invited. This is a long-term project that could take up to five years. OHS is interested in partnering with TIC, and they have greater access to funds and could help apply for grants. DeSouza asked if there was dedicated money in the Oregon Community Foundation. Von Domitz said yes and that we need to communicate with the Oregon Historical Trails Advisory Council as the organization that originally created the kiosks. While they no longer own the kiosks, they do have access to funding and we would like their support. Baldwin asked if this project would be something the interpretive wayside account could be used for. Pickett said that it was likely not. Watson asked to be kept informed and to be a part of local listening sessions. She also recommends reaching out to Travel Oregon. Russell noted that Jill Thorne was an active member in the kiosks creations. Drennan asked von Domitz to thank the Salemtowne volunteers for their amazing work.

**Rest Area:** Russell reported that the committee continues work on key performance measures, with external measures posted online before the beginning of the legislative session in February. DeSouza discussed possible reporting formats. The committee is focusing on five performance measures to best reflect the work the agency has been able to accomplish and the services provided. Marsh congratulated the staff on their willingness to work toward fact-based performance measurements.

Nash reported on his first round of inspections and the addition of regulatory compliance requirements. He completed his first ADA inspection at Tillamook.

Russell addressed two issues that have affected the Rest Area Committee's decisions to move forward with capital investments. The first is that staff has assured the committee that the rest areas

have been brought up to a condition that none of the rest areas have any major areas of concern. The second is ODOT's current lawsuit regarding ADA compliance. ODOT believes ADA improvements in rest areas would be triggered by other rest area improvements. DeSouza explained that parking lot improvements greater than a chip or slurry seal would trigger ramp upgrades up to the sidewalk. If a construction project is valued at \$150,000 dollars or more and requires a building permit, it would trigger an ADA upgrade of up to 25% of the project's cost. Baldwin clarified that improvements to a parking lot trigger upgrades from the lot to the sidewalk, but building projects trigger upgrades inside the building and out to the parking lot. Baldwin asked if the 25% includes the ADA necessities of the building, for example ADA accessible toilets and hand rails, or is the 25% on top of the standards required. Nash responded that any project would be required to meet current ADA standards, and we likely would be required to spend an additional 25% over the base project's cost on other ADA upgrades elsewhere within the rest area.

At the recommendation of the Finance Committee to spend down reserves in the Rest Area account, the committee is focusing on capital improvements. To date, completed capital projects total \$262,135. The total of pending projects is \$1,277,865. Russell spoke to the importance of addressing the parking lot improvements as soon as possible. The committee recommends going forward with all of the parking improvements which are estimated at \$518,000.

The Council and staff discussed the lack of capacity at Oak Grove and the need to expand. DeSouza said this would be a good opportunity to demonstrate TIC's stewardship of the rest area program. The existing restroom buildings on both sides cannot be expanded because of seismic requirements, and Nash estimates that the roof will fail within five years. Watson recommends taking a very intentional approach in choosing a replacement building design that would be replicable at other locations. Baldwin recapped that staff should consider a template that is flexible for all rest areas, contains design elements reflective of Oregon, be cost prudent, and have an energy efficient design. Nash recommended the project for the southbound rest area.

Each project advanced will be presented to the Council for approval.

**Executive:** Baldwin reported that the Executive Committee has not met since the last Council meeting. The cycle of the annual review of the executive director will begin the next quarter.

**Chair's Update:** Chair Baldwin gave an overview of the judge's opinion in the Walker case. Council reappointments and recruitment will likely recommence after the election. After the last TIC meeting, Baldwin said she was able to meet with the chairs of the Transportation Commission and the Tourism Commission to discuss items of mutual interest.

*Council broke at 10:45 a.m. Council resumed at 10:57 a.m.*

**Executive Director/Staff Reports:**

DeSouza reported on the agency's current legal cases. Staff are working with DOJ regarding cannabis-related signage applications for Oregon highways, seeking clarity on legal authority before granting or denying applications.

*Craig Campbell joined the meeting at 11:00 a.m.*

The rest area exclusion program is rapidly expanding statewide under the direction and training by OSP Lt. Steve Duvall. DeSouza updated the Council on a suspicious package sent to the office, and discussed protocols for working with State Police on such matters in the future. Staffing is stable. Gettings Creek and Cabin Creek have a new crew of supervisor and two specialists that is receiving excellent reports. Jeremy McQuain is reviewing positions descriptions, titles and classification for various positions, ensuring accuracy by location and specific job duties.

Regulatory compliance tracking and reporting duties have been centralized in Heather Swanson's position to ensure that every required report, test, and document is part of a database, along with due dates and status.

The agency's affirmative action plan has been completed and is in review. The public records policy is in final stages with the sole requested exception from the standard state retention schedule for the sign program to be able to hold applications for longer than required by state rule.

DeSouza discussed work to evaluate the agency's strategic plan status and intent to update the Council following further discussions with staff. The plan is for an update at the December TIC meeting and working on a fully updated strategic plan for next biennium. She updated the Council on current conversations with local DMOs, in particularity, Clackamas and Tillamook counties. Pickett updated the Council that field work for the Annual Review was done in one day and should be returned by the end of November.

Nash reported on lead testing done on drinking water at all rest areas; all of which were well below action levels. An outlier result at Deadman Pass which was still under the limit is being retested. ODOT reports that the Summit Ski Area lot can be plowed this winter, ensuring access and egress to the Government Camp Rest Area. DeSouza and Watson will meet with the US Forest Service permits supervisor regarding the longer-term status of that location. Vending in rest areas should be updated in the coming year with new machines and cashless technology; the Commission for the Blind received funding of about \$4 million to purchase new vending machines and are making rest area vending improvements a priority.

*Due to technical difficulties, Watson was unavailable by phone for a short time.*

Von Domitz reported that Grove of the States sponsorship efforts will advance now that the tree removal has completed. PGE has been presented with a proposal that they are considering and von

Domitz will meet with Jeff Stone at the Oregon Association of Nurseries in order to build a connection to its members. There has been some media interest. Von Domitz hopes to use this as a vehicle to drive smaller sponsorships. Russell asked if this would be by RFP. DeSouza said that since we are seeking multiple sponsors for the Grove and its components, it was a better approach to offer sponsorships at set-priced levels. However, overall sponsorship for the French Prairie southbound rest area would likely be offered as an RFP, as outlined in the FHWA-approved ODOT rules. Drennan asked if outside marketing help was being considered. Von Domitz responded that for the Grove she would be doing most of the marketing. In her conversations with Friends of Trees finding sponsorships for everything we want to do in a year time frame will be difficult. If that happens we would reduce the scope to the tree removal and the new tree planting. Additional sponsorships could be sought for paths, benches etc. after the August anniversary. Russell recommended contacting the Oregon Forestry Industries Council. Some of the larger timber owners may be interested.

Cheyne reported that the sign program's mile point review is complete and turned in to ODOT. A link was provided by ODOT to the live statistics so we will have current information for any new customers. ODOT should return its review by the end of the month. The database has been set up to take the information and compare it to its current numbers. It will print a report for any numbers that need to be changed. Cheyne is also compiling information to create a report on how much it would cost to replace our signs on their projected expiration dates, which would include the expiration dates of all signs, any new staff needed, training, extra equipment, cranes, licenses, etc. These numbers would be used to compare this cost verses the cost of using outside vendors.

Cheyne tasked John Hafner to begin LED light conversions at southbound French Prairie and Multnomah Falls kiosks. He will seek energy grants to fund the project. He also has been tasked to improve the windbreak at the Multnomah Falls kiosk.

**New Business:**

**Action/Voting items:**

Baldwin presented changes to the TIC Operating Procedures for the elections of TIC officers to align with a fiscal-year cycle.

*Russell moved to adopt the changes to the operating procedures as identified in the document presented by Chair Baldwin. Washington seconded. It was unanimously approved.*

**Agency Contracts: None.**

**Information/Policy Discussion:**

**Legislative Update:** Campbell discussed the agency's legislative concept, LC 575, which clarifies oversight of the executive director by the Council, defines roles, aligns council member terms with the fiscal year, and requires the staggering of terms. Russell asked if this had been approved they

the Governor's Office. DeSouza explained the approval process, and that final approval would not be until late 2016. Campbell discussed LC 320 regarding human trafficking awareness. It creates a fund inside the Treasury that would be used to produce and install anti-trafficking in the stalls of all rest areas operated by TIC, ODOT and OPRD. There also may be a "right to rest" bill similar to the one sponsored by Sen. Shields in 2015. Campbell reported that the transportation joint committee continues its work. It is not anticipated that we will see anything formal until after the elections. Measure 97 would provide some transportation-related revenues because any taxes on fuels are constitutionally required to go into the highway fund. Measure 97 does not address where those dollars would be spent.

*Chair Baldwin left the meeting at 11:54 a.m. The gavel was passed to Vice Chair Russell.*

**Legislative Planning:** Council will be updated on the status of the agency's concept and any movement towards sufficient and stable rest area funding inclusion in a transportation package or companion/alternate bill. The Executive Committee welcomes the input of all Council members on legislative matters.

**Other Business:**

Russell congratulated Snyder on the very positive *Willamette Week* review of his new restaurant in Cannon Beach.

**Adjourn:**

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, December 6, 2016 – Forest Grove area (in conjunction with the Oregon Tourism Commission).

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