

**Travel Information Council
Special Meeting with Public Hearing
Monday, April 30, 2012
Oregon Travel Experience Office
Salem, OR**

Council Participating:

Chair Drew Roslund, Hospitality Industry
George Forbes, Hospitality Industry
Tom Loun, Electrical Sign Industry
Mike Drennan, Member at Large
Secretary Rod Miles, Outdoor Advertising Industry

Vice Chair Steve Peterson, Member at Large
Sandy Flicker, Member at Large
Paul Mather, ODOT
Bob Russell, Vehicular Services
David Porter, Member at Large

Absent:

Maria Ponzi, Member at Large

Guests Present:

Stu Rasmussen, Mayor of Silverton, OR

OTE Staff Participating:

Cheryl Gribskov, CEO
Harry Falisec
Annie Von Domitz

Tim Pickett, CBO
Madeline MacGregor

Jim Renner
Jenn Smith

Acting Chair Miles called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM. He stated the meeting location of 1500 Liberty St. SE, Salem, OR. The purpose of the public hearing is to take testimony on the proposed increase to the schedule of annual permit fees.

Roll call

Miles verbally read the Council membership. All were present with the exception of Flicker, Ponzi and Porter. *Note: Flicker and Porter came into the meeting later.*

Overview

Gribskov gave an overview of the public hearing process and why the hearing was being held on April 30th. She informed the group that although a state agency, OTE makes its policy different from other agencies. OTE staff is not used as hearings officers. Instead Council members are the decision and policy makers. She reminded the Council that OTE had notified the 2378 customer that a fee change was being considered. Of those 2378, staff has received 45 customer responses. Some of the responses felt that a 20% increase was excessive during the current economic climate.

Gribskov said that staff is responding to the questions and helping the customers understand the cost of sign maintenance as well as how OTE is set up compared to other state's sign programs.

Public Hearing

Renner reviewed the public hearing process and what the requirements of statute and administrative rules. Gribskov asked if the required letter to customers and interested parties was mailed on March 29th. Renner confirmed that it was and because of that mail date, this meeting was being held 30 days after the assumption that customers and interested parties would have received the letter on March 30th.

Miles asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to present public testimony. No one stepped up to testify. Miles closed the public hearing at 9:15 am.

Proposed Permit Fee structure

Loun suggested staff look into an option of doing an increase now of 10% for businesses and 7% for non-profits. Additionally, another 10 % and 7% increase in two years and then again two years later. He suggested that the increases be stated in the contracts and then the customers could plan for it.

Forbes concurred that it would be a good idea to allow the customers the opportunity to plan for the increases.

Drennan commented that if you look at the fact that there hasn't been an increase since 2007, it amounts to only a 4% increase over the last 5 years.

Russell expressed concern about making a decision without more information. In addition he would like to tie depreciation and fee increases together. He suggested it is important to know the cost to put up the sign and maintenance costs. In addition he would like to know what kind of demand there is for space on the signs (waiting list).

Drennan expressed concern about taking depreciation on faster and that it will have a negative impact on the financial bottom line.

Flicker commented that it was important to have all the information they could with regard to our costs to justify the fee increase.

Loun asked if staff would be able to gather the information Russell was requesting. Pickett said that yes, staff would get them the information and it would take about a month.

Mather agreed gathering more information would be helpful in making a decision. In addition he supported the idea of a graduated increase.

Flicker asked whether delaying the decision would cause a problem for OTE. Gribskov said that no, it did not.

Roslund commented that as long as the Council stayed within the limits of the initial proposal for an increase, another public hearing would not be needed. Renner concurred, with the caveat that as long as it was done in a short time frame.

Petersen asked how close staff was to finishing the depreciation analysis. Pickett replied that the initial work is completed and the goal to have it completed would be the end of July.

Petersen also asked if this Council could obligate future Councils with the phased-in approach. Gribskov replied that new Council members would operate under the structure of their predecessors and then have an opportunity to review and change or alter it, if they so decide. Russell suggested it would be a good idea to ask DOJ for an opinion.

Flicker asked if the customers should be updated on where the Council was in the process. It was agreed they should be.

Gribskov introduced Stu Rasmussen, the mayor of Silverton.

Forbes made a motion to table the decision on a fee increase to allow Council more time to accomplish due diligence. In addition, staff will inform the sign customers in a timely manner the results of this meeting. Porter seconded the motion. Motion passed; Drennan opposed.

Other Business

Forbes requested information on timing on the Council appointments. Gribskov replied the process is in motion and ongoing.

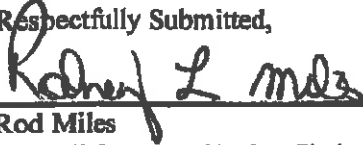
Gribskov thanked the Council members for attending.

Roslund thanked Miles for running the meeting.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 9:35 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rod Miles", written over a horizontal line.

Rod Miles
Council Secretary/Acting Chair