

Travel Information Council
Hood River County Library – Hood River, OR
Wednesday, September 24, 2014

Council Participating:

Gwenn Baldwin, Chair, 3rd Congressional District
Bob Russell, Vice Chair
Ed Washington

Charlotte Lehan, 5th Congressional District
Kathy Watson, 2nd Congressional District

Participating via Phone:

Mike Drennan, Member-at-Large

David Lohman, OTC Representative

Council Absent:

Danuta Pfeiffer, 4th Congressional District

OTE Staff Participating:

Kyle Walker, CEO
Jenn Smith, Executive Assistant
Diane Cheyne, Sign Operations Director
Heather Wyland, Chief Rules & Policy Advisor

Tim Pickett, COO
Jason Nash, Rest Area Operations Manager
Angelique M. Goldschmidt, Chief Human Resources Manager
Annie von Domitz, Chief Community Assets Officer

Guests:

Craig Campbell, Victory Group

The meeting was called to order by Chair Baldwin at 8:32 am.

- A) **Introductions:** Council and staff introduced themselves.
- B) **June 27, 2014 minutes:** Russell made a motion to accept the minutes with the discussed changes. Washington seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- C) **Public Comment:** Baldwin called for any public comment – there was not any.
- D) **Finance Committee:** Pickett reviewed the July financial report. He stated that the financial picture is stronger. Current wages are under budget due to positions being held open. The higher amount in operating costs is due to the newly acquired I-5 rest areas.
- Watson asked what is done with past due or non-pay accounts. Pickett said it depended on the account, but most are pre-paid. She also asked what the Integrated Marketing revenue was made up of. Pickett said it was from the Info Centers and Kiosks.
- Drennan asked how the trucks for the new Rest Areas were purchased. Pickett said they were paid for and the line item for the truck purchase is for the Sign Crew truck.
- Watson asked if staff was able to do a seasonal budget. Pickett replied that the goal was to be able to do this by the next budget process.
- E) **Sign Truck Purchase:** Cheyne requested Council approve up to \$45,000 to purchase a 2014 Dodge Cab Chassis for the Sign Program. Pickett noted that it would be paid for with cash and not financed. Russell made the motion; Watson 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

F) Oak Grove Systems Upgrade: Nash reviewed the need for restoring the integrity of the septic at the Oak Grove rest area and bring it into compliance. The walls around the current system will be repaired, new pea gravel and the use of “super bugs” to keep the pea gravel clean. Russell made a motion to approve an expenditure of up to \$140,000 to cover the cost to restore the integrity of the septic system at the Oak Grove rest area; Drennan 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

G) Adoption of Legislative Agenda: Walker presented the Legislative Agenda. She stated that staff and Campbell have been working on Legislative Concepts. Also, having met with Matt Garrett (ODOT), it appears that OTE and ODOT may be able to amend the inter-agency agreement. Walker announced that Pfeiffer has agreed to be the “face of the agency” with Legislators when needed.

Campbell reviewed the pre-session process. He has taken two concepts – changing the number of members of the Travel Information Council and some technical issues with the free coffee program – and sent them to Legislative Council. This resulted in LC1149. LC1149 also has a relating to clause in case there is a need to address the funding issue. Drennan asked who would be sponsoring the bill; Campbell said it would most likely be Representatives Huffman and Read and Senators Thomsen and Courtney.

Russell asked if there was any knowledge of the Oregon Rehabilitation Association trying to force OTE to use their members. He suggested that the Council develop a policy in regard to that issue. Walker noted that staff will be watching that issue carefully and requested that Council have a policy in place in the case that the issue arises.

Russell made a motion to approve LC1149; ask Campbell and staff to pursue stable funding legislatively and/or through inter-agency agreement and preserve flexibility in purchases and services. Washington 2nd; motion passed unanimously.

Staff requested clarification on authority and process during the Legislative Session. Russell made a motion that the Council adopt the following policy regarding Legislative activity: 1) it is the Council’s responsibility to set legislative policy and direction; 2) the lobbyist is instructed in all cases to maintain communication with the CEO; 3) in the event that it is not possible to convene a telephonic or other type of meeting with the full Council, the Executive Committee is authorized to act for the full Council within the policy parameters that have already been established by Council; if the Executive Committee is not available, Campbell and Walker will contact Baldwin. If Baldwin is not available, then Campbell and Walker will contact Russell. If there are any new policies that are introduced in the Legislature that would impact the agency, a meeting of the full Council will need to take place. Washington 2nd; motion passed unanimously.

H) Administrative Sign Rules: Cheyne reviewed the process for the Rules changes noting that Council approval was the last step in the process. She also told the Council that there are several locations ready to go. Russell made a motion to adopt the Sign Rules as presented; Lehan 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

I) Sign Fee Schedule: Cheyne reviewed the process to this point including that all customers have been notified of the potential change. Cheyne suggested Council approve the proposed fee schedule with all the Schedule 6 amounts reduced by \$12 which would result in a reduction of \$15,703 in gross annual sign revenues (Option 1). She said the loss should be recouped by doing double boards.

Russell asked about the agency responses to the customers. Cheyne said she only responded with a letter to Senator Whitsett and the Small Business Advocate, the others she thanked for their comments and informed them they would be in the packets for the Council members to review.

Watson expressed concern about making sure we can justify the rate increases this close to a Legislative session. It is possible the customers may start discussing this with their Legislators and how will we address the issue. Cheyne said the flyer was sent to all Legislators. Cheyne commented that some of the issues would be mitigated by approving her suggested Option 1.

Russell stated he was not comfortable taking action at this meeting because the recommended action would reduce the agencies income and the negative feedback received, and the Sign Fee Committee had not reviewed the presented structure. He recommended that the issue go to a Council committee to take a look at the fees and the issues and bring to the next meeting.

Baldwin suggest it should be an ad hoc committee including Pfeiffer, Russell, Drennan, Cheyne, Pickett and Wyland.

Russell made a motion to table the sign fee proposal and have the ad hoc committee make recommendations at the next Council meeting; Washington 2nd. Baldwin, Russell, Lehan, Watson, Washington, Lohman approved. Drennan voted no. Motion passed.

J) Performance Management: Walker gave a Power Point presentation on the new performance management system put in place for OTE employees.

K) Strategic Plan Update: Walker gave a Power Point presentation on the updates and progress of the Strategic Plan.

Wyland presented the draft concept and policy for the Sponsorship Program. She asked that any ideas or questions be sent to her as soon as possible.

L) Sign Customer Report: Cheyne presented the quarterly report. Russell asked about the comment that “installation was difficult”. Cheyne said this was mostly due to production.

M) Committee Reports: Lehan gave an update on the Historical Marker Committee and Washington on the Heritage Tree Committee.

Baldwin gave an update on the Executive Committee and presented the minutes from the most recent meeting.

N) Other Announcements: Walker said staff was still working on a facilitator for the Council retreat. The two suggested facilitators were not available, but were checking on a third suggested by Drennan.

O) Next Meeting: Smith announced the next meeting scheduled is December 11, 2014 and will take place at the OTE office in Salem. Watson said she will be out of the country but will try to call in.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 1:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Watson
Secretary