



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

MINUTES
Oregon Travel Information
Council Quarterly Meeting – June 12, 2017

OTE Administration Offices, 1500 Liberty St. SE, Suite 150, Salem, OR 97302

Council Members:

Gwenn Baldwin, Chair

Kathy Watson, Secretary

Ed Washington

Ryan Snyder

Bob Russell, Vice Chair

Mike Marsh

Bob Garcia

Kenji Sugahara

Excused:

David Lohman

OTE Staff:

Nancy DeSouza, Executive Director

Tim Pickett, Operations Director

Jason Nash, Rest Area Division Administrator

Jessica Carbone, Office Assistant

Heather Swanson, Rest Area Operations Manager

Diane Cheyne, Field Operations Division Administrator

Annie von Domitz, Heritage and Community Assets Manager

Guests:

Craig Campbell, Victory Group; Mike Drennan

Convening: The public meeting of the Travel Information Council was called to order by Chair Baldwin at 10:00 a.m. Baldwin noted attendance for the record.

Approval of Minutes: The following corrections were proposed for the March 17, 2017 minutes; correcting “thought” to “through” in line six and correcting “lead” to “led” in line seven under Sign Program; removing the “a” from line three from March’s motion to publish the 2017-19 budget for public comment. Russell moved to accept the minutes as amended. Marsh seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: None.

Receive Public Testimony: There were no public comments submitted.

Committee Reports:

Finance: Marsh said the biggest questions deal with rest area funding. There is an ongoing question about the future costs to keep Manzanita open as well as unanswered questions of how future funding will be handled in the legislative session. Operations and Capital are looking good. Assets to Liability is 1.55 to 1, Debt to Equity is 1.8 to 1, with only two accounts more than 60 days past due. Revenues are good and slightly ahead of budget. There is \$2.2 million in unrestricted cash. Three major projects – Manzanita, Deadman Pass and Gettings Creek – are slightly over budget, but are being closely watched. Operational Costs are at or under budget.

Heritage Tree Committee: Washington said the Heritage Tree Committee will next meet in Bend on July 11, 2017, at the Deschutes Historical Society. The next day, the Annual Heritage Tree Dedication will be held in Drake Park to induct the Drake Grove and the Harrington Wagon Road Trail of Trees. He invites members of the Council to attend both this and the Grove of the States dedication August 28, 2107.

Historical Marker Committee: Washington told the Council of the committee's recent trip to Cave Junction for the Triple Nickles marker dedication. It was a great success. There is hope to install a sister marker in Pendleton. The committee developed text for the Cannon Beach Marker and will begin developing the graphics. The goal is to have the marker installed by spring of 2018. Garcia volunteered to serve on the Historical Marker Committee. The committee is also looking to fill two remaining open positions with volunteers with a background in history and strong writing skills.

Rest Area Committee: Russell said that the committee has been spending a lot of time on rest area capital improvement projects. The Manzanita sewer project has been on the top of the list. There was a Special TIC meeting to authorize spending up to \$160,000. They also are working on paving contracts for Boardman and Santiam. Swanson said both contracts had just passed legal sufficiency, so things are moving forward. There are uncommitted funds of \$232,323. Funds are sufficient to continue work on all planned capital improvement and maintenance projects. Nash completed the annual inspection of the rest areas. Nash's inspections will be expanded to include more in-depth structural and mechanical evaluations to be better able to anticipate maintenance needs in the rest areas.

Executive Committee: Baldwin said the committee had not met since the last Council meeting. She does not anticipate a meeting until the next cycle of Executive Director's review process, unless needed for a decision due to the Transportation Package currently in the Legislature.

Chair's Update: Baldwin welcomed new Council member Bob Garcia. He will serve on the Historical Marker Committee. Sugahara will serve on the Rest Area Committee. Because the Legislature is in the final weeks, things are moving quickly, with little notice and with a lot of fluidity.

Executive Directors/Staff Reports:

Overview/ Updates:

- DeSouza reported HB 2325, which staggers terms of appointment to the TIC and clarifies its authority over the Executive Director and the agency has passed. The change becomes effective January 1, 2018, and on June 30, 2018, all appointments will expire, and the Governor's Office will make appointments to new terms of one-to-four years in length. Current members are eligible for reappointment.
- Pickett and DeSouza meet with ODOT tomorrow; topics include ADA compliance and pending legislation.
- FHWA provided an official response to a question regarding the posting of cannabis signage on the highways. They are prohibiting such signage, with the threat of reducing Federal Highway dollars by up to 10% for failure to comply. How appeals to that decision are handled are an ongoing topic of conversation with DOJ and ODOT.
- The August 21 solar eclipse will greatly increase highway traffic and five of the TIC rest areas are in the path of totality. OTE is included in statewide planning meetings led by the Office of Emergency Management to ensure the state is prepared. Staff are developing plans to handle multiple problem scenarios including how to meet high user demand in the rest area, delays in emergency response, communications, and illegal camping.
- The parking lot for Summit Ski Area at Government Camp continues to fail, and likely will not be plowed by ODOT as a Sno-Park this coming winter. DeSouza and Watson are seeking a meeting with the USFS leadership to discuss options.
- There are no active lawsuits other than the Walker case now in the Oregon Court of Appeals.
- Travel Oregon completed their new branding efforts and we will continue to seek assistance in moving OTE branding to something more reflective of our role in providing the infrastructure for tourism efforts through our rest areas, kiosks, signs and heritage programs.
- The annual staff performance evaluation process is complete, and the agency has documented both the positive actions by staff and reflected areas needing improvement in the individual evaluations. Overall, staff performance is excellent, and continues to get stronger as expectations are defined and articulated, with accountability systems in place.
- The accounting team quickly identified serious overspending on a capital project by a rest area supervisor, and that employee has been dismissed.
- DeSouza continues to represent small agencies and semi-independents on the steering committee to implement the Governor's Executive Order on information security.

Sign Program: Cheyne reported the Sign Program is moving along very nicely. Two more capital projects were completed before the end of the fiscal year, with the program 100% on track for what was planned. New applications continue to arrive weekly. The program is dealing with a possible shortage of waterproof plywood for signs until the sole manufacturer resumes work in September.

Staff and the Ad Hoc Sign Fee & Rules Committee continue work on performance measures that include customer satisfaction, overall program responsiveness, time spent on the waitlist, service space, and measuring program assets. Russell asked for clarification on what makes a customer on the wait list “serviceable” or “non-serviceable.” When a customer is waiting for a space on a sign that cannot be expanded to include additional spaces that customer is “non-serviceable.” A “serviceable” customer is one who, with additional capital investment into the expansion of a sign, could receive a space. Snyder recommended clarifying the information to just show total customers served. Pickett said the information could be combined to provide clearer information.

Baldwin left the meeting at 11:05a.m. and returned at 11:11 a.m.

After discussion of how having to contract out large and remote sign installations across the state affects the amount of time to post our signs, the group discussed the costs to expand staff and equipment to bring all installations in-house. Currently, that would be cost prohibitive. Cheyne clarified that installation information will be provided in the performance measures. Baldwin said that if Cheyne noted any recurring themes, that that information should be provided.

Rest Area Program: Nash gave his findings from the latest round of rest area inspections. The overall target for the inspections is a 4 out of 5. Last year the inspections rated an overall 2.83/5 and this year 2.98/5. He feels the latest inspections reflected the harsh winter recovery. This second round also includes additional topics such as JHA (Job Hazard Analysis), necessary permits/contracts and additional structural maintenance. Swanson is planning the next rest area training/meeting for September. Nash provided a list of all ADA upgrades completed since Council’s approval of the primary \$85,000 expenditure. Upgrades are at 70% completion.

- **Oak Grove Expansion** - We expect the 100% plans from the engineer soon, which will then go to ODOT for approval, the contract to DOJ for legal sufficiency, and then an invitation to bid will be issued. The successful bid will come before Council for approval.
- **Manzanita Sewer System** – This project should be completed by the end of the month. There will be discussion with the Three Rivers School District about the cost of removing additional waste from the lagoon and a reevaluation of the IGA with ODOT. Russell asked if the new system will increase the maintenance fees for service. Pickett said yes, because of costs to pump the tank.
- **Boardman/Santiam Paving Projects** – Both contracts have cleared DOJ for legal sufficiency. Once bidders are selected, these contracts will require Council approval.
- **Weatherby** – No bids were received for this sealcoat; staff likely will grind and overlay patch instead.
- **Deadman Pass** – The well reopening project continues with discussions with the contractor and the tribe regarding boring versus trenching.
- **Gettings Creek Landscaping Equipment** – Purchased, with cost recovery on this equipment estimated at one year of savings from not contracting for the work.
- **French Prairie Northbound On-ramp** – The bidding process has not begun for this project, but the area has been completely patched.

Heritage Programs: Von Domitz said that the Oregon Trail Kiosks project is in the process of building relationships with interested parties. All panels will be replaced, starting over to include expanded stories of all the peoples who had a part in the Oregon Trail period. 175th anniversary of the Oregon Trail is next year. Von Domitz hopes to coordinate a workshop at next year's Heritage Conference to help determine content. The cost of a second Triple Nickles marker in Pendleton is estimated at \$4,800; installation by our sign crew bringing the cost to just over \$5,000. She hopes to have this installed by next spring.

The Grove of the States work continues. The Oregon Department of Forestry is holding two trees until they are big enough to be planted and three trees remain to be sourced. The team is researching ADA-accessible pathway options. Bids to date range from \$23,000 to \$43,000. She is negotiating a donation by the Oregon Landscape Contractors Association as a possible student project in the fall. This means the paths would not be installed in time for the dedication in August, but would be a great way to save money and get students involved. Cash sponsorships have been difficult to procure, but in-kind contributions are strong. So far we have received \$9,600 in tree sponsorships, \$27,808 in in-kind sponsorships and have spent \$38,000.

DeSouza recognized Annie von Domitz as an Ambassador of Public Service, selected by the Governor for her excellence and dedication to public service to the people of Oregon. She was a guest of honor at a reception at Mahonia Hall in May.

The Council recessed for lunch at 12:03 p.m. Council resumed at 1:00 p.m.

New Business:

Action/Voting Items:

- **Sign Fee Review and Recommendations for Public Comment:** After the discussion of adding a seventh band to the top of the sign fee structure, the Ad Hoc Sign Fee and Rules Committee and staff recommend maintaining the existing structure of six bands with a 3% increase for the next year. Council discussed splitting the additional revenue generated between the Sign Program and the Historical Markers Program. Staff asked the Council to consider the adoption of a late payment fee to discourage repeated missing of renewal deadlines, which creates significant work for staff. Staff will research and recommend a flat fee or percentage fee to Council at the September meeting.

Russell made a motion to accept the proposed sign fee increase of 3% for fiscal year 2017-18, to have staff send notice of the proposed fee changes to each business with a sign permit and to all interested parties and to consider adoption of a late fee for customers who are not timely with payments. Watson seconded the motion. Snyder commented that even with the increase, the Sign Program is one of the most affordable types of advertising available. The motion was unanimously approved.

Lohman joined the meeting at 1:49 p.m.

- **2017 – 19 Biennial Budget Adoption:** Staff recommends that Council approve the proposed budget. This budget assumes the current budget will continue at \$6.55 million; sign fee revenue will continue to increase; personnel will continue at current levels along with 2% annual COLAs and an annual merit pool of 3%; PERS costs will increase as announced; and operating costs will continue at normal inflation. Watson asked if this budget includes funding for the capital improvement of the Northbound side of Oak Grove. Pickett replied it does not.

Marsh moved to adopt the 2017-19 budget as proposed. Russell seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Campbell joined the meeting at 1:25 p.m.

Agency contracts/Agreements:

- **Sign Maintenance and Installation Contract Renewal:** Staff recommends Council Approval of the extension with Coral Construction. There was discussion of a recommendation from DOJ to change the current contract to a price agreement at the next renewal.

Russell moved to extend the contract with Coral Construction with Amended Not to Exceed. Watson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

- **Sign Program Truck Purchase:** Staff recommends that Council approve a \$46,703 expenditure to purchase a 2017 Dodge 3500 Crew Chassis 4x4, fit with a flat bed, four boxes, roto beams and accessories. The chassis is \$40,503. The flat bed is four boxes installed is \$4,820. The roto beams and additional expenses will cost \$750.

Watson made the motion to approve the planned capital expense of spending \$46,703 to purchase a 2017 Dodge cab chassis and improvements. Marsh seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

- **Extension of IAA with ODOT for Sign Program:** Staff requests Council's permission to extend the IAA for six months to discuss potential changes including how to address challenged sign denials based on an ODOT/FHWA decisions.

Garcia made a motion to extend the existing IAA with ODOT for six months. Washington seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

- **Election of Officers for 2017-18:**
The proposed slate of nominations:

- Bob Russell - Chair
- Ed Washington - Vice Chair
- Kathy Watson - Secretary
- Gwenn Baldwin - Member at Large

Garcia made a motion that nominations be closed. Marsh seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Information/Policy Discussion:

Legislative Update: Campbell discussed major issues at the end of the session. It is still unknown whether the Legislature will move through some of the remaining major issues including PERS reform, general revenue reform, the health care/Medicare/Medicaid shortfall, and a transportation funding package. SB 375, the anti-human trafficking bill, is on its way to Ways and Means and likely will have a vote at the end of the week. SB 61, which adds TIC to the list of agencies working with the Office of Emergency Management for emergency preparedness, has been passed and signed.

Other Business: None.

Other Announcements:

- August 28, 2017 – Grove the States Dedication

2017 TIC Quarterly Meeting Schedule and Locations:

- September 25, 2017 – Pendleton, Oregon
- December 11, 2017 – Portland Area

Adjourn: 1:53 p.m.

Next Meeting: Monday, September 25, 2017 – Oxford Suites, Pendleton, Oregon.