



# Oregon Travel Information Council

1500 Liberty Street SE, Suite 150  
Salem, Oregon 97302

Minutes – Rest Area Committee  
OTE Offices, Salem  
Thursday, August 3, 2017

**Members Participating:**

Bob Russell, Mike Marsh, Ed Washington, Kathy Watson (by phone)

**Members Excused:**

Ryan Snyder, Kenji Sugahara

**OTE Staff Participating:**

Nancy DeSouza, Executive Director; Tim Pickett, Operations Director; Jason Nash, Rest Area Division Administrator, Heather Swanson, Rest Area Operations Manager

Chair Russell's arrival was delayed; the meeting of the Travel Information Council Rest Area Committee was called to order by DeSouza at 10:06 a.m.

**Executive Director Update:**

**Eclipse Planning:** DeSouza reported that planning and staffing for the August 21 eclipse is progressing well. Led by the Office of Emergency Management, cooperation is high at the federal, state and local levels. ODOT is well prepared for the projected influx of travelers on the highways, with kudos to ODOT Emergency Preparedness Manager Greg Ek-Collins for his inclusion of our rest areas in their planning. TIC rest area preparations are nearing completion, with additional supplies ordered, and staffing schedules set to cover additional shifts and double-staffing depending on location of the rest area. Some Sign Crew staff will be deployed to rest areas. We expect increased staffing costs for overtime and fill-in workers, supplies and other capacity-driven costs. Posters and handouts will explain rest area rules to eclipse travelers promoting cooperation and safety. Nash and Swanson added that they are working to ensure staff are well prepared and safe, particularly since law enforcement may not be readily available during the eclipse period. DeSouza reported that Memaloose supervisor Bryce Guske has resigned and we have grouped that rest area with Government Camp, with John Garmon to serve as supervisor of both, reducing our net number of supervisors from 10 to 9. The .6 FTE Specialist position at Government Camp will be increased to full-time with the current employee.

**Governor's Executive Orders:** Semi-independents are exempt from the hiring freeze. We await word from DAS as to whether legislative action during the 2017 session will require any travel reductions/restrictions.

*Chair Russell joined the meeting at 10:30 a.m.*

## Business Meeting:

- **Minutes:** Marsh moved to approve the May 5, 2017 minutes as submitted. Washington seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.
- **2017-19 Biennial Budget Revisions & Planning Post-HB 2017:** Pickett reported that agency structure, rest area staffing and strategies are under review, which must be completed prior to recommending necessary budget modifications for FY 2018-19. New rest areas and revenues will change the budget significantly. We are looking at the macro restructure at the agency level, and at the micro level for how we onboard the new rest areas and staff as we move to implementing HB 2017 in July 2018.

DeSouza noted that there is an inflation factor for our current rest areas in the funding authorized by HB 2017, and that funding is no longer tied to the DMV Convenience Fee. She discussed central administration's groundwork for these changes, including planning, project prioritization, succession planning and reworking the agency budget. Proposed personnel changes will first go to the TIC Executive Committee and then to the full Council for approval. Current plans are to hire an assistant director to lead the Rest Area overall program and the oversight of capital maintenance and improvement projects. Nash and Swanson would report directly to this position, with Swanson taking a larger project management role in the division; she would continue to report to Pickett on her contracts and procurement duties.

At TIC leadership's direction, DeSouza and Pickett are working on job analysis questionnaires and descriptions for their two positions and for the Assistant Director position. These will be analyzed by the agency's contracted consultant, HR Answers, to develop position descriptions and market-based salary ranges. Results will go first to the Executive Committee for their review and then to the full Council for approval and inclusion in any changes to the budget. Following this, we will restart the overall class/comp review of the remaining positions in the agency. This may result in several stages of budget revisions for personnel costs as the agency moves through fiscal year 2017-18, culminating in the hiring of staff for the new rest areas and the added Central Office workload.

DeSouza explained that HB 2017 shifts Highway Fund transfers to the agency from a calendar year to a fiscal year cycle, leaving a six-month gap when the current transfer period ends December 31, 2017. On January 2, 2018, the bill transfers \$3.33 million, a slight increase from the \$3.275 million that would have been transferred at the prior rate; this will require a budget change at the December TIC meeting to reflect the \$55,000 increase in revenue for the remainder of the fiscal year. She walked through the addition of rest areas on July 1, 2018 and July 1, 2019 with their related funding.

The capital maintenance and improvement funds provided in the bill were based on the agency's prior plans for our existing rest areas, information from OPRD for their three transferring locations, and OTE's estimates of capital costs for the ODOT rest areas to be transferred, as they did not provide us with that information. These were our best estimates based on Nash's survey of current and to-be-added rest areas for components including paving, which at some locations would need to be done more than once in the 10-year funding period, with a conservative estimate of inflation over the decade.

This cost estimate information was submitted by rest area to the Legislature, which they used to set a schedule to significantly front-load improvements to the rest areas that would both ensure the rest areas are fully functional and that travelers would see significant aesthetic improvements quickly. DeSouza pointed out that no funding is being shifted from OPRD to fund the transfers of their rest areas to TIC. DeSouza noted that there may need to be some individual and small-group meetings in between committee and Council meetings to discuss and advance plans as they develop. There also will need to be revisions to the IAA with ODOT prior to July 1, 2018. There are no reporting requirements to the Legislature until September 2018, but we will provide information as requested before that date. OTC representation on the TIC when Lohman transitions off is yet to be determined by OTC Chair Baney.

### **Rest Area Capital Projects & Other Projects**

- **Current Available Funding & Commitments:** Pickett noted the updated status of funds for the rest areas based on June 30, 2017 numbers. Residual available funds have increased partly because Santiam paving came in below initial estimates. The program is in healthy shape, with continued growth month-over-month. DeSouza said the Council may want to revisit the amount of the agency reserve currently set at \$750,000 in light of the 10-year capital funds allocated by the Legislature for rest areas. Swanson confirmed that both Santiam and Boardman paving projects should be completed this year. Russell asked about planning for the next capital project list, and DeSouza said discussions are happening internally, and will need to be reviewed by the Rest Area Committee as they develop. For example, there is now sufficient funding to rebuild both sides of Oak Grove. It may be cost effective to seek bids for both on the same contract, even if Southbound is started this fiscal year and Northbound begun after July 1, when the capital dollars are transferred.

Staff supports an ambitious schedule of facility cosmetic upgrades to replace aging restroom interiors, update exteriors, and other improvements. Washington asked about the scope of such upgrades, and DeSouza explained that many interiors are shabby, worn and patched, despite staff's best efforts to maintain them on tight budgets. Nash estimates it will cost approximately \$10,000 per rest area building to strip and renovate interiors to the design specifications adopted for Oak Grove's interior.

Russell noted the prior agency strategic plan called for a "National Park-model" type of aesthetic that wasn't feasible. He would like to see the strategic planning effort to reengage Council to provide more policy direction to the staff for planning. He sees the strategic plan being 5-10 pages as a policy document to provide long-term direction to the staff on priorities and where the agency should go. DeSouza said that this is a regular topic with agency management, and that the next strategic plan needs to encompass more than just rest areas and include the Sign Program and Heritage Programs. Russell said the urgency is with the rest areas, and he would like to start with the Council and their vision, and then the staff could fill in the blanks. DeSouza noted that operational elements need to include items on how to upgrade or replace aging buildings that are still structurally viable, multiple paving projects, and possible expansions of truck parking. There will need to be prioritization for the available funds over the next decade. Russell would like to confirm that Council

is still comfortable with their decision that the Oak Grove design remain the template for future work. Russell also noted that the portable offices do not convey a good image and should be replaced now that we have stable funding for the long term. Marsh agreed. DeSouza noted that staff has discussed this, and Oregon Corrections Enterprises has a very efficient design already used by OPRD that could be revised for OTE use and adapted to our specific sites. Marsh is concerned that plans from Council ensure that we are getting the best input from the staff and a feeling of empowerment and direction. Russell said he would see broad participation by key staff in a facilitated day-long meeting.

Nash said that Eastern Oregon restrooms are generally in better shape than those in the valley. Russell noted that the OPRD structures will require significant work. DeSouza said that at Peter Skene Ogden, in addition to building renovations, there will need to be significant ADA upgrades to the building, parking and pathways. Watson said that non-profits that want to participate in the Free Coffee Program could be well served by upgraded offices that include water service.

Russell asked if the next step to launch this is a discussion at the September Council meeting. DeSouza noted that there are so many moving parts, there will need to be an Executive Committee meeting to discuss the structure of the agency so we can recruit for the Assistant Director position, and a preliminary approval of the budget changes at the September TIC meeting. In response to a question from Russell, DeSouza said that the Executive Director position description would require approval by the Executive Committee, but that it may not require an in-person meeting, if they choose to hold an email meeting. DeSouza expressed the importance of Council being invested in those decisions.

- **Gettings Creek Testing/DEQ:** Nash reported that in 2014, TIC took over management of this rest area and the ODOT contractor for water testing (Orenco) was continued by OTE for two years. No issues were noted, because Orenco was to file the reports with DEQ and did not provide copies to the agency. Not having the permit at the time, Nash said required monthly tests by staff of the fresh water well were not completed as required from June through October each year. The warning letter shows the agency missed seven of the 15 required tests. The agency also exceeded the permitted amounts of waste water several times. Nash questions the accuracy of the flow levels listed by Orenco with unexplained wide variances. We also weren't notified of effluent testing problems. Oregon Water now has the contract, and discovered several errors in the system designed by Orenco, including problems with pumps, filtering curtains and other issues.

ODOT and Oregon Water joined OTE supervisors in a walk-through to examine the system and renew the permit. Overall the system is in decent shape, and the violations are being corrected. Pumps will need to be replaced and the system cleaned. Swanson will now be copied on all reports. Russell asked why that wasn't already happening; Swanson said that has been corrected, and all permits are entered into the database with required testing and results being actively administered. There remains a need for the Operations & Maintenance plan required by the permit that was developed by ODOT, but had not been provided to OTE. This led to a lack of knowledge and understanding by staff, which we believe to be resolved. Russell wants to ensure that all reports of non-compliance are immediately known by leadership. There are no penalties by DEQ if we achieve

compliance, which is nearly complete. Nash and Swanson assured that future rest area transfers will include this information. Marsh asked about holding Orenco responsible for violations on their watch. Pickett will investigate possible legal recourse for the failures of the contractor.

Washington asked about the Deadman Pass DEQ issue, and its resolution, which is complete. Pickett noted that there are five rest area locations currently operating under DEQ permits. Marsh asked staff for a commitment that there are no additional existing issues coming systemwide; Nash committed that there would be none from current rest areas. DeSouza discussed how we will evaluate the new rest areas coming on in the six months prior to transfer.

- **Action Item: Cabin Creek Light Circuits:** Nash described the failed and failing light poles that have been replaced, and that the local inspector determined the conduit for the electrical was too corroded to use as the ground for the system, and required that we trench back to the electrical box for the light poles and the kiosk. DeSouza asked the committee to authorize requesting the full Council to approve an additional \$12,500, bringing the total project expense to \$31,200. Marsh moved approval. Washington seconded. The committee voted unanimously in favor.

*Kathy Watson left the meeting at 11:30 a.m.*

- **Charles Reynolds Sewer System:** Pickett explained the issue of the sewer line failing under I-84. DeSouza said that it will be a significant cost to repair, but the dollar amount is undetermined. Nash described the freeze-thaw cycle causes heaving and more frequent problems along I-84. ODOT is aware of the issue, and we are seeking their approval of repairs that will pull new piping through the failing pipe's pathway, with cleanouts as required on either side of the highway. The first rough estimate of cost is approximately \$59,000; Pickett said we are seeking additional information and estimates. Bids will be sought with scope of work to bring before Council.
- **Manzanita Sewer Project:** Pickett reported the project is complete. The original vault is closed. The Three Rivers School district accepted the repairs. We continue discussions with them on how to measure flow and on costs and timeline for dredging the pond. Russell asked if rate negotiations would result in higher costs. DeSouza explained that is why we want a flow meter installed before beginning rate negotiations, so we can determine costs. Our overall costs will increase because of the need to pump the new tank.
- **Oak Grove Rebuild:** Pickett said that Branch Engineering reports some possible savings by contracting for rebuilding both sides on the same contract, although the actual construction would happen at different times. Adapting the existing Southbound design for the Northbound side will cost approximately \$10,000. Staff will ask Council to consider how they wish to pursue the second side. DeSouza explained that we have funds in this budget for Southbound, and will have sufficient funds transferred on July 1, 2018 for the Northbound side. We could retain some economies of scale and expedite ODOT's approval of the plans by doing them together. Russell confirmed it was Council's intent that both sides be replaced as funding permitted, and the work should be sequential to avoid shutting both sides at the same time. Pickett confirmed that staff would proceed with the combined proposal.

- **Santiam & Boardman Parking Lot Resurface:** Pickett credited Swanson on her work creating the Invitations to Bid. Swanson said there was a learning curve with DOJ legal sufficiency review as public works projects, but the process is getting smoother. The Santiam bid has closed with the successful bidder being below budget estimates. The Boardman bid will close on August 14. With Council's approval, work should be completed this fall. DeSouza said that there will need to be separate TIC meetings by email to approve these two projects, so we don't hold up Santiam waiting for Boardman.
- **DEQ Supplemental Environmental Project Status:** Nash and Pickett reported the project is complete and the matter is closed.
- **Deadman Pass Well:** Nash said the bids are coming in, including the trenching and plumbing from the well to the hub for the cistern and installation of the pump. Permit paperwork is being completed, and we are working with the tribe on how to best meet their cultural preservation requirements.
- **ADA Mitigation:** Nash said projects continue, including hand dryer replacements. Most of the smaller items are complete and he is looking at some of the bigger projects. Pickett said we will report completion to ODOT for their tracking database/compliance matrix required by the settlement agreement. Russell reported that many ODOT projects are significantly increasing in costs because of ADA requirements, so we should be prepared. Nash said ADA-compliant curb cut outs is our most significant issue at this point.
- **Grove of the States Project Update:** DeSouza reminded that all are invited to the rededication on August 28 at 1:00 p.m. AG Rosenblum will speak, and we await response from the Governor. A significant element to be determined is the ADA pathways, and von Domitz is working on an in-kind sponsorship with the Oregon Association of Landscape Contractors. She is working on all other aspects of signage, markers, and additional plantings, as well as continuing to seek sponsors. Russell committed to providing potential sponsor contacts to von Domitz.
- **Government Camp Update:** Staff and Councilor Watson met with USFS Forest Ranger Bill Westbrook and Permit Manager Scott Kaden. After touring the site, the group discussed options, and DeSouza explained the restrictions on the use of highway funds and agency other funds for repair work on the Summit Ski Area lot. We expressed willingness to look at eventual relocation of the entire rest area; USFS suggested Frog Lake as a more suitable rest area location for both trucks and buses. Those conversations will continue. USFS will coordinate efforts to repair the lot to ODOT minimal Sno-Park plowing standards for this winter, and we will discuss the long-term options. Westbrook committed to prevent the Summit permit holder from manually blocking access to the rest area. With the Governor's Office support, if the Summit lot is not plowed, we are prepared for intermittent rest area closures this winter. DeSouza will update the briefing documents and provide them to the Governor's Office and Council.

**Performance Measures – Rest Area Inspections:** Nash reports that he has implemented the deeper-level inspections which have expanded since we need to complete long-range plans under the new funding levels of HB 2017. Normal inspections continue with supervisors.

**Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 12:14 p.m.

**Next meeting:** September 19, 2017, 10:00 a.m. to noon at the OTE offices in Salem.

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