

Ponzi requested that the meeting packets be sent electronically before the meetings and paper packets were not necessary. In addition, Council requested the whole packet be sent at one time.

Gribskov discussed how it is important that OTE is perceived positively by the public and make sure that credible systems stay in place to be transparent. After the recent situations with the press, especially *Willamette Week*, and the misinformation that had been provided to them, it is important that OTE shows integrity, but is also discerning with information.

Although OTE recently experienced “interesting” times, it came out ok because of our willingness to answer questions and have accurate information. Now that OTE is growing, it will come under more scrutiny and it is crucial that it remain open to being questioned.

Gribskov then thanked Roslund for his help and advice during the past month and always having OTE’s best interest in mind.

Gribskov also thanked Pickett for always having the correct information to LFO, *Willamette Week* and any others that had questions. In addition, she thanked him for having a consistent value system for the rest area supervisors. Gribskov also thanked Swanson for being Pickett’s “right arm” in working with the rest area staff.

Roslund thanked Gribskov for her vision and noted that she was the reason the Council was here today. He also wanted to clarify that he wasn’t necessarily doing what was best for OTE, but rather what was best for Oregon and believes the path OTE is on is right for Oregon.

- C. TIC Financials:** Drennan stated that the financials in the packets were through January 2012, a seven month statement into the biennium. He reminded the Council that the Finance Committee began meeting monthly 18 months ago to go through the financial statements in detail.

Drennan informed the Council that the general account is at a low point and shows a negative number (separate from the Rest Area funds). The account was not overdrawn, but some checks had been issued, but had not cleared yet. He reported that receivables are flat from last month, and commended staff for their outstanding work on collections. The Finance Committee is watching the liability and payables. Payables did jump up in January due to three large invoice amounts due to Coral, DAS and ODOT. The equity position is down, while income is on budget and expenses are ahead of budget. Part of low general account balance is due to personnel costs (health insurance costs and unemployment). In addition, discussions are being held with PERS on some missed payments. Current payments are being made, but it is yet to be determined how the missed ones will be paid back.

Drennan reported that for both the month and the year, OTE income is lower than expected. The Finance Committee is confident that by the end of May OTE should be close to break-even.

In regard to depreciation, Drennan noted that the signs depreciation were not included in the budget, but it does affect profitability.

Roslund thanked Drennan for the rigorous discussions he led during the finance committee meetings. He also commended Pickett and Bengston for providing accurate and thorough reports.

Loun asked what the time frame was for removing signs that were delinquent. Pickett responded that staff had recently discovered that sign customers do not have contracts, instead they receive permits. The permits allow for the signs to be removed after 10 days, but sometimes it takes longer due to the process of actually removing the sign. In light of that, the signs cannot be removed off the books until the sign is physically taken down.

Loun then asked if once the sign is taken down if the charge off is done at the end of the year. Pickett replied that it was accruing a provision for the debt on an ongoing basis and it is already reflected in the operating statement. The charge-off would then go to the bad debt.

The Council discussed whether or not a motion was needed to approve the Financial statement. It was decided it was not necessary.

New Business

A. Next Meeting: The Council agreed that in light of information received that Senator Johnson would be available to meet April 5th & 6th, 2012 in Tillamook. Senator Johnson has a suggested venue. Drennan suggested a work party could be held at the Tillamook rest area and then a reception similar to the one held in Baker City. This will give the local leaders from the Tillamook area an opportunity to let us know what they would like to see happen at the rest area. *(Note: since this meeting, the dates of the next meeting were changed to April 19-20, 2012.)*

B. Other Fund Development

a. TTT Program: Gribskov discussed the Travel Plazas, Trails and TODS (TTT) concept. The idea is to use the Travel Plaza model for locally designated trails. The idea started with a conversation that was had with Danuta Pfeiffer, a trails expert. The program is designed to bring people into the area for economic development purposes by having a trail that showcases the area. Recently Pfeiffer has expanded and has created several trails. These are not projects ODOT wants to take on due to the commercial nature, but it is something the locals are interested in pursuing.

Gribskov reported that Applegate Valley has requested signage for the Applegate wine tour from OTE. In trying to find a way to get the wine tour exposure when there are federal regulations on signage, the conversation led to the Travel Plaza concept.

Gribskov would like to explore partnering with Pfeiffer. Porter commented that it seemed to follow OTE's vision. Porter asked if the first facility would be a Travel Plaza. Gribskov responded that it would, similar to the Woodburn Travel Plaza.

Drennan asked if the signs would be county signs. Gribskov replied that yes, counties provide follow up signs to augment our TODs.

Russell asked about the financial implications. Gribskov replied that it had a good potential for brochure sales at the travel plaza.

Ponzi asked if it goes well how soon could it happen further north. Gribskov replied there could be some opportunities on I-217 and the Sunset highway.

Porter made a motion to proceed with exploring the TTT project; Loun seconded. Motion passed.

b. Mobile App Concept: Gribskov reported that during her meetings with the billboard groups she assured them that OTE did not want to interfere with their sales, but would like to get information out to the traveler about what is going on in area (such as community events).

After the meetings, Lamar approached Gribskov and wanted to meet one-on-one. They proposed OTE develop its own mobile app. for travelers, Lamar would advertise it in Oregon.

Gribskov posed the question to the Council whether or not anyone really cared about an Oregon based mobile app., and if so, how does it get developed? To find those answers, she and Falisec have decided to

do a market study with businesses and see if it is a viable concept. If it proves to be, then they will do the research on the development of the mobile app.

Roslund asked if the Road Ninja was already a mobile app, and who the people advertising in it were. Gribskov replied that yes, it was and the companies using it were companies advertising on Lamar's billboards.

Drennan questioned whether or not this would be in conflict with Travel Oregon. Gribskov replied that this is part of our mission – to provide travel information.

Porter asked if this could be meshed with the Trip Check. Gribskov answered that yes, and could also include rest area locations.

Loun moved approval for the research the concept; Flicker seconded. Motion passed.

- c. **Kiosk Interactive:** Gribskov described that kiosks might be something more exciting than our current back-lit displays. Keizer is looking at installing interactive kiosks that would give the traveler information that would drive them into the communities, by touching a computer. She would like to investigate how OTE might be able to get these into the rest areas.

Forbes had questions about the security and how other states handle this. Gribskov replied that would all be part of the research.

Porter made the motion to allow staff to proceed with the inter-active kiosk research; Ponzi seconded. Motion passed.

- d. **Sign Fee Structure:** Roslund reported that some discussion had already taken place in regard to changing the sign fee structure and the information is in the packets.

Miles explained that the reason for the proposal came from discussions about the current fees and whether or not they could be increased in certain areas.

Falisec reported that OTE has not had a sign fee increase in five years, mostly due to the economy. The Council had decided to forgo a sign fee increase in order to avoid a negative effect on OTE's customers. He reminded the Council that the fees were based on traffic volume (the more traffic, the higher the fee). Falisec mentioned that due to the lower amount of traffic and the difficult time rural areas have rebounding from economic hard times, their costs have been protected. Falisec noted that in the last five years the costs of labor and materials have increased. In light of that, the proposal is to increase fees 15-25% depending on the category and area the sign is placed.

As an example, Falisec said that under the current proposal a restaurant customer in the Portland area would see an increase of \$8.00 per month; a museum customer in John Day would see an increase of \$1.25 a month.

Flicker asked how the increase would affect sales. Falisec responded that he did not think sales would be impacted. Drennan commented that the percent sounds big, but when put in dollars terms, it seems reasonable.

After much discussion and questions regarding implementation, revenue increase and other details, Falisec was asked to do some research and bring the information back at the April Council meeting.

C. SB 1591

- a. **Council Replacement:** Gribskov announced that SB 1591 became effective as of passage. One of the elements of the bill was that all Council members' position expire as of May 1, 2012. The Governor will then appoint the other ten positions. Gribskov encouraged all current Council members to reapply. There are new representation categories, so if reapplying, members should determine which category they are applying to represent.

Drennan asked why the change in categories happened. Gribskov said the reason was that the new categories will better reflect the current program base of OTE, former categories were developed in 1972.

Gribskov explained that with the new appointments, half would be for a 2 year term and the other half for a 4 year term.

Roslund announced he is reapplying and encouraged the other Council members to, as well.

- b. **2012 Plan: Tillamook & Government Camp:** Pickett apologized for not having any documentation to share, but explained things have been a "moving target". He announced OTE is moving forward to begin management of the two rest areas. One item is to determine the budget impacts and maintain operations (especially Government Camp) until personnel can be arranged. Both rest areas will need to be surveyed to determine what needs to be done and how to plan for that in terms of the budget. Pickett said that given its age, the building at Government Camp is in fairly good condition. Although the Oregon Department of Transportation maintained it as well as could be, the interior does need some improvements.

In addition, Pickett said other things that needed to happen included transfer of utilities and interfacing with the communities surrounding the rest areas. In the short term the goal will be to get them up and running smoothly. Long term will be what would the communities like to see them look like.

Roslund asked if any of the funds OTE will be receiving for the rest areas could be used retro-actively to cover expenses for Government Camp and what was the time period the funds do cover. Pickett replied that no, they could not be used retro-actively and they will cover March 1-December 31, 2012. Pickett also told the Council that OTE staff will be tracking the funds separately, but that they are Transportation funds and can be put into the same account as the other rest areas.

Loun requested a list of all the rest areas OTE will be managing once the SB 1591 is fully implemented.

Mather expressed interest in having separate conversations on some of the rest areas that were not in the bill perhaps moving to OTE. In addition, he said he will be sure to get the agreements done as quickly as possible. Mather also requested that OTE consider some of the current ODOT staff to become OTE staff for the rest areas.

Old Business

- A. **SB 639: Digital Billboards:** Gribskov reported that OTE is now in charge of all digital billboard public notification and will go through Sue VanHandel's (Business & Sign Assistant) office. She would then get the information out to the appropriate billboard companies.

Gribskov said the conversations led to the question of how to get community information out and craft a criteria acceptable to the billboard companies, that OTE can use when looking at applications.

As a trial, Lamar has offered to put its digital and blank space billboards in partnership with the Josephine County Visitors Association and together they will come up with good public notifications. The goal will be to drive people into the different places in the area to visit. This concept and the meetings Gribskov is having with Lamar will help craft the recommendations that are due to the Legislature by September 1, 2012.

Gribskov clarified that SB 639 passed during the 2011 Legislative session and the language put OTE in charge of developing the language for the billboard notification.

Porter asked if there was a group in the public that may be opposed to digital billboards. Gribskov replied that there potentially could be, however OTE's goal is to maintain balance with the billboard companies and the potential opposition; bring community partners to the table; make sure there is a platform where the public can express their concerns, and keep them informed.

- B. Community Solutions: Josephine County:** Gribskov said that OTE is still working with the Governor's office to find solutions. One idea at this point includes trying to find a way to use the right of way for economic development. She told the group that Representative Hicks is the point person and has called for a meeting of the stake-holders. The written version of the proposal Gribskov developed has been approved and the next steps are to begin visioning by the Community Solutions team, and then start implementation.

Committee Reports

- A. Community Assets:** Forbes announced the 2012 Heritage Tree class that includes Trysting Tree, Hollering Place, and Smoke Jumper. The state-wide dedication will be taking place at OSU on April 6, 2012. Staff is currently working on the new Heritage Program brochure and it should be out in March in addition to the Annual Report. A full report is in the Council members packets. Forbes commented that the people on the Historical Marker and Heritage Tree Committees are doing good work. He also said von Domitz is doing a good job.

Forbes noted that the communities that have Markers and Trees are seeing economic development that come from them. He announced that Coos Bay has put forward \$16,000 toward the markers that will be installed there. In addition, the relationship that has been developed with the tribes has been very beneficial.

Forbes mentioned that Eliza Canty-Jones from the Oregon Historical Quarterly has gotten very involved with the Abigail Scott Duniway marker and women's suffrage and her involvement has been very beneficial to the program.

von Domitz noted it is a very exciting time for the programs and the partnerships that are developing.

Roslund thanked both Forbes and von Domitz for their hard work, as the Heritage Programs are important to the core of what OTE does.

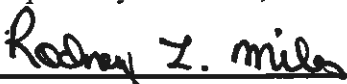
- B. Sales Committee:** No report.
- C. Communications:** The report is in the packed.

Adjournment

Roslund asked if there was any business for the good of the order; hearing none he thanked Gribskov and Campbell for all of the hard work they have put in to get OTE to this point with the legislation.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:40 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Rod Miles
Council Secretary