



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

MINUTES

Oregon Travel Information Council Quarterly Meeting
September 17, 2018

Running Y Ranch, 5500 Running Y Road, Klamath Falls, Or 97601

Council Members:

Ed Washington, Chair

Mike Marsh, Secretary

Kenji Sugahara

Susan Steward (by phone)

Bob Garcia, Vice Chair

Mike Card

Katy Brooks (by phone)

Excused:

Tammy Baney, Ryan Snyder

TIC Staff:

Jim Denno, Executive Director

Tim Pickett, Director of Administration

Daphnee Legarza, Rest Areas Operations Director

Jessica Carbone, Executive & HR Support

Nancy DeSouza, Senior Policy Advisor (by phone)

Diane Cheyne, Field Operations Division Manager (by phone)

Annie von Domitz, Heritage and Community Assets Manager (by phone)

Convening: The public meeting of the Travel Information Council was called to order by Chair Washington at 9:00 a.m. Self-introductions were made for the record.

Business Meeting:

Approval of the Minutes:

- **June 11, 2018 Quarterly Council Meeting, June 27, 2018 Special Email Meeting, July 12, 2018 Special Email Meeting, August 9, 2018 Special Email Meeting, August 24, 2018 Special Email Meeting and the August 30, 2018 Special Email Meeting:** Marsh suggested the following amendments: add a “s” to “permanent office” in the third line of Approval of Funds for Leasing of New Rest Area Offices in the June 11, 2018 minutes; change “Denno listed five email responses” to the correct “six email responses” in the June 27, 2018 minutes; change “Staff with continue” to “Staff will continue” in the last paragraph of the July 12, 2018 minutes;

add Marsh to the list of absent Council members from the August 30, 2018 minutes. Marsh made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Garcia seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Public Comment: None.

Committee Reports:

- **Finance Committee:** Marsh said finances are solid. The agency finished the fiscal year ahead on revenue by 1% and 2% under budget. There was positive retention of \$320,000. Debit to Equity Ratio was up a small amount due to the funds transfer from ODOT. There was only one account past 60 days and that has since been taken down. Planning for the 2019-21 budget is going forward. All capital projects are within budget. Denno will give a presentation in September to the Joint Committee on Transportation on the implementation of HB 2017. Card asked what the policy is for customers who are past due. Pickett said that signs are billed in advance of the upcoming year. If they have not paid by the due date the customer receives a removal notice. If the account remains unpaid, the customer's signs are removed. Therefore, the amount owed is so minimal that it negates the need of other collection methods.
- **Heritage Trees:** The Yang Madrone Tree was dedicated in Corvallis on July 13. It was a well-received event with over 100 people attending. The Geer Crest Orchard dedication will be October 12 at 1:00pm. The invitations will be sent out soon. The committee is looking for nominations for the 2019 class of trees and Maynard Dawson award.

(Annie von Domitz arrived at 9:19am)

- **Historical Markers:** Garcia said the committee is working on a text revision of the Fort Stevens marker that include more information about the Clatsop tribe. Von Domitz is working on finding the right connections within the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz in order to obtain feedback. Travel Pendleton has secured full funding for a new Triple Nickels pedestal marker in downtown Pendleton. It is expected to be completed by Spring of 2019. The marker inspired the city of Pendleton to pursue creating a bronze statue to honor the Triple Nickels. There are three markers whose text is currently being revised: Broughton's Expedition, Beacon Rock and the Tsunami of 1700. The text for the Tsunami of 1700 marker is nearing completion. Next year the committee will be revising Pre-Historic River, Cape San Sebastian and Brownsville. However, the Nez Perez marker in Enterprise is in need of repair so that may become a priority. The program received a \$7,000 grant from the Oregon Cultural Trust Partners to support small stipends and travel expenses to encourage tribal input on the Oregon Trail Kiosk project.
- **Rest Area:** Marsh said the statewide engineering evaluation has been completed. The purchase of Opiniator has been approved by Council. Staff has begun planning its implementation into all the rest areas. Staff is also working on the performance measures. Legarza is working on an infrastructure focused inspection system. The Continuity of Operation Plan (COOP) was submitted on time. The Governor's table top exercise will be held next month. The combined north and southbound Oak Grove project is moving forward. The rest area division has also put together a quarterly newsletter to encourage better communication throughout all of our locations.
- **Executive Committee:** Washington said the Executive committee has not met since the last meeting but may have a meeting in the near future.

Chair's Update: The Chair did not have an update at this time.

Executive Director/Staff Reports:

- **Overview/Updates:** Denno said there has already been noticeable improvements in the five rest areas that the agency took over on July 1, 2018. This is a result of the high caliber of staff we were able to hire for these locations. The transition from ODOT was seamless. The discussions with State Parks about the three locations we will be taking over in July 1, 2019 have been going well. Rest area staff meetings will be happening in the next couple weeks. The statewide engineering evaluation of the rest areas has been completed. It provided a lot of useful information. There were no major surprises discovered, but the report did call out about \$10 million worth of work to be done over a ten-year period. This report will be combined with staff knowledge of rest area systems to prioritize maintenance and capital projects lists.

Staff is rethinking the information kiosks and how to make them the most relevant. There have been recent conversations with Travel Oregon to get their input and gauge their interest in a possible partnership in the kiosks. Denno recently met with their new Public Affairs Director to bring her up to speed and keep the conversation going. While we continue talks with Travel Oregon we are moving ahead with contracting with Certified Folder Display Service to assume management of the kiosks. Staff is discussing a rebranding of the agency to remove the dba of Oregon Travel Experience. The dual agency names and the similarity with Travel Oregon creates ongoing confusion between the two agencies. Staff is asking for Council's approval to go forward and research all the requirements for a name change. Denno continues to participate in the OERS Council meetings and will participate in the Table Top Exercise in October. Garcia asked if there were any updates on Government Camp. Denno said that the new owners of the Summit Ski area reached out to him. They have said they will likely be able to perform some repairs to the parking lot in preparation for the winter season. For the long term, a larger, regional discussion of transportation design for the area will be discussed, including many stakeholders. Those discussions are likely to include possible alternative locations for the rest area.

Card asked if the agency had ever envisioned building rest areas or if new properties would always be something we would take over from another agency. Pickett said that historically there have not been the resources to build. Card then asked for further information about the Faithful and Gould study. He asked what work needs to be done in order to get all our rest areas in to good or fair condition. Pickett said that over the course of designing HB 2017 the cost to operate the rest areas and cost estimates in order to bring all the rest areas up to good condition were considered. The Council then discussed the capital funds transfer schedule and some of the data that went into the funding estimates.

- **Sign Program Overview:** Cheyenne said the program has an additional 14 customers since June. There has been a lot of positive feedback from the customers. The overall metrics of the program are up. The average age of the boards is the same as the last report. She expects the average age to decrease as replacement of supports and boards from the 1970s continues. The program is nearly at capacity on the interstate highways due to FHWA sign density restrictions. Marsh asked for further information on why board and support ages don't meet the metric goals. Cheyenne said that staff is working against a very large amount of signs that need to be replaced. Replacement of signs didn't begin until 2000. Staff are replacing as many signs as possible annually. She continues to balance budget restraints, age and prioritizing locations where replacing a sign would be an opportunity to add customers, reducing the waiting list. Pickett shared some history of the program and how the metrics were created. Card asked if Coral

construction installed all our signs. Cheyne explained there are three different entities that complete the work. The agency has a five man sign crew that covers 2/3 of the state. We contract with ODOT in Districts 12, 13 and 14 in Pendleton, LaGrande and Ontario. Coral Construction does all work in the Portland Metro area and large projects that the sign crew is unable to do.

The council recessed 10:25 a.m. to 10:37 a.m.

▪ **Rest Areas:**

- **Systemwide Engineering Evaluation:** Legarza presented charts summarizing the systemwide engineering evaluation. The information learned from this evaluation, along with information from rest area inspections, will be used to construct a three and ten-year maintenance plan. Site improvements is the largest category, accounting for about 60% of the total work recommended. Some examples of this work include; pavement, irrigation and fencing, plumbing and electrical. Priority 1, or the most critical work, is only 1% of the total. priority 2 is 46% and priority 3 was just over 50%. Staff will combine this information with that found during inspections into a capital project plan. Garcia asked if the agency has the DEQ waste water permits for the rest areas. Legarza said yes, we have copies of all DEQ permits where they are required.
- **Oak Grove Rebuild:** Legarza said that the Northbound and Southbound project have been combined into one large project. The building permits are complete and legal sufficiency has been completed by DOJ. The auxiliary building design is about 80% complete. Due to contractor availability, this project has been postponed until after the larger Oak Grove project is completed. Garcia asked how long the bidding process was. Legarza said bidding is about a two-month process.
- **Opiniator:** Legarza said that staff is working toward an October 1 live date. The signs for the rest areas are in production and tests of the system are being run. Staff will have their training at the area meetings in the next couple of weeks.
- **Santiam Asphalt and Picnic Table Upgrades:** Legarza said the design 60% complete, there is still work being done on the ADA ramps designs. The timeline of the project is dependent on the Oak Grove project.
- **Gettings Creek Tree Trimming:** Legarza said that this project has been completed. All of the trees labeled severe or significant by the arborist have been trimmed on both the north and southbound sides.
- **Gettings Creek Curtain Replacement:** Legarza said that the project is complete. Staff continues to work with Oregon Water to monitor the effluent coming from the system to make sure the startup process keeps all levels under the DEQ permits.
- **Santiam Manhole Repair Project:** Legarza said the project is complete and everything looks great. It is a massive improvement from their previous condition. Staff is investigating doing one more manhole at Cabin Creek.

Card suggested that when staff begins planning repaving projects that they look into the feasibility of including the groundwork for parking sensors.

- **Historical Programs:** Von Domitz said the Salemtowne volunteers are working really hard and trying to do as many maintenance trips as they can. Jack Carroll has begun succession planning in order to fill his foreman position. She is hoping to schedule the first meeting for the Oregon Trail Kiosk Project in November. Members of Council are invited to schedule a time to meet the Salemtowne volunteers and take a tour of their sign shop.

Strategic Planning Discussion

- **Agency Overview:** Denno shared what his vision for the agency's strategic plan. It is plan that covers what work the agency, program by program, will complete in order to accomplish the task we have been given. It is an iterative plan, that flows between the committees, Council and staff. He presented documents that gave a brief history and plan for each department.
 - **Business Name Change:** Denno said that after conversations with staff and council members and some stakeholders consensus is that the agency's DBA, Oregon Travel Experience creates confusion and is not useful. Pickett informed the Council how the DBA was created. The Council discussed the confusion of the similarity to Travel Oregon and if the Travel Information Council was still an appropriate name to the agency's main functions. Staff recommended the agency drop the DBA and use the statutory name, Travel Information Council. Staff will conduct a deeper investigation into the work and costs involved in the name change and will report to Council in December.
- **Signs:** Cheyne spoke about the contract with Certified for sales and management of the Information Kiosks. Certified will work to build a larger customer base to serve more local businesses Certified is also interested in exploring the possibility of installing electronic kiosks in some locations. Marsh asked if there were any states are doing things differently from us. Cheyne says 23 other states manage signs and info kiosks using a private entity, Interstate Logos. This company is large enough that it does its own sign printing. The customer pays one fee that includes plaques. In our program the plaques are owned by the customers and they responsible to get them printed. Cheyne then spoke about working with ODOT to allow nine space boards in some locations. Because of the ongoing road construction that sometimes requires the removal of one of our signs, the State Traffic/Roadway Engineer at ODOT recommended expanding our six space boards to nine space boards that have been tested out in other states. Garcia asked about the agency's long-term thoughts on pricing. Pickett said that pricing is addressed by the Sign Ad Hoc committee each year. Garcia asked about the cost of signs for non-profit organizations be considered. Cheyne said non-profits pay 60% of the normal sign price.
- **Rest Areas:** Legarza said our overarching goals include improving rest areas, making them cost effective, and providing a consistent rest area experience throughout the state. These goals will be achieved through a combination of the capital improvement plan, the operations plan and the maintenance plan. The systemwide evaluation, rest inspections and staff knowledge will be used to develop these plans, especially the capital improvement plan. The operations plans is a tool for rest area staff to prioritize their projects and daily work load. These are living documents that flex and change as priorities shift. Marsh asked that staff include customer feedback as a regular part of rest area planning. The performance measures of the rest areas will be quantifiable, reasonable and representative.
- **Heritage:** Von Domitz said that a majority of the work done by the Historical Marker committee has tended to be reactive instead of proactive. With the funds allocated to the program by Council last year the committee is now able to be more proactive. After conducting a text review of all the markers, a priority replacement list was created. There is a five-year plan with projects identified for the first two years. The program has also reached a point where a lot of the markers have reached a state of disrepair and need to be replaced. Von Domitz continues to work the Salemtowne volunteers. The Oregon Trail Kiosk project is in its first year. This first phase will establish the volunteer advisory committee. A contractor will be hired, and they will create the first content draft in 2019. Garcia asked about the

status of the Grove of the States. Von Domitz says that the last phase of the project, which is installation of the extended path ways in the grove, is taking a lot longer than planned. Because the project is small and contractors are so busy right now , she has been unable to get any bids for the project. There may be more interest in the fall when demand slows down. Some of the trees have not survived. She is working with Friends of Trees to find replacements. Three of the trees are still too small to be planted and are in the care of a Heritage Tree Committee member. Marsh asked if there been any more sponsorships. Von Domitz said that sponsorships have come to standstill. Because of highway funding restrictions, the ability to recognize sponsors in rest areas is very limited, and there is a hesitancy to donate to a state agency's project.

- **Administration:** Pickett said that finance and administrative staff is there to support agency operations. Staff is setting a replacement schedule for the agency's servers. The current equipment is under review to make sure it is properly structured and protected. Over the last four years Luc Rizzo has developed interfaces that allow the sign program and accounting to better access data for customized reporting. A required upgrade to SAP will bring advanced budgeting and control structures. Card asked how the agency handles security. Pickett said that our servers operate on LAN system. We also contract with Centerlogic, who backup our servers daily and weekly to an offsite facility. Marsh asked if there are measurements for what are considered timely process for payroll, accounts payable and accounts receivable. There is a requirement that any accounts payable or accounts receivable beyond 30 days must have a reason why.

New Business:

Agency Contracts/Agreements:

- **IAA with ODOT for Sign Program:**

ODOT has not yet completed its review of the IAA. , This item is postponed until the December meeting.

Action/Voting Items:

- **Deliberate and Adopt Sign Program Rules:**

Revised sign program administrative rules came before council at the June meeting and were approved. The public comment period has closed. Cheyne said that no public comments were submitted. Staff recommends the revised rules be adopted.

Marsh made a motion to approve the adoption of the revised Sign Program Rules as presented. Brooks seconded the motion.

Card asked for clarification on what "bumping" means and why urban areas should be avoided for new signs. Cheyne clarified that businesses closest to the interstate have priority for signs. So if a new business applies for an interstate sign that is closer than a business that has an existing sign, the business that is closer can replace or "bump" the existing customer. Due to the need for traffic control signs in urban areas, ODOT has asked that no new logo signs be put up. Garcia asked when the rules would take effect. Denno said that rules would be effective Oct 1, 2018.

The motion carried unanimously.

DeSouza, Cheyne and von Domitz left the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

- **PERS Contribution Policy Change:** Pickett said that a positive decision would impact payroll for all agency employees . In 1979 the unions and the state came to an agreement that there would not be an increase salaries, but the state would pick up the 6% employee contribution to retirement accounts. As a result of recent collective bargaining agreements, DAS has issued a policy change. From February 1, 2019 forward, state employees will return to contributing 6% from their pay. At the same time, employee salaries will be increased by 6.95%. The .95% is to cover the increases in payroll taxes paid by the employee. The net effect to employee pay is intended to be neutral. This change will impact the budget and employee compensation going forward. Denno said that the majority of the semi-independent agencies have chosen to adopt this policy, though not all. Staff is not making a recommendation because it effects employee compensation. Council discussed possible options and the forward effect to the agency's costs for COLAs and the merit pool.

Garcia made a motion to approve changing the current PERS contribution to align with the new state government policy change. Sugahara seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Other Business:

2019 Meetings:

- March 3-4, 2019 in Coos Bay, OR.
- June 10, 2019 in in Salem at TIC offices.
- September 8-9, 2019 in Baker City, OR.
- December 9, 2019 in Salem at TIC offices.

Adjourn: 12:50 a.m.