



Travel Information Council  
1500 Liberty St. SE, Suite 150  
Salem, OR 97302

## MINUTES

### Council Meeting

Monday, September 11, 2023  
Bend, OR & Virtual Meeting

**Members Participating:** Mike Card, Chair (In-person); Eliza Canty-Jones, Vice-Chair (virtual); Rich Riggs, Secretary (virtual); Bob Garcia (in-person); Matt Preston (virtual); Valerie Wilson (in-person).

**Excused:** Ed Washington; David Warren.

**TIC Staff Participating:** Elizabeth Boxall; Diane Cheyne (Virtual); Michelle Roth (Virtual); Heather Peck; Jessica Carbone.

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**Call to Order/Introductions:** The quarterly public meeting of the Travel Information Council was called to order by Chair Card at 9:32 a.m. Introductions were made for the record.

#### **Approval of the Agenda and Order of Business:**

*Garcia made a motion to approve the updated agenda to include the Memaloose Project Increase. Wilson seconded. 6-0 Vote.*

#### **Business Meeting:**

#### **Approval of the June 12, 2023 and August 17, 2023 Council Meeting Minutes:**

*Garica proposed accepting the June 12, 2023 minutes with the correction of "The Council then discussed the State's ongoing negations" to "The Council then discussed the State's ongoing negotiations" Riggs seconded. 6-0 Vote.*

*Canty-Jones made a motion to approve the August 17, 2023 minutes as submitted. Garica seconded. Vote 5-0. Riggs abstained.*

**Public Comment:** None.

#### **Committee Reports**

**Finance Committee:** Canty-Jones said the largest topic of discussion at the most recent committee meeting was the bargaining agreement negotiated by state union employees which was the topic of the Special Council meeting on August 17, 2023. During this meeting, there was discussion on what areas the Council was feeling strong on and what areas there were concerns about related to the

agency's finances. Canty-Jones accredited TIC's strong finances to good management, which includes good investments. Canty-Jones said that the new fiscal year has just started so there is not enough data to look for trends. Canty-Jones asked the Council to begin focusing on those strategic priorities that focus on preparing to advocate to the legislature and making sure that our lobbying and advocacy will result in increased funding for TIC. Garica asked the Council to be cognizant that we are dipping into our reserves for this upcoming fiscal year. Canty-Jones asked Cheyne if there was anything the Council should be aware of financially about the Sign Program. Cheyne said the program is going well. The 3% sign fee increase went into effect on July 31, 2023 invoices. The average number of sign removals has stayed the same. No customer feedback has indicated the fee increase as the reason for their removal.

**Heritage Trees Committee:** Carbone said that the Heritage Tree Program is going strong. The committee is working on community outreach and finding trees that tell the story of underrepresented groups. Other possible outreach and advocacy of the program include celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the program and America's 250 anniversary. Carbone said last Tuesday a small group of committee members visited the nominated Big Tree Trail located at Northrop Creek Horse Camp. The trail was nominated for its connection between the projects that happened at its location and their connection to the development of the Oregon Department of Forestry. Carbone said that there is one new Heritage Tree for 2024, The Moyer House Linden Wisteria. Carbone said that lots of work is happening at the Grove of the States (GOTS). Committee member Craig Leech has developed a maintenance plan for the GOTS, part of that plan includes structural pruning done as a training exercise with our partners at ODF and having a work crew from Coffee Creek Correctional Facility to complete the creation of tree landscape rings around each tree to protect them from large lawn equipment.

**Historical Markers Committee:** Garica said that the Oregon Trail Kiosk project has been earmarked by Senator Wyden's office for \$220,000 of congressional funding. This grant is a significant piece in the completion of the project. Staff continue to look for other funding and grant opportunities to complete the project. Garica said the last Historical Marker Meeting was on August 1. The committee is working on five current marker projects and was able to take on three new projects renovating and revising established markers: First Coastal Expeditions, Brownsville, and Peter Skene Ogden at Peter Skene Rest Area. Garica informed the Council of the work currently being done on active projects. Carbone said that one of the challenges that is facing the program and lengthening the timelines is the sourcing of hardwood. The wood is sourced in small batches, transported, and stored to dry, transported for planning, and then transported again to Salemtowne. Card asked for clarification on how funding is traditionally acquired for the marker projects. Carbone responded that funding and sponsorships are received for individual projects, not for the program. Canty-Jones spoke to the Council about the work being done by the Washington State Historical Society to apply for grants to fund wholesale revision of their markers and possible grant opportunities related to the upcoming semi-quincentennial of the USA in 2026. Garica said that the committee has a new member, Katie Bush, a Public Historian at the Clark County Museum. Riggs told the Council about his time at the Salemtowne Volunteer Appreciation event.

**Rest Area Committee:** Card expressed the need for an well-thought-out strategy to bring before the legislature to make sure we have adequate funding to maintain current service levels and tackle the list of capital projects that still need to be completed. Card said that Peck has been doing a lot of traveling visiting and working at TIC rest areas across the state. Peck is also working on a booklet of information about the rest areas.

**Chair's Report:** Card said that he has enjoyed working with Boxall and she continues to do good work.

## **Staff Reports**

**Agency Update:** Boxall said the agency continues to work on the Governor's list of agency expectations. Some of the items that have been worked on in the last quarter are updating the continuity of operations plan that is due at the end of September and updating TIC's strategic plan. TIC meets all of the strategic plan requirements except one, which will be talked about with the Council later. Boxall informed the Council that she plans to schedule a meeting of the strategic plan workgroup on funding to meet soon. Boxall said Peck is working on the finalization of a status report showing how TIC has used its funding and what it is currently working on. Boxall said that staff will be doing a budget review in the fall due to recently implemented changes such as the recent COLA increase. As part of the update on legislative outcomes from the most recent session, none of the bills that were passed were extremely noteworthy or had a significant impact on TIC. The Council then discussed some of the funding challenges ODOT is facing. The council then discussed the rumors that rest areas are closing and clarified that these are rest areas run by state parks. The closure entails the removal of rest area signs and the locations returning to day-use-only facilities. Boxall said staff is working on a cyber security assessment and establishing a data governance plan. TIC will be subleasing office space to a second small state agency. Card thanked Roth for the accounting team catching up on the financial reporting and asked that financial statements be part of the quarterly meeting packet for review.

**Finance:** Roth reported that the June 30 year-end financial statements have been completed. Staff implemented two new accounting standards. One standard deals with public-private and public-public partnerships and the second relates to subscription-based information technology arrangements. Roth said overall, the year ended with a positive change in net position of \$4.2 million, which was about \$800,000 more than planned. A lot of this is driven by interest income of about \$530,000 coming in more than planned. Other unplanned revenue includes grants related to the Oregon Trail Kiosk Project and insurance recoveries. Roth said rest area operations ended with \$2.9 million in spendable carry forward balance but iterated that TIC would be dipping into reserves this biennium and it will get used up fast. Roth said Bank of the West was recently acquired by Bank of Montreal, the conversion happened at the beginning of September. Treasury has been monitoring to ensure the protection of public funds. All investments are having pretty good returns with at least 4%.

**Heritage Programs:** Carbone congratulated the amazing work being taken on by the Historical Marker Committee volunteers who are currently working on eight projects. Carbone applauded Beth Dehn for her work in researching and applying for grants to fund the committee's projects and welcomed Amy Platt to the marker committee.

The Council took a break at 10:35 a.m.

The Council returned at 10:41 a.m.

**Sign Program:** Cheyne said the sign program continues to do a great job, especially the TIC sign crew. In overall responsiveness the crew is meeting installation at 73 days, beating the goal by two days. Progress continues on the waitlist, by removing 12 customers in the last quarter. Cheyne reported that there were 26 new customers between June and August. More than 26 customers were removed from the program, but applications for new customers are still being received. Cheyne provided a graph

detailing that the majority of customers that the program is losing are lodging customers. Cheyne is in the process of doing a review of what other states' sign fees are and what the demographics of their customers look like.

**Rest Area Program:** Peck said that the rest area program and its rest areas have been extremely busy this summer. All the supervisors have seen a considerable increase in travelers and freight while completing lots of smaller projects. Some examples of these projects are tree removals, pavement patches, painting, signage updates, and safety enhancements. Peck said yearly staff evaluations have been completed and she is working toward visiting all the rest areas. In the last couple of months, Peck has been working on the facility program booklet and updating the rest area facility evaluation with a standard checklist. Peck hopes to have a full draft of the facility booklet to the Council for comment at the next meeting. Peck said that there will be a rest area supervisors meeting taking place at the TIC offices in October. Peck will be meeting with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) to discuss the capital project at Peter Skene Ogden. OPRD has asked TIC to match \$800,000 in funding for the project. Peck will be looking at all current projects to see how adjustments might be made to fit the funding needed into the current project timeline. Peck informed the Council that the budget concerns facing OPRD and ODOT do not seem to affect capital funding but operations. Future discussions will be needed with both partners on the ongoing maintenance of these capital projects once they are built.

Peck said that the Memaloose project has been split into two smaller projects, paving and building. Both of those projects are currently with the DOJ. The Council then discussed the timetables needed and/or estimated for our capital projects and if there were challenges that workarounds could be found for. The Council discussed possible ways to describe the effect a 5% cut in funding would have on the work happening and the condition of the rest areas. Card shared his apricating of TIC's excellent staff.

### **Action/Voting Items:**

- **Cabin Creek Line Replacement Update:** Peck presented the overage approval request for the Cabin Creek Line Replacement project that was approved by the expedited process stated in TIC policy. Peck said the project was originally approved by the Council for a not exceed amount of \$100,000. The projects saw of overage of \$2,500 due to an overrun for temporary sanitary services.

*Garcia made a motion to approve the Cabin Creek Waterline overage, not to exceed \$102,500. Wilson seconded. 6-0 Vote.*

- **Memaloose Project Increase:** Peck presented a request for the Council to approve an increase to the design and construction support services specific to the Memaloose rest area rehabilitation and upgrades project for \$94,242. The original design contract included both Memaloose and The Maples Rest Area. Peck said during the initial phase of design for the Memaloose project, it was found that additional design scope would be required by code and needed to be added to the project. This new scope affects the building design on both east and westbound by adding additional and separate building structures and features for ADA companion restrooms and related design compliances that will affect the ADA ramps and entrance features to the building that are site-specific in both hardscape and pavement. The costs included in the \$94,242 will fully complete the final design of the Memaloose project and include all services through the final construction. The original contract amount was \$149,961.30, with an amendment number one

for \$57,002.00 For archaeological investigation and a few other things that had to do with The Maples construction. The Maples project is completed and saw cost savings measures through TIC oversight totaling \$99,582.24.

*Gracia made a motion to approve final design services, including survey, bid support, and engineering services related to the construction support and Administration for the Memaloose rest area project in the not to exceed amount of \$94,242.00. Canty-Jones seconded.*

The Council then discussed the need to clarify the distinction of where the overall approved funds are allocated within the project.

*6-0 Vote.*

Peck informed the Council that they should expect the same procedure in a future meeting where a vote is asked of the Council to uncouple the three phase 1 projects located on I-84 by reapproving those projects at an individual level.

- **Sign Project Approvals:** Cheyne presented three capital sign projects for Council approval. The first project was a replacement of a sign that was involved in an accident at Beltline, Exit 5. The cost of the project was estimated at \$26,595.60, above the \$25,000 that Cheyne is allowed to authorize without Council approval. Because the next Council meeting was three months away and the sign program has a responsibility to the customer to put the signs back up as quickly as possible, the project was approved using the expedited process stated in TIC policy on June 14, 2023. The sign was replaced on July 5, 2023. Cheyne let the Council know that since the approval of the project and the current meeting, TIC has received the claim reimbursement for the accident from risk management.

*Riggs made a motion to approve \$26,595.60 for the replacement of the Gas/Food sign at Beltline, Exit 5. Canty-Jones seconded. 6-0 Vote.*

Cheyne presented sign projects two and three for Council approval. Both signs that are to be replaced are located on I-5 in Southern Oregon. The boards and supports are of an age where they need to be replaced. The I-5, Exit 108 northbound is from 2001 and southbound is from 2003. The replacement would allow the program to gain four new customers by removing them from the Wait List. Both projects have been budgeted in the Sign Program FY2023-2024 Capital Plan.

*Garica made a motion to approve both capital sign projects, one at I-5, Exit 108 northbound Food/Camping/Attraction for a total cost of \$31,615.00 and I-5, Exit 108 southbound Food/Attraction for a total cost of \$35,603.00. Wilson seconded. 6-0 Vote.*

The Council took a break at 11:40 a.m.

The Council returned at 11:49 a.m.

- **Equity Statement for Strategic Plan:** Boxall presented a draft equity statement for TIC's strategic plan to meet the agency expectations set forth by the Governor. The draft contained in the memo reflects feedback incorporated by TIC's leadership team. The draft statement said, "The Travel Information Council is committed to ensuring that our rest areas are safe and accessible to all

visitors. We are committed to telling complex and accurate stories of Oregon's past through our heritage program, where inclusion is at the forefront. We are committed to equally serving all directional sign customers by providing equitable and consistently high service levels. TIC embraces all aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion so that employees and the travelers we serve feel welcome."

*Garica made a motion to approve the draft equity statement as presented. Wilson seconded.*

Card asked how the statement was to be used. Boxall said that while the statement would be used to meet the Governor's expectation, it is also a good tool for evaluating TIC's external focus, not just the internal focus of the current affirmative action plan which focuses more on hiring practices and how TIC is treating its employees. Boxall said the statement is more inclusive and outward facing, tying into the purpose of why TIC is here, who TIC serves, and how TIC is going to do that. Canty-Jones recommended keeping the first three lines and removing the fourth line. The Council discussed the last line's contribution to the overall statement.

*Garcia amended the motion to approve the draft equity statement as follows, "The Travel Information Council is committed to ensuring that our rest areas are safe and accessible to all visitors. We are committed to telling complex and accurate stories of Oregon's past through our heritage program, where inclusion is at the forefront. We are committed to equally serving all directional sign customers by providing equitable and consistently high service levels." Wilson seconded. 6-0 Vote.*

## **New Business**

### **▪ Other Announcements:**

The Council then discussed the next steps and upcoming planning meetings for the four work groups tied to the strategic plan. Card suggested that the champions of each workgroup report on the progress of their group.

**Adjourn:** 12:21 p.m.

### **Next Meetings:**

December 11, 2023

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