



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

MINUTES **Council Meeting**

Monday, December 11, 2023
Salem, OR & Virtual Meeting

Members Participating: Mike Card, Chair (in-person); Eliza Canty-Jones, Vice-Chair (virtual); Rich Riggs, Secretary (in-person); Bob Garcia (in-person); David Warren (virtual); Ed Washington (in-person); Valerie Wilson (virtual).

Excused: Matt Preston

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

Call to Order/Introductions: The quarterly public meeting of the Travel Information Council was called to order by Chair Card at 9:31 a.m. Introductions were made for the record.

Business Meeting:

Approval of the September 11, 2023 Council Meeting Minutes:

Riggs proposed accepting the September 11, 2023, minutes with the correction of two grammatical errors. Washington seconded. 7-0 Vote.

Public Comment: None.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee: Canty-Jones said the committee has been meeting regularly. The finance team's staffing changes has contributed to the monthly reports being behind, but staff are working to get caught up. The one-time payment of \$1,500 and the 6.5% COLA for regular service staff had a notable financial impact.

Canty-Jones said that the earnings from TIC's investments continue to be greater than budgeted and staff work to closely to balance all investments for the highest return with the most amount of flexibility. Garcia said that forecasts indicated that interest rates will be going down, so staff will be looking at how best to capture the highest interest rates while available. Once the financials are caught up, staff will review the budget to consider any potential amendments.

The Council then discussed the cash flow analysis done prior to investment recommendations. Canty-Jones said that the committee knows that additional funds are necessary for rest area operations and

maintenance, and capital improvements to keep our commitments.

Heritage Trees Committee: Washington said there are currently two Heritage Trees that are part of the class of 2024; The Moyer House Linden Wisteria and The Northrup Big Tree Trail. Craig Leech, the current committee Chair has completed a Grove of the States maintenance plan that tracks and summarizes the condition of the Grove by year along with maintenance recommendations. The plan also includes an accurate map with tree locations and species. Washington said that the committee has begun accepting 2024 nominations for the Maynard Dawson and Heritage Tree Hero awards.

Historical Markers Committee: Garica said there is no update on the congressional funding earmarked by Senator Wyden's office for the Oregon Trail Kiosk project. The committee is working on reviewing two new marker nominations, one for the Oregon Nisei Veterans near Hood River and the second for a possible Salem Began Here, proposed for a Riverfront Park location. Garcia said the final text for the Dry River Canyon marker, formally the "Prehistoric River" marker has been approved. This text, along with the text for the Upper Klamath Lake marker, is with the ODOT sign shop for design. The Jesse Applegate Marker has been completely routed and is currently being painted by the Salemtowne volunteers, hopefully to be installed this spring. The Nez Perce Marker is in its second design draft with Sea Reach, a dedication is planned for this Summer. Card asked if the Peter Skene Ogden marker project was included in the future renovation of the rest area with Oregon State Parks & Recreation (OSPR). Carbone said that OSPR probably has plans to update different signage located in the rest area but is not included in that project. The project was started when the committee decided the text needed revision. The committee decided to shift the focus of the text from who the rest area was named after to the physical location of the marker and the railroad bridge there.

Rest Area Committee: Card said the rest area committee has had two meetings since last September. Card said the rest areas have seen some challenges in the last couple of years due to rising costs and staff turnover.

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

The Council returned at 10:14 a.m.

Card continued the Rest Area Committee update when the Council returned from break. Card said the committee and staff continue to focus on finding ways to meet the existing and future needs of the rest areas and developing a plan to bring those needs before the legislature. Card said that staff has been working with ODOT on plans for future truck parking expansion in some of our rest areas along major corridors. These plans will be used to request possible federal funding.

Chair's Report: Card directed staff to continue working on the objectives set in the strategic plan.

Staff Reports

Agency Update: Boxall said the agency continues to work on the Governor's list of agency expectations and presented an update of the work accomplished since that last Council meeting. Work includes submitting the updated strategic plan with the new equity statement, submitting a continuity of operations plan, updating the IT plan, beginning the process on a succession plan, and beginning quarterly check-ins between staff and supervisors. Boxall said that three of the four strategic planning workgroups met. Boxall informed the committee that some of the early planning and legwork, such as meetings with potential lobbyists and business partners, is being done to prepare for the 2025

legislative session. The policies and procedures workgroup will meet once Beth Dehn, initiative owner, returns to work.

Boxall gave the Council a recap of the recent meetings involving the possible Government Camp Rest Area relocation. There is a current plan to try and access funds from a federal grant earlier than originally anticipated to start a feasibility study and hire a project manager. Some of the major topics of discussion included who was going to own the rest area at the end of the project and who would be responsible for the project management.

Card suggested a Gantt chart or timeline to track the agency priority work. Boxall stated that a Gantt view was created for work like agency expectations and strategic priorities and has been used internally. Riggs suggested moving the five-year timeline of the strategic plan to a six-year or even number, to better align with legislative sessions.

Finance: Roth said the new accountant began work on November 28th. Staff finished work related to the annual agreed-upon procedures report. Roth pointed out that the most recent financial statements were included in the packet at the Chair's request. Roth said that August had a change in net position of \$85,000, ending \$12,000 under budget. Interest earnings continue to be higher than expected. Garica asked when the new COLA would go into effect. Roth responded that the 6.5% COLA became effective Dec 1, 2023. Card asked staff to confirm that a 4.25% COLA had been budgeted prior to the Council approved increase aligning with the union's ratified agreement of 6.5%. Roth confirmed and said the next COLA is set at 6.55% for either January or February 2025 depending on legislative outcomes. Card asked if staff could provide a more consolidated version of the financial information provided in the packets. The Council then discussed what they deemed the most valuable and how it should be presented. Roth will present at the next meeting the memo and a consolidated report similar to the quarterly financial report. Washington asked what the biggest financial challenge is that TIC was facing over the next couple of years. Boxall said it is supporting ongoing operations and maintenance and capital projects in the rest areas. The Council then discussed the contributing factors that have led to these financial challenges. Warren then informed the Council of ODOT's financial challenges.

Heritage Programs: Carbone updated the Council on the Oregon Trail Kiosk project. Carbone, Boxall, and Canty-Jones met with the design team for a project update in November. The design team presented the draft designs for a majority of the kiosk panels and how they would be presented in the kiosks. Carbone said that everyone who met with the design team is happy with the overall design. The project is progressing, and the potential congressional-directed funding for the project is still waiting on the federal budget's approval.

Sign Program: Cheyne said the sign program continues to perform well. The program is rated a 1.46 overall customer service rating with one being the highest score that can be awarded. In overall performance responsiveness, the crew is meeting installation at under the 75-day goal and has installed 905 signs since 2015. The TIC sign crew has installed more than double what ODOT and Coral Construction have installed combined. Cheyne continues work to lower the number of customers on the waitlist. Last month there were more new applicants for locations with a waitlist than were removed. Overall, there were 24 new customers and 28 customer sign removals. Cheyne said that the sign program, like in rest areas, is seeing project cost inflation. Not all projects planned for the year can be completed or may have to be deferred to the following year.

Rest Area Program: Peck said the Rest Area program field and site operations have been operating as expected in the first quarter of a biennium. This included filling numerous open recruitments for technicians, which has been an ongoing challenge. Peck and Boxall then informed the Council of how many open technician positions, the requirements of the position why the position can be difficult to fill. The rest area program has been managing the operations and capital projects without the operations manager during November and December. Peck then updated the Council on multiple rest area projects. Pecks said she has been working with ODOT's planning department on the new truck parking enhancement project. Since October, Peck has been working with an internal ODOT work group to create draft plans for increased truck parking at certain rest areas throughout the state. The group made visits to the facility sites and ODOT has been drafting preliminary planning documents to show where and how truck parking could be increased. So far, five drafts are being worked on. Peck said she might be able to share preliminary site diagrams with the Council at the next meeting for Gettings Creek, Manzanita, Santiam, French Prairie, and Baker Valley.

The Council took a break at 11:21 a.m.

The Council returned at 11:28 a.m.

Peck continued her Rest Area Program update after the Council returned from break. Peck said that seven of the eight rest area trucks previously approved by the Council have been received. Peck said that multiple rest areas are facing the need to replace multiple LED parking lights. Replacement of LED lighting is required when the light turns a blue or purple hue. Unfortunately, most of the lights are no longer within the warranty period and require TIC to pay replacement costs. Staff have reached out to the manufacturers to get a possible warranty extension. This was successful for affected lights at French Prairie, but this has not been possible at every location. Peck informed the Council that DOJ completed its review of the Memaloose paving project last week. Peck will be submitting a formal solicitation in Oregon Buys this month. The posting should run for 30-45 days and will be followed by a bid review and recommendation to proceed with contracting afterward. Staff are anticipating a spring 2024 start date. This project will take coordination with Oregon Parks as there is an entrance to a park within the right of way.

Peck said that the parking lot paving project with Federal Lands for the Government Camp Rest Area has been pushed back to 2025. The Sunset Springs Rest Area paving project is being planned for the Invitation to Bid documentation ready to go to DOJ soon. This will allow a posting for bidding and work to begin in the spring of 2024. Peck said she is hopeful to have the Baker Valley ADA and renovation project invitation to bid documentation ready to go by the end of January. Charles Reynolds and Deadman Pass do not have a current schedule at this time, but Peck will update the Council as soon as that information is available.

The OSPR lead renovation project of the Peter Skene Rest Area is moving forward. OSPR hired a project manager and started conducting project meetings. OSPR received general fund money to fund the project with anticipated TIC support of approx. \$800,000. The Council has not given formal approval of this expenditure, but TIC did commit in 2017 to partner with OSPR on this project, but there was no established timeline or estimated cost at that time. Peck said she would gather more information and bring a formal recommendation to the next Rest Area Committee meeting. The Council then discussed the differences between the needs and project knowledge that was used to base the funding requests for HB 2017, how those have changed, and possible future needs.

Action/Voting Items:

- **2024 Rest Area Janitorial & Landscape Contracts:** Peck presented three new rest area janitorial contracts, one new landscaping contract for Council consideration and requested approval of the expenditures as specified in the contract terms. The Request for Quotation (RFQ) process was completed for janitorial contracts at the French Prairie, Santiam, and Gettings Creek rest areas and the landscape contract at the French Prairie rest area. Based on the scoring outcomes staff recommendation is to award the following new contracts for 2024:
 - French Prairie janitorial: Sharp's Specialized Cleaning LLC = \$125,925.00
 - French Prairie landscape: Crystal Greens Landscape = \$44,040.00
 - Santiam janitorial: Full Circle = \$95,400.00
 - Gettings Creek janitorial: Full Circle = \$90,000.00

The total difference from the current approved budget for these four contracts is a total net increase of \$1,377.00 or .39%. The initial terms for the contract will be 12 months and will be effective as of the date the contract is signed and executed. Peck said staff would like to have these contracts start in January of 2024. After such a time, the contracts could be negotiated for 24 months if desired.

Garcia made a motion to approve the 2024 rest area janitorial and landscape contracts as presented. Riggs seconded.

Card asked what needs the French Prairie rest area had that would warrant the need for a landscape service instead of being accomplished by staff. Peck said that the amount of acreage, heavily wooded landscape, and the high traffic volume of the rest area put the landscaping requirements out of our staff's capabilities if also paired with their other job duties. French Prairie also has a janitorial contractor to help support off hours and twice a day on weekends and late evenings. The Council then discussed the other janitorial and landscape contracts in the rest area program and their locations.

7-0 Vote.

- **Multnomah Falls Kiosk:** Boxall said that the approval of the Multnomah Falls Kiosk project is being brought to Council for review because of an error in the original vote. Boxall said that during this period there have also been some changes to the original contract as well. Cheyne said that the contract was reviewed, and it was ascertained that while TIC owns the kiosk or the overall structure of the building, Certified Folder owns the infrastructure of the building. Staff requested Romtec resubmit the proposal without the infrastructure, which greatly reduced the total cost. Certified will contract with Romtec to construct the infrastructure of the building.

Riggs made a motion to approve the amended Multnomah Falls Kiosk project as presented for a cost of \$104,805.27. Washington seconded. 7-0 Vote.

- **I-205 Capital Sign Replacement:** Cheyne presented a capital project for Coral Construction to replace a Lodging sign located on the island in advance of the airport exit on I-205, Exit 24 southbound. The footings, supports, and board are from 1990 and have fully depreciated. The project has been budgeted in the Sign Program FY2023-24 Capital Plan.

Garcia made a motion to approve \$35,160.00 for the replacement of the Lodging sign located on the island in advance of the airport exit on I-205, Exit 24 southbound. Riggs seconded.

While Warren's virtual connection was compromised and active at the time of voting, no response to the vote was heard.

6-0 Vote.

- **Sign Fee Discussion:** Cheyne said that as stated in the Oregon Administrative Rules the Council is to discuss sign program fees once a year. Chyene informed the Council that the program is healthy and on track each month with fee receipt estimates. The Council approved a 3% increase last year partly in anticipation of the expenditures related to the implementation of a new online invoicing system. The system has not yet gone into effect due to staffing and capacity challenges. Chyene gave a sign program overview and the difference between TIC's sign program and any other state sign program. The budget included a 3% fee increase in the event it was needed. A recommendation will be made to the finance committee at their next meeting, then brought back to the Council.
- **Investment Policy:** Roth provided a revised investment policy that has been recommended for approval to the Council by the Finance Committee. She reviewed the changes made to improve readability and clarity. Language was added to clarify where TIC's authority comes from to invest funds. Roth said she added under objectives, clarity to the goals of preserving capital, liquidity, taking market rates, and diversification. The policy was also revised to clarify that investment earnings could be credited to rest area operations and maintenance, as well as rest area capital improvements. Garica asked if there had been changes to the Oregon Public Funds Collateralization program or their authorized banking institutions. Roth said that there haven't been any major changes and TIC is required to report which banks it is using annually.

Garcia made a motion to approve the amended investment policy as presented. Canty-Jones seconded. 7-0 Vote.

- **Year-End Statements:** Roth said the Finance Committee felt it was important that they review and make a recommendation to the Council based on the Year-End Financial report. Roth presented the informational memo and the Year-End Report included in the meeting materials. For the fiscal year 2022-23, there was a positive retention of \$4.2 million, which was \$864,000 more than budgeted. This was driven by interest income and unplanned other revenues. In total, interest income was \$529,000. Overall expenses were under \$183,000, driven by some cost savings on insurance and sign repairs and maintenance. Due to inflation and the cost of things rising projects are more likely to be capitalized by going above the \$5,000 threshold. Roth highlighted the new accounting standards that went into effect last year. GASB 94 relates to public-private-public public partnerships, which TIC's agreement with Certified folder and display is subject to. GASB 96

is related to subscription-based information technology arrangements, for subscriptions to software for a period. GASB 96 recognizes that liability and brings it onto the balance sheet and a corresponding asset. Roth explained a new report she created to split out all the different types of funds TIC has. The report shows the funds broken up into other funds, operating, then vehicle replacement and capital funds.

Gracia made a motion to accept the 2022-23 Year-End financial statements as presented. Riggs seconded. 7-0 Vote.

Card thanked the members of the Finance Committee and staff for their good work.

New Business

- 2024 Meetings Calendar: Card presented the 2024 TIC meeting calendar included in the meeting materials. The Council discussed a possible Southern Oregon meeting location for the September meeting.
- Other Announcements: None.

Adjourn: 12:32 p.m.

Next Meetings:

March 11, 2024
