



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

MINUTES

Council Meeting

Monday, September 9, 2024

Salem, OR

Hybrid Meeting

Members Participating: Eliza Canty-Jones, Chair (in-person); Rich Riggs, Vice-Chair (in-person); Bob Garcia, Secretary (in-person); Jeff Baker, OTC (in-person); Diane DeAutremont (in-person); John Hamilton (in-person); Kristine McConnell (virtual); Matt Preston (virtual).

TIC Staff Participating: Mike Auman; Diane Cheyne; Michelle Roth; Heather Peck; Heather Swanson; Beth Dehn; Jessica Carbone.

Guest: Chole Haller, Victory Group

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

Approval of the Agenda and Order of Business: The Council had no comment on the agenda and order of business.

9:34 a.m. Matt Preston joined the meeting.

Business Meeting:

Approval of June 10, 2024, June 12, 2024, June 18, 2024, June 27&28, 2024, July 11, 2024, and July 19, 2024 Council Meeting Minutes:

Baker made a motion to approve June 10, 2024, June 12, 2024, June 18, 2024, June 27&28, 2024, July 11, 2024, and July 19, 2024 minutes as presented. Riggs seconded. 8-0 Vote.

Public Comment: None.

Victory Group: Chole Haller from Victory Group gave a presentation highlighting their work leading up to the 2025 Oregon Legislative session. Haller informed the Council of some of the key elements, part of the climate of the Oregon legislature, and their impacts on TIC's strategic objectives. She stated there has been a lot of change since TIC last engaged with the Legislature. There are many moving and changing parts to creating an effective transportation package, but this is just the beginning of a very long road ahead. Baker said he has been encouraging Legislators to stop at rest areas that are part of their commute or a planned trip so they can see the condition of the facilities and how important they are to the public, commercial trucking, and road safety. The Council then discussed the issue that rest

area staff has with being unable to get derelict and abandoned RVs removed. There are several factors around this issue involving multiple partners, such as the Oregon State Police (OSP) and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), that need to be addressed before a solution can be found.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee: Canty-Jones said that TIC is current with financial reporting and the bottom line is running better than expected due to higher investment income than planned and savings in personnel expenses. Because of good management, TIC has not needed to access its reserve funds as early as previously forecasted. Canty-Jones said the Finance Committee discussed TIC's proposed involvement in the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP). TIC's participation in the LGIP would provide a good return on investment with less direct management from TIC staff.

Historical Markers Committee: Garcia said that at the most recent Historical Marker Committee meeting the committee voted on a sponsorship rate increase. The cost of a large modern marker will now be \$8,000 and a pedestal marker will be \$3,900. At that meeting, the committee also discussed a possible partnership with Travel Oregon to fund the development of a marker with each of the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon. This project is still in development with Travel Oregon's Tribal Tourism Subcommittee. Discussions are focused on the parameters of the markers and how they would fit into the program. Hamilton offered any assistance he could provide with his contacts at Travel Oregon. McConnell thanked TIC and its sign program for their quick work on the application and installation of the directional signage for the Simnasho Tribal Market. The signs were funded as part of a grant from Visit Central Oregon. The Ews Marker at Klamath Lake will be installed this fall and the Nez Perze marker is installed. There are no current dedication dates for these markers.

Rest Area Committee: Riggs reported on his first meeting as the Rest Area Committee Chair. He stated he had met with Peck the week before the meeting to learn and discuss in greater detail the current conditions and issues facing the rest areas. The committee discussed the issues around abandoned RVs in the rest areas, ongoing and future capital projects, and TIC's funding needs in the future. Riggs said that tough decisions will need to be made if TIC does not receive additional funding. Peck and the Rest Area Committee will be developing a priority list of all the needed capital projects. TIC will receive the last of its scheduled capital funding in 2025 so priority of these projects is important.

Chair's Report: Canty-Jones thanked everyone for attending the meeting and said she was so excited to meet all the new Counselors. Canty-Jones stated that there are a lot of tasks going on currently. There is an ongoing recruitment for a new Executive Director and the agency is preparing for the next legislative session to secure stable funding. Canty-Jones shared her appreciation for the Leadership Team and Interim Executive Director Auman.

Staff Reports

Agency Update: Auman introduced three new members to the Council, John Hamilton, COO, of Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association, Kristine McConnell, VP of Regional Programs, of Visit Central Oregon, and Diane DeAutremont, President and Owner, of Life Relocation Services. There is one remaining vacant position on the Council that needs to be filled by a candidate from Congressional District Two. Auman updated the Council on the agency's work to achieve stable funding and the current status of the Executive Director recruitment. The first round of interviews will be happening

next Monday. The second round of Interviews with the Full Council is scheduled for September 27. Auman then informed the Council that, instead of waiting for the Executive Director position to be filled, he has decided to extend the DAS Humans Services contract through June 2025. Auman said that the Governor has requested that all agencies conduct an employee engagement survey. DAS recently entered a contract with Gallup so that agencies with less than 75 FTE could participate for a modest cost of \$15 per staff member. TIC will be participating in the survey for 2024 and 2025. Auman is hopeful that the results will be available in December of 2024.

Finance Program: Roth presented to the Council on the June 30, 2024, year-end results. The Agency showed positive retention of \$1,659,344. Investments earned TIC over \$1,000,000 in interest income. Roth said that she expects interest income to start dropping in the coming months as the Fed is expected to start lowering interest rates. Other Funds had an ending fund balance of \$4 million in a justified reserve. There was greater than planned income from signs, info centers, and interest. Lower than planned payroll, sign repairs and maintenance and bank fees were discussed. Bank fees were lower than planned because the anticipated E-Biz electronic invoice and payment system has not yet been implemented due to staffing levels. Staff is working on upgrading hardware and software to facilitate moving forward with the E-Biz system. Hamilton asked if the agency has a reserve policy. Roth replied the financial policy set the reserves at \$250,000 for other funds and \$750,000 for rest areas. Hamilton suggested reviewing the amounts to see if it is viable for current operations. Roth shared with the Council that total operating expenses for rest areas for the year were \$9.7 million. TIC is now at the point where rest area operating expenses exceed the annual operating income received from ODOT of \$9.16 million. Without the income earned from investment interest, rest area operations would have had a net loss. Interest income is expected to decrease as interest rates are expected to drop and as capital funds that had been invested are used to complete projects. TIC ended the year with \$3.1 in rest area operating fund balance. Rest area capital funds had an ending fund balance of \$7.6 million. During the year capital funds were spent to complete pavement work at Memaloose, Oak Grove northbound and the restroom expansion and pavement work at The Maples.

Heritage Programs: Dehn said that the Heritage Tree Committee is focused on outreach to increase its geographic footprint and subject matter content. Each of the heritage committees held their annual elections this last quarter, and Dehn presented rosters of committee members for the Council to review. Dehn then updated the Council that a public hearing was held on September 2nd for the proposed Historical Marker Administrative Rule changes that the Council approved at the June 2024 meeting. No public comments were received, so those rules have been made official with the Secretary of State's office. Dehn said that the program's rules are now in alignment with how the program is administered.

Sign Program: Cheyne presented the updated Sign Program content from a rating of one being the highest score to five being the highest as requested by Councilor Baker. New customers rated the program at 4.57 out of 5. The TIC sign crew is averaging 72 days from the receipt of the application to the installation of a new customer. Cheyne said that she has been tasked by the Council to balance replacing signs that have aged out with replacing signs that could be enlarged to take customers off the waitlist. Currently, there are 71 applicants who could be taken off the wait list with the completion of a capital project with a four-year backlog. This is down from almost a nine-year backlog in 2017. Because the focus has been split between expanding signs that may not have been depreciated yet and replacing signs that have aged out. The average age of the signs has not gone down since 2017. Cheyne continued to present the sign program's performance data..

Rest Area Program: Peck presented a power point updating the Council on the current condition of the rest area program. Staffing levels have leveled out since the last Council meeting apart from the open technician positions. Peck and rest area staff completed the semi-annual facility evaluations in August. Peck said that she is finalizing a couple of capital projects that are currently in the design phase, while there are many large maintenance projects currently in progress. Staff is coordinating projects with agency partners such as Oregon Parks and Recreation (OPRD), ODOT, OSP, and the Marine Board. The in-person Rest Area Supervisor Meeting will be taking place at the TIC Admin offices this October.

Peck said the repair projects from last winter's storm damage at The Maples are being finalized. Staff have almost completed the new roof on the utility building and a new modular unit for onsite staff will be delivered in the next couple of weeks to replace the building that was destroyed by a tree. Riggs asked if there was a planting plan in place to replace the trees lost in the storm and taken down for safety. Peck replied there is a planting plan in place. Staff is being very strategic about where and what kind of trees to plant. The Memaloose paving project punch list was completed in August. Peck reported that the contractors did a really good job and the closures were minimal. The Memaloose building project's plans are being finalized by DOJ to go out to bid. This project will bring the buildings up to ADA and current building code compliance. Peck anticipates to go out to bid in late September or early October. The project is scheduled to start spring of 2025. The Sunset paving project started on September 3. The rest area will be closed until October 3, but the entire project is scheduled to take 60 days to complete. The Government camp paving project is also being completed. The rest area will be closed for approximately three weeks. Peck informed the Council that the stakeholder group for the relocation of the Government Camp Rest Area has finalized the selection of a planning consultant. Preliminary meetings are anticipated to start this month. Peck told the Council that OPRD issued an intent to award with Bermik Construction for the Peter Skene Ogden rest area improvement project. The project was estimated at \$1.4 million. The bid came in at \$960,476.72. TIC has agreed to pay for half of the project up to \$860,000. Peck said that 100% plans have been received for the Charles Reynolds rest area renovation and pavement rehabilitation project. This project will hopefully go out for bid in October. The work for this project is estimated to begin Summer of 2025. Baker gave his compliments to the rest area team for maintaining great rest areas a long his I-84 trip to eastern Oregon.

Haller left the meeting at 11:16

Council paused the meeting at 11:16 a.m.

Council resumed the meeting at 11:23 p.m.

Action/Voting Items:

- **Sign Program Truck Purchase:** Cheyne requested the Council approve a not-to-exceed expense of \$79,200 for a 2025 Dodge Ram 5500 truck chassis, transferring parts off the old service body, inverters, and post rack, and installing safety equipment. The truck's replacement date is a year earlier than scheduled due to excessive mileage on an aging fleet truck (2019), 225,000+ miles, and excessive repairs to the computer and recalled parts. This request also includes a 10% contingency.

Baker made a motion to approve a not to exceed the amount of \$79,200 for the purchase of a 2025 Dodge Ram 5500 truck. Riggs seconded.

Garica asked if the staff was able to use DAS purchasing contracts for the vehicle. Swanson confirmed.

8-0 Vote.

- **Certified Agreement:** Cheyne requested Council approve signing the agreement with Certified Folder Display to perform the services and deliver the products outlined in the agreement and authorize the receipt of compensation as outlined in the agreement. Cheyne said that we have had an agreement with Certified over the last five years and she believes it to be a great relationship. Certified is the only company on the West Coast that provides this kind of service. The Council asked where the kiosks are located.

Garcia made a motion to approve signing the agreement with Certified Folder Display to perform the services and deliver the products as outlined in Exhibit A. Riggs seconded. 7-0 Vote. Preston abstained.

- **Gettings Creek Kiosk Replacement Amendment:** Cheyne said that on June 10, 2024, the Council approved the Getting Creek Kiosk replacement request for a not-to-exceed amount of \$104,805.27. Due to the change from the original Multnomah Falls kiosk installation location to the Gettings Creek kiosk and the delay in construction, the cost increased by \$6,882.00. It was also determined that gutters were not included in the agreement. The addition of gutters is an additional \$1,000.00. Cheyne asked the Council to approve the amendment of the original expenditure to \$112,687.27. \$122,687.27 is still below the original budgeted amount.

Baker made a motion to approve the ratification of the Gettings Creek kiosk replacement at the amended amount not-to-exceed \$112,687.27. Riggs seconded.

Garica asked if the staff thought there would be any need for contingencies. Cheyne replied that she did not foresee any need for contingencies.

Baker amended his motion to approve the ratification of the Gettings Creek kiosk replacement at the amended amount not-to-exceed the budgeted amount of \$125,000. Riggs seconded the amended motion.

8-0 Vote.

- **Sign Program Capital Projects:** Cheyne presented multiple capital sign projects for approval by the Council since each project's total cost is over \$25,000. Cheyne informed the Council that in all these instances steel I-Beam and concrete expenses have increased and most six-space footings, supports, and board replacements will cost over \$25,000 from now on. Cheyne proposed the following projects.

| Project | Cost |
|---|--|
| I-5, Exit 191 (southbound) enlarge 4 Space Lodging with a 4 space Lodging/2 space Attraction Supports and Board – 2001/2 Wait List Customers | Supports - \$22,470 Board - \$6,323 Total Cost - \$28,793 |
| I-84, Exit 109 (westbound) enlarge 2 space Food/2 Space Lodging with a 2 space Food/2 space Lodging/2 space Attraction Supports and Board – 1999/2 Wait List Customers | Supports - \$23,220 Board - \$6,051 Total Cost - \$29,271 |
| FY 2023-24 R&M | Total - \$58,064 |
| I-5, Exit 306A/B (northbound) replace 4 space Food/2 space Gas Supports and Board - 1996 | Supports - \$21,320 Board - \$6,960 Total Cost - \$28,280 |
| I-5, Exit 192 (northbound) enlarge 2 space Food/2 space Lodging with a 2 space Food/2 space Lodging/2 space Attraction Supports and Board – 1996/2 Wait List Customers | Supports - \$29,170 Board - \$6,531 Total Cost - \$35,701 |
| I-84, Exit 84 (eastbound) enlarge 2 space Food/2 space Lodging with a 2 space Food/2 space Lodging/2 space Attraction Supports and Board – 2002/2 Wait List Customers | Supports – \$28,490 Board – \$6,406 Total Cost - \$34,896 |
| I-5, Exit 282 (northbound) enlarge 2 space Attraction with a 6 space Attraction Supports and Board – 2008/4 Wait List Customers | Supports - \$21,870 Board - \$5,174 Total Cost - \$27,044 |
| I-5, Exit 263 (northbound) enlarge 4 space Food with a 6 space Food Supports and Board 2002/2 Wait List Customers | Supports - \$21,750 Board - \$5,859 Total Cost - \$27,609 |
| I-5, Exit 263 (southbound) enlarge 4 space Food with a 6 space Food Supports and Board 2002/2 Wait List Customers | Supports - \$19,990 Board - \$6,115 Total Cost - \$26,105 |
| I-5, Exit 292B (northbound) enlarge 2 space Food/2 space Lodging with a 4 space Food/2 space Lodging Supports and Board – 2006/2 Wait List Customers | Supports - \$21,430 Board - \$6,048 Total Cost - \$27,478 |
| FY 2024-25 Budgeted Capital Expenditures | Total - \$207,113 |

*Garcia made a motion to approve the expenditure of \$207,113 for nine sign enlargement projects
The projects are:*

- I-5, Exit 191 (southbound)enlarge 4 space Logging with a 4 space Lodging/2 space Attraction Supports and Board
- I-84, Exit 109 (westbound) enlarge 2 space Food/2 space Lodging with a 2 space Food/ 2 space Attraction
- I-5, Exit 306 A/B (northbound) enlarge 2 space Food/2 space Gas
- I-5, Exit 192 (northbound) enlarge 2 space Food/2 space Lodging with a 2 space Food/ 2 space Lodging/2 space Attraction
- I-84, Exit 84 (eastbound) enlarge 2 space Food/2 space Lodging with a 2 space Food/2 space Lodging/2 space Attraction
- I-5, Exit 282 (northbound) enlarge 2 space Attraction with a 6 space Attraction
- I-5, Exit 263 (northbound) enlarge 4 space Food with a 6 space Food
- I-5, Exit 263 (southbound) enlarge 4 space Food with a 6 space Food
- I-5, Exit 292B (northbound) enlarge 2 space Food/ 2 space Lodging with a 4 space Food/ 2 space Lodging

Baker seconded. 8-0 Vote.

- **Sign Program Fee Schedule Restructuring:** Chyene told the Council that on July 12, 2024, 1,617 emails and 104 letters were sent out to active customers informing them of the proposed fee schedule restructuring. Next, at the request of Chair Canty-Jones, Chyene provided the Council background on the sign program, how the fees are currently structured, and how the restructuring came to be to provide some additional clarity. The feedback received was minimal. Eight customers asked where they fell within the restructuring proposal. All eight were in the current Schedule 5 or Schedule 6 and will see minimal changes. The Executive Director of ORLA asked for clarification about the restructuring because some of his constituents were concerned about the new top tier for higher traffic counts. There were no comments in opposition. The Council discussed the intent of the program being directional signage versus advertising and if there was any imperial data to show customers that the signs bring in new customers.

Riggs made a motion to approve the proposed fee schedule restructuring, effective October 1, 2024, as it is as outlined in recommendations A through F.

- A. Realigning the bands to make them a 10% increase from the Base.*
- B. Add a 7th Band at the top.*
 - a. Adding a 7th Band Average Daily Traffic Count Chart*
- C. Resetting Double Logo rate from 1.30 to 1.33 of the price of a Single Logo*
- D. Changing Intersection signs to be 50% of the rate of Advance signs*
- E. Changing Trailblazers pricing to Base plus a 10% increase for each subsequent band in the schedule*
- F. These changes would result in a total increase of \$70,619:*
 - a. For Profit Interstate – Increase \$58,498*
 - b. Non-Profit Interstate – Increase \$337*
 - c. For Profit Off Interstate, TOD, and Museum – Increase \$10,748*
 - d. Non-Profit Off Interstate, TOD, and Museum – Increase \$1,036*

Garica Seconded. 7-0 Vote. Hamilton abstained.

- **Memaloose Pump Replacement:** Peck informed the council that the well pumps that supply water to the Memaloose Rest Area are failing and need to be replaced. The well that feeds the rest area properties is operated by two well pumps that push water uphill approximately 1800ft, under Interstate 84 (to feed the eastbound side), and into a 50,000-gallon cistern that keeps the water in continual operation. Over their life span the pumps have been rebuilt four times, so repair of the pumps at this point is not an option. Pecks asked for the Council to approve an expenditure of a not-to-exceed amount of \$30,000 for the replacement. \$27,785.00 is the quote for the pump replacement and installation and \$2,215 of the total is for incidentals related to the replacement and some contingency.

Baker made a motion to approve the not-to-exceed expenditure of \$30,000 for the purchase and replacement of 2 new well pumps at the Memaloose Rest Area. Riggs second. 8-0 Vote.

- **Investment Policy Amendments and LGIP Participation:** Roth presented to the Council about the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP). The LGIP is managed by the Oregon State Treasury and invests in high-quality, short-term fixed-income securities with maturities no greater than 3 years.

Historically, the LGIP has performed well and delivered strong returns while also keeping public funds safe. In addition, all funds invested are liquid and can be transferred out of the LGIP within a couple of days. Participation in the LGIP would reduce staff time doing cash flow analysis to determine how much funds can be invested as well as setting up and managing CDs. The Investment Policy would also need to be amended to include the option of participation in the LGIP as an investment option.

Riggs made a motion to amend the Investment Policy to add the phrase “or be invested in the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP)” to the policy. Garcia seconded. 8-0 Vote.

Riggs made a motion to approve participation in the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) and open two new LGIP accounts. Baker seconded. 8-0 Vote.

- **Accounts Payable Clerk Position:** Roth asked the Council to consider approval of the expenditure for adding one full time accounts payable/administrative support position. Roth said that in January 2023 TIC changed from processing payroll in-house to having the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) process payroll. The transition allowed TIC access to Workday, the State's human resources, learning, payroll, and time tracking system. The finance team was reduced by one payroll position. Payroll processing and human resources are now provided by DAS, but not all the anticipated efficiencies have been gained and some processes still need to be done by the TIC staff. Staff vacancies and leaves over the past couple of years have also highlighted how lean TIC's finance team and administrative support is. The position was not budgeted for in FY 2024-2025. It is estimated that the annual cost for this position including wages, taxes, and benefits will be a maximum of \$115,530. Discussion was had about the addition of the position. Auman shared his support for the need for the position.

Baker made a motion to approve the expenditure to add up to one full-time accounts payable/administrative support position not to exceed \$115,530 in the first year. Garica Seconded. 8-0 Vote.

- **Oregon Trail Kiosk Project Federal Funds:** Dehn gave the Council a recap of the history of the Oregon Trail Kiosk Project. The project is currently in the second of three phases. Dehn said that finding the funding to complete this project has been a big challenge. In March of 2024, Congress approved \$220,000 of Community Initiated Project (CIP) Transportation Housing and Urban Development (THUD) funds for the Oregon Trail Kiosk Project in the FY24 budget. Dehn thanked Chair Canty-Jones for her help in the process of securing these funds. ODOT will manage these funds and the federal reporting requirements for TIC through a reimbursement process at no additional cost to TIC. Based on estimates from the selected design consultant, this will cover the cost of preparing the design files, printing, fabrication, and installation. The remaining funds may be spent on the dedication. Dehn asked the Council for approval to enter contracts and spend up to \$220,000 of federal funds on Phase III of the Oregon Trail Kiosk Project.

Riggs made a motion to approve entering contracts and spending up to \$220,000 of federal funds on Phase III of the Oregon Trail Kiosk Project. Baker seconded. 8-0 Vote.

Committee Selection/ Reappointment of Mike Drennan:

Kristine McConnell volunteered to serve on the Heritage Tree Committee.
John Hamilton volunteered to serve on the Finance Committee and Heritage Tree Committee.
Diane DeAutremont volunteered to serve on the Historical Marker Committee.

Garica made a motion to reappoint Mike Drennan to the Finance Committee for two years. Riggs seconded. 8-0 Vote.

New Business

Update on Executive Director Recruitment:

September 12, 8 a.m.-11:30 a.m. & September 16, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.- Round 1 Interviews
September 20, 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. – Meet and Greet Event
September 27, 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. – Round 2 Interviews with the Full Council

- **Other Announcements:** None.

Adjourn: 1:13 p.m.

Next Quarterly Meeting:

December 9, 2024 – Salem, OR Hybrid
