



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

MINUTES

Second Quarterly Council Meeting

Monday, June 9, 2025

Salem, OR

Hybrid Meeting

Members Participating: Eliza Canty-Jones, Chair; Bob Garcia, Secretary; Jeff Baker, OTC; Diane DeAutremont (virtual); John Hamilton.

Excused: Kristine McConnell, Rich Riggs, Vice-Chair, Matt Preston.

TIC Staff members Participating are Mac Lynde, Diane Cheyne, Michelle Roth, Heather Swanson, Beth Dehn, and Jessica Carbone.

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

Approval of the Agenda and Order of Business: Canty-Jones reviewed the agenda with the Council. The meeting proceeded with the agenda and order of business as presented.

Executive Director Update: Lynde welcomed attending members of the Council and thanked them for their attendance. Lynde said that a few minutes before the meeting started, the legislature released the first proposal of the highly anticipated transportation funding package. The proposal is 175 pages. Lynde said that he will stay in contact with TIC's lobbyist to provide the Council with a solid understanding of what this means for the agency. Next, Lynde presented his Executive Director update. TIC participated in "Take Your Kids to Work Day". Kids worked alongside staff in the office and at the Grove of the States located at the French Prairie Rest Area. Lynde said he and staff represented TIC at the Governor's Tourism Conference this spring. Baker inquired if Lynde felt the people he spoke to at the conference could identify the agency by its name. Baker said he felt our agency name could better identify what TIC does. Lynde said that the name was created when the agency just handled blue highway signs. As the agency's duties have grown, past Councils have struggled with how to fully represent TIC's varied responsibilities. Lynde said it is something that will be considered in the future. Lynde said he spent some of the last quarter traveling to different meetings and different TIC-managed locations around the state. He was able to accomplish visiting all of TIC's rest areas since joining the agency in November. Lynde took part in a meeting with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs about the relocation of the Government Camp Rest Area. There was a great conversation with staff about possible relocation sites along US26. Along with his travels around the state, Lynde said a lot of his time has been spent on legislative engagement and working to secure additional funding to meet rest area program needs. Lynde shared two staff anniversaries with the Council. Mike Bryant, Sign

Program Manager & Construction Inspector, celebrated 21 years with TIC and 35 years with the State of Oregon, and Deaven Konopacky celebrated 5 years with TIC. Two new Rest Area Specialists joined TIC last quarter, Hannah Begley at Cow Canyon Rest Area and Zach Wieting at Midland Rest Area. In closing the update, Lynde shared a picture of the newly remodeled restroom building at Peter Skene Ogden Rest Area. Baker shared his appreciation of the new building design and asked if TIC would consider this design in future building projects. Lynde said it would be considered, and the building at Peter Skene will be able to provide information on how this design holds up under use and for ideas on how it could be modified for the other locations around the state.

Chair Update: Canty-Jones acknowledged and appreciated the work staff continues to accomplish during this time of budget uncertainty. Canty-Jones said that despite possible outcomes of this legislative session, the visibility and reputation of TIC have really been raised with legislators. Canty-Jones thanked Garcia for the work he has done for the agency over his two terms of service. Canty-Jones said that she would be working closely with Lynde and others to think about how the Council oversees and conducts annual evaluations of the Executive Director. Lynde said he is currently working with the Governor's office to find new Councilors to fill the open seats from congressional districts 2 and 4.

Public Hearing

Public Hearing on the 2025 – 2027 TIC Agency Budget: Chair Canty-Jones opened the public hearing on the 2025-27 TIC agency budget. Notice for this public hearing was posted 15 days before the date of the hearing. There were no members of the public at the meeting, and the agency received no written comments to present.

Public Comment: None.

Action/Voting Items:

Approval of March 10, 2025, Council Meeting Minutes:

Baker made a motion to approve the March 10, 2025, Council Meeting Minutes as presented. Hamilton seconded. 5-0 Vote. Canty-Jones- yes; DeAutremont- yes; Garcia- yes; Baker- yes; Hamilton-yes.

Memaloose Project Increase: Lynde spoke to the Council about the history of the Memaloose project and how the project got to where it is today. The project was last seen before the Council at the March 2025 meeting because the construction bid received was higher than the engineer's estimate. The Council approved additional funding so that the contract could be awarded. The construction contract was awarded to Construction Services Group, LLC on April 8, 2025, and work began in mid-April. During construction, several items have emerged that need to be addressed, resulting in increased costs for the project and significant delays. Taking into consideration the additional costs that have been identified and planning for unforeseen contingencies, Lynde requested that the Council approve an additional increase of \$345,080 for a total rest area building project approval of \$2,050,000. Hamilton asked where the requested additional funds would come out of the budget. Lynde said that additional funds to complete the

Memaloose project would be capital funds, leaving fewer funds available for other projects. Hamilton then asked if staff had discussed the benefits of drawing the needed funds from operations instead of capital to keep as many funds as possible in investments. Roth said there are insufficient operational funds to maintain current service levels, so it isn't possible to use operational funds for additional expense. The Council and staff discussed the challenges and opportunities of different sources for the additional funds. Baker asked what other capital projects are affected by more capital funds being diverted to the Memaloose project. Lynde explained that staff had revised the capital plan for the next biennium. The capital funding plan was developed based on the total amount of remaining funding, taking into consideration any design work already completed, safety needs at each location, the age of the pavement and buildings at each location, and our ability to deliver the necessary services. Lynde said that he would like to get to a point where TIC has another prioritized list in the future. Baker shared his concerns about how the project planning was accomplished and the quality of work provided by the engineering consultants. Baker asked Lynde if he felt the amount requested would be enough to complete the project in a way that TIC can be proud of and serve Oregonians and visitors for the next 50 years. Lynde shared the staff's project considerations and concerns. The Council discussed the benefits and varied outcomes of increasing the project approval by an additional \$50,000.

In the context of TIC funding, Baker asked if staff felt that investment in the Information Center Kiosks was a responsible use of limited funding. Lynde said that all the kiosks are in serious need of upkeep or replacement. Most of these kiosks are on rest area property, which is TIC's responsibility to maintain. The kiosk at Multnomah Falls, while not on rest area property, produces about 1/3 of the program's total revenue. There are plans to begin conversations with different partners, such as Travel Oregon and Certified Folder, to develop the program to make it as marketable and profitable as it can be.

Garica made a motion to approve an increase to the Memaloose Building Project by \$395,080 for a total of \$2,100,000. Baker seconded. 5-0 Vote. Canty-Jones- yes; DeAutremont- yes; Garcia- yes; Baker- yes; Hamilton-yes.

2025 – 2027 Budget Approval: Roth presented the 2025-2027 biennial budget and revised budget narrative. The budget includes inflation factors and budget assumptions outlined in the budget narrative and discussed at the March Council meeting. Roth said the budget that was put out for public comment. There were a few changes from the one presented to the Council in March. These changes included adjustments to beginning cash balances for changes to projects expected to be completed by June 30, 2025, updates to the Memaloose building expansion cost and timing, revision of the rest area capital plan from specific building and pavement projects to a pavement preservation program and building improvement program, moving \$100,000 from unplanned rest area repairs to the capital budget for rest area equipment, increasing the amount for rest area truck replacements, and updating depreciation expense amounts due to the changes. Garica asked if investment income had been planned for in the budget. Roth said that staff did budget for interest income but was very conservative due to the uncertainty around interest rates and the expected decrease in funds available to invest. Roth outlined how the budget was built for the next biennium including using the \$750,000 rest area operating reserve for part of the \$2.6 million rest area operating deficit in FY 2026-2027. Canty-Jones asked that, since the budget and future spending depend heavily on the outcomes from the current legislative session, the topic be brought before the Finance Committee before the September meeting.

Baker shared his concern that the planned 3% increase for sign fees will not keep up with current inflation increases for construction costs. Cheyne replied that the amount currently being charged is more than current expenses. The only items that increased in the new price agreement with Coral Construction that was just received were steel and concrete. Lynde said that the sign fee discussion is planned for the December Council meeting, which will be a healthy discussion given the increasing costs in multiple areas. There was discussion about the last sign fee review that included the addition of another band for customers with the highest traffic counts. Cheyne said that Roth is working on updating the overhead allocation to better reflect the true cost of the sign program. Roth presented the updated budgeted capital outlay plan. Roth said that the budget as presented includes planned personnel, services and supplies, and capital outlay costs for the 2025-2027 biennium of \$36,116,362 in total cash outflows. The forecasted ending cash balances for the biennium leave no funds left in Rest Area Operating, \$426,000 in Rest Area Capital, and \$2.5 million in Other Funds. Roth reminded the Council that approval of the budget authorizes expenditure of funds within approved budget limits, including contracts or expenditures above \$25,000. Hamilton shared his concern about the additional workload taken on by Lynde and Swanson particularly around construction projects and asked Lynde if he had decided to wait for the outcome of the legislative session before deciding to fill the open Rest Area Program Administrator position. Lynde shared a few different possible staffing solutions being considered pending the legislative funding decisions.

Hamilton made a motion to approve the 2025-2027 Budget as presented. Baker seconded. 5-0 Vote. Canty-Jones- yes; DeAutremont- yes; Garcia- yes; Baker- yes; Hamilton-yes.

Financial Policies Change: Roth informed the Council that the State is considering increasing the fixed asset capitalization threshold from \$5,000 to \$10,000. If approved it would be effective July 1, 2025. Roth presented the current as well as updated policy language recommended for approval by the finance committee. The current policy of “Capital assets are tangible or intangible assets with an initial estimated useful life of greater than one year AND an initial cost (including ancillary charges) of \$5,000 or more” with approval would be updated to “The agency follows the State’s definition of a capital asset as defined in the Oregon Accounting Manual under OAM 10.50.00.PR.” Roth said this change would allow TIC’s policy to always align with the State without having to make updates to TIC’s financial policies as well as avoiding additional time and work that would be required if TIC’s policy differed from the State’s.

Garcia made a motion to approve amending TIC's current financial policy to "The agency follows the State's definition of a capital asset as defined in the Oregon Accounting Manual under OAM 10.50.00.PR." Hamilton seconded. 5-0 Vote. Canty-Jones- yes; DeAutremont- yes; Garcia- yes; Baker- yes; Hamilton-yes.

Election of Council Officers:

Canty-Jones made a motion to re-elect Chair Eliza Canty-Jones and Vice-Chair Richard Riggs and to elect John Hamilton as Secretary. Garcia seconded. 5-0 Vote. Canty-Jones- yes; DeAutremont- yes; Garcia- yes; Baker- yes; Hamilton-yes.

Council break 11:34 a.m.

Council returned at 11:145 a.m.

Informational

Staff Reports

Finance: Roth presented an informational finance staff report. Roth said that the total agency net position showed positive retention of \$2.2 million through March 2025, which was \$1.2 million more than budgeted. Interest income was \$926,000 greater than planned. Savings in payroll and general administrative expenses also continue to be lower than planned. If not for interest income, the rest area operating funds change in net position YTD through March 2025 would have been a net loss of \$361,495. During the last quarter, electronic credit card reporting was implemented for the rest area program, and the finance department successfully recruited a Senior Accountant who will begin June 23rd.

Heritage Programs: Dehn presented an informational Heritage Program staff report. During Take Your Child to Work Day, staff and some of their children completed a yearly clean-up at the Heritage Tree Program's Grove of the States. The dedication of the John Quincy Adams Young House Tree will be taking place on September 21 in Cedar Mill. Dehn said that the Heritage Tree committee did not have a Q2 meeting, but her focus is to update the committee's media presence in preparation to celebrate the program's 30th anniversary in 2026. Dehn has been working to get updated images of the trees on TIC and Travel Oregon's website. The newly revised Upper Klamath Lake marker has been installed at Moore Park in Klamath Falls. The sign crew was able to partner with an Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) crew from District 11 because the sign that needed to be removed required larger equipment. Dehn and Garcia both spoke to the successful partnership with the Klamath Tribes to revise this marker. The Oregon Nisei Veterans Memorial Highway Marker is fully in production, and the dedication is planned for the fall. Dehn informed the Council that the committee has reaffirmed the Values Statement it originally adopted in 2020. Dehn has posted clear language on the website that speaks to the committee's process, who they work with, and how the public can be a part of the process. Dehn shared the overall condition of the markers currently in our program. Out of 108 markers, 47 are in excellent or good condition, 36 are in fair condition, 13 are in poor condition, and 12 need full replacement. Dehn said the goal is to get the program to a place where there are only three or four that need a full replacement annually. The committee is working on creating a plan to speed up replacements, but in the meantime, a potential historical marker replacement schedule has been drafted with work planned through 2028. So far, the projects for 2025 and 2026 are on track. During this work, Dehn said that she had to investigate different production streams due to the constraints the program has experienced. Hamilton asked what the major factors were that led to delays in replacing markers. Dehn said that she did not think this speed of replacements had ever been attempted by the committee due to the limitations of the Salem town volunteers and how to balance affordability and time.

Sign Program/Info Centers: Cheyne presented an informational Sign Program staff report. The feedback from new sign customers was positive. One customer who had been on the wait list since 2009 received a space due to a capital project to expand the sign. There are currently 2500 active customers, and staff continue to work on removing customers from the wait list when able. Cheyne shared with the Council the different options considered when deciding on capital projects, such as asset life span and the length of the location's wait list. Cheyne then shared

images of all the sign projects completed in the last quarter. There was one expansion from a four-space board to a six-space board; the rest of the projects were replacing boards due to age and condition.

Cheyne spoke to the Council about the history of the Informational Center (kiosk) program. The kiosks were built by ODOT and transferred to TIC in 1975. The purpose of the kiosks were so that motorists could find tourist information about the surrounding area when they stopped to take a break. There are eight remaining kiosks in the program. Most of the kiosks are in TIC-managed rest areas, but there is one in Harris Beach State Park. Last year, the kiosk at Gettings Creek was replaced with a new design. Currently staff is working through the permitting process to replace the kiosk at Multnomah Falls. While the permitting process is more expensive than originally planned, the Multnomah Falls kiosk grosses the largest amount of income out of all the kiosk locations.

Rest Area Program: Swanson shared an organizational chart to give the Council an idea of the current staffing levels of the rest area program. There are 11 supervisors and 31 specialists currently serving our program. Swanson then showed photos from the rest area supervisors meeting that took place this spring and shared photos and highlights of the Peter Skene Ogden building replacement. Lynde said that when these photos were shared at the supervisor's meeting, there was a lively discussion about parts of this design that may work in the more remote locations but would not work in the I-5 locations due to potential vandalism and damage. Swanson shared some of the projects that have taken place in the rest areas over the last quarter. The unique sewer system at the Boardman Rest Area required a new panel replacement. The new panel has helped to run that system more efficiently and effectively. The old large redwood water tanks, which were the original water source for the French Prairie Rest Area, have lived past their useful life and began leaking. Currently, the water in these tanks is used for irrigation. These tanks have been removed and replaced with three smaller poly tanks. Baker asked if the used redwood had any market value. Swanson said that the wood had become too rotted over time to have any remaining value. The work for emergency pavement repairs at Baker Valley Rest Area that the Council approved at the last Council meeting will begin in the next week or so.

Hamilton asked how often the contract for vending in the rest areas comes up for renewal. Swanson said that the vending in the rest areas isn't under contract. It is a continuous agreement with the Commission for the Blind. In the 60s, the Randolph-Sheppard Federal Law gave vendor preference to anything associated with federal highways for blind people. In Oregon, this program is managed by the Oregon Commission for the Blind. The Commission finds the vendors and managers. We perform an inventory of the machines located in our rest areas annually and bill the commission for the electricity to run those machines. The Council discussed possible topics of discussion to have with the Commission to improve the products found in the vending machines at rest areas.

New Business

Garica Appreciation: Lynde said that today's meeting would be Councilor Garica's last meeting as his second term was coming to an end at the end of the month. Over Garcia's eight years with the Council, he has served on the Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Historical Marker Committee, and numerous special committees. Canty-Jones shared her appreciation for Garcia's work.

Adjourn: 1:00 p.m.

Next Quarterly Meeting:

September 8, 2025 – Salem, OR Hybrid
