



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

**MINUTES**  
**Council Meeting**  
Monday, June 10, 2024

Virtual & In-Person Meeting

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

**TIC Staff Participating:** Mike Auman; Diane Cheyne; Michelle Roth; Heather Peck; Heather Swanson (virtual); Beth Dehn; 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 9:30 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.

*Washington made a motion to approve the agenda and order of business as presented. Garica seconded. 8-0 Vote.*

**Business Meeting:**

**Approval of March 11, 2024; April 8, 2024; April 11, 2024, and April 23, 2024, Council Meeting**

**Minutes:**

*Canty-Jones made a motion to approve the March 11, 2024, April 8, 2024, April 11, 2024, and April 23, 2024 minutes as presented. Wilson seconded. 8-0 Vote.*

**Public Comment:** None.

**Committee Reports**

**Finance Committee:** Canty-Jones congratulated the finance department on being fully staffed and catching up on the monthly financial reports. The financial reports continue to show consistent trends. The biggest variance from budget is greater than planned income from investments. Canty-Jones said that those earnings are a big reason why rest area operations have not had to access reserve funds, although expenses are going to be exceeding revenue from the funding available. The agency's need

for additional funding to maintain operations is a larger discussion, but for now, finances are doing well. TIC is seeing lower-than-expected expenses in personnel, even with the higher COLA's and the one-time payment that occurred last fall. These savings are partly due to employees not taking full advantage of health care benefits that were budgeted for every position as they have those benefits available from another source.

**Heritage Trees Committee:** Washington said the Heritage Tree Committee has had a busy Arbor Month. During this month, the committee co-hosted two tree dedications. One was located in Clatsop Forest in partnership with the Forest Service, and one in Brownsville in partnership with Linn County Museum. Both were well attended. The dedication for the Moyer House Linden/Wisteria in Brownsville was covered by KEZI and can be found on the TIC website. Additionally, four Heritage Tree awards were presented: three Heritage Tree Heros awards, and a Maynard Dawson Award winner.

**Historical Markers Committee:** Garica said the Historical Marker Committee met on May 7 and approved text for two marker replacements to move into production. Both were identified as a high priority for text revision because of their unbalanced interpretation of early explorers. Yaquina Bay at Yaquina Bay State Park in Newport was originally installed in 1950. The committee worked closely with the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians to incorporate the history of the Coast Reservation. Cape San Sebastian south of Gold Beach was installed in 1969 and started with the sentence, "Spanish navigators were the first to explore the North American Pacific Coast beginning fifty years after Columbus discovered the western continents." The replacement will now tell the story of the first dinosaur fossil excavated in Oregon. Chair Card thanked Dehn and Garica for their work to make sure the markers were telling diversified stories.

**Rest Area Committee:** Wilson thanked Peck and the rest area staff for the quick work repairing the broken water pipe at Sunset Springs Rest Area. Wilson then spoke about how the Standfield rest area is used as an overnight rest stop for the huge trucks transporting wind turbine blades. Work continues on the project to update the facilities at the Peter Skene Rest Area. TIC has partnered with the property owner, Oregon Parks and Recreation (OPRD). OPRD is the lead on the project. The rest area committee will begin working on a list to prioritize upcoming capital projects.

**Chair's Report:** Card said this would be his last meeting. Card and Washington have served their max term limits and Wilson has resigned as of August 31. Card thanked Washington and Wilson for their service. The Council and staff are actively seeking possible new members for the Council. With this shift in Council membership, the Council will vote on Council elections later in the agenda. Card then discussed with the Council the agency's current work on forming a legislative concept for the 2025 Legislative session developing a strategic messaging and communications plan.

## **Staff Reports**

**Agency Update:** Auman reviewed the upcoming legislative concept Timeline and the important dates the Council should know. Auman asked the Council if they would like to meet for final approval of the legislative concept before it has to be filed. Auman next informed the Council about the history and current state of TIC's Human Resources contract with the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). The original agreement was signed in November of 2023 when the Human Resources Manager left on extended leave and was originally signed for three months. It was extended again in January of 2024 and is currently extended through September of 2024. Auman said that he did not feel the new

Executive Director will want to decide if whether TIC needs a in-house human resources person or whether they should keep the contract with DAS. The Council will be asked to vote on approval of an extension of the contract until June 25, 2024. Auman shared the different options TIC has to fill the human resources needs of the agency. Auman said that even if the Council approves the not to exceed \$195,000 contract with DAS it would be up to the new Executive Director to keep or cancel the agreement. Next, Auman informed the Council that DAS is currently conducting a cyber security assessment which includes TIC. The latest assessment was conducted in 2021 and some gaps were identified. This was not unexpected given that TIC is a small agency with a light IT presence. Auman said that he did not expect to see the end report until December and with not a great deal of improvement, but some. TIC is in the middle of implementing mobile phone management, hopefully, to be completed in six months.

Auman then presented a chart reflecting the upcoming Council seat vacancies and their impact on the Executive, Rest Area and Finance Committee, and the strategic planning workgroups. He informed the Council of contacts and sectors that staff has reached out to for possible Council member recruitments and the congressional districts that will need representation. Auman then asked the Council to reach out to any possible members that would be interested.

**Finance Program:** Roth said the finance team has been working very hard and is happy to report that they are pretty much caught up with the financials. Currently the finance team is working on the May financials. Roth reminded the Council that June is also year-end, so those numbers take a little extra time to complete. Roth said that the March financials were included in the packet, but since the time the packet was sent out April financials have been completed so she would be including that information in her report. On June 30, 2023, TIC had \$2.9 million in rest area operating reserves. When the budget was prepared it was expected we would have tapped into reserves for about \$923,000, but right now we are running \$950,000 better than. If things continue as they are going, TIC will not have to access reserves this year. This is due largely to interest income being \$675,000 higher than planned and savings in other areas. General and administrative expenses are \$166,000 under budget, but we are moving into its busiest time of the year, so she expects expenses to increase. The human resources position is also vacant, but savings are being offset with expenses for a professional services contract with DAS to provide these services. The budget also included a classification and compensation study that staff have not been able to get to. Other Funds is showing positive retention. Roth informed the Council that once staff look at the savings left at the end of the year in sign repairs and maintenance, staff would bring a proposal to Council in September to approve a couple of additional capital projects to spend the additional funds left. Canty-Jones asked if it was concerning that the classification and compensation study that was budgeted for has not been completed. Auman said that a classification and compensation study is something that should be done regularly. Peck said that we had received some comments from DAS letting us know that we could be off market in some areas. The Council and staff discussed the need for a classification and compensation study, current staffing needs, and the different ways that staff have looked at solving these issues.

**Heritage Programs:** Dehn let Council know that the biggest focus for her right now has been the change in leadership with the Salemtowne volunteer group. Sadly, Jack Carroll who had been the foreman of the group for many years passed away. He held a lot of institutional knowledge that wasn't documented. Dehn said that she has been able to spend a lot more time with the team learning. Dehn gave her thanks to the sign crew. They have been doing all sorts of tasks for the marker program, some normal, some unusual, and all around the state. Dehn then said that with Council Washington leaving the Council at the end of his term, the Heritage Tree Committee needs a Councilor to take his place.

Garcia asked if there was any update on the federal funding for the Oregon Trail Kiosk project. Dehn said that we have been notified that we were awarded the funding, but there has been no further communication on when or how it will be disbursed. Dehn will continue to me inquiries.

### **Sign Program:**

Cheyne said the sign program continues to maintain its service levels. The program continues to receive high customer satisfaction scores. The sign crew continues to hit their metric of installing new customers in 72 days on average. There were 24 customers removed from the waitlist in the last three months. These customers had been on the waitlist for an average of 7.3 years. The biggest reason continues to be sign capacity. Those potential customers who keep applying in Dundee or Portland must be added to the waitlist. The trend of removing more sign customers than adding new customers continues. The biggest reason for these removals is a food business closing. Cheyne informed the Council that she is currently working with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) by providing notes on the newly updated Federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. TIC's administrative rules are written around this manual. When Cheyne compares TIC's current rules to those updated in the federal manual, she will need to meet with ODOT and decide if our rules can be updated to reflect those changes. The Council then discussed how the highway rules affect TIC's ability to increase capacity and where signs are allowed to be placed.

**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 with the exception of the open technician positions. Quarterly and yearly staff evaluations are currently ongoing. Peck and rest area staff are also conducting semi-annual facility evaluations. Visitor counts are up 4% compared to 2.8% this time last year. Peck informed the Council of some of the program's accomplishments over the last three months. She mentioned clean up and repair after an ice storm at The Maples and Gettings Creek and emergency repair of the leaking water pipe that feeds the Sunset Springs rest area. The Council then discussed the continuing conversation staff is having with ODOT about the clarity needed in the agreement to define "maintenance" and between the two agencies about the responsibility of repair for infrastructure outside of the rest area. The next accomplishment Peck spoke about was the substantial completion of the capital paving project on both eastbound and westbound sides. The project included full paving rehabilitation and ADA ramp installations at parking and sidewalk rehab. The work was completed for \$460,750 under the engineering estimate. Work began at the beginning of May and the rest area was back open for travelers for the Memorial Holiday. Two extra truck parking spots were added during this project.

Next, Peck spoke to the Council about the projects in progress. These projects include the Memaloose Building Project. This project includes bringing the building up to ADA and current building code compliance. The smaller second bathroom facilities on site will be renovated and meet the new ADA guidance for companion bathrooms and repurposing the existing smaller buildings. The Bid materials are being reviewed by DOJ and we are waiting for final approval for legal sufficiency. It is anticipated that this project will go to bid in July. The Sunset paving project has been approved by DOJ and is estimated to go out for bid in late June or early July. The work is estimated to happen in August of this year. The Charles Reynolds rest area renovation and pavement rehabilitation project's bid documents and design are in the final design stage. 90% plans were received June 3, 2024. Construction is estimated to take place in late summer/ early fall 2024. The scope of work includes building, parking lot, drive lane, and walkway renovation. This rehabilitation will include partial depth reconstruction (sub-base) and asphalt overlay, sidewalks and new ADA ramps and curbs, and full re-striping. The Government Camp paving project is being managed by USDOT and is expected to be completed by August 2024. The Government Camp relocation project stakeholders have finalized the selection of a

planning consultant, and the contract is being finalized for preliminary work. Peck then informed the Council that the Peter Skene Ogden improvement project, being managed by OPRD is moving through design quickly and is approximately 90% complete. TIC is reviewing specifications with the project team. The ODOT Truck Parking projects have had no progress since April. Wilson asked Peck to consider the rest area capital project prioritization conversation as an important matter for discussion. Peck discussed with Council when she would be more prepared for that discussion.

Council paused the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

Council resumed the meeting at 12:47 p.m.

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

- **Rest Area Program Truck Purchases:** Swanson requested approval from the Council for a not to exceed expenditure of \$371,000 to purchase eight new Ford trucks for the Rest Area Program. The purchase would ensure that TIC can continue to replace its aging trucks and move toward owning its fleet, rather than leasing DAS vehicles, which will provide long-term operational savings. The \$371,000 would purchase one Ford F250 diesel truck at \$57,281.57, three Ford F250 gas trucks at \$48,011.89 each, and four Ford F150 gas trucks at \$42,317.26 each for a total of \$370,586.28. Swanson said that \$369,000 was budgeted for truck purchases. The remaining \$1,586.28 would come from the insurance proceeds of an agency-owned truck totaled in an accident. The total proceeds received from that accident was \$29,080. If the Council approves this expenditure, staff will complete the purchase contract, notify DAS fleet, and coordinate with DAS Surplus for the disposal of the aged trucks. The Council discussed TIC's routine of replacing and aging out their vehicles.

*Canty-Jones made a motion to approve \$371,000 for the purchase of eight new trucks for the rest area program. Garica seconded. 8-0 Vote.*

- **Sign Program Fees Revision:** Cheyne presented a plan to revise the sign program fees. Cheyne stated in her research she has found a way to flex the high demand for highway signs in more populated areas while not largely affecting those customers in the more rural areas. Cheyne explained the program's history and how the current fee structure was created. The proposal for fee revision included; realigning all bands to make them an accurate 10% increase from the base, adding a 7th band at the top of the average Daily Traffic Count Chart for over 120,000 cars per day for Interstate and over 42,000 cars per day for Secondary highways, resetting Double Logo rate to from 1.30 to 1.33 of the price of Single Logo, changing Intersection signs to be 50% of the rate of Advance signs, changing Trailblazers pricing to Base plus a 10% increase for each subsequent band in the schedule. This would lead to a total increase of \$70,619. The Council and staff then discussed the process of how customers would be notified and the revisions implemented.

*Canty-Jones made a motion to approve directing staff to send letters to all existing customers about the five proposed changes of realign all bands to make them an accurate 10% increase from the base, adding a 7th band at the top of the average Daily Traffic Count Chart for over 120,000 cars per day for Interstate and over 42,000 cars per day for Secondary highways, resetting Double Logo rate to from 1.30 to 1.33 of the price of Single Logo, changing Intersection signs to be 50% of the rate of Advance signs, changing Trailblazers pricing to Base plus a 10% increase for each*

*subsequent band in the schedule. Wilson seconded. 8-0 Vote.*

- **Multnomah Falls Kiosk Replacement Amendment:** Cheyne informed the Council of the permitting conflicts that have delayed its installation. The permit required to replace the structure in a National Scenic Area, which is governed by the Gorge Commission and implantation through country code, will take 9 months to a year to complete. Staff requested the Council consider using the structure that is in the process of being built to replace the Gettings Creek Information Center kiosk. The Gettings Creek kiosk is the same age as Multnomah Falls, is not ADA compliant, is dark, outdated, and has been vandalized and repaired over the years. Staff will bring a second Multnomah Falls kiosk replacement request to the Council in September when staff knows more about the permit process and fees associated with it.

*Garcia made a motion to approve the ratification of the amendment to replace the kiosk at Gettings Creek instead of Multnomah Falls for the not to exceed the amount of \$104,805.27. 8-0 Vote.*

- **Historical Marker Administrative Rules Review & Revisions:** Dehn presented proposed revisions to the Historical Marker Committee administrative rules. The existing rules are out of date and not aligned with the program operations. A rule-making advisory committee comprised of two Historical Marker committee members, an ODOT representative, the Sign Program Administrator, and TIC Heritage Program staff met in mid-May and drafted the submitted revisions. The Council discussed the proposed changes and how they allow greater access for people to the program, expanded the location approval clause, and added criteria to the eligibility clause.

*Garcia made a motion to approve the proposed revised rules for the Historical Marker Program. Canty-Jones seconded. 8-0 Vote.*

- **Legislative Concept Approval:** The Council discussed the proposed legislative concept, possible changes, and potential meeting dates. The Council decided to have a Full Council meeting on July 15 to approve the final legislative concept. Then the funding committee would meet to approve or make any changes needed during the two weeks allowed before the legislative concept is House Bill ready.

- **DAS HR Services Contract:**

*Canty-Jones made a motion to approve the not-to-exceed expenditure of \$195,000 for DAS human resources services for November 1, 2023, through June 30, 2025. Garica second. 8-0 Vote.*

- **Officer Elections:**

*Garica nominated Canty-Jones for Chair of the Travel Information Council. Washington Seconded. 8-0 Vote.*

*Garcia nominated Richard Riggs as Vice-Chair of the Travel Information Council. Canty-Jones Second. 8-0 Vote.*

*Canty-Jones nominated Bob Garcia as Secretary of the Travel Information Council. Washington seconded. 8-0 Vote.*

*Garica nominated Matt Preston as an at-large member of the executive committee of the Travel Information Council. Canty-Jones seconded. 8-0 Vote.*

The Council then discussed the reassignment of the committee positions due to three Councilors

leaving the Council. Canty-Jones said she will stay Chair of the Finance Committee. It was decided that the Council representation seat of the Heritage Tree would remain vacant until the new Council members can be asked if they would like to serve. The members of the Strategic Planning Committee for Policies and Procedure and I.T. Planning will be addressed after the permanent Executive Director is hired and the Council members have joined. The Funding Strategic Planning Committee will consist of Eliza Canty-Jones, Bob Garica, and Jeff Baker. After some discussion, the Rest Area Committee will be Chair Richard Riggs, Eliza Canty-Jones, Matt Preston, and Jeff Baker.

*The committee member assignments of the finance committee and the reappointment of Mike Drennan were not addressed at this meeting. They will be included on the September 9 2024, agenda.*

## **New Business**

**Update on Executive Director Recruitment:** Canty-Jones informed the Council of the current state and process of the Executive Director Recruitment. Preston will be unable to be a part of the Hiring Committee. Canty-Jones said that Auman had already concluded his scoring of the candidates and asked the Council if they would like Auman to take Preston's spot on the hiring committee.

*Garcia made a motion to accept Matt Preston's resignation from the Executive Director Hiring Committee and fill that spot with Mike Auman. Canty-Jones seconded. 8-0 Vote.*

The Council then discussed the possible times for the second-round interviews of the Executive Director Interviews that would require a quorum of the Council.

### ▪ **Other Announcements:**

Carbone presented plaques to the three Council members who will be leaving the Council on August 31, 2024. Card, Washington, and Wilson were thanked for their contributions to TIC and their service on the Council.

**Adjourn:** 2:42 p.m.

**Next Quarterly Meeting:**

September 9, 2024

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