

# Oregon Tourism Commission Meeting December 14, 2022

The Loft at the Red Building  
20 Basin St.  
Astoria, OR 97103

Broadcasted via YouTube Live

**Tourism Commissioners present included:** Chair Boyles, Vice-Chair DiNovo, and Commissioners David Gremmels, David Penilton, Maria Ponzi, Greg Willitts, and Scott Youngblood.

## Welcome and Introductions

Chair Boyles opens the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and welcomes everyone to the Dec. 14, Oregon Tourism Commission meeting.

Chair Boyles thanks everyone that has joined us here today in Astoria, and those joining through Travel Oregon's Industry YouTube channel. Today's meeting materials, including the agenda and supplemental material can be found on the Travel Oregon Industry website if you'd like to follow along.

Chair Boyles acknowledges that in holding a meeting today, all Public Meeting notice requirements were met.

The Oregon Tourism Commissioners introduce themselves to our audience.

Commissioners acknowledge their gratitude to the local Astoria hosts and their admiration of the community.

Chair Boyles states that we are without Commissioners Sheppard and Stephenson as they had commitments that kept them from attending our meetings this week – but they have received the meeting materials and will receive minutes of today's meeting. We wish them well this holiday season.

## Chair Remarks

Chair Boyles states that as many know, I serve both on the Tourism Commission and on the Travel Lane County board of directors.

It is my pleasure to present a formal letter of thanks from Travel Lane County to the Oregon Tourism Commission and Travel Oregon for this body's support in bringing the World Athletics Championships Oregon 22 to Oregon, and - also, to present this plaque

awarded by Sports Destination Management commemorating the World Athletics Championships Oregon22 and Travel Oregon as Champions of Economic Impact.

Travel Lane County and its Eugene, Cascades & Coast Sports Commission submitted nominations for two national awards for the event and both nominations were successful.

The second national award was presented at the Teams Conference of the Sports Events Tourism Association. The award recognizes the World Athletics Championship Oregon 22 as the Best Professional Sporting Event for 2022. I understand that three-time Olympian Willie Banks appeared in person to accept the award, to the thrill of the audience. Thanks to all who played a role in bringing this important to our state!

I also recently participated in two industry events that I'd like to share. Last week I attended the Oregon Tourism Leadership Academy's graduation dinner. As Oregon Tourism Commission Chair and along with Commissioner Penilton, Travel Oregon's Teresa O'Neill and ORLA's Jason Brandt, it was our pleasure to award graduates their diplomas and celebrate their preparation as leaders and champions of our industry.

That same day last week, I had the opportunity to join Todd and present thoughts regarding Travel Oregon's 10-Year Strategic Vision to the Oregon Wine Board and their members, including Commissioner Ponzi.

The 10-Year Vision calls out "partnerships" at least 20 times and emphasizes that in order to accomplish the identified objectives and strategies, it "will take leadership, partnership and alignment among our stakeholders and partners as we all leverage one another's ideas and passions." This interaction with OWB and its members was a valuable opportunity to engage with one of these partners, and I look forward to other opportunities to come.

With that, we have a full agenda today and I, for one, am excited to see what's in store.

Commissioner Willits acknowledges Todd Davidson's presence on the Brand USA board and that he has been nominated to be their Chair. Commissioner Willits acknowledges his gratitude for Todd's work and thanks him for representing Oregon on the national level.

### **Local Welcome**

Chair Boyles states that our in-person meetings around the state provide an important opportunity to hear from our local partners welcoming us into their communities.

It's my pleasure to ask Marcus Hinz and Arica Sears of the Oregon Coast Visitors Association to join us for a Local Welcome.

Marcus Hinz and Arica Sears of the Oregon Coast Visitors Association (OCVA) welcome the Tourism Commission to Astoria. Marcus and Arica tout the good work that is happening along the north coast including:

- Revitalization of the dying kelp forests by re-introducing the sea otter to the Oregon coast which includes creating sea urchin ranches.
- Beach Access opportunities including signage and infrastructure for all.

Marcus cites Travel Oregon's 10-Year Strategic Vision for the future it holds for Oregon's tourism industry and its potential impact to the world.

Arica discusses the role of tourism in climate action and discusses the important work of Travelability who you will hear from next. Arica discusses the Mission of OCVA is to inspire travel and strengthen collaboration to create a sustainable coastal economy and how OCVA's climate action work is leading them to hear from stakeholders that climate solutions were a priority. Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency on an international level recognizes that tourism impacts and contributes to climate change. OCVA became members and was thrilled to see in destination stewardship not in Travel Oregon's 10-Year Vision.

OCVA interviewed state agencies that have climate action plans to determine best practices and how their plans were being implemented. What became evident is that small businesses and tourism were not a part of conversation or being built into plans. Discusses that conversations were held with small businesses to determine how climate change action plans would impact their business. The tourism industry has the opportunity to have these kinds of conversations at a statewide level, to be part of the conversation and help with innovations that will be part of the solution and help businesses as well. Highlights work being done by tourism industry to support climate action work including: EV driving itineraries; creating opportunities from small businesses to give back; kelp forest work along coast. There is a place for tourism in climate action work.

Arica introduces Bobbi Price, Exec. Director of Yachats Chamber of Commerce. Arica and Bobbi discuss work with Travelability. Bobbi discusses how her personal experiences helped provide passion to create opportunities for those with accessibility needs. Created itinerary, vetted experience to share with coastal communities' representatives.

Arica discusses how at the Oregon Coast's Peoples Coast Summit – they focused on accessibility opportunities. Keynote speaker Kelcie Miller-Anderson presented and then did a familiarization tour of Oregon highlighting opportunities for accessible travel in Oregon.

Bobbi discusses how Wheel the World will be coming to train regarding accessibility opportunities and then promote communities.

Arica discusses how Travel Oregon's recent Capacity grants were vital for DMOs to be able to request funding to support the efforts on accessibility.

Commissioner Willits acknowledges his desire to be a Commissioner and how it gives a platform to be more involved and integrated in tourism issues. Commissioner DiNovo expresses her gratitude for the local welcome speakers and their work. Commissioner Penilton acknowledges his past work with youth with disabilities and the meaning and importance of that work in local communities. Commissioner Ponzi challenges other DMOs and Travel Oregon to continue the accessibility work. Commissioner Boyles expresses his gratitude for the welcome and the work on The People's Coast.

### **Stakeholder, Partner and Public Statements**

On Monday, November 28, the Commission meeting notice was posted to the Commission Meetings webpage. Notice was sent through our Industry Communications, and the meeting materials including the agenda, financials, a Strategic Plan Progress Report, along with a link to this Livestream were posted. That posting included an invitation for comments from our partners and the public at large to provide us with information, updates and thoughts regarding Oregon's travel and tourism industry, on topics that may or may not be on today's agenda. I'd also like to remind our stakeholders, partners and the public that a comment form lives continually on our Industry meeting page should you like the opportunity to provide us with your insights outside of today's meeting.

We had no such comments submitted ahead of this meeting. Today, with this meeting being held in-person – we have the opportunity for attendees to sign up in-person to speak with us today. Has anyone signed up, or does any wish to speak?

Commissioner Boyles acknowledges Alyssa Logan of Fort George Brewery. Alyssa reports positive tourism impacts surpassing 2019 production numbers. Fort George has expanded their production space and expanded partnerships with local organizations and has donated more money to these groups than ever before. A recent event brought 600+ guests to Fort George / Astoria - the February Festival of the Dark Arts which sold out in under 15 minutes and brought people to the coast in a slow tourism month. Alyssa acknowledges challenges such as wastewater treatment, housing, inflation, etc.

Commissioner Boyles asks if tickets are available to 2023 Festival of Dark Art tickets. Alyssa says there are no tickets available but for future years, tickets go on sale on Black Friday.

Commissioner Penilton asks if Alyssa knows the plan for the wastewater treatment plan. Alyssa acknowledges the plan to mitigate water waste but does not know more about city plans.

Todd acknowledges the postcard Greetings from Astoria campaign is working well. Todd expands upon the value of the PDX Taproom in Tokyo serving Oregon beer including from Fort George. Alyssa says they support Fuji to Hood partnership with Japanese breweries.

Commissioner Boyles acknowledges Clatsop County Commissioner Pamela Wev. Commissioner Wev shares county elected official's perspective of rural areas. Rural areas are not homogenous and have unique needs including resistance to tourism. Pamela shares about the Scandinavian Festival including the flags and anthems of each country. Spectators still proudly sing their national anthems. Commissioner Wev acknowledges lack of staff capacity in rural areas. OCVA has supported tourism programs to share resources such as better research data, accessibility support including mobi pads. Astoria entrusts Clatsop County Chamber to work in tourism including welcome center support and staffing. Commissioner Wev shares the importance of a regional DMO such as OCVA and their role in partnership. Clatsop County has the highest houselessness rate of any county in the state, so partnerships are more important than ever.

### **Commission Business**

Chair Boyles asks if everyone has received their Commission packets including Travel Oregon financials; Commissioners confirm they have. He thanks Vice Chair DiNovo for reviewing the financials with Kathleen Stewart, Comptroller of Travel Oregon, Todd, Commissioner Willitts and himself and asks Vice Chair DiNovo to provide an update to the rest of the Commission.

Vice Chair DiNovo states that the financials FYTD (FY23) were included in our Commission materials and have been posted to the Industry Site.

Looking at current FYTD – for Q2 to date we have received \$25.4M in TLT, or 75.8% of the current revised budget. Normally we would be about 61% of budget at this time; we are on pace with the Feb. '22 updated revenue forecast.

YOY increase TLT is up 19% compared to same time frame FY22

Compared to FY20, TLT is up 20% after adjusting for the change in the tax rate.

No other comments or questions regarding the financials.

### **Commission Action**

Chair Boyles asks if the Commission has reviewed the October 3-4, 2022, Commission meeting minutes and if there are any questions or comments.

Commissioner Ponzi acknowledges that she was present at the briefing.

Commissioner Penilton thanks all presenters including the Grants presenters Lisa Itel and Michelle

Commissioner Gremmels moves to approve the October 3-4, 2022, Commission meeting minutes and Commissioner Ponzi seconds the motion.

The motion to approve the October 3-4, 2022, Commission meeting minutes is unanimously approved, and the minutes will be posted to the Commission section of the Travel Oregon Industry website.

#### Proposed Budget Modification

Todd reviews the PowerPoint slides discussed during the Commission Briefing and posted to the industry website. Travel Oregon's current budget is \$69.1 million for the 21-23 biennium. The proposed budget modification is \$73,786,306.

Todd states that this budget modification will clearly be directed toward the 10-year Strategic Vision and that 5 priority strategies have been identified and action teams have been created to accomplish this work.

Income increases from Welcome Center brochure program and Governor's Conference revenue. Todd states that the budget modification also includes the statutory obligations of 20% to RCTP and 10% to grants.

Priority strategies are being allocated budget for the following items:

- Additional grant program for crisis response

- Employee growth development and retention

- Pulsed marketing campaigns to come

- Enhancements to Governor's Conference and Women in Tourism event

- Tribal signage and visitor center collaborations

- Tribal tourism group strategic planning

The Legislative Fiscal Office (LFO) state budget classification code slide is shared. Todd asks for questions and yields to Commissioner Boyles.

Chair Boyles thanks Todd and states that on Monday, November 28, the Commission meeting notice regarding the potential budget modification was sent through our Industry Communications, and the meeting materials were posted. Ensuring we had the most recent figures from the Oregon Dept. of Revenue informing this proposed

modification, this past Friday, December 9, the proposed budget modification was posted to the Commission meetings page.

Chair Boyles opens the Public Hearing on the Proposed Budget Modification for the 2021-23 biennium.

No one has signed up to speak and no written comments have been submitted.

Does the Commission have any questions or discussion?

Commissioner Penilton shares gratitude for the budget modification process and alignment with state goals. Employee growth component and crisis response are especially of note.

Commission Willitts thanks Travel Oregon teams in utilizing the Transient Lodging Tax to reinvest in communities.

Chair Boyles states that if there is no further discussion, I will take a motion on the proposed budget modification as presented; approving \$4.65M which is comprised of \$4.5M resulting from the revised revenue forecast for FY23, \$186k in additional revenue from FY22; an increase in Other Income of \$87K and a decrease in funds used from the Operating Reserve of \$120K.

Commissioner Ponzi moves to approve the budget modification as noted, Commissioner Penilton seconds the motion.

The motion to approve the proposed budget modification as presented; approving \$4.65M which is comprised of \$4.5M resulting from the revised revenue forecast for FY23, \$186k in additional revenue from FY22; an increase in Other Income of \$87K and a decrease in funds used from the Operating Reserve of \$120K is unanimously approved.

Chair Boyles recesses the meeting at 10:11 a.m.

Chair Boyles calls the meeting back to order at 10:23 a.m.

### **Oregon22 Final Report**

Todd notes the awards that the World Athletics Championships received and the opportunity today to hear an update and final report on the event. To start us off today, I'd like to now welcome Teresa O'Neill, VP of Global Strategic Partnerships and Niels de Vos of Oregon22 to walk us through the Final Report from the World Athletics Championships Oregon22.

Teresa thanks the Travel Oregon team for the collaborative efforts to ensure the metrics of the event were met. Niels thanks the Travel Oregon staff for their efficient and proficient work to support the event. Teresa and Niels provide the Commission with a PowerPoint presentation regarding the World Athletics Championships including:

- Elevate Track and Field in the U.S.
- Elevate the State of Oregon
- Elevate the Magic of Hayward
- Oregon22 Delivered Important World Championships Firsts
- Making Sporting History
- Universality of Event
- Fan Experience
- Global Showcase
- Crew22
- Medals
- Worldwide Welcome Relay
- Hello World, Meet Oregon
- Positive Regional Impact
- MOWA, Heritage Trail and ASICS 5K Race
- Riverfront Festival

Niels shares "Unforgettable" video regarding Oregon22.

Commissioner Youngblood asks if there will be a legislative debrief regarding the Oregon 22 final report.

Todd states that there will likely be an opportunity to share this with the newly elected legislature early next year.

Commissioner Penilton thanks Niels and the Travel Oregon team for the work to accomplish the successful event. It was quite the opportunity to highlight the US and Oregon in the track and field – return on investment is still to come.

Commissioner DiNovo thanks the entire Travel Oregon team.

Commissioner Ponzi asks about economic impact stayed in Lane County versus the entire state.

Niels indicates that those numbers received and highlighted were from the Nielson Report.

Chair Boyles thanks everyone for helping solidify Eugene as Track Town USA.

Teresa thanks Kari Westlund, Travel Lane County for all the work done.

Todd states that we will look for opportunities to solidify the economic impact numbers and that there will be opportunities in the future to highlight Oregon on the national level as a state to host large sporting events. That while the actual event is impactful, the lingering returns for years to come will be strong. Todd thanks the Oregon22 team to make sure that Oregon was highlighted throughout the event, leveraging the state's investment.

Commissioner Gremmels thanks everyone and states how much pride he felt watching the video about the event, especially regarding the sustainability efforts.



Commissioner Youngblood states that it was December 2016 when the Commission voted to approve a Large Grant and this investment to World Athletics Championship.

Todd confirms that yes, it was that meeting based on Oregon securing the bid in 2015 and the Governor requesting the investment from Travel Oregon.

Commissioner Youngblood states that the courage it took the Commission to make, what was then a hard decision to make the investment, seems easy now based on the presentation today. Commissioner Youngblood thanks Niels and his team for all the work.

Niels thanks the Commission and states that like Mat Kearney's song "He left his Heart in Oregon."

### **Why Guides Update**

Todd welcomes Gabi Duarte, Global Sales Program Manager, to provide an update on a program created to help tourism businesses, especially our small business partners.

Gabi walks the Commission through a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Why Guides program including:

- Snippet from 3-part podcast
- Why Guides Registry

Commissioner Penilton states how excited he is that 50 more guides have registered.

Commissioner Youngblood asks if Gabi is aware of another state in the U.S. has a program like this Why Guide program.

Gabi states that she is not aware of any other state and that they hope to bring our adjoining state's along with this program.

### **Advertising Update – New Creative Spring '23**

Todd asks Katy Clair, Director of Marketing Services, to join and provide an advertising update.

Katy introduces several Wieden + Kennedy staff Nick Stokes and Derek Chanel and creative team in the room to help introduce and walk the Commission through a PowerPoint presentation on the new creative:

- Situation – what informs the campaign
- The Task – bring the diversity of Oregon to a diversity of visitors
- Strategic Vision – lens of destination stewardship (prosperity, racial equity, and regenerative tourism)
- Our Role
- Creative Exploration
- Strategic Territory – POV: you can't keep Oregon to yourself
- Creative Platform – shine a light on Oregon's character

- Previous campaigns
- New opportunity
- We can create a campaign that is 'alive'
- Tricky to ask people to go off the beaten path
- There is something magical about lesser-known spots and needing to know someone to find
- How about a guide
- Real diverse guides to show a real diverse guide
- Real guides such as
- Plus fictional characters audiences will notice
- Characters like...
- All fictional characters will be created by Oregonians
- Real strength behind the approach is flexibility
- You can Travel Oregon with ...

W+K team acknowledges the work to be shared is very rough and in the early stages. The team shares a video with voiceover.

The team shares how we can use guides and characters to tell specific stories like backpacking or have character guests on podcasts or weather reports.

Katy shares how this can be achieved using three media tactics: using the anthem, smaller ads in pulsed campaigns, and immersion (smaller ideas in social media and PR aspects).

- Media roles – connect stories with right audience
- Media Strategy for the year (or longer)
- Timeline slide with responsible tourism messaging

Commissioner Penilton shares his gratitude for the time to do quality creative work.

Commissioner Ponzi shares concerns of rough anthem "too cute" campaigns versus continuing economic development and visitor spend. Commissioner Ponzi continues concerns of sharing lesser-known places with balancing dollars back to state taxes.

W+K team addresses the concerns of being too cute but shares that they are meant to surprise and delight all demographics by using a character fabricator that has a wide range of talents. Katy shares that we do have a wide range of goals to address and that this is being shared much earlier than in previous years. The creative is meant to address specific needs with sophistication. W+K shares that the guides will be spotlighted.

Commissioner DiNovo asks about the active traveler designation. Katy says this is someone who actively engages in their trip with activities available in Oregon, 25-55 years old. Katy offers to share more detailed data at the next Commission meeting.

Commissioner Penilton shares gratitude for working with local businesses in the creative work.

Commissioner Youngblood shares the evolution of campaigns and their innovation and ability to create niche campaigns is impressive. Commissioner Youngblood shares that others do not have the ability to deploy such surgical campaigns.

Todd thanks the presenters and yields to Commissioner Boyles.

### **Other Business**

Commissioner Boyles asks if the Commission has any other business to share and hears none.

Commissioner Boyles thanks the staff and local partners and adjourns the meeting at 11:54 a.m.