

# OREGON TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING

November 14, 2025

Virtual Meeting

**Tourism Commissioners present included:** Chair Greg Willitts, Vice Chair Patel, and Commissioners Travis Hill, Lucinda DiNovo, Jenifer Roe, David Gremmels, Heather Miller and Nick Pearson.

## **CEO Search Subcommittee Meeting**

Members: Chair Greg Willitts, Vice Chair Harish Patel, Commissioner Lucinda DiNovo, and Commissioner David Gremmels.

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Willitts opens the CEO Search Subcommittee meeting at 10:31 a.m. and welcomes everyone to the November 14, 2025, CEO Search Subcommittee and Oregon Tourism Commission virtual meeting.

Chair Willitts thanks everyone for joining virtually, noting the agenda can be found on the Travel Oregon Industry website.

Chair Willitts states that in holding a meeting today, all Public Meeting notice requirements required by state law were met.

The CEO Search Subcommittee members of the Oregon Tourism Commissioners introduce themselves.

Chair Willitts acknowledges that David Penilton has resigned from the Commission. The Governor will evaluate when to fill the open seat, but there are no immediate plans for a new appointment.

Department of Justice representative Devon Thorson also joins the meeting and introduces himself.

## **Chair Remarks**

Chair Willitts appreciates advancing the CEO search process through today's meetings. Qualified search firms brought forward quality proposals for the subcommittee's consideration.

## **Considerations of CEO Search Firm Proposals**

Vice Chair Patel shares a summary of the CEO Search Subcommittee's work with Travel Oregon staff to develop an intermediate RFP process to six qualified search firms. Five proposals were received and scored by the subcommittee. Follow up questions were answered by four firms, Motus Recruiting and Staffing, Searchwide Global, Winner Partners, and Heidrick and Struggles, via video recording. Subcommittee members scored the answers and a ranked list was generated. Heidrick and Struggles was ranked first.

Vice Chair Patel asks for discussion and deliberation.

Chair Willitts appreciates the diligent proposals including the firms' abilities to network within the tourism industry to source candidates and supports Heidrick and Struggles as the top choice.

Commissioner Gremmels appreciates how the search firms considered the questions and answered them via video recording. The firms noted their readiness to meet public meeting laws and utilize their custom approaches to sourcing candidates. Furthermore, they touched on how DEI practices would be included in the search process. He appreciates the thorough approach and democratic process of the review and scoring.

Commissioner DiNovo acknowledges the close scoring but overall quality of the proposals. She acknowledges that the current CEO was not involved in any part of the process. The pre-recorded video proposals were very helpful to the review process.

Vice Chair Patel asks for a motion to recommend Heidrick and Struggles for a full Commission vote. Commissioner Gremmels moves to recommend. Chair Willitts seconds the motion. The subcommittee takes a roll call vote:

- Commissioner DiNovo votes in favor.
- Commissioner Gremmels votes in favor.
- Vice Chair Patel votes in favor.
- Chair Willitts votes in favor.

The motion to recommend Heidrick and Struggles for a full Commission vote is approved.

The CEO Search Subcommittee adjourns their meeting at 10:46 a.m.

### **Oregon Tourism Commission Meeting**

Chair Willitts convenes the Oregon Tourism Commission Meeting at 11:31 a.m.

The Oregon Tourism Commissioners not in the CEO Search Subcommittee, Commissioners Roe, Hill, Pearson and Miller, introduce themselves.

### **Commission Action**

Chair Willitts states that pursuant to ORS 284.142, the Oregon Tourism Commission is tasked with hiring an executive director following the retirement announcement of CEO Todd Davidson.

Chair Willitts asks Vice Chair Patel to share a summary of the CEO Search Subcommittee's work with Travel Oregon staff to develop an intermediate RFP process to six qualified search firms. Five proposals were received and scored by the subcommittee. Follow up questions were answered by four firms, Motus Recruiting and Staffing, Searchwide Global, Winner Partners, and Heidrick and Struggles, via video recording. Subcommittee members scored the answers and a ranked list was generated. Heidrick and Struggles was ranked first.

Vice Chair Patel asks for discussion.

Commissioner DiNovo acknowledges that Commissioners received the criteria and scoring matrix to acknowledge the rigor of the process. Firms were asked about their qualifications, experience placing C-level executives, demonstrated experience with tourism or non-profit clients, evidence of DEI practices, experience with working with boards and committees, comfort level complying with public meeting laws, approach to recruit with a quasi-public agency in a private sector industry and more. She appreciates Heidrick and Struggles' experience in placing high level executives and experience with a DEI lens. She acknowledges that select Travel Oregon staff contributed to the process but the Travel Oregon CEO was not involved.

Chair Willitts asks for a motion for the Commission to direct Travel Oregon staff to contract with Heidrick and Struggles for purposes of engaging in the CEO search and hiring process.

Commissioner Gremmels moves that the Commission direct Travel Oregon staff to contract with Heidrick and Struggles firm for purposes of engaging in the CEO search and hiring process. Commissioner Roe seconds the motion. Chair Willitts takes a roll call vote:

- Commissioner Roe votes in favor.
- Commissioner Pearson votes in favor.
- Commissioner DiNovo votes in favor.
- Commissioner Hill votes in favor.
- Commissioner Gremmels votes in favor.
- Commissioner Miller votes in favor.
- Vice Chair Patel votes in favor.
- Chair Willitts votes in favor.

The motion to direct Travel Oregon staff to contract with Heidrick and Struggles firm is approved. Chair Willitts thanks the Commission for this key step in the process.

Chair Willitts asks Vice Chair Patel to detail the second action of the meeting.

Vice Chair Patel seeks to fill the fifth seat on the CEO Search Subcommittee and after garnering interest has identified Commissioner Travis Hill to join the subcommittee.

Chair Willitts asks for a motion to approve Commissioner Hill as the fifth member of the CEO Search Subcommittee.

Commissioner DiNovo takes a motion to approve Commissioner Hill as the fifth member of the CEO Search Subcommittee. Commissioner Gremmels seconds the motion. Chair Willitts takes a roll call vote:

- Commissioner Roe votes in favor.
- Commissioner Pearson votes in favor.
- Commissioner DiNovo votes in favor.
- Commissioner Gremmels votes in favor.

- Commissioner Miller votes in favor.
- Vice Chair Patel votes in favor.
- Chair Willitts votes in favor.

The motion to approve Commissioner Hill to the CEO Search Subcommittee is approved. Chair Willitts thanks Commissioner Hill for joining the subcommittee.

### **Other Business**

Chair Willitts asks if there is any additional business or announcements.

Commissioner DiNovo acknowledges David Penilton's resignation and her appreciation for his service, integrity and tenure in the industry. His commitment to service shall not be overshadowed by that resignation. She called for unity moving forward.

Chair Willitts states that the Commission may hold additional meetings to keep the CEO search process moving forward. The Commission is actively working with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission to adhere to procedures for the CEO hiring process via an open and competitive process. Information on the December 3 Commission Meeting in Corvallis will be shared on the Travel Oregon industry website as soon as it is available.

Chair Willitts adjourns the meeting at 11:46 a.m.