

# OREGON TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING

October 8, 2025

Virtual Meeting

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

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Willitts opens the meeting at 9:04 a.m. and welcomes everyone to the October 8, 2025, 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.

Chair Willitts welcomes Commissioners Heather Miller and Nick Pearson following their appointment and Senate approval.

The Oregon Tourism Commissioners introduce themselves. Department of Justice representative Sylvia Cramond also joins the meeting.

## **Chair Remarks**

Chair Willitts appreciates the full Commission and their representation of all aspects of the industry and state. He reminds the Commission that there is no playbook for hiring a CEO, but we are working constantly with the Department of Justice and Oregon Government Ethics Commission to ensure best practices.

## **Executive Session**

Chair Willitts states that the Commission will now meet in Executive Session pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(f) to consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection. Only individuals authorized or invited by the Commission are permitted in the Executive Session. News media are directed not to report on or otherwise disclose any of the deliberations or anything said about these subjects during the executive session except to state the general subject of the session as previously announced. Chair Willitts invites Sylvia Cramond; Kari Westlund, external contractor; Anna Richter Taylor, external contractor; and Sarah Watson, Travel Oregon Chief of Staff, to join the Executive Session. Jim Neff, Oregon Journalism Project, requests access to the Executive Session as a member of the media. The public meeting will resume at 11:15 a.m.

All Commissioners and invited and authorized guests enter a Zoom breakout room for the Executive Session at 9:10 a.m.

The Executive Session ends at 10:40 a.m.

Chair Willitts resumes the public meeting at 11:15 a.m.

Chair Willitts reminds the attendees that no decisions or actions were taken during the Executive Session.

### **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 for a motion to establish a CEO Search Subcommittee to oversee and conduct the recruitment and selection process for the next Chief Executive Officer. The CEO Search Subcommittee shall consist of Commissioners DiNovo, Willitts, Patel and Penilton as Chair of the subcommittee.

Sylvia Cramond clarifies that an alternative can be named to the subcommittee or the subcommittee can be expanded to five members so quorum rests at three members present for a meeting. Chair Willitts opens for discussion. Commissioners support adding a formal fifth member to the subcommittee.

Sylvia Cramond recommends that the Commission, rather than the subcommittee, select a fifth member. Chair Willitts recommends Commissioner Gremmels join the subcommittee.

Commissioner DiNovo moves to establish the CEO Search Subcommittee with the following members: Commissioners DiNovo, Patel, Gremmels, Willitts and Penilton as Chair of the subcommittee.

Commissioner Hill seconds the motion. Chair Willitts takes a roll call vote given the virtual nature of the meeting:

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

The motion to establish a CEO Search Subcommittee is approved.

Chair Willitts asks for a motion to delegate authorities to the CEO Search Subcommittee including:

- Reviewing Search Firm RFPs to make recommendation to full Commission;
- Coordinating with the Search Firm to ensure it conducts all of its contractual responsibilities;
- Creating and implementing a hiring plan with the search firm;
- Determining need for and approving contract amendments with search firm as needed, not including termination;

- Recommending changes to the hiring plan to be voted on by full Commission;
- Reviewing candidate applications;
- Determining what applicants should be interviewed and conducting first round interviews;
- Recommending and/or decide which candidates should be advanced to the second round of interviews;
- Delegating any duties to staff or the search firm that the Search Subcommittee determines is useful or necessary to carry out its duties; and
- Conducting any other activities that are reasonably necessary to fulfill the duties of the Search Subcommittee.

Commissioner Gremmels moves to approve and Commissioner DiNovo seconds the motion.

Commissioner Roe asks who will conduct the second round of interviews. Sylvia answers that the hiring plan is not finalized but the CEO Search Subcommittee will determine the plans and bring it back to the full Commission for approval.

Chair Willitts takes a roll call vote given the virtual nature of the meeting:

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

The motion to approve to delegate authorities to the CEO Search Subcommittee is approved.

Chair Willitts asks for a motion to delegate authorities to Travel Oregon staff including:

- Manage internal aspects of CEO search and transition.
- Coordination and facilitation of public meetings and any required public testimony logistics for Commission and Subcommittee meetings.
- Facilitate communication with the Department of Justice.
- Facilitate communications with Governor's office and any participating state agencies.
- Assist with reference checks and pay equity analysis.

Commissioner DiNovo moves to approve and Commissioner Penilton seconds the motion.

Chair Willitts takes a roll call vote given the virtual nature of the meeting:

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

- Commissioner Hill votes in favor.
- Commissioner Gremmels votes in favor.
- Commissioner Miller votes in favor.
- Chair Willitts votes in favor.

The motion to approve to delegate authorities to Travel Oregon staff is approved.

Chair Willitts asks for a motion to delegate authorities to external consultants including:

- Conduct CEO compensation study.
- Advise on hiring plan, job announcement, and qualifications.
- Support development of interview protocols, evaluation criteria, internal and external communications.
- Support development of CEO Succession Plan.
- Support development of agency governance documents and processes.

Commissioner Gremmels moves to approve and Commissioner Hill seconds the motion.

Chair Willitts takes a roll call vote given the virtual nature of the meeting:

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

The motion to approve to delegate authorities to external consultants is approved.

Chair Willitts recesses the meeting at 11:34 a.m. so the CEO Search Subcommittee can meet.

### **CEO Search Subcommittee Meeting**

Subcommittee Chair Penilton welcomes the subcommittee members and asks for a motion to accept the delegated authorities.

Commissioner DiNovo moves to approve and Commissioner Gremmels seconds the motion.

Chair Penilton takes a roll call vote given the virtual nature of the subcommittee meeting:

- Commissioner DiNovo votes in favor.
- Commissioner Gremmels votes in favor.
- Commissioner Willitts votes in favor.

The motion to accept the delegated authorities is approved.

Chair Penilton adjourns the subcommittee meeting and Chair Willitts reconvenes the Commission Meeting at 11:38 a.m.

**Other Business**

Chair Willitts asks if there is any additional business or announcements. Chair Willitts acknowledges Commissioners Miller and Pearson for their immediate contributions to the Commission.

Information on the next Commission Meeting will be shared on the Travel Oregon industry website as soon as it is available. 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.

Chair Willitts adjourns the meeting at 11:40 a.m.