



**Tourism Development Council Meeting**  
**Wednesday, May 14, 2025 3:03 – 4:09pm**

**Minutes approved 6/11/25**

Virtual via Zoom - [Recording Link](#)

**Members Present:** Luke Spencer, Holly Pfortmiller, Mike Quinn, Brian Crow, Patrick Dawsey, Amy Barton, Katen Patel, Ryan Tigner **Staff Present:** Lizzie Keenan, Jim Austin, Janice Nilson, Danae Burke Jones

**3:03 - 3:07 pm Welcome/Call to Order/Introductions & Declaration of Conflicts** - Luke Spencer, Chair

**3:05 - 3:09 pm Approval of Minutes for March 2025** - Danae Burke Jones, Administrative Specialist

Brian motioned to approve minutes from March with correction to the spelling of Patrick Dawsey's last name. Seconded by Katen Patel and approved unanimously.

**3:10 - 3:13 pm TDC Leadership Extension Update** - Luke Spencer, Chair

Luke announced that he has accepted an extension to his term and will stay on the TDC board and serve as board chair for an additional year.

Lizzie clarified that TDC positions are 3-year terms that can be re-upped for a total of 2 service terms. The board chair position is usually a 2-year term; however Luke would have finished his 2 terms of service in June 2025 having only served as the chair for 1 year. With the recent leadership transition and new board members it was agreed that it would be helpful to keep him in the chair position for an additional year. In June 2026 the board will need to fill both the Chair and Vice Chair rolls of the executive team and should start considering that in the upcoming months.

Luke also mentioned that the 'At Large' executive committee position is not currently filled and encouraged members to consider if they'd be interested in that roll in the future.

**3:13 – 3:54 Program updates**

Lizzie thanked members for their flexibility changing the meeting format today. With only three County Commissioners available the BCC would not have had a quorum, and the joint meeting could have only been a listening session rather than a true discussion. The board clerk suggested a re-schedule during the June meeting which Lizzie posed to the TDC members, acknowledging June is a busy time in the tourism industry. TDC members agreed that if the BCC can commit to June, the TDC should make it happen because with all the moving parts sooner is better than later. Lizzie will confirm with the board clerk on the June date and update the TDC.

Lizzie shared a short version of the presentation of national travel economy data that she had planned to share at the joint meeting. In March international arrivals into the United States were down 11.6% over last year and still down 17% over 2019, so still have not recovered to pre-Covid numbers. Most of the dip in travel and planned travel seen so far is related to international travel and U.S. air passenger volume is holding growth on a domestic level.

MMGY's recent survey reveals a weakening economic environment and reports that 80% of U.S. consumers say their travel behavior will change as a result of recent financial news. Intent to travel remains strong, but in a shaky balance with economic uncertainty. Reporting shows a drop in travel intentions from those whose income is under \$50k.

Canada land travel to the US is down by nearly a third in first quarter of this year and forward bookings point to steep air declines looking at projected travel through September. Air arrivals from Mexico also fell significantly in March.

Tourism Economics had previously predicted that U.S. inbound arrivals would recover to match 2019 (pre-covid) levels by 2026 or 2027. They are now anticipating that this recovery will not happen until 2029.



Travel spending for Oregon is \$14.3B total. Of that, international visitor spend makes up \$0.7B. So, while international travel is down, it is also not a huge market when compared with domestic travel. The drop in international travel is a hit that we will see and feel, but likely not with any drastic impact for Oregon.

This fiscal year's monthly Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) reports have mostly shown increases in TLT collection over the same month in the previous year, but most recent reports do show that TLT collection was down in February and March compared to previous year comparisons. Lizzie projects that end of FY24/45 earnings will be equal with or just above the previous fiscal year.

A question was asked if any changes should be made to the TDC budget based on this data and about budget safe guards if collections go down. Lizzie responded that we are currently set up well financially and shared that the budget is based on total collections from previous completed fiscal year, so the budget for FY25/26 was total collections from FY23/24. Which means we'll have a year and a half in advance before it affects the budget directly and adjust the budget in advance accordingly. We also have some extra funds in FY 25/26 allocated to advertising in the budget that can be allocated to the markets most likely to travel currently. Lizzie also mentioned that staff just got this data and have a team meeting in June to start working through strategy and make sure we're responsive. Currently it feels like we are set up well to be as responsive as we can be.

In response to a question about our budget and proposed legislation related to TLTs, Lizzie gave a short legislative update on two bills that TDC put testimony on. One increases the state lodging tax percentage to contribute to a wildlife fund. That one made it through to revenue without a recommendation, unsure how it's going to land.

The other bill; HB3556 was to open up the definition of how to spend TRT dollars and did not make it through Revenue Committee. However, HB3556 has now been blended into HB3962 which is the same bill with slight changes to the definition, to only apply to transient lodging taxes that were implemented in 2003 and after. Clackamas County's TLT was started long before then so doesn't impact us, but it is a big risk to industry when the definition is opened up.

Lizzie also clarified that our FY 25/26 budget that the TDC approved is fully allocated for, and we are not holding on to anything extra that is not allocated, this includes our contingency fund which we allocate and carry over each year.

Luke shared that the contingency fund was also set up that way to ensure we could get through future emergencies and Lizzie expounded that we carry a \$5 million contingency in our budget, which is just under what our annual TLT revenue is, so roughly 1 year of collections, with the idea that it could carry on programming and staffing for at least one year should anything significantly impact collections.

A member asked Lizzie why she still thinks that at the end of the year we'll come out ahead of the previous year for collections and Lizzie clarified she meant fiscal year with that projection and that her numbers are based on a \$83K Yr/Yr increase in Q1, \$60k Yr/Yr increase in Q2 and only down \$16k so far in Q3. She also passed along info shared by Travel Oregon at the Oregon Governor's Conference on Tourism that statewide they are projecting 3% growth in TLT collections for FY 25/26. This was a previous projection that they decided to remain unchanged, even in the current economic climate because while they believe occupancy will be down, inflation will make up for that drop and we will still see an increase in collections.



Multiple lodging members disagreed with those takes and shared that there was a huge dip in April to their revenue and that all are seeing similar trends with May looking worse than April. Candid reports include properties still seeing bookings from more local visitors, but not getting the same length of stay they get from international bookings. When guests stay longer, lodging hosts are able to make suggestions of things to do, but when it's local people for a short time there's less opportunity to share other local attractions. Lodging partners also shared that STR reports show that all lodging is dipping, and rates are lowering. A suggestion was made that while collections in the past few quarters are up, that could be because there's more inventory, while on an individual basis lodging is booking less and at lower rates.

Lizzie said that by the June joint meeting she should have the April TLT data which should be more reflective of what is happening right now, and she will follow up to see if we can get some future anticipated travel data for U.S. domestic travel. She hopes that at the June meeting TDC members can share more about the impact on individual businesses with the BCC. Individual feedback is very helpful, and the reality of the industry is a valuable story to share with the Commissioners.

#### **3:54 – 4:09 pm TDC Updates TDC Members**

**Luke** – Retail side is struggling, hard to get items and needing to increase prices. There's already been enough impact that we'll likely see a ripple effect through other industries. White Water Festival is this upcoming weekend and has lots of engagement from community and vendors. Not as much financial support as seen in the past, but volunteers have been willing to show up and help. Will only have rentals at one on-water site this year along with their store and have hired employees for the season. Trying to wait out the current economic situation and shared condolences to Next Adventure another outdoor that is shutting down and big hit to community.

**Amy** – Experiencing some impacts of the current administration, but in a different way since they are an environmental non-profit. Seeing some issues with federal grants, they tried to reallocate some money towards the Upper Clackamas clean up project and received word that it's not in line with the current administration's objectives. Currently unsure how they will do this project but still planning on completing the cleanup.

Oregon's Mt. Hood Territory funded some indigenous art pieces from Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. Amy said that they are now completed and shared a photo of one of the pieces 'The Fisherman' that will be installed at Barton Park. Two others will go to Milo McIver and Riverside Parks.

**Mike** – (via chat comment)

I have a hard stop at 4pm and need to jump from the call. From Skibowl's visitation, we started feeling a softening in March of winter visits as well. Our wedding business is down for this season in bookings as well. I'm hopeful that transient business picks up and or stays on pace.

**Brian** – Kicked off busy season with Spring Garden Fair. Attendance was strong and it was a fun event. Currently setting up for Canby Brewfest for this weekend; three days of booze, food and music. Rock and Gem Show at the end of the month and then the Renaissance Fair for all of June which is lots of fun. Harefest in July, Fair in August. Construction started on a new building, and they anticipate holding conferences there in the future which will hopefully drive more people to hotels.



**Patrick** – Excited for Renaissance Fair. Working on package deals and trying to get travelers out to local experiences and seeing some traction with those. Trying to work on that some more, learning to pivot and finding new and exciting things for visitors. Getting into busy season with sports / soccer tournaments in July. Just met with an outfitter and talked about creating a package together.

**Tessa** – TMK still has international tourists coming in, just had someone from Japan today. Large contracts with tourism entities which bring in some international, but mostly domestic travelers. Will be interesting to see if those numbers change from last year.

**4:09 pm Adjourn Public Meeting**