



Tourism Development Council Meeting
Wednesday September 11, 2024 2:06 - 4:01pm
Minutes approved 11/13/24
In-person and Virtual Via Zoom - [Recording Link](#)

Members Present, Luke Spencer, Holly Pfortmiller, Katen Patel, Tessa Koch, Brian Crow
Staff Present: Samara Phelps, Sarah Eckman, Janice Nilson, Jim Austin, Danae Burke Jones, Aaron Liersemann, Lizzie Keenan, Annie Austin **Others Present:** Thelma Haggemiller

2:06 – 2:13pm Welcome, Call to Order, Introductions & Declaration of Conflicts - Luke Spencer, Chair
Luke shared that Catherine Connall Nyland has resigned from her position on the TDC as the Member At Large. She was a dedicated part of the team, and her hard work has been appreciated. Will be looking to fill the vacant board position.

2:13 – 2:16pm Approval of Minutes for June & August 2024 – Danae Burke Jones, Administrative Specialist.
Holly motioned to approve minutes from June, seconded by Katen and approved by unanimous vote.
Katen motioned to approve minutes from August, seconded by Holly and approved by unanimous vote.

2:16 – 2:43pm Year-end Financials - Samara Phelps, Executive Director

The draft year-end financial reports are ready to share, no action or approval is needed by the board but using this opportunity to share and discuss the financials. Most overspending was reflected in the advertising and marketing columns. Advertising has been a priority for staff and the TDC and there were opportunities that arose, and the team was able to execute more than originally budgeted for. Advertising prices continue to increase, and the budget has already been increased for upcoming fiscal year. Another thing to note is \$10,943.36 in fees that was not budgeted for. These fees are for Clackamas County managing the Tourism Department funds and this was the first year they were called out in this way. This has been adjusted for in the upcoming budget.

The Professional Services line continues to be underspent significantly, this is where the carryover funds have landed because it's a flexible place for the funds to sit as they await programming direction from the board. Pass Through special payments are the Strategic Investment Program funds. Because of the timeline, some of these funds are obligated but did not go out the door in the 23/24 fiscal year. Of the \$192,400.50 shown there is around \$83,000.00 that is unallocated and available. Transfer Other Funds is the TDC's investment into the Vacation Rental registration program with the county. Because this was a transfer within The County it appears in its own line and looks like it wasn't budgeted for even though it was elsewhere. Overall the programmed budget was executed at about 90%.

Revenue projections were exceeded, so we are above budget for revenues this year. Because we're now making interest in a way that hadn't done before, the budget that was shared with TDC has information on earned interest. It is important to see interest separate from TRT revenue because TRT revenue is both an industry health metric as well as a performance metric. It is a bit confusing for this year but fixed for future years.

Finally, when budgeting was done for this year, there was American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) lost revenue money that was earmarked for, or could be dedicated to tourism. As those rules were coming out, we did not have a plan that matched the requirements for that funding, so it went back to the County to use at their discretion. Opportunity lost, but one we released ourselves from because it was a significant amount of



uncertainty & administrative obligations to meet all the requirements. The former TDC chair & Samara felt like they had done their due diligence trying to find a use for the funds and decided to instead stay with just TRT funds.

A question was asked if the overspend in marketing & advertising was many little things or one larger thing? Samara and Annie answered that the spend is activation of the program as a whole, some bigger buys were added mid-year but overspend is not one individual thing added on.

A question was asked if properties are caught up with TLT from not paying during Covid and is there a penalty/fee? Samara answered that The County is tracking delinquency which happens at County administration level. Most delinquencies we see in our program are smaller operators or Vacation Rentals that just have 1 or 2 properties. The County is basically caught up and in compliance with operators with the note that intermediaries do not remit on behalf of owners. During Covid there was no pause to the collection of TLT so it should have been kept consistent.

2:43 – 3:31pm Annual Report Content Lizzie Keenan, Tourism Manager

This is the second annual report the TDC has been presented in this format. Format will likely change for next year as we have access to additional data and will be able to pull and design a different layout.

Saw strong continued growth in TRT revenue. Most notable change Lizzie noticed is that November 2022 was a soft month for occupancy, but that recovered significantly for November 2023 and the seasonal dip in occupancy is a bit more balanced this year than it was in previous years.

A question was raised if any other counties have a TLT system similar to Clackamas County's? Samara responded that there is a wide variety of systems, with around 2/3 of Oregon's Counties have some form of registration and TLT. No new programs like Clackamas County's recent TLT program for unincorporated Clackamas County.

The Dean Runyan & Associates Economic Impact Measurement data is sourced from Travel Oregon. Most notable thing is that visitor spend finally did recover beyond 2019, so next year the 2019 comparison will drop off the reporting. Other things to note are average visitor spend increased by 3.5%.

Datafy is a data system that pulls from phone pings to show visitor trends. Data shown is from people that travelled in from 50+ mi away and are not residents of Clackamas County. Data shows an increase in repeat visitors in FY23/24. A repeat visitor is considered anyone who has visited within the previous 7 years, but the data will also show a visitor as "new" if they get a new cell phone so that could also have an impact on the data. We are also noting an increase in visitors coming for only one day. We saw no changes in Visitor Demographics from the previous year.

A question was asked about how funds are being spent to encourage more diversity in travelers to Clackamas County? Lizzie responded that we can look at our dollars and the diversity of the markets we are advertising into. Annie added that because this is one of our strategic priorities, we look at not just geographic markets, but also different community groups & audiences.



Annie provided a Marketing overview and reported that the marketing team is fully staffed with 3 positions. In 23/24 we targeted many markets in six states between primary and secondary markets. Second graphic shows the mix of marketing and what kinds of paid, shared, owned and earned marketing was done.

Marketing metric highlights are similar to quarterly reports and show the number of impressions, engagement and conversions with the priority messaging. Marketing data shows that our advertising had a direct impact on \$67,079,320 of visitor spend and 48,364 room nights. Partner promotion continues to increase with all tourism pillars and regions highlighting across every marketing program channel. We increased both the number and quality of partner events that we shared on our calendar.

A question was raised about marketing on the national level or how do we get stories pushed out, along with damage control if there's a fire or similar. Samara answered that this is covered by our contract with Lawrence PR. They are working with the team to identify priority messaging and push stories out. We have crisis communications as part of our contract with them.

23/24 Strategic Outcomes were Tourism Recovery, Safe and Inclusive Community, Visitor Flow and Organizational Resiliency. Examples were shared of how programs touched on each of these Strategic Outcomes.

TDC member feedback on the report was encouraged. Katen said great work, Holly said the report is beautiful and Luke added that it contains lots of great information and shared thanks for the team putting it together.

3:31 – 3:43pm Accessibility: Colorblind Glasses at Swan Island Dahlia Festival- Janice Nilson, Management Analyst

Janice shared that just short of 50 people have checked out the glasses so far with rave reviews and shared a thank you note from a colorblind kid who was thrilled to use them. The Dahlia festival asked Janice today if we can get more glasses to loan out because they've had so much interest. Swan Island Dahlias have been a fabulous partner and they are thrilled with the program. Aaron added that this was a pilot program with basic metrics and goals and it's blown the goals out of the water. The plan will be to run this at the Wooden Shoe Tulip Fest in the spring as well. The group watched the video of the program put together by the marketing team.

Fox12 ran an article on Friday & KGW & KOIN 6 was coming out today to do news spots on the program.

3:43 – 3:52 pm Program Updates - Staff

Aaron – The Harvest Trail was created last year to promote partners who have activities during the month of October. Visitors who visit farms and collect 5 stamps on their passport got a knit beanie in 2023 and for every redeemed stamped card a thanksgiving meal was provided to a family in need. The program was very well received last year. Staff set a goal of 25 redemptions for the initial year and ended up with 125 redemptions. This year the program continues with a custom OMHT scarf as the prize. 200 scarves were ordered this year, and three new farms were added to the trail. Five of the farms, along with the Sandy Museum, will act as redemption sites so visitors will be able to trade their passport for a scarf right there which will save money on shipping and encourage more farm visits. Program will launch October 1st.

The Strategic Investment Program is open. Our PR team helped us get the opportunity out into local media.



Information is located on our funding opportunities page and a press release that includes a direct link will be sent to the TDC.

Marketing is excited to share that a 5-year contract is activated with FISH Marketing for social media marketing.

3:52 – 3:53pm Executive Director Transition- Samara Phelps & Sarah Eckman, Interim Executive Director
Samara's last day will be September 12th, and Sarah will lead the next TDC meeting.

3:53 – 4:01pm TDC Updates - TDC Members

Brian – First year of Oregon Celtic Festival kicks off this weekend at the Event Center. Typically takes about 3 years to build a following for a new event and are hoping to grow this into a capstone event.

Holly – Staying busy, having to spend more time project managing than normal.

Katen – Crazy busy, on a few boards so doing a lot of learning. Thanks for having him on the TDC, it's great.

Luke – Rounding out busy season & looking forward to some down time. Looking forward to having Brian, Lizzie & Sarah and will miss Samara. Appreciates everyone's hard work.

Tessa – Samara will be missed. Now that summer season is over they're noticing an uptick of international visitors on motor coach tours. Is anyone else noticing an uptick in tours? Have a specific tour group that only visits them in Clackamas County and there could be opportunities for promoting other places to stop at in the County.

Thelma - Has a meeting next week with a potential new employee.

4:01pm Adjourn Meeting Public Meeting