



Destination Oregon City

Meeting Minutes
April 20, 2026 4:00-6:00 PM
City Hall

Virtual Meeting Link: meet.google.com/irf-udnd-rpp

Call to Order 3:57

Roll Call

- ~~Chair: Holly~~ - excused
 - Vice: Lee
 - Treasurer: Daria
 - Secretary: Trieste
 - ~~Bryce~~ - excused
 - Corinne
 - ~~Jessica~~ - excused
- Non-Voting
- Ann
 - Rocky
 - Sylecia
- Other:

Review and Approval of Minutes: [3/16/26 Minutes](#)

- 1st: Trieste Andrews, 2nd: Corinne Lowenthal, motion passed.

Treasurer's Financial Report

- [Q3 Financials review](#)
 - Current balance: \$118,510.11
 - Sylecia Johnston reported that the operational budget is on track, with spending just under \$70,000 from Q1 to Q3, which represents 56.3% of the original year one budget of \$122,700. The lower percentage is due to a projected large spend on digital asset development (KOIN episode, website) planned for Q4. The estimated total spend for year one is projected to reach about \$114,000, leaving an approximate \$8,000 difference that will roll over into year two.
 - Reserve Funding and Operational Budget: The operational budget being managed is separate from the reserve funds, which originate from the city's initial \$125,000 seed fund. Any standard process for reserve funding would involve allocating 5 to 10% from the operational budget in the future. The Contract Administrator is managing the biennial operational budget of \$250,000, and any spending outside of that amount requires board approval, such as the proposed expense for the bookkeeping company.
- [TBC engagement](#)
 - TBC Engagement and Bookkeeping Services: Engaging TBC, a bookkeeping company, is proposed to officially review quarterly financials, manage federal, state, and city registrations, and assist with

tax filings. The cost for these services would be outside of Sylecia Johnston's scope of management and thus require board approval from the original seed funding. TBC also noted that they could not find an official DBA filed for "Travel Oregon City," which needs to be addressed.

- The bookkeeping company's standard rate is \$90 per hour with a two-hour minimum per month, but they are willing to reduce this for the first year to a quarterly minimum of two hours. The engagement aims to provide an official third-party review of financials, address potential conflicts of interest, and help set up correct account buckets in QuickBooks to separate expenses like marketing spend.
- Board to decide on engagement of TBC at next meeting. Corinne will abstain from voting since EOTOT also uses this company.

Old Business

- [Draft Financial Policies and Procedures](#) for vote of adoption
 - The draft financial policies and procedures, based on boilerplate language, were reviewed and received positive feedback from the bookkeeping company, though the language would need minor updates if the company is hired. A reserve target was set for the organization to maintain an operating reserve equal to approximately six months of annual operating expenses, which is estimated to be \$62,500 based on the city's \$125,000 MOU. Use of reserves exceeding \$5,000 requires board approval, and any use mandates a replenishment plan within 12 to 24 months.
 - Conditional approval: A motion was passed to approve the policies with the amendment that the language for the "executive director" role will be updated to include "contract administrator" or similar terminology to ensure compliance.
 - 1st: Corinne Lowenthal made a motion to accept; 2nd: Daria Loi seconded. Motion passed.

New Business

- [Visitor Experience Report](#) (Contract Y1Q4 Deliverable)
 - The first visitor experience report, which is a Q4 deliverable, was based on full desk research, scouring platforms like Google, Trip Advisor, Expedia, and Airbnb. The analysis involved pulling reviews, feedback, and ratings, and the methodology was conducted by Sylecia Johnston and then cross-checked using Google's Notebook LLM, an AI research tool. The main takeaway was that there is a low volume of online reviews for Oregon City, leading to a need to encourage local businesses and stakeholders to prompt visitor reviews.
 - Destination Score and Short-Term Rentals (STRs): The overall destination score based on Sylecia Johnston's research was 3.9 out of five stars, while Google LLM found 4.4 stars. The difference stemmed from Google LLM's

inclusion of short-term rentals (STRs), which scored very highly. This finding highlighted a need for conversation around STRs, especially since many highly-rated STRs may not be legally registered with the city. The current process for registering an STR in Oregon City is complex and expensive, with an upfront cost of approximately \$7,000, including a conditional use permit, which takes three to six months for a public hearing. Strong regulations are considered important to prevent market destruction, but the high cost of entry may deter potential hosts from legal registration. Sylecia Johnston prepared a step-by-step resource guide to help people legally register their STRs with the city and county.

- Positive Visitor Impressions and Gaps: The research indicated high scores for attractions and landmarks, as well as events and venues, with the overall destination described positively as rich in history, quirky, and having a "small town vibe without the snobbery". Key gaps identified include limited review volume for underreviewed assets, poor access and visibility to Willamette Falls, and a need for growth in accommodation options. Hours friction, particularly concerning historic sites, was noted as a minor disappointment for visitors.
- Addressing Online Presence and Reviews: There is an opportunity to improve online presence by encouraging stakeholders to incentivize visitors to leave Google, Yelp, or Trip Advisor reviews. Currently, only about 5% to 10% of customers naturally leave reviews, but this rate can increase to up to 65% when actively prompted. Potential strategies include creating generic signs or using QR codes for digital reviews at events and businesses.
- Tracking Visitor Numbers: Tracking accurate visitor numbers is a current difficulty due to the lack of geo-fencing or foot traffic analytics. A possible solution is to collaborate with key stakeholders (e.g., First City Celebration, End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, Energy Kayaking) to provide their visitation numbers to the DMO for consistent year-over-year tracking. A suggestion was made to provide a free item in exchange for visitors providing their zip code and how they heard about the destination to track marketing effectiveness.
- Gaps in Dog-Friendly Spaces and Niche Travel: The lack of dog-friendly areas, such as the no-dogs policy at Nool Creek, was highlighted as a major disappointment for visitors traveling with pets. It was suggested to explore niche tourism platforms like Atlas Obscura to boost the city's presence, as they focus on strange and unusual attractions, which aligns with Oregon City's "quirky" perception. The next planned report will be a full experience gap analysis focusing on missing tourism businesses and activities.
- [Bylaws: Board Meetings & Terms](#)
 - Based on the bylaws, the board has a minimum meeting frequency of four times per year. Due to current difficulties in meeting quorum, a suggestion was made to move toward a quarterly meeting schedule in

the future, while maintaining the required annual meeting in the first quarter (July, August, or September). Sylecia Johnston also announced the upcoming launch of a marketing committee, which will take over some direction and expectations from the executive board's plate.

- **Discussion of Board Member Terms and Term Limits:** Standard subsequent director terms are three years, often structured with one year for onboarding, one year of full service, and one year for training a replacement. They expressed surprise that the initial organizational structure only allotted three board members six months in the first year. A document with numbered terms could not be located, so a previously signed appointment letter filed with the bylaws was used as reference, indicating positions 1, 4, and 7 are set to roll off in July at the annual general meeting. This change would require the recruitment of three new people.
- **Proposed Adjustment to Roll-off Timing and Potential Position Swap:** Trieste Andrews mentioned that their initial understanding was that board members would roll off in December, which aligns with the non-typical fiscal year and allows more time for the recruitment process. They proposed adjusting the roll-off date to December, requiring a vote for any bylaw adjustments. Additionally, they noted a possibility of swapping positions, which would also require a vote, due to a current chair needing to step aside after a move.
- **Tabling the Board Term Discussion and Frequency of Meetings:** The board agreed to table the discussion on board member terms and position swaps until the next meeting to allow time to gather all necessary information and ensure more attendees can provide input. The group also discussed meeting frequency, concluding that while time is often filled, the need for voting approvals suggests that transitioning to a quarterly meeting schedule, plus the annual meeting, might be appropriate starting with the next term.
- **Starting the Transition Process for the Treasurer Role:** Daria Loi emphasized the need to start the process of transitioning the Treasurer role to someone else because it requires a bank visit and signing necessary documentation. They expressed hope that the matter could be resolved by next month's meeting.
- **Recruiting New Board Members and Maintaining Categorical Representation:** Sylecia Johnston will prepare an addendum for next month's agenda with the board numbers and proposed items for a vote, including the topic of new board members. They asked the board to consider and start reaching out to potential candidates to maintain categorical representation, specifically noting a need for someone from the retail sector and suggesting restaurant representation.
- Marketing Committee suggested members
 - The marketing plan, excluding specific names, has been shared with the commission. Sylecia presented a list of twelve marketing professionals

who have shown interest in joining the Marketing and Events Committee, which would meet virtually and infrequently (quarterly or twice a year) to review annual performance, marketing plans, and budgets before board approval. Sylecia clarified that participation on the committee would be on a volunteer basis, estimating a maximum of six hours of commitment per year.

- A suggestion was made to include an *ex officio* member on the Marketing Committee, potentially serving as the committee chair who would report to the board but not necessarily be a voting member. The name Yvette Burma (Nebbiolo) was proposed, and Sylecia agreed to reach out to them. The board will vote on the proposed committee and potential future board members at the next meeting.

Admin Report

- Marketing initiative updates:
 - The contract for the **KOIN episode** is signed, and the first payment is being processed. Interns have begun filming B-roll, and the production team has held initial kickoff and online meetings with various individuals to narrow down the run of show, which will include an opening segment, three story arches, and short interstitial transitions highlighting themes like arts and culture. The air dates for the show are scheduled for Sundays from July 12th through August 2nd, from 4:00 PM to 4:30 PM on KRCW, KOIN, and KOIN+, which is beneficial as it highlights summer activities during the summer season.
 - The **Mother's Day promotion website** is being continuously updated with participating businesses and suggested itineraries, and social media promotion is active with a story highlights reel on Instagram. Printed advertisements, including "surprise and delight bouquets" and "foraging bouquet cards" with QR codes linking to the website, are being distributed around the Portland metro area as a "guerrilla marketing" tactic. Sylecia is actively seeking information from businesses that may be hosting Mother's Day activities but have not yet submitted their details.
 - The **new website** is looking good and is being built by Matt Broderick. Key features will include an updated, free community event calendar, updated business listings, and an interactive map with location markers. The launch is targeted for mid-May, ahead of presentations to the commission and OCBA. The website development includes heavy SEO and AI integration, supported by a 50-page FAQ document written for AI search queries to boost the organization's authority rating. The website cost is \$10,000, drawn from the digital assets budget, and it will have an ongoing monthly maintenance fee of \$50, which includes two hours of support per month to ensure updates and plugins are handled. Sylecia ensured the site is designed for easy admin updates to minimize relying on external support. Sylecia is currently writing new blogs and is

looking to feature local writers, specialists, and students, possibly offering a small stipend for their contributions or using it as a publishing opportunity. The goal is to obtain diverse perspectives and feature local faces, potentially including a partnership with the local college.

- The **co-branded Oregon City Visitors Guide**, produced in collaboration with the Chamber, has been released. Moving forward, Sylecia Johnston plans to suggest starting the collaboration earlier and possibly involving the Marketing Committee to improve the publication's structure and ensure it functions more as a visitor guide rather than a chamber directory.
- [Co-Branded Parks & Trails Map](#) - review for input
 - Collaborating with City Parks and the Arts Commission to create a new, updated, and co-branded illustrated parks and trails map. The plan details the layout, featured parks, icons, and potential space for sponsors, who could pay for a small ad or logo placement to help offset costs. The city's willingness to help fund the project depends on their review of the budget, and the use of the organization's brand color palette was confirmed.

Round Table Updates

- **Lee's Update:** eNRG is getting ready for the season. They're still looking for one more musical artist or duo for one of the Concerts on the Water events. Nike has a group of ~30 coming and Lee offered to ask them if they'd be open to being filmed for the KOIN episode and B-Roll.
- **Rocky's Update:** Rocky reported on the success of their large convention in March, which filled the Seaside Convention Center and surrounding buildings with around 1,000 attendees and 100 vendors. Rocky is currently focusing on redoing their website and is resettling after three months of intense work. Rocky shared that Oregon City could learn from Seaside's established tourism machine, where hotels proactively offer deals to event attendees and the Visitors Bureau collaborates with media to promote events. Rocky also discussed the arrival of a national company offering tours in Oregon City, which presents a challenge to their small business but also signals that the area is a recognized destination. Rocky is learning how to balance competition and is focusing on different business models and online marketing strategies. Rocky and Sylecia discussed the importance of leveraging Oregon City's film locations, noting a decrease in local filming and the ongoing restructuring of tourism and film-related city functions. They expressed concern about the potential loss of historical tourism advocates on the City Commission during an upcoming turnover, emphasizing that strong partnerships with the Chamber and other groups are crucial for the organization's longevity.
- **Daria's Update:** Daria reported on the Pearl District gallery's successful expansion to nearly 3,000 square feet and the high attendance at the most recent First Thursday opening, which included three parallel shows and a

fashion catwalk. shared observations about how businesses in the Pearl District are supported, noting that other businesses attend their openings, make connections, and actively try to help them. They also reflected on the recovery of downtown after the pandemic and associated challenges, noting the intense impact of events and how the city has reacted to these situations.

- **Trieste's Update:** Derby Day is coming up! The committee would like to give a ticket to each of the board members for the Derby Day fundraising event on May 2nd from 1:30-4:00. They try to make it as fun as possible with an afternoon of games, prizes, food, drinks, and a live viewing of the Kentucky Derby. RCOC gave over \$83,000 to so many OC organizations over the past 2 years including both the surgery and the cancer wings of the Providence Willamette Hospital, the mobile Shower unit for Love One, scholarships for schools, and more. This is Rotary's one fundraiser of the year. So it goes to a good cause! Trieste also shared that having Travel Oregon City partnering on social media for this event is helpful. They got over 5500 views from just one post.
- **Corinne's Update:** The outpost studies room is now open. The new 14x20 research room is now full of bookshelves and books. Getting ready for June. Either 14 or 15th hosting a blood drive for world blood drive day. Juneteenth will have a straight week of events. EOT had their first triple booked school day - 3 schools the same day and one more in negotiation. Exploding from last spring. EOT will be planning a big anniversary for this summer. The Pioneer wagon will be going to the Rose parade.
- **Ann's Update:** The City is moving forward with the adaptive reuse program. Responses to the Enhancement grant program are due on May 22 nd . There is a new mural starting right after July 4th .

Adjourned at 6:17 pm.