

**COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA
BI-STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Notice and Agenda**

**ANNUAL MEETING
Wednesday, November 15, 2017
**** 12:00 P.M. ******

Bridgeside Restaurant
699 NW Wanapa Street
Cascade Locks, OR 97014

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Estimated Time</u>	<u>Item</u>
Call to Order/Introductions	5 minutes	Information
Approval of November 2016 Minutes	5 minutes	Approval
Overview of Bi-State Advisory Committee	5 minutes	Information
Oregon/Washington Investment Board Updates	10 minutes	Information
Eagle Creek Recovery and Disaster Loans - <i>Other opportunities for responsiveness</i>	15 minutes	Discussion
Federal Funding Status	15 minutes	Discussion
Economic Development Strategy	15 minutes	Discussion
Gorge 2020 and Economic Advisory team	15 minutes	Discussion
Regional Economic Development Updates <i>Skamania EDC; MCEDD</i>	15 minutes	Discussion
Opportunities for Further Collaboration	5 minutes	Discussion
Other New Business	5 minutes	Discussion
Adjournment		

The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. If you have a disability that requires any special materials, services or assistance, please contact us at 541-296-2266 at least 48 hours before the meeting so arrangements for appropriate accommodations can be made.

COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA
BI-STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2016
12:00 P.M.
WALKING MAN BREW PUB – THE GRAIN ROOM
240 1ST STREET STEVENSON, WA 98648

ATTENDANCE:

OIB MEMBERS: John Kasberger (Hood River County), Rick Leibowitz (Wasco County), Tammy Miller (Multnomah County), Jack Miller (Hood River County) Ken Bailey (Wasco County), Amanda Hoey (MCEDD staff)

WIB MEMBERS: Sandy Seaman (Skamania EDC), Mike Bomar (CREDC) via teleconference, Anita Gahimer (Skamania County), Jeanne Stewart (Clark County Councilor), Kari Fagerness (Skamania EDC staff)

GUESTS: Krystyna Wolniakowski (Columbia River Gorge Commission), Jason Hildreth (Columbia River Gorge Commission), Rachel Pawlitz (USFS)

CALL TO ORDER:

Rick Leibowitz called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. Round table introductions took place.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 23, 2015 MINUTES:

Jack Miller moved to accept the September 23, 2015 minutes as presented. Ken Bailey seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

OVERVIEW OF BI-STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL:

Amanda gave an overview of the bi-state advisory council including its history and the roles of its members which include the OIB, WIB, MCEDD, Skamania EDC, Gorge Commission, USFS, and State staff. She briefly summarized the purpose of the council which is to support bi-state economic development and encourage collaboration between the two Investment boards. The annual meetings and sub-committee meetings provide an opportunity to discuss potential joint projects and adopt policies for managing funds.

OREGON/WASHINGTON INVESTMENT BOARD UPDATES:

Washington Investment Board: Kari gave an overview of the Washington Investment Board activity for the past year. She indicated that the Washington Investment Fund has a current balance of \$588,309.80. She gave a summary of WIB activity in the past year including a loan approved for the Port of Skamania for a 15,000 square foot building and a loan to LDB Beverage in the amount of \$180,000. Two loan modifications were approved, one for Skunk Brothers Distillery (change in monthly terms) and one for Scenic Autobody (release of collateral). The WIB also approved one small grant request in the amount of \$2,500 for The Gorge Tourism Studio. She also gave a quick overview of board member changes within the last year including Jeanne Stewart taking over for Jeff Swanson and Jaclyn Woodson replacing Jane Swanson. In 2016, the WIB approved by-laws, created an executive committee and also approved the 2015 update to the Economic Vitality Plan.

Oregon Investment Board: OIB has approximately \$1.2 million available and a little more than \$1.6 million in loans receivable. The OIB has also had changes in board members in the past year. The Board approved the update to the Economic Vitality Plan and the State of Oregon concurrence has been received. In the current year, the OIB has approved three new loans: Big Jim's Drive-In, Beachwood Eatery, and Downey Sleep Center. One grant was approved to the Fresh Start Culinary Program in the amount of \$10,000 to assist with workforce and training in the culinary arts.

VITALITY PLAN STATUS:

In May of 2016 the final draft of the update to the Economic Vitality Plan was completed and letter requests were subsequently sent to Business Oregon and the Washington State Department of Commerce to approve the updates and forward to the USFS. Business Oregon completed the request and provided concurrence in June and the Washington State Department of Commerce completed their letter of approval in October. Both letters and the plan have now been sent to the USFS.

Amanda explained the relationship between the Economic Vitality Plan and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and the interconnection between the two. The Vitality Plan has incorporated language from and reflects the current CEDS. The MCEDD Board approves the final CEDS and MCEDD is currently working through the regional prioritization process by convening sessions throughout the region to analyze and update the different components that need to be included in the final CEDS. Amanda went through the list of the different sessions, gave a brief overview of the SWOT analysis, and schedule for completion of the CEDS in March of 2017.

POLICY INTERPRETATIONS:

Amanda discussed the need for clarification of the use of Scenic Area funds for Program Administration as this has always been an area requiring some interpretation. Amanda handed out an overview of the current guidelines and interpretations pertaining to program administration. She stated that program administration for staffing is fairly clear and no principal base from OIB/WIB funds is used for staffing. Program administration for loans and grants, though, has some areas which require clarification. Board discussion ensued.

Ken Bailey made a motion to clarify program administration guidelines in the Economic Vitality Plan as noted below. Tammy Miller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

- Program administration for the Investment Boards (MCEDD and Skamania EDC). Only interest and fees generated by the fund may be used to cover contracts for staffing and administration, including auditing and marketing. Funds can be used for legal costs incurred in protecting the fund if those costs are tied directly to a particular loan as this is loan administration, not program administration.
- Program administration for ultimate recipients (Grants). Contracts with grantees exclude reimbursement of any staffing expense for the applicant, even if that staff is directed to delivery of a program. Investment board funds awarded to grants can be used solely for equipment, leasehold improvements, products/services. Services and contractual services are only allowed if they are necessary to produce a particular deliverable.

- Program administration for ultimate recipients (Loans). All activities related to a client borrowing funds are eligible uses and are not considered program administration. Working capital, in particular, is noted as an eligible use of funds for loan recipients, as it is a business development need and should not be construed as program administration.

FUNDING REQUEST STATUS; ONGOING STRATEGY:

Amanda circulated a letter to Secretary Vilsack from the congressional delegation. She provided an update on the efforts to gain the funding authorized which has never been appropriated. Congressional staffers are currently working on a funding path through USDA Rural Development as the original funding account through which to receive those funds has been closed. USDA is a willing participant in this process and there appears to be support at the local, regional, state, and federal levels. The recent election does place some unknowns on how this may proceed. Amanda mentioned the OIB/WIB website and interactive map that shows the funding distributed.

URBAN AREA BOUNDARIES:

Jason Hildreth gave an update on the current status of the urban area boundary review and updates including written legal descriptions for the urban area boundaries to eliminate questions as to where exactly those boundaries exist. Previously the boundaries were just hand drawn by Congress on USGS maps causing confusion as to where exactly the boundaries should be. Usually the opposite is done, legal descriptions are created and then a map is drawn to depict the areas. Jason presented several examples of areas of confusion or areas that have known issues relating to these boundaries within the National Scenic Area. He also discussed generally that fact that maps do have inaccuracies and presented some examples of those inaccuracies. The Gorge Commission is currently waiting on the final legal descriptions from the surveyor. Board discussion ensued. Jason discussed efforts for the next major plan update are beginning and that more information would be forthcoming.

OIB/WIB OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION:

Anita Gahimer-Crow mentioned collaboration between the economic development organizations by providing coordinated comments and recommendations for the upcoming Management Plan review. The Boards suggested excellent coordination efforts between MCEDD and the EDC should continue and is a strong aspect of current collaboration efforts.

PARTNER UPDATES (*USFS, MCEDD, CRGC, Skamania EDC*):

USFS – Rachel indicated that they would be interested in helping to spread the word for agencies that are helping businesses particularly through its social media avenues. Amanda requested that they provide additional information on how the USFS would like to receive that information. Rachel mentioned that there is a transition process based on the November elections and how that affects the USFS.

CRGC – Krystyna mentioned the 30-year anniversary celebration on December 13, 2016 at the Hood River Inn at 3 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: 1:45 p.m.