



CITY OF BEND

# Meeting Minutes

## Bend Economic Development Advisory Board

Location: City Council Chambers, 710 NW Wall Street, and online

Date: Monday, May 5, 2025

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The meeting of the Bend Economic Development Advisory Board was called to order at 12:01 p.m. on Monday, May 5, 2025, in the City Council Chambers, 710 NW Wall Street, and online.

**Roll Call:** Gary North (Chair), DaWayne Judd (Vice Chair), Briana Manfrass (online, arrived at 12:02 p.m.), Petra Orosanova (online, arrived at 12:06 p.m.), Jillian Taylor, Jenn Lynch, Ryan Andrews (arrived late, at 1:05 p.m. online), Tierney Booker (online)

Chad Young (online), Katy Brooks, Jennifer Gould (online), Nate Wyeth, Don Myll- Ex Officio

Councilor Perkins-Council Liaison

Absent: Mark Kroncke, Sara Odendahl (ex-officio)

### 1. Approve April 21, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Member Lynch moved to approve the April 21, 2025, BEDAB Meeting Minutes. Vice Chair Judd seconded the motion.

The voice vote passed 5-0:

Yes: North, Judd, Lynch, Taylor, Booker

No: none

### 2. Public Comment

none

### 3. Council Liaison Report | Mayor Pro Tem Megan Perkins

Mayor Pro Tem Perkins provided an update on recent City Council Joint meetings and the upcoming May 7, 2025, City Council Meeting.

The Bend City Council met with the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners and discussed wildfire coordination, the Juniper Ridge Temporary Safe Stay Area, and an updated solid waste franchise agreement.

The Bend City Council met with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Tribal Council and discussed water issues and commissioning a Native artist to create an art piece for a roundabout in Bend.

Mayor Pro Tem Perkins announced that the City is currently recruiting for some advisory bodies, including the Environment and Climate Committee (ECC), the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC), and the Transportation Bond Oversight Committee (TBOC) through May 15, 2025. Mayor Pro Tem Perkins stated that Council is considering expanding the role of TBOC about transportation in general, and would appreciate representation from the business community on that committee.

Mayor Pro Tem Perkins provided an overview of the upcoming May 7, 2025, City Council Meeting, which marks the start of budget season. Mayor Pro Tem Perkins summarized the timeline for budget adoption and listed other agenda items on the May 7 meeting.

Business Advocate Cyrus Mooney reminded people to send any Transportation Fee feedback to Council at [councilall@bendoregon.gov](mailto:councilall@bendoregon.gov).

**4. Houselessness Resources and Pending Changes |** Housing Senior Programming Manager Amy Fraley and Shelter Coordinator Brook O’Keefe

Fraley provided the point in time (PIT) count for 2024, which counted 1,811 people experiencing houselessness in Central Oregon (a 10% increase since 2023), with 959 in Bend (a 5% decrease since 2023).

Fraley discussed low-barrier houselessness solutions and the role of the City in providing funds and collaborating with community partners who run shelters.

Fraley highlighted City-led solutions, including maintaining 500+ beds, creating additional safe parking spaces, developing a dashboard and providing funding. Fraley outlined how American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars have been spent and noted that shelter beds are at 98% utilization since January 2025.

Fraley provided a brief overview of the Temporary Safe Stay Area (TSSA).

**5. Visit Bend Business Plan |** Visit Bend CEO Jeff Knapp and Visit Bend Senior VP Strategy Nate Wyeth

Knapp and Wyeth provided an update on Visit Bend’s business plan and FY26 budget. Knapp and Wyeth provided an overview of Visit Bend and explained that is a private non-profit, in contract with the City, tasked to create economic development. Visit Bend stewards 35.4% of transient room taxes, and the remaining 64.6% is applied to the City’s General Fund. Visit Bend aims to create a positive impact on the community through tourism.

Mooney explained that per Visit Bend's contract with the City, Visit Bend is required to present their budget annually to BEDAB and then to City Council, incorporating feedback from BEDAB. Visit Bend will return to BEDAB at its June 2, 2025, meeting to address any questions before its presentation to Council later in June.

Wyeth and Knapp explained Visit Bend's "Balanced Bend Model" of regenerative tourism, which aims to improve the community through tourism dollars, including using revenue to fund marketing, grant programs and community development.

Wyeth and Knapp shared research on the changing perception of tourism's impact on the community and stated that the perception is shifting toward positive.

Wyeth and Knapp discussed Visit Bend's grant programs: the Bend Sustainability Fund and the Bend Cultural Tourism Fund.

Wyeth and Knapp shared tourism metrics, including total lodging tax collected and occupancy rates. Wyeth and Knapp shared their new marketing strategies, which include a thoughtful and strategic reintroduction of summer marketing. Wyeth and Knapp explained that Visit Bend ceased summer marketing several years ago due to congestion and negative community feedback, but as smoke has negatively impacted summer tourism, Visit Bend plans to re-introduce summer marketing with a thoughtful approach that will target new audiences, weekday tourism and group sales.

Wyeth and Knapp identified Visit Bend's FY26 Priorities and Goals:

- Elevate and diversify Visit Bend's marketing and content strategy to increase transient room tax (TRT) collections
- Maximize visitor spending in the local economy
- Leverage new partnerships throughout the region to grow economic impacts
- Promote equity and accessibility within Bend's tourism ecosystem
- Enhance resident sentiment and engagement
- Ensure industry representation in community-development conversations
- Enhance environmental resilience and sustainability
- Promote engagement in outdoor recreation, education and conservation efforts to all who spend time in Bend.
- Support and partner with organizations working to find solutions to the challenges Bend faces as a sustainable destination.

Wyeth and Knapp presented the FY26 budget, expecting flat year-over-year growth and foreseeing 1% increase in FY27, and provided additional details.

Chair North asked how Bend competes with comparable vacation destinations in terms of travel costs.

Knapp responded that Bend is competitive in terms of travel costs as there is a large population within driving distance of Bend, making the city more resilient to economic changes. However, Knapp felt that Bend is less competitive in terms of sports travel, conferences, conventions, and indoor spaces, as Bend is lacking those amenities.

Member Taylor asked for more information on Visit Bend's plan to attract group sales, as Bend does not have a many large event spaces.

Knapp identified the Riverhouse Lodge as the primary conference facility and partner. Knapp stated that Visit Bend plans to target government travel, small business travel and corporate retreats, and plans to deploy a feasibility study to identify other opportunities

Member Lynch provided feedback on the presentation, and requested Visit Bend:

- include details on how Visit Bend communicates with suppliers, such as lodging, retail, restaurants businesses
- include metrics on the business community's perception of tourism
- address the three years of flat growth, as this will help businesses plan ahead
- include a five-year plan that is opportunistic as well as a "plan B"

Member Lynch appreciated the presentation's comparisons within the context of the competitive market

Vice Chair Judd suggested setting aside a budget for emerging markets.

#### **6. Redmond Municipal Airport (RDM) Economic Impact and Expansion | Redmond Municipal Airport Director Zachary Bass**

Bass provided an overview of the Redmond Municipal Airport (RDM), including its organization, partners, and overall revenue and budget. Bass noted that the airport is completely self-sustainable and shared a breakdown of revenue streams, revenue per flights, and expenses.

Bass provided metrics on how RDM compares to other Oregon airports and its growth over the past decade, including growth of passenger volume, destinations, operating revenue, aircraft size, and number of commercial landings. Bass stated that this summer will be the busiest RDM has seen.

Bass discussed RDM's air service goals of expanding its non-stop market east, targeting Minneapolis or Chicago, and attracting additional airlines.

Bass shared details on the terminal expansion construction, including the projected annual regional economic impact, images, a construction timeline, and details on the construction experience for airport users. Bass stated that construction will begin this month and will be finalized by 2028. Bass stated that the overall construction cost is \$180 million and provided an overview of funding, including grants, Federal funding, and airport revenue.

#### **7. State of Workforce Development in Central OR | East Cascades Workforce Investment Board Executive Director Heather Ficht**

Rescheduled to June 2, 2025, meeting.

#### **8. Roundtable and Future Topics | Group**

Mooney provided an update on the Economic Development Strategic Plan. Invitations have gone out to the 20 organizations identified for the focus groups, and dates for focus groups sessions have been set (June 10, July 10, and August 24, 2025). Mooney stated that next steps include identifying 100 stakeholders for stakeholder interviews.

9. **Adjourned at 1:54 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Bontje  
Deputy City Recorder



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