



CITY OF BEND

# Meeting Minutes

## Bend Economic Development Advisory Board

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

Date: Monday, June 2, 2025

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The meeting of the Bend Economic Development Advisory Board (BEDAB) was called to order at 12:05 p.m. on Monday, June 2, 2025, in the City Council Chambers, 710 NW Wall Street, and online.

**Roll Call:** Gary North (Chair), DaWayne Judd (Vice Chair), Briana Manfrass (arrived at 12:06 p.m.), Mark Kroncke (online), Jenn Lynch (online), Tierney Booker (online)

Ex Officio: Sara Odendahl, Katy Brooks, Nate Wyeth

Council Liaison: Mayor Pro Tem Megan Perkins (online)

Absent: Jillian Taylor (member)

Absent: Ex officio: Chad Young, Jennifer Gould, Don Myll

### 1. Approve May 5, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Judd moved to approve the May 5, 2025, BEDAB Meeting Minutes. Kroncke seconded the motion.

The voice vote passed 5-0:

Yes: North, Judd, Kroncke, Lynch, Booker

No: none

*Member Manfrass arrived late and did not participate in the vote.*

### 2. Public Comment

None

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

Item #3 Council Liaison Update was taken out of order, after item #6.

Mayor Pro Tem Perkins shared the following updates:

- Council Updates:
  - Council has been part of budget deliberations and is working on prioritizing aspects of the Council Goals Work Plan. Some goal actions will be delayed due to capacity, but no Economic Development actions are expected to be delayed.
  - Council is discussing establishing a housing work group to identify subsidies and incentives for housing development. The work group will begin meeting in fall of 2025.
  - Council held a public hearing for the first three site-specific Tax Increment Financing (TIF) projects.
- Topics on the Upcoming Council Meeting:
  - Transit update
  - Fee schedule resolution
  - Public hearing on the development code to facilitate more housing options, such as second accessory dwelling units (ADUs), second kitchens, and rowhouses
  - Electric-first policy for City vehicles, not including heavy vehicles
- Point-in-Time count results came out, which is a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness. The count in Bend has remained flat over a two-year period. The count for the overall region increased, but that was largely attributed to an improved data process.
- Attended the Bend Business Roundtable meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Perkins and Ex Officio Don Myll, Economic Development for Central Oregon (EDCO)'s Bend Area Director, are working on planning monthly tours with Councilors to hear directly from local businesses.

Mooney added that the next round of TIF applications will be coming to the Bend Urban Renewal Agency (BURA) at an upcoming meeting.

**4. Visit Bend Business Plan and BEDAB Recommendation |** Visit Bend CEO Jeff Knapp, Visit Bend SVP, Strategy Nate Wyeth and Visit Bend Destination Stewardship Director Zavi Borja

Knapp and Wyeth added information to the presentation they gave to BEDAB at the May 5, 2025, meeting, per the request of BEDAB. Slides added:

- Visitor Spending by Category 2024
- Industry and supplier relations
- Summer hotel occupancy rates – citywide since 2016 [graph]
- TRT collections since FY18 [graph] by month
- Looking Ahead: Long-Term
  - Group business feasibility study
  - Wildfire messaging x business resiliency
  - Alignment with CoB Economic Development Plan (Invest Bend)
  - Expanded revenue opportunities to support more diverse community needs (housing, transportation)
  - Supplier surveys to better inform Visit Bend investments
  - Grant program evolution and expansion to further serve local organizations and economic development efforts through cultural and sustainable tourism.

Business Advocate Cyrus Mooney shared that one of the Council Goal action items for 2025-2027 is to look at creating a Bend-specific economic index to provide timely, relevant data and to track the City's progress.

Regarding summer hotel occupancy rates, Wyeth noted that occupancy rates have slipped from a high point of 86% to low-mid seventieth percentile since 2016. Wyeth stated that Visit Bend does not anticipate marketing for summer weekends as weekends are still busy, but they have campaigns ready if needed.

Member Lynch asked what Visit Bend's plans are to address the anticipated three years of flat lodging tax revenue. Does Visit Bend expect growth to occur due to their marketing changes?

Knapp responded that all efforts are intended to move growth and expects to see movement in a positive nature due to their summer marketing strategy and group sales tactics.

Member Lynch expressed appreciation for Visit Bend's focus on balancing visitors and their economic activity with local dissatisfaction over traffic and congestion.

Vice Chair Judd asked if there are specific action items to support diversity.

Borja stated that Visit Bend's strategic partnerships plan includes working with tourism and local organizations that work specifically with communities of color from different markets.

Vice Chair Judd suggested connecting Visit Bend's website to small, minority-owned businesses, especially regarding events held by those small businesses.

Knapp pointed out that legally, Visit Bend can only market to visitors, so it can be difficult to share information with locals.

Vice Chair Judd asked to receive an update on their partnerships relating to minority-owned small businesses at Visit Bend's next presentation.

Vice Chair Judd moved to approve the Visit Bend business plan and budget for fiscal year 2025-26 as presented to BEDAB on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025. Member Manfrass seconded the motion.

The voice vote passed 6-0:

Yes: North, Judd, Kroncke, Manfrass, Lynch, Booker

No: none

**5. State of Workforce Development in Central OR | East Cascades Works Executive Director Heather Ficht**

Ficht provided an overview of East Cascades Works, which is appointed by the governor to serve the ten counties east of the Cascades. East Cascades Works does not deliver direct service, but serves as investors and neutral evaluators of the public workforce system. East Cascades Works is predominantly Federally funded but also receives funding from partners.

Ficht discussed East Cascades Works' programs and initiatives

- Talent
  - Youth: Youth Career Connect, Youth Compass Program Career Passports
  - Adults: WorkSource Oregon, WorkSource Reentry
- Business:
  - Business Response Network
  - Sector Partnerships
  - Employee Advancement Grants
  - WorkSource
    - Rapid Response – Layoff Aversion
    - Recruitment – Screening
    - On the Job Training funds

Ficht discussed funding challenges East Cascades Works is facing. In the coming fiscal year, the organization is down \$1M and is taking another 10% reduction from Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WOIA) funding.

Ficht stated that Portland State University conducted a study of the prosperity program statewide, which proved very successful and showed that the \$35 million investment to future funding will generate \$23.1 million in new tax revenue from increased earnings and \$195.4 million in reduced social services costs, which amounts to an estimated total annual financial benefit to the state and taxpayers of \$219 million.

Ficht presented some ideas for funding incumbent worker training that BEDAB could support.

Mooney clarified that he invited Ficht to present funding opportunities because the City is transitioning how it contracts with economic development services from a sole source agreement to a more standardized Request for Proposal (RFP), and Council had indicated it would like to support workforce development.

## **6. BEDAB Seats and City Staff Changes | Business Advocate Cyrus Mooney**

Mooney stated that BEDAB Members Ryan Andrews and Petra Orosanova resigned and that the City is currently recruiting to fill those vacancies. The application is open through June 30, 2025.

Mooney announced that Katy Brooks will begin as the City of Bend's Economic Development Officer on June 30, 2025.

Item #3 Council Liaison Update was taken out of order, after item #6.

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

None.

## **8. Adjourned at 1:10 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Bontje  
City Recorder

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