



CITY OF BEND

Meeting Minutes

Bend Economic Development Advisory Board

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

Date: Monday, January 5, 2026

The meeting of the Bend Economic Development Advisory Board was called to order at 12:04 p.m. on Monday, January 5, 2025, in the City Council Chambers, 710 NW Wall Street, and online.

Roll Call: Gary North- Chair, DaWayne Judd- Vice Chair, Amy Bertram, Mark Kroncke (online), Jillian Taylor, Jenn Lynch, Willie Hertford, Chad Schlottmann, John Evons

Heather Ficht, Sara Odendahl (online), Agatha Ventura (online), Nate Wyeth, Don Myll, Mike Richards, Rebecca Robinson- Ex Officio

Mayor Pro Tem Perkins-Council Liaison

1. Public Comment

- Garrett Mosher, on behalf of the Central Oregon Builders Association, spoke regarding electrification. Concern over impact of a fee on housing costs and livability, proposed an electrification pilot program to provide data to make decisions. Mosher cited an example pilot with Cascade Natural.
 - Vice Chair Judd invited Mosher back to provide information on the pilot program.
- Dave DeBerger, on behalf of UA local 290 Plumbers and Steamfitters expressed concern over electrification and urged the City to consider more information before moving forward, such as impact on ethnic communities and the grid capacity of Pacific Power.
 - Taylor asked DeBerger to send relevant questions to Cyrus.
- Sara Odendahl, on behalf of the Bend Chamber of Commerce, spoke about electrification and expressed concern that the City is making long term policy decisions without real world data, and requested the City measure data before implementing a fee structure. Odendahl requested that the City support a time limited pilot program to directly measure carbon reduction outcomes and real-time construction, equipment costs, and grid reliability and impact to housing affordability. Odendahl also asked BEDAB to sign on to a joint public statement with the Chamber of Commerce in the Bend Bulletin about pursuing climate goals through a data-driven public policy, including the use of a pilot program.

Assistant City Attorney Brooke Olsen discussed the implications of signing onto a joint statement. Olsen addressed the request made by the Bend Chamber and stated that type of action is not within the scope of the committee and that BEDAB authority is limited to making recommendations to Council. Olsen did not recommend this action but noted that body members can sign on as individuals.

City Attorney Ian Leitheiser stated that the code specifically limits the authority of an advisory body. Leitheiser stated the BEDAB cannot sign onto a letter or write a letter unless Council asks the committee to do it but noted that a member can sign on as an individual. Leitheiser stated that it is not advisable for a member to sign on noting their status as a chair, vice chair or member as that could blur lines and potentially not respect the limits of advisory body's authority.

2. New Member Introductions | Amy Bertram, Willie Hertford, Rebecca Robinson (Ex-Officio)

Member Amy Bertram, with S&P Global, provided a self-introduction. Bertram was appointed as a full member after serving as an alternate member.

Member Willie Hertford, president of Miller Lumber, provided a self-introduction. Hertford was appointed as a full member after serving as an alternate member.

Rebecca Robinson, with Oregon State University Cascades, provided a self-introduction.

Agatha Venutra, with Central Oregon Community College's Small Business Development Center, will be filling Jennifer Gould's ex-officio role. Ventura provided a self-introduction and shared that she is also a member of the Human Rights and Equity Commission (HREC).

3. Mayor Pro Tem Perkins Updates

Mayor Pro Tem Perkins provided an update from Council, noting that she is speaking on behalf of Council as a whole and not in her individual capacity and stated that she will join the League of Oregon City Energy and Environment Policy Committee. She then shared topics on upcoming Council Meetings:

1/7/2026 Business Meeting

- Update from the Director of the Latino Community Association
- Audit Results
- Vote on Bend Central District EID and
- Appointing temporary committee on electrification

1/14/2026 Work Session

- Presentation on the Neighborhood Commercial Complete Community and discussion including incentives, land use and legislation to encourage more complete communities
- Juniper Ridge Temporary Safe Stay Area presentation in preparation for a County meeting

1/21/2026 Business Meeting

- Council will hear from Bend delegation, hear about legislative priorities, and Council will confirm legislative priorities of the City.
- Parklets

Member Taylor asked if the Council discussed a pilot program and Mayor Pro Tem Perkins responded that the Council's view is that the upcoming joint committee can discuss this as a part of implementation.

Member Lynch asked about the report of the East-West changes on Greenwood Avenue and survey results, and noted that BEDAB had asked if the business community's voice was included and asked if BEDAB can be doing something else to give feedback. Lynch reiterated request for Council to seek business input on Greenwood. Mooney responded, suggesting this be a specific agenda item for BEDAB and invite community members to provide feedback on Greenwood and develop a recommendation. Mayor Pro Tem Perkins expressed a desire for a more standardized approach.

4. Energy Trust of Oregon Presentation | Nate Merrill, Central Oregon Outreach Manager, Energy Trust of Oregon

Merrill provided an information presentation on how Energy Trust aligns with goals of advisory body and to support business growth in Central Oregon. He provided an overview of Energy Trust, which is independent non-profit that provides incentives to increase access to affordable, clean energy. Merrill noted that Energy Trust works with gas companies and the organization is fuel neutral and stated that Energy Trust of Oregon does not lobby or promote fuel switching but promotes using the most efficient method for either fuel choice.

Merrill provided information on various incentive pathways, which include standard incentives, custom incentives, and retro commissioning. Merrill highlighted work with Deschutes Brewery, the lighting upgrade program for small businesses, and the Strategic Energy Management (SEM) program which focuses on a holistic approach to improving energy performance over time. Merrill shared details on the Oregon Department of Energy's Commercial Building Performance Standards, which were signed into law in 2023. Energy Trust of Oregon is working to help customers reach these standards.

Discussion included availability of data relevant to the City's electrification policy, the success of the organization's outreach including how that relates to electrification, and the potential for the organization to increase specific services, especially related to the federal landscape.

5. Electrification Policy Update | Cyrus Mooney

Business Advocate Cyrus Mooney provided an informational presentation with next step action items. Mooney clarified that BEDAB will formally nominate 3 members to serve on the joint electrification policy committee.

Chair North reiterated the position that BEDAB recommends outreach and education and voiced BEDAB's concern over impacts of an electrification fee on affordability. Chair North stated that the social cost of a lack of housing affordability is greater than the social cost of carbon.

Member Lynch requested information and data on housing affordability, energy costs and how businesses will be impacted. Mooney clarified that energy providers will serve as ex-officio members on the joint committee and that BEDAB members on the joint committee will serve as voices of the business community as well.

Discussion included the potential use of any revenue generated from a potential fee, concern over an ongoing need for revenue generation, measurable goals for the policy, the possibility of conducting a pilot program, the direction and goal of the joint committee, and the overall need for additional information and data, including for those BEDAB members who will serve on the joint committee.

Mooney responded to various questions stating that the joint committee is being tasked with discussion and the Council will determine fee, that the committees will have no influence over setting of fee, however they will discuss potential exemptions, revenue generation and non-monetary incentives, and how fee revenue should best be used.

Leitheiser noted that Council asked for four nominations from each committee, that the Mayor and Council appoint members, and the intention is for that to happen at a Council meeting in February.

BEDAB decided to wait for more information about the time commitment and the work needed by the joint committee and finalize nominations for the joint committee during the February 2 meeting.

The Board discussed drafting a letter to Council in support of a pilot program to determine the validity of an electrification policy fee to increase the level of data being used in the policy conversations. The intention was to prepare the letter in before the Council's Work Session on January 7, 2026 and Mooney would work with Chair North and/or Vice Chair Judd on the drafting of the letter.

Member Evons moved for BEDAB to draft a letter specifically focused on a pilot period with a data driven approach to validate a fee. Member Taylor seconded the motion. The voice vote passed 8-0. Member Kroncke did not vote.

6. Draft Review and Feedback on Economic Development Strategy | Katy Brooks

Economic Development Officer Katy Brooks provided the presentation and requested feedback. Brooks provided a timeline for the Economic Development Strategy adoption and overview of Oregon's economy. Brooks shared the City's general goals for welcoming and supporting businesses and building connected communities. Brooks expressed concern over a recession in manufacturing and indicators in other industries and shared City's goal to retain businesses and address affordability and discussed specific strategies and asked for BEDAB input. Strategies included:

- Retain, grow and recruit business
- Build resiliency
- Enable inclusive prosperity

Discussion included suggestions to include actual numbers on metrics, such as data on the transportation system and demonstrating the actual economic impact of a permit being delayed for a week, adding a timeline and information on staff capacity. Brooks reiterated that BEDAB will approve the strategy at the February 2, 2026 BEDAB meeting and it will go to Council on February 4, 20

7. Motion to Recommend the Establishment of the Bend Central District Economic Improvement District | Cyrus Mooney

North moved to recommend on behalf of BEDAB that the Bend City Council move forward in establishing an Economic Improvement District in the Bend Central District as presented to the Board on December 1, 2025. Member Lynch second the motion. The voice vote passed, 9-0.

8. Adjourned at 2:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Bontje
City Recorder



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