

**VISIT BEND
750 NW LAVA ROAD, SUITE 160
BEND, OREGON**

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
JANUARY 20, 2026, 9:00 A.M.**

MEMBERS:

Brandon Tyler	Chair
Chloe Manke	Vice Chair
Noelle Fredland	Treasurer
Courtney Braun	Member-at-Large (via teleconference)
Jana Johnson	Member-at-Large
Sam Johnson	Member-at-Large
Amanda Bird-Zimmerman	Member-at-Large
Lauren Burke	Member-at-Large
René Mitchell	Member Ex Officio

STAFF:

Jeff Knapp	Chief Executive Officer
Justin Keyes-Bundy	Digital Content Manager (via teleconference)
Nate Wyeth	Senior Vice President, Strategy
Zavier Borja	Director, Destination Stewardship
Daniel Elder	Director of Operations
Megan Tacchi	Visitor Center Manager (via teleconference)
Kelli Carrow	Marketing Manager (via teleconference)
Sarah Akbari	Sales and Marketing Coordinator (via teleconference)
Laurel Hunter	Director, Web and Creative Services (via teleconference; from 9:13 a.m.)
Tyler Segel	Vice President, Brand Stewardship

GUESTS:

Cyrus Mooney	Business Advocate, City Manager's Office
Todd Montgomery	Director, Sustainable Tourism Lab, Oregon State University
Wanda Tigard	Accountant, Perfect Balance Accounting
Denna Bybee	Regional Director, Hotel Peppertree
Lori Goshert	Recording Secretary, Minutes Solutions Inc.

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, and adequate and proper notice of the meeting having been given, the meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

On a motion made by Sam Johnson, seconded by Noelle Fredland, it was resolved to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2025, Board of Directors meeting, as presented. Motion carried.

3. **FINANCIALS**

On a motion made by Chloe Manke, seconded by Amanda Bird-Zimmerman, it was resolved to accept the financial report for the period ending December 31, 2025. Motion carried.

Wanda Tigard presented the financial report as of December, 2025, and for the fiscal year to date. Revenue for the month was \$4,300 under budget due to a slight downturn in city funding. Year-to-date revenue was \$192,000 over budget due to city funding receipts and healthy retail sales. Personnel expenditures were \$28,300 under budget year-to-date, partially due to a vacant sales position that was filled on October 1, 2025; they are expected to even out.

Grant programs were \$1,400 under budget for December, 2025. Year-to-date grant program expenditures were \$38,700 over budget due to city funding receipts early in the fiscal year. Sales and marketing expenditures were \$10,600 under budget year-to-date. Overhead expenses were \$4,800 over budget year-to-date. The year-to-date net surplus is \$187,000 over budget. Cash on hand remained constant in December, 2025, with a total cash balance of \$3,602,245.

Attendees were instructed to contact Daniel Elder if they want any printed financial information.

As of December 31, 2025, there was \$1,484,075 in the operating account, \$1,220,770 in the Bend Sustainability Fund, \$336,163 in the Bend Cultural Tourism Fund, \$515,139 in the rainy-day fund, and \$107,532 in the wind-down fund.

4. **RESIDENT SENTIMENT REPORT AND OVERVIEW 2025**

ACTION – Todd Montgomery will send the slide deck for his presentation to the Board and staff.

Todd Montgomery presented the resident sentiment of tourism report for 2025, beginning with a statement on research independence. The study is in its fourth year, and survey responses were gathered from a representative sample based on the U.S. census rather than from stakeholders. Approximately 25% of respondents work in the hospitality industry. It proved difficult to secure participation from people who have lived in Bend for less than one year.

Regarding costs versus benefits, 31% of respondents stated that the benefits of tourism outweigh the costs, compared to 23% in 2024, and 31% of respondents stated that the costs outweigh the benefits, compared to 44% in 2024. Todd Montgomery shared these responses broken down by age group and length of residency.

Regarding quality of life, 5% of respondents stated that tourism had an extremely negative effect, compared to 9% in 2024 and 20% in 2023, and 9% stated that tourism had an extremely positive effect, unchanged from 2024. More significantly, 32% of respondents chose “neither positive nor negative,” compared to 12% in 2024. When asked about priorities for tourism tax revenue, 55% of respondents prioritized economic uses, compared to 24% for environmental uses and 21% for community uses; the 2024 responses were similar.

Todd Montgomery noted a strong correlation between economic uncertainty and the embrace of tourism. Respondents primarily described the benefits of tourism using economic terms, while the highest perceived costs varied, with the most significant being overcrowding, traffic, community, cost of living, affordable housing, and environment. Todd Montgomery pointed out that while environment was described as a cost, it was not cited as a high priority for tourism tax revenue.

Regarding green space, 46% of respondents indicated that the amount in Bend is satisfactory; however, 48% of respondents stated that they would like to see more green spaces and parks. Todd Montgomery noted that residents in most communities outside Alaska cite insufficient green space. Only 4% of respondents indicated that the safety, maintenance, and cleanliness of green spaces in Bend required improvement, which is significantly lower than in comparison cities, indicating that Bend residents feel that their parks are safe and well-maintained.

Responses indicated a slight increase in satisfaction with Bend's destination management organization (DMO), Visit Bend. Regarding economic sentiment, 36% responded that their current conditions are somewhat worse or much worse than a year ago, compared to 18% who selected much better or somewhat better. When asked whether they were aware of DMO-sponsored projects, 25% responded "definitely yes," compared to 16% in 2024; however, awareness of specific DMO-sponsored projects decreased.

Todd Montgomery noted that Bend appears to be entering the inflection stage of the applied destination lifecycle and that Bend should not be compared to a destination city in its early stages.

Responding to a question about respondents who have lived in Bend for 21 years or longer, Todd Montgomery noted that their satisfaction has decreased. Long-term residents have benefited from the growth of tourism, such as by purchasing homes early or starting businesses, but nostalgia for times of lower tourism is a factor. Respondents who have lived in Bend for 16 to 20 years expressed a favorable view of tourism; a resident who asked for this demographic to be broken down by age was instructed to email Todd Montgomery.

It was noted that Visit Bend is far ahead of other DMOs in understanding resident sentiment. Questions regarding resident sentiment or the data presented should be emailed to Todd Montgomery.

5. BOARD SEAT REPLACEMENT PROCESS UPDATE

There are four open Board seats. Approximately 20 individuals have applied for the seats. Staff will interview the candidates on February 11 or 13, 2026, and will submit recommendations to the Board. Priority will be given to candidates with experience in lodging, particularly vacation rentals; food and beverages; arts, entertainment, and culture; and transportation. The new Board members will be officially voted in during the March 17, 2026, meeting.

6. BYLAWS REVIEW AND ADJUSTMENTS TO POTENTIALLY EXPAND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SEATS

The Executive Committee would like to expand its seats from three to four, which would entail adding a secretary role per the bylaws. Sam Johnson has expressed interest in the role; other interested individuals should contact staff.

The adjustments to the bylaws will be discussed during the February, 2026, roundtable.

7. TOURISM INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE UPDATE (TABLEAU)

The short-term rental (STR) demand for December, 2025, was 45,927, which is down by 4.4% year-over-year. The STR average daily rate (ADR) was \$106.92, which is up by 1% year-over-year. The AirDNA demand was 14,417, which is down by 7.2% year-over-year. The AirDNA ADR was \$188, which is up by 1.6% year-over-year. Nate Wyeth noted that the December tax collections reflect November activity. The surplus can be spent as needs arise if the economy declines. The STR was affected by a slow start to winter, but it increased with the first snow.

Nate Wyeth shared the transient room tax (TRT) collections as of November 30, 2025, comparing fiscal years 2022 to 2026. A new Tableau dashboard was used to display the data. The collections by type for November, 2025, were hotel, \$508,895; vacation rental, \$30,438; bed and breakfast, \$1,044; RV park, \$3,188; and Airbnb, \$164,279. Nate Wyeth shared the lodging tax distribution between tourism shares and city shares from July through November, 2025; this data shows how tourism increases a city's economy.

It was noted that marketing entails informing potential visitors when it begins to snow. Some travelers have access to up to 20 resorts with one pass, and they book their trips based on the presence of snow.

Nate Wyeth shared the occupancy rates from January, 2023, through December, 2025, compared to six other cities. Bend is currently in sixth place but performed better than many other cities during the summer due to lack of smoke.

The Tableau dashboard is usually updated on the 15th of each month and is available to the public. Any feedback should be directed to staff.

8. GRANT PROGRAM UPDATES

8.1 Bend Sustainability Fund (BSF)

Zavier Borja shared the BSF grant program timeline. Staff is currently reviewing applications for eligibility, after which they will be sent to the Advisory Committee. Recommendations will be discussed during an upcoming Board roundtable, and voting will take place on March 17, 2026.

8.2 Bend Cultural Tourism Fund (BCTF)

Zavier Borja shared the BCTF grant program timeline. The application window will open on February 2, 2026. The press release has been drafted.

FM Civic will be conducting a survey on the impact of grant programs.

9. CSL PROJECT

Jeff Knapp presented an update on the public assembly venue feasibility study. A final draft of recommendations is being completed. Different needs exist for sports, performances, and meetings. A competitive gap was identified: Bend lacks the indoor theaters and arenas found in 71% of peer markets. A public assembly venue could serve to stabilize tourism regardless of weather. The target demographic for such a venue is residents with household incomes \$15,000 above the state average.

10. BOARD ROUNDTABLE

Brandon Tyler plans to increase his presence at the Bend Visitor Center and requested that other Board members do the same. It was suggested that a shift calendar be distributed so that Board members can choose times to visit. The Visitor Center receives the most visitors on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Board members should make it clear to Visitor Center staff that they are there to help and support; if there are very few visitors, Board members can bring donuts for the staff or help them move boxes.

Cyrus Mooney invited Board members and staff to attend the City Council meeting on January 21, 2026, at which programs relevant to Visit Bend will be discussed.

The Old Mill District will celebrate a significant milestone anniversary on June 23, 2026.

The contract for the FairWell Festival was not renewed. There was a discussion regarding whether anything can be done to help. Large-profile events are helpful when the weather is not ideal.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

12. NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is March 17, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

DISCLAIMER

The above minutes should be used as a summary of the motions passed and issues discussed at the meeting. This document shall not be considered a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.

Director

Director

Date

Date