



# Eastern Oregon Border Region Economic Development Board

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March 3, 2025

Ontario, OR

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## **Attendance**

**Members Present:** Andrew Maeda, Cheri Hung, Taylor Rembowski, Nickie Shira, Ron Haidle, Daniel Longoni

**Members Present Via Zoom:** Melisa Drugge, Business Oregon

**Staff Present:** Shawna Peterson, Executive Director; Emily Conlon, Board Coordinator

**Guests Present:** Derrick Noll, Energy Trust of Oregon; Courtney Warner-Crowell, Oregon Governor's Office; Feather Sams-Huesties, Business Oregon

**Guests Present Via Zoom:** Steven Mitchell, Malheur Enterprise

## **Welcome, Introductions, Minute Approval**

Chair Maeda opened the meeting and board members and guests made introductions.

Ron Haidle made a motion to approve the February 3 meeting minutes. Cheri Hung seconded the motion and all present board members voted in favor.

## **Public Comment**

None.

## **Fiscal Report**

Executive Director Shawna Peterson reviewed the OCF fiscal report/statements. As of February 27, 2025, the Border Board fund has a total of \$6,232,369.72. The board also reviewed Executive Director Shawna Peterson's financial report detailing expenses and disbursements for the month.

## **Executive Director Update**

Executive Director Peterson reported on her activities since last month's meeting and plans for the month ahead. She informed the board that grant cycle 11 is open and will close at the end of the month; currently open programs are the Scott Fairley Memorial Edge Grant, the Community Improvement Planning Grant, and the Education and Workforce Training Grant. This month, Peterson continued development of the Leadership Program as well as two new grant concepts that will be discussed in detail at today's meeting. Peterson had a productive meeting with Representative Owens and Senator Mike McLane where she updated them on the board's work and discussed the legislative session. Peterson also participated in a town hall hosted by Wallowa County commissioners where they are exploring a bill modeled after the Border Board 2017 bill. HB 3122, the Owyhee Lake Road bill that directs the Oregon Parks department to enter into good faith

negotiations with the overlapping federal agencies to pursue implementation of an access fee, is in the legislative process and Peterson will continue to follow it and provide updates to the board.

### **Updated Budget**

Executive Director Peterson presented an updated budget based on last meeting's discussion. Cheri Hung made a motion to accept Executive Director's budget as revised. Nickie Shira seconded the motion and all present board members voted in favor.

### **Housing Incentive Application Approvals**

The board reviewed two Competitive Housing Incentive Program (CHIP) applications and one Property Improvement Rebate Program (PIRP) application. Nickie Shira made motion to approve CHIP applications #74 and #75 in the amount of \$6,000 each for a total of \$12,000. Taylor Rembowski seconded the motion and all present board members voted in favor. Taylor Rembowski made a motion to approve PIRP application #15 in the amount of \$8,895.45. Cheri Hung seconded the motion and all present board members voted in favor.

### **Loan Program Application Approvals**

The board reviewed two Housing Rehabilitation Loan Programs. Application #19 is for an additional loan request to application #18 approved at the February meeting. Cheri Hung made a motion to approve application #19 in the adjusted amount of \$13,976.80 repaid at \$250 monthly for 56 months or until paid in full, application #20 in the amount of \$14,084 repaid at \$250 monthly for 57 months or until paid in full, and application #21 in the amount of \$15,000 repaid at \$250 monthly for 5 years. Nickie Shira seconded the motion and all present board members voted in favor.

### **Leadership Program**

The board discussed the Leadership Program and the proposal from Rural Development Initiative (RDI). RDI's proposed program will be structured as a cohort of 12-15 individuals who will participate in 6 sessions over the course of 8 months that will cover leadership in community, community centered interests, appreciating and working with differences, moving to action, understanding community conflict, and community-led initiatives. The border board will lead an additional 2-3 sessions focusing on economic development and parliamentary procedure and administer a capstone project component. RDI has provided a quote for their services for three years of \$174,600.

The board discussed RDI's proposal as well as procurement requirements, potential participants, marketing, and application development. Executive Director Peterson will continue to work with RDI on refining their proposal and identify any procurement requirements. Peterson has requested board members to present any potential candidates to Board Staff. In the month ahead, Board Staff will facilitate the Leadership Program workgroup in developing the application.

### **Program Concepts Discussion**

The board reviewed two draft concepts presented by Executive Director Peterson: a Job Creation Grant Program and a Signage Grant Program.

**Border Region Job Creation Grant Program.** This program incentivizes local businesses for creating jobs in the Border Region by awarding grants in the sum of \$15,000 per full-time equivalent job created with an additional \$5,000 per full-time equivalent job created upon confirmation that the employee(s) are residents of the Border Region. The board discussed a preliminary application process, the exclusion of organizations over 25 full-time employees, and the process of obtaining confirmation of paid property taxes.


**Border Region Signage Grant Program.** This program provides grant funds to businesses to help fund the design, purchase, and installation of a commercial sign on eligible properties in the Border Region. The grant is a 2:1 match, with the Border Board contributing \$2 for each \$1 of application contribution to the funding of the project. The board discussed permitting, exclusion of organizations over a certain size, tax delinquency of property owners, location of eligible properties, and the application window.

Board members and Board Staff will continue to fine tune these concepts at the next board meeting.

**Next Meeting / Agenda**

The next board meeting will be on April 7, 2025. Agenda items will include a Fiscal Report from Oregon Community Foundation, an executive director update, discussion of funding a county planner position, and continued discussion on the leadership program and other program concepts.

Meeting closed at 4:38pm.

Approved by:  4/7/25  
Andrew Maeda, Board Chair Date  
Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Board