



**MARCH 5, 2026**

## **Board meeting minutes FINAL**

### **ATTENDEES**

#### **Board**

Tiquette Bramlett, Cristina Gonzales, Dionne Irvine, Greg Jones, Austin Kraemer, Robert Moshier, Adam Ramirez, Andy Steinman

#### **Absent**

Ben Casteel

#### **Staff**

Gina Bianco, Sally Crawford, Carissa Cook, Ben Engel, Stacey Kohler

#### **Guests**

Kimberly Conyers (Silverback Estate Wine), Ken Johnston (independent grower/Silverton), Ken Kraemer (Kraemer Farms), Pierre Paradis (Paradis Vineyards), Julie Pond (Northwest Center for Small Fruits Research), Shayla Steffen

### **MEETING OPENING**

Chair Tiquette Bramlett called the Oregon Wine Board public meeting to order at 10:33 a.m.

#### **Review of the meeting minutes**

- The Board reviewed the meeting minutes from January 21, 2026.

**MOTION:** A. Kraemer moved that the January 21 meeting minutes be approved.

G. Jones seconded. The motion carried 6-0 (C. Gonzales and A. Ramirez not present at the Jan. 21 meeting and B. Casteel was absent from March meeting).

#### **Matters for Decision**

##### **FY2026-27 Budget**

- S. Crawford presented an overview of the FY 2026–27 budgeting process.
- The draft budget was posted on the website February 10, 2026.
- Input was received during the Industry Partnership Committee (IPC) meeting on February 17 and a public budget forum was held on February 19.
  - Feedback from these meetings has been partially incorporated into the proposed budget, with additional revisions planned later in the year.
- She noted that the purpose of approving the budget now is to meet the state mandate of turning it in to Business Oregon by April 1.
- The following budget adjustments were noted:
  - Viticulture and enology grant expenses were updated to reflect finalized funding amounts
  - The rent line was revised to align with proper lease accounting
  - Based on a reforecast of the current fiscal year, staff does not anticipate utilizing reserves as previously projected.
  - Instead, a small surplus is expected with approximately \$75,000 being carried forward into FY2026-27 while maintaining current reserve levels.
- A revised budget will be brought back to the Board at the August 13 Board meeting.

**MOTION:** R. Moshier moved to approve the FY2026-27 financials as presented. C. Gonzales seconded. The motion carried 8-0.

#### Industry Grant requests

- G. Bianco presented two new and one previously submitted industry grant requests:
  - Ahivoy requested a grant for supporting a graduation event and a sponsorship for a golf tournament.
  - C. Gonzales provided additional details on the graduation event, including media and donor participation.

**MOTION:** A. Kraemer made a motion to approve a \$5,000 sponsorship to Ahivoy. G. Jones seconded. The motion carried 7-0 (C. Gonzales abstained).

- G. Bianco discussed the grant request for the Basalt Bash in the Rocks District to support media to attend the event.

**MOTION:** G. Jones made a motion to approve a \$5,000 grant to the Rocks District Winegrowers. D. Irvine seconded. The motion carried 8-0.

- G. Bianco discussed the previously submitted grant request for the Umpqua Valley Winegrowers Association. With an Executive Director now in place, the request seeks \$10,000 to support marketing efforts for events throughout the year.

**MOTION:** D. Irvine made a motion to approve a \$10,000 grant to the Umpqua Valley Winegrowers Association. A. Ramirez seconded. The motion carried 7-0 (G. Jones abstained).

## IPC

- R. Moshier reported that feedback from the IPC meeting held on Feb. 17 indicated revenue projections may not be sufficiently conservative, given current industry challenges and anticipated impacts from the 2026 harvest.
- He also discussed appointing Carol Skeeter-Stevens from Travel Medford as the 2026 co-chair.

**MOTION:** T. Bramlett made a motion to appoint Carole Skeeters-Stevens as the 2026 co-chair on the IPC. C. Gonzales seconded. The motion carried 8-0.

## Marketing and Communications Update

- C. Cook provided an update on the reorganization and redesign of the industry website.
- The fall and holiday campaign achieved over 15 million total impressions and gained 4,000 new followers on social media.
- She discussed the upcoming Oregon Wine Month campaign, which will extend from April to June and includes a significant media buy.
- She spoke about the events strategy, noting a strong focus on increasing participation in consumer and industry events.
- Most recently, several staff attended the Houston Rodeo *Best Bites* event, which drew approximately 6,500 consumers and featured a significant Oregon wine presence
  - She will return to Houston next week for additional rodeo programming, including a featured Oregon wine region event scheduled for March 10.
- Other upcoming sponsorships and event participation include the Governor's Tourism Conference, ORLA Food Show, Tillamook *Snack & Sip*, AAPI events in New York City, the Yamhill-Carlton Spring Festival, the Organically Grown Wine Conference, and Malbec in the City.

## Public Relations

- B. Engel reported successful execution of the OWS PR strategy, with nine media in attendance-the highest participation in recent years.
- Pitching media outreach ahead of Oregon Wine Month is focused on Oregon wine and sustainable travel, to culinary, wine, adventure and travel media, resulting in increased inbound interest from national journalists.
- Year-to-date media mentions are more than 20% compared to last fiscal year.
- Oregon Wine was featured in 415 media placements, 72 secured by OWB, across regional, trade, and national outlets.
- B. Engel discussed PR next steps & timing:
  - Coordination with Travel Medford on a FAM tour tied to the Savor Southern Oregon event.
  - Planning is underway for a hosted critic tasting, from Vinous, in late May, with industry details to be released soon.
  - Continued collaboration with marketing to promote Oregon Wine Month and the summer season.

## Marketing Committee Meeting

- C. Cook reported that improving industry engagement was a key topic at the Marketing Committee meeting on Feb. 25.
- She noted that the industry website's events calendar allows industry members to submit events, which are then promoted through the organization and Travel Oregon.
- Accurate event listings are increasingly important as AI-driven search tools use these sources to recommend activities in the Oregon wine community.
- D. Irvine noted that providing updates, like the Marketing Committee meeting, during IPC meetings is a valuable way to share this type of information.
- She also noted that the committee suggested a brief 5–10-minute presentation highlighting the OWB's services and resources when attending regional meetings would be helpful.
- G. Jones inquired about AI visibility and the extent to which the Oregon Wine Board serves as a source.
- C. Cook responded that AI prioritizes authoritative, authentic, and conversational content, and that the OWB is actively exploring strategies to optimize its website and content while maintaining traditional SEO practices.
- D. Irvine added, for Oregon Wine Month, the Marketing Committee discussed surveying industry partners to identify priority markets for Oregon Wine Month, with a shift towards supporting industry activations rather than launching new initiatives.
- C. Cook shared that a sub-work group will be formed to focus on social media strategy.

## RESEARCH

- G. Jones provided an overview of the research and research steering committee's RFP process, proposals review, project recommendations and Board approval process.
- Current multi-year projects focus on red blotch, smoke exposure, and rootstocks.
- Due to budget constraints, few new projects will be funded this year.
- The Erath Family Foundation is being engaged to help supplement research and community initiatives, with the goal of a long-term partnership.
- Funding decisions are expected by late April.

## EDUCATION

- G. Bianco briefly discussed the Oregon Wine Symposium Survey, stating that the net promoter score increased from 19% to 35% this year.
- Key takeaways:
  - Consider fewer, larger panels rather than smaller ones
  - Implement more structure around complementary content to ensure sessions are cohesive
  - Avoid mixing speakers with drastically different perspectives in the same session, as this can confuse the audience
- The feedback will be incorporated into planning for future symposiums.

## Public Comment

- J. Pond (NCSFR) informed the Board that the team is actively engaged in Washington, D.C. this week to support funding discussions and congressional outreach.
  - OWB supports travel for two representatives to D.C. each year, aiding in securing research funding.
  - Last year, \$1.2 million in research funds were awarded, with about half benefiting projects in the Pacific NW.
  - Basic Research proposal reviews are complete, while ranking review for 10 new grant proposals will take place Friday.
  - Following ranking, proposals will move to USDA administration for final funding decisions.
  - FY2026 funds have been appropriated by Congress.
  - G. Jones asked about cross-listing and coordination of funding streams, so we can avoid overlap.
  - More information will be shared in future OWB Research meetings.
- K. Johnston (independent grower/Silverton), expressed concern about the voluntary Winery & Vineyard Census:
  - He expressed concerns about the accuracy and credibility of the grape report, noting that it represents less than 25% of total acreage and potential data gaps that may misrepresent current grape supply conditions and industry realities.
  - He also has concerns that the report is widely referenced by media, investors, and policymakers despite limited representation, which may lead to inaccurate conclusions.
  - Suggestions for improvement included suspending publication when response rates are too low, separating vineyard and winery reporting to improve timeliness, removing price data if it discourages participation, and exploring stronger reporting approaches, including models used in other states.
  - He emphasized the need for more reliable data to better inform industry decision-making and policy discussions.
  - G. Jones added to the discussion the mandatory registration for vineyards that has been under discussion for several years, noting it has been challenging due to the complexity.
  - He stated that one perspective would be to discontinue it temporarily or permanently and assess the impact.
  - Uncertainty exists about the size of the void this would create for the industry. Any discontinuation should be accompanied by a plan or process to address the gap in the future.
  - The conversation concluded with the overall tone of collaboration and shared commitment to continue the dialogue to address industry challenges.

## MEETING FINALIZATION

Chair Bramlett adjourned the Oregon Wine Board public meeting at 12:16 p.m.

**MARCH 5, 2026**  
**Executive Session**  
9 -10:20 a.m.

The Oregon Wine Board Directors met in an Executive Session and discussed:

- Financials
- Industry Grants
- Economic Impact Study
- Erath Family Foundation
- Research Committee Meeting
- OWS
- CRM
- IPC
- OWA Legislative Wine Caucus Reception