



JUNE 17, 2025

Board meeting minutes **FINAL**

ATTENDEES

Board

Greg Jones, Tiquette Bramlett, Cristina Gonzales, Dionne Irvine, Austin Kraemer, Robert Moshier, Maria Ponzi, Adam Ramirez

Absent

Gary Mortensen

Staff

Gina Bianco, Carissa Cook, Sally Crawford, Stacey Kohler, Jessica Willey

Guests

Jana McKamey (OWA), Chris Serra (LIVE)

MEETING OPENING

- Chair G. Jones called the Oregon Wine Board public meeting to order at 12:36 p.m.

Review of the meeting minutes

- The Board reviewed the meeting minutes from March 14.

MOTION: T. Bramlett moved that the March 14 meeting minutes be approved. C. Gonzales seconded. The motion carried 8-0.

- The Board reviewed the meeting minutes from May 16.

MOTION: T. Bramlett moved that the May 16 meeting minutes be approved. D. Irvine seconded. The motion carried 8-0.

Finance Committee Update

- The Board considered an industry grant request from the Umpqua Valley Winegrowers Association for marketing assistance for the Umpqua Valley's annual Harvest Tour.

MOTION: C. Gonzales made a motion to approve an industry grant fund of \$2,000 for the Umpqua Valley Harvest Tour. A. Ramirez seconded. The motion passed with a vote of 7-0-1, with G. Jones abstaining.

- S. Crawford presented the FY2024-25 1st Quarter Financials with complete details, noting that as of September 30, 2024, there is a \$1,044,800 revenue with expenses of \$738,778.

MOTION: A. Kraemer made a motion to approve the FY2024-25 1st Quarter Financials as presented. C. Gonzales seconded. The motion carried 8-0.

- S. Crawford presented FY2024-25 3rd Quarter YTD Financials as of March 31, 2025. The 3rd Qtr revenue is \$1,506,052 with \$948,116 in expenses. YTD revenue is \$2,902,840 and YTD expenses total \$2,12,419.
- S. Crawford stated that the Grape Assessment Tax exceeded budget by approximately \$400,000.
- The expenses for the 2025 Oregon Wine Symposium exceeded revenue by approximately \$22,000, primarily due to fewer sponsorship commitments.
- Other costs that came in below estimates included total employee compensation, as OWB operated with a six-person staff instead of the budgeted seven. Additionally, travel budgets were under budget, and there was a delay in the rent expenses for the Oregon Wine Board offices.
- Based on year-end forecast, there will be a surplus of approximately \$800,000.

MOTION: M. Ponzi moved that FY2024-25 3rd Quarter Financials be approved as presented. A. Kraemer seconded. The motion carried 8-0.

- S. Crawford asked the Board to consider adjusting financial reserve levels to cover six months of operating expenses and set it to \$900,000. Currently the reserves are based on 30% of the most recent 3-year average grape assessment. The reserve level as of July 1, 2024, was \$649,958.
- S. Crawford provided the following reserve level scenarios to the Board:

Monthly Operating Expenses - \$150,000				
Reserve at June 30, 2025	Months Op Expenses	Surplus to FY25-26	Expenditures to Budget for FY25-26	Comment
\$677,578	4.5	\$870,000	\$3,543,334	30% of 3-yr average grape assessment
\$800,000	5.3	\$747,578	\$3,420,912	
\$900,000	6	\$647,578	\$3,320,912	Proposed reserve

- The Board discussed the importance of having a reserve fund to cover potential industry downturns.

MOTION: M. Ponzi made a motion to raise the level of reserve funds to \$900,000 to cover 6 months of operating expenses. T Bramlett seconded. The motion carried 8-0.

- S. Crawford advised work is underway for proposed FY25-26 budget adjustments. Input from the pending strategic plan, staff, Marketing Committee, Industry Partnership Committee and the public presentation (July 22) will inform the revisions presented to the Board in August.

Strategic Planning Update

- G. Bianco provided an update on the strategic planning process, highlighting the establishment of priorities and objectives. She indicated that the staff is currently developing tactics for goal setting and conducting more in-depth analyses to ensure that our spending aligns with the strategic plan.
- G. Bianco also highlighted the importance of how we communicate and what we communicate moving forward. This will be crucial in demonstrating that we have listened, that we have a plan, and that we are striving to be adaptable and supportive of the industry, especially as challenges arise.
- She also updated the Board on the regional association strategic plans for the three regions we are supporting through the Travel Oregon Grant. The first step in this process was conducting a financial review; each of the three associations received a financial evaluation from an OWB contracted CPA firm. This is a crucial piece for them and will also be integrated into their strategic planning process. It will help them creatively explore financial sustainability options, attract non-wine enthusiasts to their organizations, and seek sponsorships, among other initiatives.

- o The other Travel Oregon Grant for a Statewide Tourism Plan is in the process of conducting interviews with regional associations and other key organizations. The information gathered will inform next steps in the strategic planning process, including who should be involved and how we can engage both the industry and adjacent organizations.
- o Both are on track to be completed by the end of November, as scheduled.

Marketing Committee Update

- o C. Cook presented an activity report for Oregon Wine Month.
 - OWB engaged with approximately 11 media outlets for paid media initiatives, which included digital and print advertising, as well as the work at the airport.
 - OWB collaborated with several new partners this year.
 - Increased social media followers by 2,000.
 - More information will be presented during the August 5 Oregon Wine Month webinar.
 - The Board discussed the importance of consistent marketing efforts throughout the year along with better engagement with distributors and wineries to improve trade activation.

Research Committee Update

- o G. Jones presented the updated Research Committee Charter.
 - The revisions included changes to terminology, the role of continuing project specialists, and the process for emergency funding requests.
- MOTION:** A. Kraemer made a motion to approve the revisions to the Research Committee Charter as presented. T Bramlett seconded. The motion carried 8-0.
- o J. Willey provided an update on the 2024 Vineyard & Winery Census Report, which is scheduled to be released next week.
 - A press release will accompany the report's release, along with talking points for the Board & staff.
- o J. Willey also discussed the Economic Impact Study.
 - This study has historically been commissioned every three years; however, due to changes in the global landscape and other external factors affecting the industry, it will now transition to an every-other-year cycle. The last study was completed in 2022.
 - In the coming weeks, a survey will be sent out to the industry, and the findings from the 2024 Economic Impact Study will be presented at the 2026 Oregon Wine Symposium in February.
- o G. Bianco highlighted that the Wine Market Council, of which the OWB is a member, has conducted extensive research this past year on consumer sentiment and behavior.
 - They will compile a report specifically for Oregon, which will be distributed to the industry this year. The report aims to enhance communication with and attract younger consumers. Additionally, it will analyze behaviors across all generations, providing valuable insights.
- o G. Jones provided a brief update to demonstrate the engagement and collaboration with the ODA and OWRI.
 - He discussed the importance of staying informed about the Spotted Lanterfly and emphasized the need to share this information with the industry, as it could present to become a potential emergent issue.

Education Committee Update

- o J. Willey provided a brief update on the Oregon Wine Symposium.
 - After conducting a request for proposals (RFP) process with the Oregon Winegrowers Association, a new event planning partner has been selected.
 - The new partner, Blue Ribbon Events, specializes in trade shows and conferences, making

them a great fit.

- Blue Ribbon Events is already offering fresh ideas for content and strategies.
- A kickoff meeting was recently held to discuss ways to enhance the upcoming event. The group proposed shortening the breaks during the trade show and introducing activities during educational sessions to maintain a steady flow of traffic on the trade show floor. Additionally, there are plans to include workshops on specific topics and to consider returning to a two-day format, with the second day featuring inspiring speakers and a shorter schedule.
- Ticket sales will start on November 1.

ACTION: J. Willey will share the schedule for upcoming OWS meetings with the Board and encourage their participation and input. She will provide a more detailed update for the August Board meeting.

Communications Update

- G. Bianco provided an update on the Public Relations Manager position.
 - Three candidates have been interviewed, and one candidate has emerged as the best fit for the role.
 - This candidate will report directly to Carissa Cook, the Marketing Director.
 - After checking references, an offer letter will be issued.

IPC Update

- D. Irvine provided feedback to the Board regarding several issues discussed at the March Board meeting.
 - These issues included potential overlaps with the Marketing Committee and low participation from various regions. There was also a conversation about the possibility of merging the IPC with the Marketing Committee.
 - D. Irvine would like more time to explore ways to enhance feedback to the Board and encourage greater participation from all regions, as well as to consider the future of the IPC. She noted that although participation can be inconsistent, these discussions foster valuable connections.
 - Timely conversations about regional experiences have created a feedback loop among IPC members, helping everyone understand the broader state context.
 - Upcoming budget discussions are a priority for the committee, along with providing input on the forthcoming strategic planning discussions, which are crucial to the group's success.
 - Recently, the OWS was discussed, and the group provided suggestions for improvement.
 - One key outcome was that IPC shared information with the group, which contributed to the development of the regional Association Strategic Plans for the three regions supported by the OWB Travel Oregon Wine Country License Plate Matching Grant.

Other Business

ICE Detainments

- J. McKamey from OWA provided an update regarding the recently detained individuals from the vineyard community. It is essential for the industry to know whom to contact and what immediate actions can be taken in these situations. Before sharing any information, it must be verified, and care should be taken to avoid disclosing personal details unless consent has been given.
- OWA has collaborated with organizations such as OWB, WVWA, advocacy groups like Unidos (active in Yamhill County), and the ACLU to express concerns. Recently, OWA participated in a roundtable discussion with Congresswoman Andrea Salinas, which provided an opportunity to raise awareness

about this issue and other broader matters affecting the industry. Representative Mike Thompson, the Chair of the congressional wine caucus and representative of Napa and Sonoma, was also present.

- OWA has been working to educate employers on compliance measures and employee rights while exploring protocols for documenting incidents. Additionally, OWA and WVWA are discussing a coordinated approach to public relations, given the media's interest.
- OWA suggested that before OWB issue its own communication, it would be beneficial to be involved in the coordinated efforts for a unified response. This collaboration would help identify spokespersons and ensure they communicate effectively with the media.

LIVE/Oregon Certified Sustainable Wine Trademark

- C. Serra, Live Executive Director updated the Board on the Oregon Certified Sustainable Wine trademark and the discussions over the years between a former OWB Executive Director, and more recently with Gina Bianco, upon taking over the executive director position.
 - The trademark covers both the logo and the program. The Oregon Wine Board did not renew it, leading to its status as either canceled or abandoned. There were two different logos associated with the trademark.
 - The certification program was created in 2008 by the Oregon Wine Board and dissolved in 2012.
 - It aimed to provide a certification mark backed by the state for wines made from grapes that met specific certification standards.
 - Producers were able to use the Oregon Certified Sustainable Wine (OCSW) logo when making wines from LIVE, organic, and biodynamic grapes blended together. This simplifies certification compared to the current system where different certifications have varied grape percentage requirements.
 - Since this program ended in 2012, new certifications like Regenerative Organic Certification, B Corp, and Washington's Sustainable Law have emerged.
 - C. Serra confirmed that they need to be certified by one of the certification bodies identified in the rulemaking.
 - G. Jones asked for more time for the Board to discuss the matter.
 - G. Bianco verified that OWB has all the data, materials, documentation, and presentations stored in SharePoint, and as we move forward in the process, we can identify what is needed to support the next steps.

Board Vacancies

- G. Jones gave an update on upcoming Board vacancies.
 - D. Irvine agreed to apply for a second term.
 - G. Mortensen has indicated that he will not seek a second term and wishes to relinquish his position as Treasurer.
 - M. Ponzi submitted a letter of resignation, effective at the end of August.
 - G. Jones urged the Board to start considering individuals who might be interested in filling these roles.

MOTION: T. Bramlett made a motion to appoint A. Ramirez as Treasurer on the Executive Committee, effective immediately. D. Irvine seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 7-0-1, with A. Ramirez abstaining.

MEETING FINALIZATION

- Chair G. Jones adjourned the Oregon Wine Board public meeting at 3:03 p.m.

JUNE 16, 2025
Executive Session
2 – 5:30- p.m.

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

- Strategic Planning