

Full Council Meeting

October 30, 2020

Online Meeting

Attendance

Members Present: Jenn Lynch, Portland Seed Fund; Nagi Naganathan, Oregon Institute of Technology; Treasurer Tobias Read; Chris Cummings, Business Oregon; Juanita Kurtin, OSRAM; Piper Crowell, Nike; Chad Olney, Pacific Crest Federal Credit Union; Brent Wilder, Oregon Association of Independent Colleges and Universities; Bill Berg, City of Beaverton; Corey Frazier, Intel; Peter Barr-Gillespie, OHSU; Kalpana Merchant; Sen Betsy Johnson (ex officio); Rep Drazan (ex officio); Representative Gomberg (ex officio); Kanth Gopalpur, Business Oregon Commission (ex officio)

Staff Present: Kate Sinner, Jordana Barclay, Nick Batz, Mark Brady, David Sell

Guests: Brian Wall, OSU; Jacob Vandever, Oregon Legislature; Heather Ellis, OTRADI; Skip Rung, ONAMI; David Kenney, VertueLab; Gordon Hoffman, NW Tech Ventures; Joe Janda, PSU; Meredith Coba; Rebecca Campbell

Welcome, Roll Call & Meeting Minutes

Chair Jenn Lynch began meeting at 9:01 and asked for roll call. Chair Lynch mentioned that there are several new members on the Council and invited each of them to briefly introduce themselves to the group. The new members – Bill Berg, Corey Frazier and Kalpana Merchant – each gave the Council an overview of their background and reasons for interest in the Council's work. Chair Lynch asked for comments on the July Council meeting minutes. There were no comments or changes to the minutes and the minutes were approved.

COVID-19 & Budget Updates

Chris Cummings gave a presentation on Business Oregon's response to COVID-19 and wildfires including budgets and financing opportunities for businesses, cities and counties. Chris also spoke about statistics of what funding has been awarded and other results of the agency's COVID response to date. Sen. Johnson asked about how the COVID programs were being run including policies, procedures and audits. Chris discussed the numerous steps required to develop, stand up and administer a program. He also explained that the agency is maintaining good auditable files under the assumption that these programs would be audited at some point.

Chris and Kate Sinner reminded the Council that, due to COVID-19, Business Oregon had a near-complete cutting off of Lottery Funds while some funds were reinstated later as the revenue forecast was updated. They showed the Council pre- and post-COVID budgets for Oregon InC. Kate also reminded the group about the policy option package that was submitted to add to Oregon InC's funding to restore it to its original funding level. Kate explained that this would likely be tough given the current budget situation but that the proposal remains under consideration so we will keep the Council updated on the progress of the request.

Program Updates

HIOP

Jordana Barclay gave updates on the HIOP program, focusing on the funding opportunity announcement that was currently open. Jordana reminded the group about the intent of the HIOP program as well as the prior round of HIOP grants that were canceled due to COVID-19. She described the budget available for this round of grants and the efforts undertaken to generate interest in the opportunity. Lastly, Jordana covered the timeline for this round of grants. Sen. Johnson recommended that the group take into account geographic distribution in its evaluation of awards.

Commercialization Gap Fund

Jordana next gave updates on the Commercialization Gap Fund program, including the current state of the budget, the agreement with Elevate, meetings with Elevate and other aspects of their process of managing the fund. Chair Lynch asked that the Council be given an update at each meeting on the investments Elevate has made. Sen. Johnson recommended verifying how many prior grants a company has received before Elevate provides support via the gap fund to help ensure that certain companies are not receiving excessive amounts of state/federal funds.

SBIR Support Program

Mark Brady provided an update on the SBIR support program including the revised budget status. Mark discussed the SBIR matching grant funding opportunity that is currently open. He described the funding available, the outreach process, office hours calls and the estimated timeline of the review process. Dr. Nagi Naganathan discussed the desire to focus on COVID-response efforts and whether these grants would support that. Mark explained that it is possible that some proposals will relate to COVID, but the program allows applications from company's that were working on their federal projects before COVID hit so those likely won't be COVID-focused. Mark also let the group know that application support grants were available again. Some of the restored funding was reserved to be able to provide about fourteen of these small grants. Mark already has an application and knows several others are being prepared.

Signature Research Centers (SRCs)

Mark next gave updates on the SRCs including their post-COVID budgets. Mark reminded the group about the budget note relating to the SRCs. He said that the agency worked with the SRCs on a report in response to the note, and the report had been discussed at a recent Emergency Board hearing. The report was accepted without comments by the Emergency Board. Rep. Drazen pointed out that the acceptance of the report did not indicate full support for the SRCs, just the acceptance of the report. Rep. Drazen also highlighted the example of a company in her region that was mentioned in the report but that she and others she asked had not heard about. Mark said they would look into the situation and get back to the Representative.

Bill Berg, Audit Committee Chair, updated the group on the last review of the SRCs progress toward achieving their performance metrics. The review covered the last quarter of fiscal year 2020 (April through June 2020). All of the SRCs are currently on track with their performance measures and budgets. They have made adjustments and pursued other resources to manage the reduction in their funding from COVID-19 impacts.

University Innovation Research Fund

Mark gave updates on the program, including the COVID-19 impacts on the program's budget and the projects that have been funded to date. Mark let the group know that there is about \$1.25M remaining in the fund so the agency is still soliciting projects from the universities. Sen. Johnson asked what the projects are that have been funded to date. Mark let the group know that two of the projects were at OSU and one was at UO. Mark promised to send the group a brief summary on the funded projects so the group knew what had been awarded.

Futures Commission Update

Kate and Jordana gave an update on the Futures Commission's work and plans. Jordana covered the desired outcomes of the work, the membership, the process and the topics of each of the six focus groups. She also described the key takeaways and preliminary recommendations from each of the focus groups. Finally, she explained the next steps in the process and what the final product of the group (10-year Innovation Plan) will do. Treasurer Read asked about the timeline of the work and how it does or doesn't line up with the Legislative calendar. Treasurer Read also asked about efforts to educate Legislators on the effort assuming the plan will involve asks of the Legislature beyond the typical Oregon InC budget. Kate described the thinking around bringing Legislators up to speed on the plan and the importance of supporting innovation.

Portfolio Update

Mark gave an update on the Oregon InC portfolio of companies. He said this is an update that will be provided at each Council meeting going forward. Mark briefly mentioned about 10 companies that had previously received Oregon InC support that had significant events in the past few months. Examples include a company closing a \$20M investment round, award wins and a licensing agreement.

Participation on Boards & Committees

Mark reminded Council members that we are asking each of them to please sign up for one or more Boards or committees affiliated with Oregon InC's work. Mark listed the current options available for Council participation and asked anyone who is interested in any of the positions to please contact him. He said he would reach out if there were any unfilled gaps.

Public comments & Adjourn

Jenn asked for public comments. There were no comments so Chair Lynch adjourned the meeting at 11:17am.

Approved by:

Signature on file

Jenn Lynch, Chair
Oregon Innovation Council

Date

Signature on file

Mark H Brady
Business Oregon

Date