

Oregon Transit Alliance (NWOTA)
Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes (Teleconference)
April 10, 2020
Tillamook County Transportation District
Tillamook, OR

1. Introductions: Doug Pilant, Coordinating Committee Chair, opened the meeting. Meeting attendees/teleconference participants included:
 - Brad Dillingham/Lisa Scherf—Benton County Transportation
 - Jeff Hazen—Sunset Empire Transportation District
 - Doug Pilant—Tillamook County Transportation District
 - Cynda Bruce—Benton County
 - Mark Bernard, Arla Miller—ODOT
 - Debra Smith—NW Works
2. Consent Calendar: Unanimously approved. (JH/BD)
 - ✚ March 13, 2020 Meeting Minutes—Under 2020—2021 Budget, amend Doug responded to his board that the NWOTA bylaws allow partners to request reduced annual dues, ~~but the partners have made a decision to date.~~ Under Covid-19 Update, amend minutes to reflect that a part time driver had been tested **for Covid but was not** positive, ~~possibly through her other EMT job.~~
 - ✚ March Financial Report—One new expenditure: \$4,136 for the Jan—Mar 2020 3rd quarter of administrative support. YTD out of the \$15,385 of the \$25,000 budget.
 - ✚ Ridership Performance Report—No updates. Covid-19-related restrictions is dramatically affecting ridership.
 - ✚ Calculating Average Passenger Miles Progress—No updates.
3. NWOTA Standing Items:
 - ✚ 2020—2021 Budget—Tabatha will nail down working capital carryover for the next year and will project out expenses and dues. Doug will follow up with Thomas on website maintenance and project carryover. Doug will also talk to John about Columbia County's staying in NWOTA. Marketing: May need to add more funding as part of the economic recovery effort.
 - ✚ IGA Approval Updates—Brad continues to keep this on his to do list.
 - ✚ Management Plan—Benton County and SETD still need board approvals.
 - ✚ Website Alert System Implementation—The Tillamook crew is now using on the 60X and 70X routes, most recently alerting riders they must start wearing masks.
 - ✚ Travel Tourism Studio/Transportation Committee—The subcommittee has stopped meeting until the pandemic lockdowns are lifted.
4. NW Connector Website Trip Planner/Marketing

Will have an update at the next meeting. NW Connector marketing has been suspended.

TCTD—Getting back of buses wrapped as part of their own marketing program. Selena designed. Different themes for the Portland buses. Two buses being dedicated to the Lincoln City/Salem service and will be rewrapped with NWConnector brand wraps.
5. CARES Funding to Transit for Managing for Covid-19 Impacts

Arla—Oregon is ahead of the nation on how deploy funding. Rather than deploying all \$42 million allocation, deploying the same amount as 5311 funding and reserving the balance for additional need. January—December 2020 timeframe. Question: Appears that the urban

and rural funding is being handled differently. Hard to understand. How does the State expect the District's to spend a full 5311 amount in one year for only Covid-related expenses? After used against actual costs, then can justify by projecting ahead regarding issues related to restarting. No way to spend 5311 in one year. Two different messages: Put against Covid expenses vs use it to run entire system. Can use it for layoffs, hazard pay, normal operating during this pandemic.

FTA allows capital expenditures, very flexible. Can be spent through 2024, unlike what is happening in the rural areas. Can't get to \$42 million. SETD will be able to use full amount, but will probably lose current 5311 allocation, but also don't provide any match. Looking at spreading out passengers, and may have to buy additional buses to ensure all passengers can be picked up.

Lincoln County—Think the rules should be as relaxed as urban direct allocation.

Large amount going into urban areas. Direction from the Feds for funding going through the state's isn't as clear and leaves it up to each state. Forces states to be conservative.

Benton County—Be flexible, don't be restrictive. Formula and needs based allocations. Not distributing all funding immediately allows private and non-profit contractors to access funding.

If money left over, ODOT will help find a way to utilize.

Lincoln County—Been very busy just trying to operate safely, short turnaround to get plan in to ODOT on how will spend funding.

FAQ Summary is available from FTA.

Eligible costs include those that prevent, prepare, operating—both current operating and those needed to reopen transit service that has been reduced. Shifting current 5311 operating costs into new Covid-19 funding and free up match that would have gone toward 5311 funding. May spend on new buses and potentially more space to store buses.

Needs based program—What is the deadline?

Extra buses to accommodate separating riders

How long will it take for ridership to come back?

Might be more value in transit service if unemployment continues. Debra Smith—Making plans for recovery, transitioning with gradual social distancing. Transportation hasn't come up in many of the recovery conversations. Unclear if will be more ridership once the economy opens back up. Even if the restrictions are lifted, it may take a while for people to get out as much as in the past. Service industry businesses cash flow month to month. TCTD Portland service could become even to more useful, may need to add more times/routes. May help to get economy started. Lincoln County—Will take a while to get ridership started again. People are finding options to Coast to Valley route such as automobiles, which may be more attractive. SETD's decreases don't seem as deep as some other agencies. Fully expect within a few months will be back to seeing increases.

Doug—Still need more clarity on using 5311 monies. See a lot of flexibility in the CARES Act, but not a lot of flexibility on what the State is asking in their applications due next week. FTA funding and emergency relief. Eliminating threats to public health. If we experience 2 or 3 waves over the next 2 years we'll need to ramp up bus cleanliness.

Question: May not want to rush to spend all Covid funds if the pandemic happens in waves in the future. If able to use funds through June 2021, then will want to look at costs associated with long term system needs.

Arla—A lot of money, unlikely to be able to spend based on biennial formula. Meant to help transit stay whole and operating while providing public transportation. Will still need thoughtful applications but will be flexible if the transit future isn't completely known. Replace money not receiving. Can use for operating funds, although will mean likely to have formula funding left over.

New money contracts haven't been signed. Can be used retroactively, but only have 45 days to send in an APR for the quarter completed. Forego last quarter APR until new funding contracts have been completed. Will need concurrence from ODOT.

As get into recovery, NW Connector marketing will be even more critical. Partners concurred.

6. Covid-19 Update

- ✦ Lincoln County—Lots going on, particularly now that having to schedule each passenger. Trying to keep the appropriate amount of people on the bus without passing by people, have to take reservations for every route, starting on Monday. Will be able to monitor reservations. Couples can sit together. Distancing 6 feet. Drivers wearing masks and requiring passenger to cover their noses and mouths. Adding plexiglass shields between drivers and passengers because don't have back doors. Taking a lot of people to the grocery and pharmacy.
- ✦ Benton County—Not a lot has changed. Discontinued fixed route services due to low ridership, including Coast to Valley. ADA rules have stayed the same. PPS has made some reductions, but still operating. Countywide ridership is down 85%, telling people to only use service if really need it. Basically, just providing demand service. Hazard pay for Corvallis drivers, through a contract amendment.
- ✦ SETD—Instituted hazard pay retro to March 23. Closed transit center, furlough staff on paid leave. Administrative staff working from home. Jeff only person in the office. Get hand sanitizer from local emergency response.
- ✦ Lisa Emergency Response Activity—Half time in Emergency Communications Center, logistics section chief. Helping acquire needed supplies. Set up a volunteer donation site, quarantine them for 72 hours, and from a storage site distributed to health care workers, PPE primarily. Local care site is still below capacity, but if need to add another care site and/or temporary morgue, need to plan the logistics for doing that.
- ✦ TCTD—Office staff has the option to working from home and encouraged to do so whenever possible. Haven't laid off any staff. Dial-a-ride ridership demand is off 60–70%. Using dial-a-ride drivers to sanitize vehicles and facility. Last week when Salem-Keizer was shut down, impacted the layover facility normally available for TCTD drivers. Created a temporary policy on employee leave rights, per CARES Act.
- ✦ Mark—LTD has suspended mobility demand pilot. Hoping CARES Act will help them.
- ✦ Debra—Dislocated worker liaison, rapid response for layoff. Have a statewide data system, so encourage all to send information on companies having to lay off workers. Have close to 2,000 workers and 300 businesses in the system.
- ✦ Oregon's unemployment staff have been supplemented to deal with the increasing number of claims. Still some difficulty getting through the system.

Recorded: Mary McArthur, Col-Pac EDD and NWOTA Coordinator