

**COLUMBIA COUNTY CITIZEN TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND
STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT FUND COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Meeting Date: March 21, 2023

Time: 4:00 P.M.

Place: Columbia County Transit, St. Helens, OR

Present: Karen MacKenzie, Marty Rowe, Pam Heimuller, Dennis Spitze

Absent: Dena Chesney

Staff: John Dreeszen, Transit Director

Guests: None

Call to Order (CCRTAC): Chair MacKenzie called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M.

Approval of January 17, 2023 Meeting Minutes: The Committee approved the January 17, 2023 meeting minutes unanimously.

Public Comments: The Committee paused for public comment, and none was given. Committee Member Rowe shared that he does receive public comments by listeners calling into the KOHI live show which prompt discussion about CC Rider service and suggestions.

Mr. Dreeszen asked the committee members if they saw the substantial article The Spotlight Newspaper published about CC Rider. Committee Member Rowe mentioned that he did receive comments about the article where individuals thought the headline was terrible, but the article itself was very informative. Mr. Dreeszen shared that the reporter was incredibly detailed in her questions and wanted to provide the correct sequencing of events that lead to the present status of CC Rider.

Chair MacKenzie asked if there were any comments made following her guest spot on KOHI a few weeks ago. Committee Member Rowe stated that there was no specific comment he received, but he believes that the conversation regarding CC Rider, its ridership, and future endeavors needs to be a constant topic on KOHI if the goal is to keep the public engaged.

Chair MacKenzie wanted to share that a story regarding the big winter storm that occurred at the end of February. While she was not on board the CC Rider commuter bus, she learned that the

driver, Mark Crampton, did not arrive to Portland until approximately 9PM that night. Due to the snowy conditions, the commuter bus did not make it back to St. Helens until approximately 1AM. The four gentlemen on board were so thankful for the bus driver that they purchased him a gift certificate as a token of their appreciation.

Line 1 Portland Ridership Update: Mr. Dreeszen shared that the ridership numbers grew recently and CC Rider is at 64% of where it was last year. Chair MacKenzie said that she has noticed that ridership has been increasing slightly as both the morning and afternoon route are typically at half capacity. With COVID restrictions expiring and employers requiring staff to return to work it is expected that ridership will continue to increase steadily.

ODOT/FTA Periodic Review: Mr. Dreeszen explained to the committee that every three years ODOT completes a periodic review that covers the topics of financial management, fleet management, building maintenance, operations, ridership, policies, civil rights, etc. ODOT hires a consulting firm to complete a comprehensive review of how an agency operates and if they fall in compliance with FTA guidelines. That review is scheduled to take place over two days in May at the CC Rider Transit Center.

ODOT/FTA Drug & Alcohol Program Review: In conjunction with a Periodic Review, ODOT also completes an additional review on a specific topic. Often this review has focused on the FTA Drug & Alcohol Program which includes as testing procedures, reasonable suspicion, random testing, etc. Mr. Dreeszen reports that CC Rider has been involved in this review for the last few months. The main finding following the review was that CC Rider needs to update its Drug & Alcohol policy to better align with FTA's more stringent requirements. Previously this more focused review was handled entirely by CC Rider's previous contractor, MTR Western.

Upcoming Budget Process: Mr. Dreeszen reports that the county's budget process has begun with a Budget Committee Meeting and within a few monthly Department Head Meetings. In one of these meetings Mr. Dreeszen voiced his concerns over several departments proposing new FTE positions which will ultimately create an administrative allocation in which each department will need to pay out of their budget. Mr. Dreeszen went on to explain that for many departments that do not operate heavily on federal and state grants, an additional administrative allocation is not an issue – but for departments like CC Rider it can be detrimental to the operating budget.

Committee Round Table: Committee member Heimuller brought handouts to share with the committee regarding micro transit. Committee member Rowe is excited for the possible approval of Sunset Empire's route extension to the PDX airport.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 5:14 P.M.