

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

Meeting Date: February 20, 2024

Time: 4:00 P.M.

Place: Columbia County Transit, St. Helens, OR

Present: Karen MacKenzie, Marty Rowe (virtual), Pam Heimuller, Dennis Spitze

Absent: Dena Chesney, Denise Watson

Staff: John Dreeszen, Transit Director

Guests: Lauren Read, Mobility Management Coordinator - Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments, Natalee Racine, Equus Workforce Solutions

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

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

Public Comments: The Committee paused for public comment, and none was given.

Line 1 Portland/Dial-A-Ride Update: Mr. Dreeszen provided the committee with an update on the snowy conditions from a few weeks ago that impacted CC Rider service. He believes that this year's winter storm was handled a bit more cautiously regarding riders and driver's time and safety. Mr. Dreeszen also shared that the contract with Enterprise has been signed and CC Rider will soon offer vanpools to interested individuals and businesses in Columbia County. Chair MacKenzie asked if this could potentially effect Line 1 ridership which Mr. Dreeszen explained that this could be an alternative for former riders in which the service reduction affected.

Mr. Dreeszen went on to share that Enterprise has had a few preliminary meetings to identify potential employers in Columbia County that may benefit from this service, although it is limited. Ms. Read suggested Mr. Dreeszen have a meeting with the Executive Director of the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments to see if there could be a collaboration.

Committee member Heimuller asked how the public will learn of this new service. Mr. Dreeszen explained that CC Rider will use its typical media outlets (Facebook, NW Connector), an official

county press release, the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments monthly newsletter, and on KOHI Radio.

Service & Performance Survey: After reviewing the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Transportation Survey Committee member Rowe took inspiration for potential questions for Columbia County specifically. He shared those questions with the committee and believed incentivizing citizens with prizes may yield high participation.

Ms. Read shared that Cowlitz-Wahkiakum had past success with a mass mailer campaign that including sending postcards with a QR code for a survey, mailer inserts, and having the survey QR code on its buses and website. Chair Mackenzie suggested a simpler approach where all focus would be put on mailers rather than QR codes. Ms. Read offered to help with the design of the postcard if CC Rider chooses that route for survey distribution.

Mr. Dreeszen directed the committee to take the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Transportation Survey home and circle 10-12 questions that they believe would work best for a Columbia County specific survey. To expedite the distribution of this survey Mr. Dreeszen requested that the committee members have their selections completed by March 1st, 2024 and ready to discuss by the next meeting.

Committee Round Table: Mr. Dreeszen wanted to remind the committee members that the county has begun their budget process and likewise the committee will need to begin working on the biennial funding plan as early as August 2024. This will include going through a priority process of what services CC Rider provides, if services should be added or reduced, grant applications that need to be filled out, etc.

Mr. Dreeszen shared that he has been working with the county Finance Director and County Commissioner Magruder to develop a plan for his succession. Funds have been set aside to hire a Transit Coordinator who will work closely with Mr. Dreeszen and take over as Transit Director in 2025.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 5:10 P.M.