

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

**Meeting Date:** April 16, 2024

**Time:** 4:00 P.M.

**Place:** Columbia County Transit, St. Helens, OR

**Present:** Karen MacKenzie, Pam Heimuller, Dennis Spitze, Denise Watson (virtual)

**Absent:** Marty Rowe

**Staff:** John Dreeszen, Transit Director

**Guests:** Ralph Painter, Savanna Cate (virtual)

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

**Approval of March 19, 2024 Meeting Minutes:** The Committee approved the March 19, 2024 meeting minutes unanimously.

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

**Service Updates:** Mr. Dreeszen shared with the committee that CC Rider is getting some funding from Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments to help supplement the weekly Rainier/Longview service. This Dial-A-Ride service is primarily for the North County residents such as those in Rainier and Clatskanie.

Mr. Dreeszen also shared some comparative Line 1 statistics with the committee. In the first three months of 2023 there were 1,625 riders and 1,736 in 2024 for Line 1. Dial-A-Ride declined a small amount with 2,874 rides in 2023 and 2,800 rides in 2024. The average completed rides a day for Dial-A-Ride is 44. The weekly Portland Medical Service continues and alternates Tuesdays and Thursdays, Mr. Dreeszen wishes ridership for that service could increase. Committee Member Heimuller asked if the community is even aware of this service, Chair MacKenzie and Committee Member Spitze voiced that this is the first time they had heard about it. Chair MacKenzie suggested that CC Rider promote the service on the Facebook page and Committee Member Heimuller believes the service would make a great piece in the local newspaper.

Mr. Dreeszen updated the committee on the upcoming community events CC Rider will be participating in. With Easter just having passed CC Rider provided a shuttle service from McBride Elementary to the Columbia County Fairgrounds for the MEGGA Easter Hunt. Approximately 90 individuals took the shuttle and enjoyed the Easter bunny who rode alongside them. CC Rider will also be providing a shuttle for Columbia City Veterans Memorial Day in May. The Elks Car Show is in July and CC Rider has been asked to provide shuttle service for another year following the success of last year's event.

**Service & Performance Survey:** Mr. Dreeszen shared with the committee that he still needs to add the final touches to an updated version of the survey and will have that available to review and discuss by the next committee meeting. Chair MacKenzie addressed the committee with a concern regarding the survey and the expectations it may create in the county that CC Rider may not be able to deliver due to financial constraints. Mr. Dreeszen shares these concerns and believes that CC Rider will not be able to return to the level of service it was providing in 2019-2020 for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Dreeszen explained that conversations with community partners, such as Portland Community College, to restore previous routes have taken place however the compensation for those routes is what typically stalls the conversations. Many of the previous routes had poor ridership and were very expensive to operate which contributed to the large financial deficit CC Rider had years ago. Mr. Dreeszen went on to explain that CC Rider has been strategically setting money aside as expenses have been increasing more rapidly than revenue. Mr. Dreeszen believes that as early as this year, expenses and revenue will match and CC Rider will need to begin dipping into savings to compensate.

Instead of spending money on paper surveys and mailers, Committee Member Watson suggested a Facebook poll as it is a free service and will generate interest and conversation within the community. Mr. Dreeszen has taken that suggestion and will be looking into it.

Mr. Dreeszen shared with the committee that a major funding source for CC Rider, The Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF), is projected to keep increasing for its recipients and may potentially double if the Oregon Transit Association launches and passes a legislative initiative in the future. This increase in funding could amount to a modest increase in service, such as an additional run into Portland or a specific Saturday Dial-A-Ride service.

**Proposed 2024-25 Transit Budget:** All committee members received a copy of the proposed 2024-25 Transit budget which will be presented to the Columbia County Budget Committee. The Transit budget shows that fiscal year 2023 ended with a surplus of \$735,000 which Mr. Dreeszen explained is primarily STIF funds that has not yet been spent or is being used as reserve. It is projected that there will be a surplus of \$939,000 at the end of fiscal year 2024.

**Committee Round Table:** The committee discussed the Transit budget and the separate funding sources that go into the overall budget total.

**Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 5:29 P.M.