

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

Meeting Date: January 21, 2025

Time: 4:00 P.M.

Place: Columbia County Transit Center, St Helens, OR

Present: Karen MacKenzie, Dennis Spritze, Marty Rowe, Pam Heimuller (Virtual), Denise Watson (Virtual)

Absent: N/A

Staff: John Dreeszen, Transit Director; Chris Wheatley, Transit Program Manager

Guests: Heather Shaw, Megan Wirtz (Virtual), Alta (Virtual), Empty Busses (Virtual), Melody Long (Virtual)

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

Approval of November Meeting Minutes: The Committee deferred approval until next month's meeting.

Public Comments: The Committee paused for public comment, many comments/questions were asked:

- Why are rides and the number of busses decreases in Columbia County?

Mr. Dreeszen shares that for many years CC Rider was operating at a deficit. In 2018 services were decreased based on where the ridership was, as well as some route closing based on Covid. Mr. Dreeszen commented that it took 4-5 years to pay off loans from the county general fund.

- Guest suggested that we have a vending machine at the Transit Center for those who are diabetic.
- Guest commented that there are many disadvantages to those in Columbia County by not having more busses.

Mr. Dreeszen suggested that the guest visit a County Commissioners meeting to ask them about the funding from the County for Transit. Mr. Dreeszen also mentioned that funding from the County would come from Transit tax that has been voted down multiple times now.

- Guest asked if CC Rider would offer a route to PCC Rock Creek campus and suggested that funds for the route be pulled from tourism funding.
Mr. Dreeszen shares that the funding for the PCC Rock Creek route was previously funded in part by PCC themselves. It is unknown if/how PCC would help fund the route if it were brought back today.
- Guest asked if CC Rider could provide service on the weekends/weekend events.
Mr. Dreeszen shared that CC Rider provides shuttle service for a few local events throughout the year.
- Guest asked if CC Rider could post about not having a commute system on the radio.
Member Rowe shared with the guest that KOHI provides local news including a segment called "Rider Talk" every weekday from 3:00pm-4:00pm.

Formula Grant Submission Update: Mr. Wheatley shared that all grants including the 5311, 530, and STIF grants have been submitted.

New Vehicle Grant: Mr. Wheatley shared that the grant agreements will be presented to the Commissioners tomorrow (1-22-25). Next step would be for the commissioners to sign the grant, then the grant will be submitted to ODOT. The grant will be used to purchase three new 12 passenger busses.

Drug and Alcohol Compliance: Mr. Wheatley shared that there will be an onsite review on the 27th of February with a consultant hired through ODOT. Mr. Wheatley mentions that we are not the only ones under review. Chair MacKenzie mentioned her concern of HIPAA violations. Mr. Dreeszen assured her that ODOT covers all the aspects regarding HIPAA. He commented that he will look into the HIPAA compliance with the consultant.

Staffing Update: Mr. Wheatley shares that CC Rider has a driver retiring at the end of the month, and that there has been a new driver hired to replace them. Mr. Wheatley shares that Mr. Dreeszen is also retiring at the end of the month.

Committee Roundtable: Members express their gratitude for Mr. Dreeszen's time with CC Rider and the Advisory Committee. Member Spritze asked about recruiting new committee members. Mr. Wheatley shares that there has been some advertising for new members on the radio with member Rowe.. Chair MacKenzie asked about changing the Committee meeting times. Mr. Dreeszen commented that there is a possibility of changing the meeting time to allow for others to join the meetings. Member Rowe mentions how transit payroll taxes may be changing this year with House Bill 2017. Mr. Dreeszen shares that the current transit tax is .01% and could be increased by .01% in each of the next four biennium.

Adjourn: Mr. Dreeszen adjourned the meeting at 5:00 P.M.