



SUNSET EMPIRE TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT
Board of Commissioners
Jan. 22, 2026 | 9 a.m.
Board Meeting Minutes
DRAFT

Link to meeting video: <https://bit.ly/3ZT8ZHv>

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kathy Kleczek called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Penny York, Pamela Alegria, Tita Montero, Kathy Kleczek, Guillermo Romero, Kathleen Teeple, Matthew Stolberg

Staff present: David Carr, Jennifer Geisler, Kelly Smith, Jason Jones, Sam Bedair, Sara Schilling

Visitors present: Johnathan Niebuhr, Leah Griffith, Mark Knudson, Ryan Quigley, Mitra Vazeen, Mel Jasmin, Craig Holt

Staff present virtually: Victoria Davis, Stephanie Rodriguez, Lauren Hedrick

Visitors present virtually: Brian Vitulli, Danny Duggan

4. CHANGES TO AGENDA (0:55)

Commissioner Montero proposed adding discussion of future agenda items to the agenda, following team reports. Commissioners agreed by consensus.

Commissioner Montero moved to approve the agenda with that change.

Commissioner Alegria seconded the motion.

	York	Alegria	Montero	Kleczek	Romero	Teeple	Stolberg
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nay							
Excused							

Aye: 7

Nay: 0

Excused: 0

Motion passed unanimously

5. PUBLIC COMMENT (2:25)

None

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (3:01)

a. Board Meeting on Aug. 28, 2025

Commissioner Montero requested amendments to the minutes of the board meeting on Aug. 28, 2025, including adding clarifying language in several places.

Commissioner Montero moved to amend the minutes as discussed.

Commissioner Romero seconded the motion.

	York	Alegria	Montero	Kleczek	Romero	Teeple	Stolberg
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nay							
Excused							

Aye: 7

Nay: 0

Excused: 0

Motion passed unanimously

Commissioner Montero moved to accept the minutes from the board meeting on Aug. 28, 2025, as amended.

Commissioner Romero seconded the motion.

	York	Alegria	Montero	Kleczek	Romero	Teeple	Stolberg
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nay							
Excused							

Aye: 7

Nay: 0

Excused: 0

Motion passed unanimously

b. Financial Report Work Session and Board Meeting on Oct. 23, 2025

Commissioner Montero moved to accept the minutes from the financial work session on Oct. 23, 2025, as presented.

Commissioner Romero seconded the motion.

	York	Alegria	Montero	Kleczek	Romero	Teeple	Stolberg
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nay							
Excused							

Aye: 7

Nay: 0

Excused: 0

Motion passed unanimously

Commissioner Montero requested amendments to the minutes of the board meeting on Oct. 23, 2025, including adding clarifying language and adding some information.

Motion: Commissioner Montero moved to amend the minutes as discussed.

Second: Commissioner Romero seconded the motion.

	York	Alegria	Montero	Kleczek	Romero	Teeple	Stolberg
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nay							
Excused							

Aye: 7

Nay: 0

Excused: 0

Motion passed unanimously

Commissioner Montero moved to accept the minutes from the board meeting on Oct. 23, 2025, as amended.

Commissioner Romero seconded the motion.

	York	Alegria	Montero	Kleczek	Romero	Teeple	Stolberg
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nay							
Excused							

Aye: 7

Nay: 0

Excused: 0

Motion passed unanimously

c. Board Meeting on Dec. 18, 2025

Commissioner Montero requested amendments to the minutes of the board meeting on Dec. 18, 2025, including adding clarifying language and making some factual corrections.

Commissioner Montero moved to amend the minutes as discussed.

Commissioner Romero seconded the motion.

	York	Alegria	Montero	Kleczek	Romero	Teeple	Stolberg
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nay							
Excused							

Aye: 7

Nay: 0

Excused: 0

Motion passed unanimously

Commissioner Montero moved to accept the minutes from the board meeting on Dec. 18, 2025, as amended.

Commissioner Romero seconded the motion.

	York	Alegria	Montero	Kleczek	Romero	Teeple	Stolberg
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nay							
Excused							

Aye: 7

Nay: 0

Excused: 0

Motion passed unanimously

7. REPORTS FROM CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS (20:13)

Commissioner Romero reported that he was glad to be at the meeting.

Commissioner Teeple: Nothing to report.

Commissioner Stolberg: Nothing to report.

Commissioner York reported that she emailed Executive Director David Carr and copied Chair Kleczek with a question about an agenda item ahead of the meeting, and discussion followed on the procedure for asking questions of staff.

Commissioner Alegria requested permission from the board to make a factual presentation to the public on Special Districts to the AAUW.

Commissioner Montero reported that she attends senior lunches in Seaside at least once a month and makes sure to share information about transit services.

Chair Kleczek reported that she's glad to have a full board, and she asked to be looped in as the orientation for new commissioners is scheduled. She encouraged commissioners to pay attention as transportation issues are discussed during the next legislative session.

She noted that she's looking forward to seeing commissioners at the upcoming Special Districts Association of Oregon conference, and she reported that board will need to

choose a voting delegate. Commissioner Montero suggested Chair Kleczek serve in that role for the board and other commissioners agreed by consensus.

8. FINANCIAL REPORT (30:50)

Financial Officer Kelly Smith presented the financial report covering November-December. She addressed questions raised during the last meeting about the balance sheet, and she discussed formatting of the exceptions report, provided clarification on some line items and general ledger definitions, reported that the district submitted its 5310 reimbursement request, and reported that the district's STIF funding has been deposited.

Ms. Smith said district staff are preparing to move ODOT loan funds into a money market account, so the funds will earn interest. Board approval will be needed, she said.

Commissioner Montero moved to authorize Executive Director Carr to draft a letter requesting the ODOT loan fund be moved from a non-interest-bearing account to an interest-bearing account and to sign the agreement.

Commissioner Alegria seconded the motion.

	York	Alegria	Montero	Kleczek	Romero	Teeple	Stolberg
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nay							
Excused							

Aye: 7

Nay: 0

Excused: 0

Motion passed unanimously

Ms. Smith answered additional questions about fees/taxes/licenses, capital expenses, check listings, cash flow and the micro-mobility program.

Commissioner Montero moved to accept the November and December financials.

Commissioner Romero seconded the motion.

	York	Alegria	Montero	Kleczek	Romero	Teeple	Stolberg
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nay							
Excused							

Aye: 7

Nay: 0

Excused: 0

Motion passed unanimously

9. CONTINUED BUSINESS

a. Transportation Advisory Committee interviews and appointments (49:35)

Commissioner Montero reported that five people applied to serve on the district's Transportation Advisory Committee. The five applicants were interviewed, with Commissioners Montero and York trading off asking three standardized questions. Commissioner Montero reminded the board that TACs must have five members, and four constituencies must be represented: public transportation providers, low-income individuals, the disabled community and the senior community. Several other constituencies are suggested but not required, including educational institutions, she said. Commissioner Montero moved that the following applicants be appointed to the district's TAC representing the following constituencies: Brian Vitulli, public transportation providers; Leah Griffith, senior community; Melvin Jasmin, disabled community; Johnathan Niebuhr, low-income individuals; Mitra Vazeen, educational institutions. Commissioner York seconded the motion. Discussion: Commissioners thanked the applicants.

	York	Alegria	Montero	Kleczek	Romero	Teeple	Stolberg
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nay							
Excused							

Aye: 7

Nay: 0

Excused: 0

Motion passed unanimously

b. Strategic Planning Process Presentation (1:23:37)

Mark Knudson, a senior consultant with SDAO, gave a presentation about the strategic planning process the board will participate in on Feb. 16, 2026. He discussed best practices, the value of preparing a strategic plan, what strategic planning involves, and the planning process. He asked commissioners to complete homework assignments ahead of the strategic planning session, including reviewing the district's vision, mission and values; completing a SWOT exercise; and engaging in goal setting.

Chair Kleczek suggested that SETD senior leadership and the TAC committee be invited to fill out the homework assignment, and that TAC members be invited to attend the strategic planning session. Commissioners agreed by consensus.

c. Strategic Plan Foundational Presentation (2:24:20)

Executive Director Carr and Chief Operations Officer Jennifer Geisler gave brief reports about their work. Mr. Carr touched on his efforts to build a new culture in the district, plus public outreach and fiscal strategy. Ms. Geisler discussed service, organizational structure, and the focus on providing safe, reliable and sustainable transportation.

10. NEW BUSINESS

a. Potential Impact of Oregon Senate Bill 179 (2:34:24)

Chair Kleczek explained that Oregon Senate Bill 179 allows special districts to opt into recreational immunity under the state's trail-use immunity statute. She noted that SETD doesn't currently own any property that would be considered open to the public and a path, but she wanted the board to be aware of the option to opt in.

Commissioner Montero said it's extra protection and she feels the district should opt in.

Commissioner Montero moved to have SETD opt in under SB 179 and have the chair sign.

Commissioner Stolberg seconded the motion.

	York	Alegria	Montero	Kleczek	Romero	Teeple	Stolberg
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nay							
Excused							

Aye: 7

Nay: 0

Excused: 0

Motion passed unanimously

b. Urban Renewal Area Amendment Response (2:37:06)

Chair Kleczek explained that the City of Astoria is proposing to expand its Astor-East Urban Renewal Area and has requested SETD's support. She noted that she asked Executive Director Carr to draft a letter outlining the district's position for board consideration.

She said that, in her view, it's important to emphasize that the district is supportive of the proposed housing projects within the expansion area. The district's concerns center on the financial impact of the urban renewal area, coupled with the potential increased demand for transit services brought by the housing projects.

Commissioners discussed how urban renewal areas work and the financial impact. Ryan Quigley, assistant to Astoria's city manager, answered questions from commissioners.

Commissioner York said she feels tax increment funding – which funds urban renewal – is a valuable development tool, and she'd be reluctant to publicly oppose the urban renewal area expansion. If the draft letter were rewritten so that it's more focused on the expectation that the district will see needed improvements due to increased demand, she could support it, she said. She supports moving that part of the letter to the top.

Commissioner Montero said she doesn't see the draft letter as being in opposition, but she could support tweaks to the text of the letter.

Commissioner Montero moved to authorize Executive Director Carr and Chair Kleczek to modify the letter as discussed and sign and send it.

Commissioner York seconded the motion.

Discussion: Commissioner Alegria said she wanted to ensure the district expresses that its supportive of the housing projects.

	York	Alegria	Montero	Kleczek	Romero	Teeple	Stolberg
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nay							
Excused							

Aye: 7

Nay: 0

Excused: 0

Motion passed unanimously

c. Board Committee Appointments (3:03:30)

Commissioners agreed by consensus on the following committee assignments:

- Board liaison to NWACT: Commissioner Romero
- TAC liaison: Commissioner Alegria
- Policy Committee: Commissioners Montero, Alegria and Stolberg
- Executive Director Evaluation Committee: Commissioners Montero, York and Teeple

d. Setting the Schedule for FY 2027 Budget Sessions (3:10:41)

Commissioners agreed by consensus on the following Budget Committee dates:

- Budget Committee Training: April 16, 12-2 p.m.
- Budget Meeting #1: April 30, 1-4 p.m.
- Budget Meeting #2: May 15, 1:30-4:30 p.m.
- Budget Meeting #3 (if needed): June 12, 9-11 a.m.

e. STIF Amendment (3:25:40)

Executive Director Carr explained that ODOT has opened an amendment period allowing STIF agencies to reallocate unspent carryover funds and allocate additional funding to existing projects within their current STIF plans. He reported that SETD has \$410,927 in carryover and \$27,834 in additional STIF funding available.

He recommended that commissioners adopt Resolution 2026-01 to reallocate the unspent carryover and allocate the additional funds.

Commissioner York moved to reallocate the STIF funds as presented in Resolution 2026-01 and authorize the chair to sign.

Commissioner Alegria seconded the motion.

	York	Alegria	Montero	Kleczek	Romero	Teeple	Stolberg
Aye	X	X	X	X	X		X
Nay							
Excused						X	

Aye: 6

Nay: 0

Excused: 0

Motion passed unanimously with Commissioner Teeple excused

f. Executive Director Employment Agreement Compensation (3:32:20)

Chair Kleczek explained that the previous board approved an employment agreement with Executive Director Carr that included employer contributions to a retirement account and a health savings account, and that those contributions haven't happened to date.

Commissioners reaffirmed by consensus that the 2% retirement account contribution should happen per the employment agreement.

However, it was explained that the district doesn't currently offer health savings accounts to employees.

Danny Duggan from Epic Brokers, the district's benefits agent, said SETD could offer an HSA plan as part of its medical benefits starting later this year, but it would have to offer the same kind of employer contribution to other employees to avoid discrimination.

Commissioners and Mr. Duggan discussed options.

Mr. Carr's employment agreement will be discussed at the next board meeting in executive session.

g. LC 257 Letter of Support (3:45:08)

Executive Director Carr reported that a task force is being established to look at sustained investment in rural public transportation in Oregon. He said his understanding is that the group will be looking for alternative sources of funding to replace the payroll tax.

He presented a draft letter to the chair and members of the Senate Interim Committee on Transportation in support of the goals of Legislative Concept (LC) 257, with similar drafts prepared for the House Interim and Joint committees on transportation.

Commissioners discussed the importance of stable funding for transit.

Commissioner Alegria moved to authorize Mr. Carr to sign and send the letter in support of LC 257 goals.

Commissioner Romero seconded the motion

	York	Alegria	Montero	Kleczek	Romero	Teeple	Stolberg
Aye	X	X	X	X	X		X
Nay							
Excused						X	

Aye: 6

Nay: 0

Excused: 0

Motion passed unanimously with Commissioner Teeple excused

11. CORRESPONDENCE (3:52:06)

a. Commissioners reviewed thank-you notes from George Onderdonk and Dorothy Flynn.

12. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT (3:52:40)

Executive Director Carr introduced Sam Bedair, the district's new human resources manager, and Sara Schilling, the new executive assistant. He also gave an update on basement storage and noted that the district is ending its agreement with Northwest Community Action to clean bus shelters and has hired a new facilities assistant.

13. TEAM REPORTS (3:55:32)

Commissioners heard brief reports from Chief Operations Officer Geisler, Financial Officer Smith, HR Manager Bedair, Mobility Manager Jason Jones and Ms. Schilling.

14. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (3:55:32)

Commissioner Montero said she's come across issues with the website, namely discrepancies in information that's posted. She wants to see a workgroup formed to review the website with staff members and a commissioner taking part.

15. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:06 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Sara Schilling, executive assistant

Minutes approved by:

Tita Montero, board secretary-treasurer

Action items from the board meeting:

- The district will opt into recreational immunity under Oregon SB 179
- Chair Kleczek and Executive Director Carr will work to modify the Astor-East Urban Renewal letter as discussed, sign it and send it
- Mr. Carr will sign and send the LC 257 letters as discussed

Items in progress:

- Clatsop Community College agreement
- Board Policy Committee
- The board will discuss the district website and formation of a website review workgroup at a future board meeting