



Wednesday, September 16th, 2020
Hood River County Transportation District
Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
224 Wasco Loop, Board Conference Room
Hood River, OR 97031
4:00pm – 6:00pm
Meeting Minutes

Board Meeting Attendees:

Board Members: Lara Dunn, Darrell Roberts, Leti Valle, Megan Ramey, Bridget Bailey

Public: Jason Kelly (ODOT), Rian Windshiemer (ODOT), Teresa Gallucci (Our Team Accounting), Valerie Egon (ODOT)

Staff: Patty Fink, Amy Schlappi, Ty Graves

At 4:04 pm Lara Dunn called the September HRCTD Board of Directors regular monthly meeting to order.

Elect Board Vice-Chair

There was a general discussion of the different roles and what their responsibilities are.

Bridget Bailey proposed to elect Leti Valle as Board Vice-Chair. Leti accepted the nomination. Bridget made a motion for Leti to be Board Vice-Chair, the motion was seconded by Darrell Roberts. All Board Members in attendance voted in favor to elect Leti as Board Vice-Chair.

Bridget made a motion to elect Darrell as Board Secretary, the motion was seconded by Leti. All Board Members in attendance voted in favor to elect Darrell as Board Secretary.

Approval of Minutes

Lara asked the group if there were any corrections that needed to be made to the July Board Meeting Minutes. No corrections were asked to be made. Bridget made a motion to approve the July 15th Meeting Minutes as presented, the motion was seconded by Megan Ramey and unanimously approved by the board.

ODOT

Rian Windshiemer gave a brief overview of his position as the ODOT Region 1 Manager. He thanked the Board for their letter regarding the re-opening of Multnomah Falls and the need for Public Transit to be included in the re-opening strategy. He explained that the reasoning for delaying the re-introduction of transit to Multnomah Falls was to ensure that the Forest Service could handle the number of visitors under the new restrictions that have been enacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, there were concerns that if the I-84 parking lot reached capacity the Eastbound gate to the lot would have to

be closed and the CAT bus would need to enter through the Westbound entrance causing delays in the service. Rian pushed for the reservation system, which is being enacted to ensure the gate will be open for public transit. He is a strong advocate of moving public transportation forward in the Gorge.

With regards to longer term, Rian highlighted the following:

- The Historic Highway Commission is concluding that private cars will not be able to be accommodated long term on the Historic Columbia Highway. The focus is now to create a transition plan from private cars and towards a shuttle model.
- The goal is to make the Historic Highway prioritized for professional shuttle, bicyclists, and pedestrians.
- Rooster Rock is very busy and might not be a reliable option for a transit hub. ODOT is currently researching a more appropriate location.
- ODOT is currently working on how to bring all stakeholders and the public together. This is happening now and ODOT needs CAT at the table to make long term public transit solutions along the I-84 corridor come to fruition.

Leti expressed appreciation for the specific examples and stated CAT needs ODOT to ensure that we are at the table and that our voice is heard. Additionally, she is worried the reservation system may limit individuals who do not have access to a computer and/or mobile smart device. Measures being taken appeared to be more reactionary rather than proactive.

Rian stressed that the decision to re-open was an incredibly quick process and always included involving public transit. He is committed to ensuring that there is an open line of communication between himself and the HRCTD Board. There are several multi-year projects in the works and will need to build slowly as the changes will be large.

There was a large amount of discussion regarding the upcoming STIF Grant Application and how multiple agencies might be able to leverage resources and to collectively strategize.

Financial Overview

Teresa Gallucci provided an overview of the financials, by highlighting:

- Fuel expense at the end of August was \$10k, which is \$5k less than last year and \$10k less than budget. The reduction is a result of reduced service due to COVID-19.
- Of the \$15k budgeted for advertising, \$1k has been spent YTD. This expense will increase as services return to normal.
- Administration expenses YTD are \$26k. This is \$1 less than FY20 but \$1k more than budget.
- Total employee costs incurred at August 31st were \$146k. This is \$74k less than budgeted and \$22k less than prior year. This decrease is due to reduced services due to COVID-19.

Patty explained that this is a very rosy outlook for the board. HRCTD has never been in this position before. Staff has asked for the first needs-based CARES Act and will be notified by the 1st week of October if it was approved. For the second needs-based application staff will be looking at additional projects, including real time information technology.

Eligible Check Signers

Patty explained the check signer process in the past and that the Board needs to agree on a process moving forward that reflects the current environment. CAT uses very little checks and no longer requires having several different check signers available to sign checks. Staff's recommendation is that the Board approves the Board Chair, Board Vice- Chair, and the Secretary in addition to the Executive Director to sign checks.

Bridget made a motion to approve the Board Chair, Board Vice- Chair, Secretary, and the Executive Director as check signers, the motion was seconded by Leti and approved unanimously.

- ❖ Amy will work with the Executive Committee to ensure proper documentation is turned in to the Columbia Bank.
- ❖ Patty will send audit procedural documents to Darrell and go through the check signer process in detail.

ED Report

Operations Report: Ty Graves reviewed operations report and the performance measures, by highlighting:

- Two coach repairs were needed (belt and alternator).
- Ridership is increasing in general and staff is encouraged that this trend will continue as more people feel comfortable with riding public transit.
- The City Route is performing well, and ridership is increasing.

There was a large amount of discussion regarding the passenger who wrote the Board describing issues with the 6:30AM bus going from Hood River to The Dalles leaving CAT late. Ty explained the specific situation and corrective actions taken. He stressed the importance of holding drivers accountable and ensure that CAT is a reliable service for passengers.

Financial Audit: Patty quickly updated the Board that the Financial Audit for FY 19-20 has begun. The goal is to have enough time to go through the process without being rushed.

2021 Gorge Pass: Patty explained that the Request For Proposal (RFP) for the Gorge To Mountain Express contracted services will be sent out the week of September 21st. This year the service will include a stop at Teacup.

Staff hopes to begin GOrge Pass 2021 sales on November 1, 2020. Passes would then be eligible from November 1, 2020 thru Dec 31, 2021. This would then become an annual date for which staff would begin pass sales. The promotional rates recommended by staff would be the same as the 2020 pass (\$30 adult, \$15 youth and Community ID holders, \$60 DAR) and would end June 18, 2020. The regular rates of the pass would be \$60 adult, \$45 youth and Community ID Holders, and \$120 for the DAR pass. The pass will include the Gorge To Mountain Express service. Without the pass, staff is recommending that the Gorge To Mountain Express fare be \$3 one-way and \$5 round-trip. First public hearing will be at the October 21st Board Meeting and the second will be at the November 18th Board Meeting. Fares will be available for purchase in cash and online.

Patty mentioned that staff is working with the Link, Skamania County Transit, and Mt. Adams Transportation to make the GOrge Pass a 4-agency pass. If the other three agencies agreed to become part of the GOrge Pass program, CAT would ensure that they received enough cash upfront to meet their revenue goals. After CAT had met their revenue goal the remaining GOrge Pass revenue would be split between CAT and the other agencies 70/30.

Letti made a motion to approve the GOrge Pass 2021 with sales beginning on November 1st, 2020 with the same promotional rates as 2020 and staff proposed Gorge To Mountain Express fares (\$3 one-way, \$5 round-trip), the motion was seconded by Bridget and approved unanimously.

- ❖ Board to discuss the 4-agency pass at the October Board Meeting.

Transition Plan for Executive Director: Patty reminded the Board that in July she gave her two-year retirement notice. To ensure that there is a seamless transition she would like to make sure that the Board is involved in the process. The Board was in general agreement that they would like to be involved in the process.

Increased Coordination with The Link and Klickitat County: Patty shared that The Link has given great feedback that they would potentially be interested in increased coordination between the two agencies and leveraging economies of scale. Additionally, Mt. Adams Transit is open to CAT operating some Fixed-Route service in White Salmon since they are unable to operate currently.

Coordinated Transportation Plan Update: Amy Schlappi updated the staff on the status of the Hood River County Coordinated Transportation Plan. The first Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) convened on September 11th where Amy shared the data collected from stakeholders and community members. The TAC then helped prioritize and refine the identified priorities. For this plan staff had combined the Hood River County Transportation District Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) and the Special Transportation Fund (STF) Committees to make up the TAC. She recommended that the Board consider combining the STF and STIF Committees to align with ODOT's 2019 action of combining the two programs. Additionally, during this process staff found that there would be two openings on the committee. Staff recommends that Lexi Stickel be appointed by the Board to replace Kristen Dillon and that suggestions are made on how to recruit a Rider and disability advocate to replace Beth Boyce.

There was general discussion on the best way to address the Advisory Committee future and members. It is important that the committee does not lose the representation required for STF and STIF.

Darrell made a motion to merge the two committees, keep current representation, and appoint Lexi Stickel. The motion was seconded by Bridget and unanimously approved.

- ❖ Staff to reach out to Kristen to see if she would still like to be part of the group and to advertise the open position on the committee.

Board Member Update

Patty had hoped to introduce the Board Member candidate, Eleazar Reyes. Unfortunately, he had a work emergency and was unable to attend today's meeting. Patty gave a brief history on how he was a driver until recently. He can represent drivers and is a longstanding community member.

Bridget made a motion to approve Eleazar Reyes as the newest HRCTD Board Member, the motion was seconded by Leti and unanimously approved.

Board Committees

Patty gave a general overview of current HRCTD committees and explained that the great thing about committees is it allows issues to be explored more in depth.

Based on the conversation Lara thinks that Board Members need a little more time to think about the different options.

- ❖ Patty will put together a survey which will gather more information to get a better idea as to which committees should be created.

Upcoming Events

The Next Board Meeting will be October 21st. The group generally agreed to keep the Board Meetings times from 4-6pm.

Public Comments

No public comments.

Leti made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:09pm, the motion was seconded by Bridget and unanimously approved.