



Thursday, June 2, 2022

**Hood River County Transportation District
3rd Meeting of the Budget Committee
224 Wasco Loop, Board Conference Room
Hood River, OR 97031**

4pm – 5:30pm

Agenda

The Hood River County Transportation District is taking measures to limit exposure of COVID-19. In support of state and federal guidelines for social distancing, HRCTD will hold this meeting by using Zoom Conferencing Technology. Members of the public can attend by calling (253)215-8782, meeting ID: 835 7238 6901, meeting passcode: 626839 or join by computer: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83572386901?pwd=eGhnejdXcUI2cFBDNFRIUjJMZ3hadz09>

- 1) Call Meeting to Order (4:00pm)**
- 2) Approve May 19th Meeting Minutes**
- 3) Review of May 19th Budget Meeting and Requested Information**
- 4) Public Comments**
- 5) Approval of Budget FY 2022-23 & Tax Rate**
- 6) Meeting Adjourned**

To request a reasonable accommodation or language interpreter, including alternative formats and translation of printed materials, please contact CAT's Administration Office no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting at 541-386-4202 (voice) or 7-1-1 (TTY through Oregon Relay Service).

Take CAT to the Meeting! Call (541) 386-4202 for more information on routes and services that come to the CAT Administrative Offices.

Se Habla Español.



Thursday, May 19th, 2022

**Hood River County Transportation District
1st Meeting of the Budget Committee
224 Wasco Loop, Board Conference Room
Hood River, OR 97031
4:00pm – 5:30pm**

Meeting Minutes

Budget Committee Meeting Attendees:

Committee Members: Greg Pack, Jeremy Hull, Darrell Roberts, Lara Dunn, Bridget Bailey, Cindy Walbridge

Staff: Patty Fink, Ty Graves, Amy Schlappi, Tiah Mayhew

Amy called the meeting to order at 4:02pm. Committee members and staff introduced themselves. This will be potentially be Jeremy's last year serving on the Budget Committee.

Election of Budget Committee Chair

Darrell made a motion for Jeremy to be Budget Committee Chair, the motion was seconded by Greg and unanimously approved by the Budget Committee.

Reading of Budget Message FY 2021-22 by Executive Director

Amy read the Budget Message for FY 2022-23. The Budget Message covered the purpose of the budget, the accomplishments of the past fiscal year, the impact of COVID-19 on CAT, goals for the upcoming fiscal year, and an overview of the FY2022-2023 proposed budget.

Initial Review of Budget FY 2021-22

Amy reviewed the FY2022-2023 proposed budget and discussed the revenues and expenditures for operating, administrative, and capital line items, by highlighting:

- Building Expenses were increased for office renovations to accommodate growing staff.
- Fuel expense was increased due to high gas prices caused by the War in Ukraine.
- The continuation of updating the Transit Master Plan and the resources needed to conduct the remaining outreach and land use pieces and consultants needed.
- Contract Revenue was increased due to contracting with MCEDD and the Link.
- Federal Assistance is higher than last year due to the delayed delivery of vehicles caused by COVID and supply chain issues. Vehicles are expected in FY23.
- Staff applied for additional CARES Act funds which was included in the proposed budget.



- Administrative Expense was increased to allow for staff training in areas such as human resources, leadership, and general operations.
- Direct Service Personnel was increased due to the wage increases and adding an additional Field Supervisor and Operations Assistant.
- \$100k in ADA improvements to sidewalks near bus stops as identified in the STIF Plan.

There was a large amount of discussion regarding questions committee members had about the proposed budget. Darrell was concerned that the amount budgeted for Preventative Maintenance was not going to be enough especially if the new vehicles do not end up being delivered this year. Bridget urged an increase in Direct Service Personnel due to labor shortages and would like to retain drivers. Darrell asked about Advertising & Marketing wanting to make sure that we are requesting enough and asked if it would be increased again next year. Amy let him know that it was only increased due to the TMP.

Amy and Patty wanted to address with the committee the possibility of adding an additional \$100k in Capital Outlay for Automated Passenger Counter technology which would be installed in the vehicles. This would give staff accurate and more dependable ridership data, reduce staff time spent on collating ridership data, and allow increased service efficiencies. There was a large group discussion. Bridget asked what the accurate numbers do for CAT. Patty explained that services such as Columbia Gorge Express are funded through the state and if we can't show that riders are utilizing the service, the funds will not continue. Bridget requested more info on what accurate numbers for ridership will do for our funding. Greg also asked for data showing how long the savings from reduced staff time will take to cover the expense. Darrell is concerned about adding another \$100k when we are already at a loss for the year.

Staff will send Budget Committee Members the below information regarding APC technology before the next Budget Committee Meeting:

- How much money could potentially be saved by investing in APC technology long term
- How would higher ridership numbers help the district secure additional funding
- How would more detailed ridership reporting contribute to higher service efficiencies

There was discussion regarding if the scheduled 2nd Budget Committee Meeting was needed for additional discussion. It was agreed that it was not needed. The 3rd Budget Committee Meeting where Public Comment will be heard will be June 2, 2022.

At 5:34PM Bridget made a motion to adjourn the meeting, the motion was seconded by Greg and unanimously approved by the committee.



Memo

To: HRCTD - BUDGET COMMITTEE
From: Amy Schlappi
Date: 6/2/2022
Re: Automated Fare Technology & Passenger Counters

Background

At the May 19th Budget Committee Meeting staff asked the committee to consider recommending that the Board add \$100,000 to the proposed budget for Automatic Passenger Counters (APC's) and automated fare technology. It is generally acknowledged that while staff is diligent in taking ridership and reviewing reporting that passenger trips are undercounted. The current process for tracking ridership allows for human error and the amount of fare revenue collected has been higher than what ridership numbers have reflected. Automatic Passenger Counters (APC's) and automated fare technology would allow the district to have accurate and dependable ridership data.

The committee asked staff to provide additional documentation showing the benefits of the proposed technology to justify the additional expense. Purchasing APC's and automated fare technology would require the district to dip into reserve funds unless other funding streams were identified and procured during FY23. It is important to note that no specific technology has yet been identified. If this APC and automated fare technology expense is approved staff would conduct a thorough search of available technology and go through the appropriate procurement process.

While some of the benefits are hard to quantify, I did my best to gather as much data as possible to answer the 3 questions that the committee asked staff to answer at the May 19th meeting.

1. By purchasing this technology how would it reduce staff time spent on reviewing and gathering ridership data? Would there be a cost reduction to help justify the expense?

Staff at all levels spend a large amount of time on collating ridership data and creating publishable reports. This work is very cumbersome and allows opportunity for human error even when several different individuals review the data. If the district invested in APC's and automated fare technology, it would not necessarily mean that the district reduces personnel expense, but staff would be utilizing their time completing other tasks that cannot be automated or taking on additional tasks that have been identified as a need to help the district grow. For drivers, the implementation of this system would mean that they are not distracted by notating ridership but instead focusing solely on their riders and operating their vehicles safely. The data below is the estimate of time that each level of staff spends on ridership per year.



Staff	Hours per year	Total Cost
Drivers	2,372 (30 min/day/driver)	\$72,000
Dispatch	365 (1hr/day)	\$11,000
Management	312 (6hrs/week)	\$17,000

2. Would proving higher ridership allow the district to secure additional funding?

The approval of funding for grant applications is not solely based on ridership, however when staff can show a progression of increased ridership year over year it does help strengthen an application. A committee takes several factors into consideration when making a decision on which projects to fund and ridership is one of them when looking at maintaining existing services. Having data that we feel accurately represents ridership can help strengthen our applications but is difficult to assign a dollar amount. From a staff perspective accuracy and dependable data would help us provide more confident applications and overview of service performance.

3. How does improved ridership numbers improve the efficiency of routes and allow for new service to be added?

More accurate data that is easier to gather helps us make decisions on how to adjust our services to increase riders and efficiency of our system. With our current rider counting system, management staff can pull the data to dive deeper into rider patterns and behaviors, but it takes about a weeks' worth of work to dive into a month's worth of data for one route. Whereas, with APC's and automated fare technology this process would be much quicker, done on a regular basis and allow staff to make better informed decisions.

SMART Wilsonville was awarded a STIF Discretionary grant in 2019-21 to "procure and implement Intelligent Information Systems (ITS) to enhance City of Wilsonville's operational performance, provide timely passenger information, and improve data collection for planning, reporting, and scheduling." One of the project deliverables was "installation of APCs to enhance data collection and information utilization for service and route management, budget development, funding solicitations." One of SMART's APRs stated "This new technology enhances the passenger experience with WiFi on buses, live bus tracking, and trip scheduling. Automatic Passenger Counters and upgraded dispatching software are increasing efficiencies by grouping rides and auto-scheduling trips while maintaining a high-quality user experience. We have already been able to reduce one run out of our service because of efficiencies gained."

Here are some additional articles on the benefits of passenger counters:

<https://www.praguepost.com/technology/passenger-counting-benefits-automated-systems>

<https://transignllc.com/benefits-of-automatic-passenger-counting-systems-for-public-transit/>



Please note that the APC's and automated fare technology would be a one-time expense and would last the district many years.

Action

The Budget Committee can recommend that the Board add the expense for APC's and automated fare technology to the proposed budget or leave it off the proposed budget.