



Wednesday, April 16th, 2025
Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
of the Hood River County Transportation District

224 Wasco Loop, Board Conference Room
Hood River, OR 97031
4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Greg Pack called the Board of Directors Meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

2. Roll Call

Tiah took roll call: Greg Pack - Board Chair, Megan Ramey - Board Vice Chair, Tamra Taylor - Board Secretary/Treasurer, Meghan Larivee, Eleazar Reyes, Matt Althoff

Absent: Gisela Ayala-Echeverria

Staff: Amy Schlappi, Tiah Mayhew, Tim Ravins, Troy Webster

Public: Jovi Arellano – Oregon Department of Transportation, Emily Beckett – Merina & Co., Doug Burkhardt – Uplift Local, Tina Castanares

3. Approval of March 19th, 2025, Board of Director Meeting Minutes

Greg asked if there were any changes that the Board would like to make to the March meeting minutes. The meeting minutes were included in the Board meeting materials. No changes were requested.

Motion: Matt made a motion to approve the March 19th Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Tamra.

Approved by: Greg, Megan R., Tamra, Meghan L., Eleazar, and Matt

Opposed by: None

4. Public Comment

Tina C., a long-time Hood River resident, gave praise to CAT services for what it has become over the years. She also expressed the need for fixed route service to west side neighborhoods in Hood River. Tina has volunteered at the High School and Westside Elementary and found it difficult to access the schools without a car.

5. Quarterly Financial Report – Emily Beckett – Merina & Co.

Emily presented her review of the third quarter of this fiscal year, included in the meeting materials. One change from her presentation last quarter is the STIF funds and vehicle funds now being held in LGIP accounts instead of money market accounts, earning higher interest. Emily continued with the statement of financial position, noting the funds balance looks great and she has broken out percentages of those funds that



are restricted and unrestricted. The statement of activities was next starting with revenue figures, both state and federal revenues increased from the prior year mostly due to new vehicle reimbursements and the increased interest income mentioned earlier. Operating expenses increased from last year by about \$200k due to vehicle repairs and a new 3-year contract for improved dispatch software. Administrative expenses saw an increase in professional fees and building expenses with the improvements made to facility roofing and fire suppression. Personnel expenses represent the biggest portion of expenses at CAT, Emily included visuals to help show the differences from last year. Increases in capital outlay include the land purchased for expanded bus storage and park and ride facilities adjacent to the CAT office and the operating equipment from the two new buses purchased. Reimbursements for the land purchase have not been received yet; most is expected in the next quarter with the remainder coming in the next fiscal year. Greg had a question about the employee taxes and Emily answered that the state unemployment tax rates were reduced this year which included a refund for some withholdings from the prior year.

Accounts receivable and accounts payable are all current. The budget is on track. Anticipated expenses in the budget for capital outlay have not happened as expected but currently CAT is at 53% of the budget through 75% of the year.

Emily also mentioned improvements she has helped make the Gorge Pass sales tracking and partner distribution process.

6. Resolution and Action Items – Tiah Mayhew

a. Approval of Free City of Hood River Fares on July 4th

In previous years CAT has offered free fares on the city route for 4th of July. It helps reduce traffic congestion and promote CAT services. Last year CAT did not offer free fares on the city route but are now asking that the Board approve one of the following options: approve ongoing free fares on the 4th of July holiday, or have staff present the request to the Board every year for individual annual approval. Tiah mentioned the estimated lost revenue for the day is approximately \$100 but noted the opportunity to strengthen our partnership with the City of Hood River and manage downtown congestion. Tamra asked if there was any major difference in ridership on 4th of July from a year offering free fare compared to last year where free rides were not given out. Amy replied that if there was a difference it was very small and that she could pull up the ridership figures if needed. No change to accommodate the annual fireworks display is planned. Megan R. and Matt both noted that it is a great way to advertise, and Matt also had a follow-up question if free fares were ever offered for other annual events held in Hood River like Hops Fest? It has been done before but the companies organizing the events must be involved.

Motion: Megan R. made a motion to approve ongoing annual free fares on the Hood River city route on 4th of July. The motion was seconded by Tamra.

Approved by: Greg, Megan R., Tamra, Meghan L., Eleazar, and Matt

Opposed by: None.



7. Operations Manager Report – Amy Schlappi

a. Performance Report

Overall, March's safety score was 100 due to no harsh events and no crashes. For the month, CAT vehicles were driven 1,460 hours and 40,969 miles. Fuel costs have increased by \$0.09/gallon and totaled \$15,748.08 for a cost per mile of \$0.38.

There were two formal customer complaints; a rider called to report that a driver had been rude, questioning her ability to use the stairs. Also, a rider wanted to express that all buses should wait for each other and not leave until each route had arrived. Vehicle incidents involved a driver bumping into the mirror of another bus while in the bus garage, no damage. The CGE bus lost air from suspension while in route but aired up when shut down. The bus was deemed safe to drive back to the CAT station and then repaired. The ski/snowboard equipment rack on bus #469 fell off while the bus was operating between Mt Hood Meadows and the CAT station, no ski equipment was damaged. The fire suppression alarm started going off on the CGE bus on its way back to CAT. The bus returned, taken out of service, and the mechanics were made aware.

Customer incidents during March were a rider boarded the Hood River bus and told the driver that they had lost their pass and asked if they could board without one. The driver told them that they needed a pass or \$1. The rider continued to ask to ride for free but ultimately paid. A rider boarded the Upper Valley bus, when the driver asked which stop they were going to, the rider used profane language asking why it mattered then stated he was going to the CAT station. The driver informed the rider that this was the Upper Valley bus so the rider de-boarded. Gorge-to-Mountain driver reported that riders were consistently eating on the bus and leaving their food trash. The driver made an announcement that food was not allowed, however, if you do eat, please clean up your mess but excessive trash was still left. Two individuals were in the bathroom at the CAT station for an extended period. Staff checked on them and the individuals stated that they were cleaning the bathroom. Staff went back out and the individuals had exited but still had the bathroom key, staff asked for the key, and they became verbally aggressive. The Hood River City bus driver had finished the route and was waiting for the next driver. A rider wanted to board the bus, and the driver asked them to wait, the rider did not wait and boarded. A rider called upset to see when the Hood River City bus was coming as they had been standing out in the rain. Upon review the bus had already been to the stop as scheduled but the rider was not at the stop. The rider was able to catch the next bus. Staff received a call requesting that the CGE bus be held while they attempted to make it. They were informed that we are unable to do so and became verbally aggressive and hung up. A rider came into the CAT office upset that they had just arrived and was upset that the CGE bus had left. Staff verified that the bus had left on time and let the rider know when the next bus was. The rider wanted to file a formal complaint as they did not feel that any bus should leave until all the others had arrived. A rider was upset that her deviated ride was not at the location it should have been. The driver called dispatch and had the location updated. Staff observed a rider that was waiting for the



Link bus light a fire in the street across from CAT. The police were called, and the fire was put out without incident. A rider came into the CAT office to complain that a driver did not stop for them at the Walgreens stop. Upon review staff found that the rider was not at the bus stop. A rider that was upset feeling that the driver had not stopped for them was approaching staff at their vehicles as they arrived at work. The rider was pounding on the staff members' windows asking what we were going to do about the driver. The rider was asked to stop but unfortunately the behavior escalated, and the police were notified resulting in the rider being trespassed for 30 days. Riders on the CGE bus consistently leave food trash on the bus. The driver spoke to the riders and informed them of the no food rule and asked if they do have trash to please dispose of it.

The group then discussed the potential benefit of the different transit providers having radios connected to reduce missed connections. Megan R. then brought up the gate closures at the eastbound Multnomah Falls exit and asked if solutions had been looked at. The current work-around involves going to the next exit, turning around and entering from the westbound lanes. This option remains the safest during busy times at Multnomah Falls and extra time is built into the route to compensate for the workaround. Drivers are also trained to announce to passengers boarding toward Multnomah Falls that the gate closure may cause a slight delay. Amy suggested drafting a letter signed by the board asking for solutions, and Jovi added that personal stories work great with this type of advocacy.

b. Ridership

Overall ridership is still doing great, the Upper Valley has seen an increase in riders, up 6% since last month. We are excited to see how ridership does on the CGE this summer with our new buses now in service. Boards per hour average 5.37 across all CAT routes.

c. Employee of the Month

Rod Espe has been named CAT's Employee of the Month.

d. Gorge To Mountain & Dog Mountain Update

The seasonal Gorge To Mountain service ended strong and offered a lot of learning opportunities this year. All of which will be used to improve the service next year. The Dog Mountain Shuttle kicks off April 26th and operates on weekends only through June 15th, including Memorial Day. Route training for drivers has already begun.

8. Executive Director Report – Amy Schlappi

a. FY25-27 Biennium Funding Update

5311 funding used for operating local services may see a slight delay but less than what was originally expected. 5310 funding used for preventative maintenance and mobility management will see a longer delay in receiving the reimbursement. CAT does have a buffer for these funds, but it may effect what projects CAT can move forward with. Tamra asked if there is any risk of funds being pulled? Jovi answered that FTA has currently not put a hold on any funds. 5310 and 5311 funds are annual allocations meaning this allocation has already been through Congress and has been set aside for



agencies.

Amy also mentioned she just received word that the FLAP Grant has gone through and funds from the grant will be used toward the Gorge To Mountain service for the next two years.

b. City of Hood River Route/Upper Valley Update – Changes Fall 2025

Amy presented her plans to improve efficiency of the Hood River City route and move the Upper Valley from a deviated fixed route to a fixed route. Previous suggestions for East and West routes within Hood River are not efficient due to resources. A two directional route suggestion was deemed unsafe due to difficult left turns on the route. A new Hood River City route was presented with changes to improve efficiency, most notably the removal of stops with the parking lots of Walmart and Safeway. Other changes include a new stop, the specific location to be determined, on the west side of 22nd Street between May Street and Sherman Street. CAT staff to work with City staff on best placement. Relocation of the Aquatic Center from 18th street to May Street between Cherry court and 18th street. The bus will then travel onto 13th Street rather than 18th Street. And new stops at 13th Street and A Street, 12th Street in front of Rosauer's. CAT staff may hold on this depending on the jurisdictional transfer of 12th street. Removal of parking at the Hospital Stop (11th & May Street). CAT staff recommends leaving this stop in the current location until we can discuss more about adding a stop closer to the hospital on 12th street as part of the Heights Streetscape Project. The route is then adjusted so the bus travels down 12th street instead of Park Street. The relocation of the 8th and Portway stop to the southeast corner of 2nd Street and Portway. This will allow CAT to cut a large piece from the route and reduce the overall length of one loop. CAT is hoping to implement these changes by Sept. 2025 with temporary signage first and then permanent infrastructure installed after the NEPA process.

Upper Valley was reviewed quickly with new proposed stops for both the southbound and northbound directions. These changes are still in draft form, so changes to the plan are likely to be made. Major highlights are new stops on Tucker Rd., stops allowing access to Wyeast Middle School, and the return of service to Parkdale. CAT will work with the community in these areas to gather feedback on the changes and how we can best accommodate their needs. The route will also be a fixed route due to our new dispatch software.

c. Dispatch Implementation Update

Launch date for the new dispatch software is planned for June 30th or July 1st.

d. Legislative Transit Day Recap

Amy attended the Legislative Transit Day in Salem to advocate for additional statewide transit funds. The Oregon Transit Association is asking for an increase in state employee payroll taxes from 0.01% to 0.05%. Amy met personally with Senator Daniel Bonham and Representative Jeff Helfrich and encouraged community members to reach out to their representatives and senators, letting them know transit is important to the area.



9. Executive Session – 5:20 pm

a. ORS 192.660(2)(i) and 192.660(8) “To review and evaluate the performance of an officer, employee or staff member if the person does not request an open meeting. The reason for executive session may not be used to do a general evaluation of an agency goal, objective or operation or any directive to personnel concerning those subjects.”

b. ORS 192.660(2)(d) “To conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to carry on labor negotiations”

Motion: Megan R. made a motion to end the Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Matt.

Approved by: Greg, Megan R., Tamra, Meghan L., Eleazar, and Matt

Opposed by: None

Motion: Matt made a motion to allow Amy to pursue non-financial and financial terms within the authority that the board of the executive directors in upcoming union negotiations. The motion was seconded by Megan R.

Approved by: Greg, Megan R., Tamra, Meghan L., Eleazar, and Matt

Opposed by: None

10. Discussion Items

There were no major discussion items.

Upcoming Events

There is an upcoming Budget Committee meeting on April 23rd. Megan R. mentioned another upcoming advocacy day event and The Oregon Active Transportation Summit coming up on June 5th-7th .

11. Adjournment

Motion: Tamra made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Matt.

Approved by: Greg, Megan R., Tamra, Meghan L., Eleazar, and Matt

Opposed by: None

The meeting was adjourned.



The Hood River County Transportation District Board of Directors meeting minutes are prepared and presented in summary form. Video recordings of the meetings are on file at CAT and are part of the approved minutes. If you would like to watch the recording of the meeting, please contact Tim Ravins tim@catransit.org, or call (541) 386-4202.

Prepared by: Tim Ravins, Administrative Assistant

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Ravins", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Approved by: Tamra Taylor, Secretary-Treasurer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tamra Taylor", written in a cursive style.