



**Wednesday, January 21st, 2026
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 4:06 PM.

2. Roll Call

Tiah took roll call: Greg Pack - Board Chair, Megan Ramey - Board Vice Chair, Tamra Taylor - Board Secretary/Treasurer (arrived at 4:08), Gisela Ayala-Echeverria, Matt Althoff

Absent: Eleazar Reyes, Jim Klaas

Staff: Amy Schlappi, Tiah Mayhew, Jeff Acciaioli, Tim Ravins

Public: Emily Bechtold – Merina & Co., Charlie – Uplift Local

3. Approval of December 17th, 2025, Public Hearing & Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes

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

Motion: Matt made a motion to approve the December 17th Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Megan.

Approved by: Greg, Megan, Tamra, Gisela, and Matt

Opposed by: None

4. Public Comment

No public comment.

5. Accounting Report

a. Quarterly Financial Report - Emily Bechtold (Merina)

Emily began by presenting the Statement of Financial Position. The cash balance is \$44k less than last year due to capital purchases that have not yet been reimbursed. She then reviewed the fund balance and shared a graph comparing year-over-year data. Overall things are stable with unrestricted funds being the account that fluctuates the most.



The Statement of Activity displays total revenue for the year at just under \$1.7 million, \$57k more than last year. Emily stated that we have seen some fluctuation as federal funds have increased and state funds have decreased but overall, the difference from the prior year is only 3.5% and revenue is relatively consistent between years. Compared to the budget, the district is \$11 million short due to capital projects that are planned but not yet executed. Cost of Goods Sold for FY26 is \$314k which is \$27k less than last year. Vehicle expenses have gone up about \$25k from last year due to an increase in preventative maintenance and vehicle repair. Tiah added that a few factors have increased this. The first impact to the increase in preventative maintenance is that our mechanic now bills travel time separately. Previously the mechanic had included the travel time expense into the repair invoices, separating it allows for more accurate data when tracking vehicle repair expenses. Another reason for the increase is that the mechanic has been on-site 28 times this year compared to the 16 times during the same time last year. We have also needed to have more than one mechanic on-site at times due to the repairs needed, and to avoid service interruptions, which increases the cost of travel time. Tiah added that the increase is mainly attributed to the age and mileage of CAT's fleet. Amy stated that the replacement vehicles are having a hard time keeping up with the number of miles and service we run and that they reach their useful life very quickly. Tamra asked if vehicle repairs are more based on miles of service or time on the road. Amy replied that the useful life of a vehicle is based on miles driven or time in fleet, whichever comes first. Greg also requested to have a look at vehicle mileage tracking spreadsheets at the next board meeting.

Gross profit is about \$85k more than last year due to revenue being slightly higher and operating expenses slightly lower. There were no major changes in building expenses, office expenses were down just a bit. Professional fees are lower than budgeted; this is related to capital projects that are on hold. Personnel expenses are similar to last year with direct service wages and benefits being lower. Greg asked if the decrease was possibly related to the delay in starting the Gorge-To -Mountain Express service or is it just measured by overall hours. Amy responded that the delay is part of it, but we have hired several part-time drivers which lowers the expense. Emily discussed Capital outlay and stated that the district received two new buses, totaling \$326,000. At the end of December, the payment for the buses was issued but had yet to receive reimbursement, leading to a cash decrease compared to the prior year. The reimbursement funds were received in early January and will be reflected in the next financial report. Emily then reviewed the capital projects that are still being worked on.

Accounts receivable and accounts payable summaries were provided. Then the total comparison for budget was given as of Dec. 31st, and actual expenses for administrative and operating expenses were reviewed. Emily closed by stating that the district is in a good place.



b. Vehicle & Liability Insurance Increase – Tiah Mayhew

Tiah explained to the Board that as they were aware, we have been seeing an increase in cost of goods and services. One of the areas where this has been especially noticeable is the district's auto and liability insurance. In 2025, the district's annual premium was \$50,540. In February, we received two new vehicles (471 & 472) that were added to the policy, resulting in an additional charge of \$9,737 bringing the total in 2025 to \$60,274 for 18 vehicles. The renewal for 2026 was \$68,223 for 18 vehicles, which is a 13.2% increase over the total 2025 cost. Matt wanted to confirm that the increase is still for the same number of vehicles and if this is the expected forecast for insurance prices moving forward. Amy and Tiah confirmed both.

6. Resolutions & Action Items – Amy Schlappi

a. Budget Committee Member Application

CAT currently has one opening on the Budget Committee. Cindy Walbridge, whose term ended last year, has expressed interest in serving another term. Budget Committee Bylaws do allow a member to serve two successive terms. Staff are asking the board to discuss and vote to appoint or not appoint Cindy to the Budget Committee. Matt stated that she has been great to work with

Motion: Tamra made a motion to appoint Cindy Walbridge to the budget Committee. The motion was seconded by Matt.

Approved by: Greg, Megan, Tamra, Gisela and Matt

Opposed by: None

7. Operations Manager Report – Jeff Acciaioli

a. Performance Report

December's overall safety score still remains at 99. Fixed route on time performance is still waiting on some software fixes. Dial-A-Ride on time performance was at 98.23%. Fuel costs for the month were down about \$0.05/mile. Vehicle hours were 1,095 hours driven. Jeff gave a brief overview of customer and vehicle incidents. One vehicle incident of note occurred when the Hood River route radioed to say they had a flat tire, pulled over, and discovered all the lugs nuts were missing. There was an investigation that was inconclusive, but staff have continued to work with Les Schwab on preventative solutions. This includes biweekly visits from Les Schwab and adding lug nut markers to vehicles. Greg asked if checking the torque setting of the lug nuts could be done inhouse. Amy and Jeff feel that having a third party is a good idea when possible and gives them more opportunities to check tread on the tires. Bus 197 had the fare box pried out and stolen. It was parked in our storage lot across the street. The bus had been out of service for a while and may have had a small but unknown amount of cash in the fare box. Damage was minimal and nothing required repair.



b. Employee of the Month

Jim Appleton has been named CAT's Employee of the Month.

c. Gorge-To-Mountain Express Update

The weekend service launched in late December and has still seen decent ridership. We recently hired seven new drivers and are on track to launch full Gorge-To-Mountain Express service in February.

d. Ridership

Ridership is up 3% from last month, but down 17% from last year. That is mostly due to the slow start to the snow season, with only three days of mountain service in December. Dial-A-Ride is still up on ridership. Matt asked if the increase in Dial-A-Ride is affecting the Hood River City Route ridership, Amy replied that it shouldn't be and that staff are currently instructed to divert riders to the fixed route when possible.

8. Executive Director Report – Amy Schlappi

a. HB-3991 Update

Amy informed the Board on the most recent information regarding House Bill 3991, which was the transportation funding bill that was passed during the special legislative session this past fall. Since the passing of this bill, petitioners have submitted signatures to refer portions of House Bill 3991 to voters. As a result, most of the new bill's revenue was delayed pending a statewide vote, including the revenue that transit would have received. Additionally, on January 7th, the Governor called for lawmakers to repeal House Bill 3991. The impact to CAT is unknown, but there will be no additional Statewide Transportation Improvement Funds (STIF) that will be received in the short term, staff should know more by the February board meeting.

b. 6 Month Workplan

Currently there is no official work plan, Amy has seen the need to create a list of short and mid-term goals for staff. When creating the work plan, Amy added only tasks and items that could be more categorized as special projects and did not include ongoing operational items or annual tasks such as creating the budget. Some upcoming projects Amy mentioned are the roll-out and promotion of the Spare Rider App, which will allow riders to book their own Dial-A-Rides. The app also has a bus tracking feature that coordinates with our specific routes. The RFP for consultants for the facility site development projects is another upcoming project hoping to be released in the next couple of months. CAT staff has also been finishing implementation of dispatch and vehicle maintenance software and refining the route trainer program. Greg asked how frequent updates on these projects should be given. The group decided every other board meeting would work best.

c. Executive Director Review

Amy's intent was to inform the Board that her review process would begin soon. She is asking that once the board survey is sent out, that they complete it as she depends



on feedback from the Board to improve her skills.

d. Office Updates

Amy's wanted to inform the Board of some small improvements made around the office to reduce the clutter and tripping hazard. Staff would like to purchase some new standing desks and potentially new monitors and organizational furniture as funds allow. The expense is estimated at 6K and is in the budget. The Board generally agreed to this.

9. Discussion Items

Matt asked if anyone would be attending the upcoming SDAO conference, taking place in Seaside from February 4-7. Amy stated that Tiah will be attending and Jim might be in attendance. Tamra asked if there had been any changes with how ODOT is working with CAT in the current economic climate. Amy replied that everyone we work with at ODOT has been amazing and we always feel that they work very hard to give us the data they can based on the information they have. Tamra also mentioned the ODOT road maintenance concerns expressed prior to the funding bill and if those have subsided at all. Amy stated that there is still concern but also hasn't really received a concrete answer. Greg mentioned they've been in contact with local ODOT maintenance yards who seem to have no major staffing concerns currently.

11. Upcoming Events

ODOT compliance review is happening on-site next Tuesday and Wednesday.

12. Adjournment

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

Approved by: Greg, Megan, Tamra, Gisela and Matt

Opposed by: None

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58.

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".

Approved by: Tamra Taylor, Secretary-Treasurer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tamra Taylor".