



Wednesday, April 15th, 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 4:00 PM.

2. Roll Call

Tiah took roll call: Greg Pack - Board Chair, Megan Ramey - Board Vice Chair, Tamra Taylor - Board Secretary/Treasurer, Gisela Ayala-Echeverria, Matt Althoff, Jim Klaas

Absent: Eleazar Reyes

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

Public: Emily Bechtold – Merina & Co., Frank Thomas – Oregon Department of Transportation

Requested change to the agenda

Staff have requested the removal of agenda item 8A, Employee Questionnaire, under the Executive Director's report.

Motion: Tamra made a motion to remove agenda item 8A, Employee Questionnaire, under the Executive Director's report from the agenda. The motion was seconded by Jim.

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

Opposed by: None

3. Approval of March 18th, 2026, Regular Monthly 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: Gisela made a motion to approve the March 18th Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Tamra.

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

Opposed by: None



4. Public Comment

No public comment.

5. Quarterly Accounting Report – Emily Beckett

Emily began by presenting the Statement of Financial Position. The cash balance at the end of March was \$1.74m, which is \$372k more than this time last year. This is primarily due to capital purchases which have now been reimbursed. Emily explained that current liabilities at the end of the quarter were very consistent with the previous quarter.

She then reviewed the Statement of Activity and noted that it is very consistent year-over-year. Revenue is consistent between years, with offsetting fluctuations in revenue sources, such as \$73k decrease in State funds and a \$45k increase in both contract and federal funds. Cost of Goods budget is on track at \$520k for the first 3 quarters of FY26, which is \$169k less than last year. Operating expenses, including vehicle expenses, are higher this year, due to more repair and maintenance costs. Administrative expenses, which include audit and bookkeeping, service planning consultation, office expenses and building expenses totaled \$170k, which is \$18k less than last year.

Emily then reviewed Personnel Expenses, while there were some shifts among wages, taxes, and benefits, overall personnel costs remain very stable year-over-year. Capital outlay highlights include the District receiving three new buses this fiscal year, with a total cost of \$469k. The district received reimbursement for all these buses by the end of March. Other major capital projects the District has planned for include the CAT Transit Facility Development Program, the RFP has been released and closed on April 13th, and two additional vehicles that staff expect to be received this summer.

Emily stated that the preliminary figures for FY26 show the District is operating well under budget for the year. She explained that administrative expenses are significantly below the adopted budget, mainly due to contract costs related to capital projects. Personnel expenses are also under budget by about \$98,000. Overall, administrative spending is at 57% of budget. On the operating side, materials and services are under budget, personnel expenses are under budget, and capital outlay is substantially under budget. Overall, operating expenses for the year are significantly below budget.

Jim had a question about why the personnel expense was so under budget, Tiah and Amy replied that it is still a learning process, and that a large buffer was added but probably not necessary. When budgeting we account for retirement contributions for each eligible employee but not all of them participate. Additionally, there was a reduction in seasonal service due to the low snow this year.

6. Resolutions & Action Items – Amy Schlappi

a. Multnomah Falls Transportation Ambassador Program Contract

Staff seek Board approval of a contract with Sasquatch Shuttle to manage the Multnomah Falls Transportation Ambassador Program. Additionally, staff requests



Board direction regarding the District's long-term role as the contract manager for this program.

On March 18, 2026, CAT issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the management of the Multnomah Falls Transportation Ambassador Program. One proposal was received, submitted by Sasquatch Shuttle. Following a formal evaluation, staff recommends Sasquatch Shuttle based on their extensive qualifications and successful management of the program over the past two years. The term of the contract is one year with an option to extend it to three years (May 20, 2026 – September 6, 2028) with a not to exceed amount of \$250k. Other items to note are the 2026 proposal reflects a 27% cost increase over the previous year. Available funding may be limited though. Staff are presently negotiating contract terms and expect to reduce the scope of work (e.g., service hours or staffing levels) to align the final contract with the approved budget. Also, CAT has served as the lead contract manager for this program since 2020. This was originally intended as a temporary arrangement. Given the program is now entering its sixth year, staff recommend that CAT transition out of the contract management role upon the conclusion of this three-year period.

Greg reminded the group that no administrative fee is collected for Amy's time. Jim asked about where the funding for this program comes from. Funding for the program changes yearly, and in the past has come from CARES funding, U.S. Forest Service, ODOT and Experience Mt. Hood. Tamra asked why include the option to extend the contract for three more years. Amy replied that the intent was to give the program partners time to find a long-term solution. CAT would like to continue being a part of the solution but now that the program has been going on for 6 years, setting a timeline for managing the program was the best option. Matt asked for scenarios if CAT were to step down from managing the program sooner than 3 years. Amy explained that the time-use permit checkpoint would most likely be unstaffed. There was discussion regarding the contract extension after the first year and how the permit checker program helps with congestion during the busy summer months and in turn helps our route stay on time and improves safety. The group discussed the topic further coming to the consensus that staff should bring the contract extension before the board each year for discussion.

Motion: Tamra made a motion to approve the Sasquatch Shuttle contract for three years, with board review before each extension and to cease management of the program after this contract concludes. The motion was seconded by Gisela.

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

Opposed by: None

b. Accountant Contract

Staff released a request for quotes (RFQ) for an outside accountant on March 5, 2026, as our current contract ends on June 30, 2026. Staff obtained three price quotations. After evaluating the quotes staff decided to move forward with Merina & Co. Staff selected their proposal because they have the qualifications needed, relevant experience, and met cost criteria. Tiah then gave some details on the contact specifics, all included in the meeting materials. Staff are asking Board Members to review and approve the Merina &



Co. contract.

Motion: Megan made a motion to approve the outside accountant contract for Merina & Co. The motion was seconded by Matt.

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

Opposed by: None

c. Bus Replacement Grant Application

ODOT recently released a funding opportunity notice for the Competitive Transit Grant Phase 1 application which is funded through the Federal Transit Administration's Section 5339(a) Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities. Phase 1 will award \$3.5 million in federal funding for vehicle replacement, right-sizing, and expansion projects. Staff have submitted the initial application for the purchase of six replacement vehicles essential to maintaining current service levels and meeting demand. These vehicles will replace one van, one Electric Transit Van, and four cutaways. As our services have matured and ridership has increased, larger vehicles are now essential to meet increased demand. While our historical reliance on 12-18 passenger cutaways served us well, current service levels require higher-capacity vehicles to accommodate our expanding passenger base. The final grant application is due to ODOT on May 29th. Tiah provided details on the grant allocation and match funds, all included in the meeting materials. Staff are asking Board Members to review and approve staff to submit the final application.

Greg asked when we would be notified if the grant was approved, Tiah thinks it would be sometime in July of this year. Tamra asked what other agencies would be applying for these funds, are we competing with larger districts? Tiah has interpreted the grant documents to say that there is a focus on rural transit for these grant funds. Matt also had some questions about the 5339(a) grant, Amy used the opportunity to introduce Frank Thomas, from ODOT, who offered clarification. Section 5339A is a federal transit administration fund that is for bus and bus facilities, it is not urban or rural specific. Amy added one last detail, that we can phase when we actually order and get those vehicles delivered.

Motion: Tamra made a motion to approve the Bus Replacement Grant Application. The motion was seconded by Megan.

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

Opposed by: None

d. CiderFest Shuttle

Staff has met with CiderFest organizers and received additional information since the last Board Meeting. Staff is asking Board Members to review the CiderFest proposal and approve staff to implement the CiderFest shuttle. At the March 15th Board meeting staff informed the Board that Visit Hood River and the organizers of CiderFest had contacted staff to request shuttle service support for CiderFest 2026. Due to a change in location, the event will be held at the Western Antique Airplane & Automobile Museum



(WAAM), where weekend transit service does not operate. ODOT confirmed with Charter rules and determined this service fits the provisions allowed. Amy gave details on the charter rules and which exceptions apply. Since last month's meeting, staff has confirmed the event date will be May 2nd from 11am-6pm. A bus for up to eighteen passengers will run a route open to the public 10 times throughout the event, the cost for this is estimated at \$980. Shuttle tickets will be \$5 each way (kids under 10 are free). Presale tickets may be offered to estimate ridership demand. Any remaining cost difference will be covered by the CiderFest organizers. The Gorge Transit Pass will NOT be a valid fare for the shuttle. Ridership will be tracked. The group discussed the potential route for the event shuttle.

Motion: Megan made a motion to approve the CiderFest shuttle. The motion was seconded by Tamra.

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

Opposed by: None

Amy added that after the route map and schedule are finalized, marketing material would be created and shared with Visit Hood River and the city to help market the service.

7. Operations Manager Report – Jeff Acciaioli

a. Performance Report

March's overall safety score is still at 99, there were two harsh events. Speeding is at 0.3%. On time performance for fixed route service improved slightly, Dial-A-Ride on time performance was down just a bit. Vehicle hours were 1,371 hours driven and 46,469 miles. CAT had two formal customer complaints, one vehicle incident and ten customer incidents.

b. Employee of the Month

Gene Jones has been named CAT's Employee of the Month.

c. Ridership

Ridership has been up since last month, but down from the previous year, mostly due to the low numbers on the Gorge-to-Mountain Express and the low snow this year on the mountain. Dial-A-Ride had the second highest numbers for the year.

d. Seasonal Service Update

Gorge-To-Mountain Express service has ended for the season. The Dog Mountain shuttle began a week earlier than the previous year. Jeff then gave some details on the Gorge-To-Mountain Express ridership, mostly noting the drop in hours of service due to the late start of the season. The Columbia Gorge Express now has nine trips per day to Portland, up from the usual seven trips a day. The increased frequency will continue through the summer.



8. Executive Director Report – Amy Schlappi

a. Employee Questionnaire

Removed from the agenda.

b. FY 2023 Section 5339(b) Discretionary Grant Update

Amy reviewed the fiscal year 2023 section 5339B discretionary grant update. The District was awarded about \$6.4 million to redevelop the current park and ride into a bus barn and maintenance facility. The grant also provided electric vehicles and electric vehicle infrastructure, this contract has not been executed yet. Staff recently received guidance from FTA to scope change request to remove the electric vehicles and electric infrastructure. If approved the funds would be redirected towards the facility design, construction activities and purchase of diesel and gasoline transit vehicles. This would also reduce the amount of a loan. Amy will update the board on the status of the scope change request at the next board meeting.

9. Executive Session

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.”

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

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

Opposed by: None

10. Discussion Items

Matt brought up board member attendance.

11. Upcoming Events

The first Budget Committee meeting for FY27 will be on April 22nd at 5PM.

12. Adjournment

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

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

Opposed by: None

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30.

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 large, sweeping flourish above the name.

Approved by: Tamra Taylor, Secretary-Treasurer

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