

**COLUMBIA COUNTY CITIZEN TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND
STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT FUND COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Meeting Date: January 19, 2021

Time: 4:00 P.M.

Place: Columbia County Transit, St. Helens, OR

Present: Bill Eagle; Dena Chesney; Blanche Katz; Marty Rowe; Charlotte Hart

Absent: Scott Burge Claudia Eagle;

Staff: John Dreeszen, Transit Director

Guests: Kathy Kleczek; Alta Lynch; Claire Catt; “Not Enough Riders”; Alex Constantin

Call to Order (CCRTAC): Chair B. Eagle called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. after a brief delay due to technical issues with the virtual aspect of the meeting.

Public Comments: Kathy Kleczek offered some encouraging comments on the New Year to the committee. Chair B. Eagle stated guests will have the opportunity to speak at the end of the meeting in case of guests having technical issues with the “mute” button.

Approval of November 17, 2020 minutes: Committee approved the November 17, 2020 minutes unanimously.

Budget Update: John Dreeszen began by stating the budget process for the upcoming biennium was just beginning. Mr. Dreeszen noted the projected income for the current fiscal year has fallen sharply due to COVID-19 constraints. Next, Mr. Dreeszen reminded the committee of the North County connection (line 5) grant unexpectedly requiring a 50% match thereby depleting STIF funds. Mr. Dreeszen informed the committee this combination has caused significantly reduced funds for services in the upcoming biennium, likely resulting in significant cuts to the system in the next biennium. Mr. Dreeszen followed by giving context in to the current fiscal year budget process that designated the current fiscal year as a transitional year, maintaining current services for the purpose of repaying the loan from the General Fund. Mr. Dreeszen then gave a breakdown of all the services currently being funded through STIF dollars – lines 3 and 6 are fully funded through STIF, and line 5 is approximately 50% funded through STIF. There was some clarification of whether or not money was “lost” due to not having grant matching dollars.

STIF BUSINESS

Priorities for use of 2022-23 funds: Mr. Dreeszen proposed to the committee that a portion of the STIF money be used for match for the federal 5311 grant. The 5311 grant is the largest grant and is flexible in its designated use. Historically it has been used for multiple route services including line 1 commuter service, line 2 service, and line 3 flex service. Mr. Dreeszen also

proposed that a portion of the STIF be used to match the federal 5310 grant. Mr. Dreeszen explained the 5310 grant has a lower match rate than many other grants. Additionally, Mr. Dreeszen proposed the STIF be used as the match for the new vehicles currently on order. Finally, Mr. Dreeszen proposed that the remainder of the STIF be used for “contingency reserve” in case of a decline in revenue or increase in expenses. Mr. Dreeszen made clear to the committee that using the STIF as proposed would result in not having funding to operate lines 3, 5, and 6. Committee member Rowe moved to accept Mr. Dreeszen’s proposals and Committee member Hart seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Additional Public Comment: Chair B. Eagle provided additional time for public comment. Claire Catt stated she joined the meeting as a representative of United Way to learn more about the needs and options to the community.

Committee Round Table: Committee member Rowe suggested approaching the commissioners to secure funding for a marketing package for the system. Committee member Katz suggested planning for changes should start as soon as possible. Committee member Hart expressed happiness that the system is still running. Committee member Chesney noted her phone number was incorrect on the contact list. Chair B. Eagle expressed optimism that the system will improve as the COVID-19 pandemic clears up and more industry moves in to Columbia County. Mr. Dreeszen thanked the committee for their support and noted the challenges have not been easy to resolve.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 5:12 p.m.