



**Sunset Empire Transportation District
Board of Commissioners
December 9, 2021
Zoom Board Meeting Minutes (corrected)**

1. CALL TO ORDER – Vice Chair Tracy MacDonald called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.
2. ROLL CALL: Present: Vice Chair Tracy MacDonald, Secretary/Treasurer Diana Nino, Commissioner Pamela Alegria, Commissioner Charles Withers, Commissioner Rebecca Read, Commissioner Boothe-Schmidt attended by phone due to technical difficulties and Commissioner Guillermo Romero was excused.

Staff: Executive Director Jeff Hazen, Chief Operating Officer Paul Lewicki, Deputy Operations Officer Jennifer Geisler, Financial Officer Kelly Smith, Executive Assistant Mary Parker, Transportation Options Specialist Kathy Kleczek, Human Resources Manager Sue Farmer, Mobility Manager Jason Jones

3. CHANGES TO AGENDA- Executive Director Hazen requested adding legal counsel change under New Business.
4. PUBLIC COMMENT (3 minutes)- Arla Miller made comment that on behalf of herself and the ODOT Public Transportation Division to wish the Board, staff, drivers, and any riders listening, safe and Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year.

5. APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 2021, BOARD MEETING MINUTES-
 Commissioner Alegria moved to approve the October 2021 Meeting Minutes
 Commissioner Reed seconded the motion
 Discussion- Commissioner Read asked if Northwest Works was a part of Work Source Oregon. Executive Director Hazen said they are part of the Work Force Investment Board, and he would be explaining that in his presentation later in the meeting.

Roll Call Vote:

Name	Boothe-Schmidt	MacDonald	Nino	Alegria	Withers	Read	Romero	
Aye	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Nay							excused	0

6-Aye
 0-Nay
 1-Excused
 Motion passed.

6. FINANCIAL EXCEPTIONS AND INFORMATION REPORTS OCTOBER 2021- Financial Officer Kelly Smith asked if there were any questions. There were several questions that were due to the accounts conversion, the auditor recommendations and general account clarification. There were no corrections or changes made to the Financial Report.

Commissioner Read moved to accept the October 2021 financial reports as presented
 Commissioner Boothe-Schmidt seconded the motion.
 Discussion- None

Roll Call Vote:

Name	Boothe-Schmidt	MacDonald	Nino	Alegria	Withers	Read	Romero	
Aye	x	x	x	x	x	x		6
Nay							excused	0

6-Aye

0-Nay
1-Excused
Motion passed.

8. REPORTS FROM CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

- a. Commissioner MacDonald- No Report
- b. Commissioner Alegria- Wished everyone a Happy Holiday.
- c. Commissioner Withers- Reported that he wanted to thank our district for participating in the Rosa Parks commemoration day. Commissioner Withers said he grew up in the rural south with the Jim Crow laws and the procedure was to go to the front of the bus pay your fare, get off and then enter through the back doors. He said it's not as if this is hypothetical or this sort of thing did not exist. I lived that until 1963 or 1964. Commissioner Withers said Rosa Parks was a brave woman, but she was one of many Rosa Parks who did that brave move to get that done. Commissioner Withers said he wanted to thank Jeff and staff for participating in what is a nationwide event and thank you from someone who lived the experience.
- d. Commissioner Nino- Reported that she had been recommended to participate in the ODOT video by the outreach manager of the North Coast Land Conservancy. The video interview was done at the Astoria Transit Center conference room, and she said it was nice to be there again. Commissioner Nino also said there was a lot of material filmed that will be used to help get the public engaged and it was a pleasure and honor to speak on behalf of our and other rural communities considering that she has not been a commissioner for that long. Commissioner Nino said they really liked the perspective that she was a rider when she first came to Oregon. Commissioner Nino thanked everyone for their congratulations. She also thanked everyone including staff for what they do and wished everyone Happy Holidays.
- e. Commissioner Reed-Reported that she is excited at all the things we are working on right now with the Transportation Plan and the anticipated Federal Funding which will boost the efforts of what we are already doing here. Commissioner Reed gave a big thank you to all that make the wheels turn and she is very proud to be part of this organization and looking forward to a new year of working together. Commissioner Read wished everyone Happy Holidays!
- f. Commissioner Boothe-Schmidt- Reported that she had watched the video from ODOT that Commissioner Nino was in, and it was great and wished everyone Happy Holidays.

9. CONTINUED BUSINESS- None

10. NEW BUSINESS

- a. SPECIAL DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION OF OREGON (SDAO) CONFERENCE- Executive Director Hazen reported that the SDAO Conference is being held live in Eugene February 10th thru the 13th. Hazen said this is a great opportunity and I am thrilled that the entire Board is going to attend. Hazen explained that we need to individually sign up for the workshops or trainings we plan on attending. Hazen asked that each Board member tell Executive Assistant Mary Parker their choices. Mary will register the Board and other staff attending will register themselves. Commissioner Read suggested that we try to make sure that we have at least one person covering each of the topics. Commissioner Read said she has her schedule picked out but would be willing to jump onto another workshop if needed. Executive Director Hazen reminded everyone that just because you are signed up for a workshop, it does not mean you are locked in except for the trainings on the first day which we individually pay for. If you are attending a workshop and it is not what you expected you can move to a different one.
SDAO DELEGATE- Executive Director Hazen explained that the Board needs to elect someone who will represent SETD as a voting delegate at both the At Large Caucus meeting and the SDAO Annual Business Meeting. Hazen said that Board members can attend the Caucus and he encouraged them to do so. Commissioner Withers nominated Commissioner Diana Nino to be SETD's voting delegate. Commissioner Nino accepted the nomination.
Executive Director Hazen said that we will be taking a bus down to Eugene and back for the conference. He asked if anyone is planning to take their own transportation to let him know.
Executive Director Hazen encouraged everyone to attend the banquet the final night because he has seen the entertainment before and they are good.

- b. RETURNING CITIZEN PROGRAM-Executive Director Hazen presented a power point on the Returning Citizen Program. Hazen explained that the catalyst for this program started back in early August when Julia Castillo the Executive Director of Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency (HIRTA) wrote a blog post that the Community Transit Association of America (CTAA) sent out on August 10th. Hazen said he would have never thought of the idea she had in that blog. He emailed Julia that evening and started developing a relationship with her and let her know how excited he was and how much she had inspired him to set something up in Oregon. Hazen said his vision is a statewide program to get returning citizens that have been incarcerated and are coming up on their release date to be trained and obtain their CDL to be a transit operator prior to their release. The goal being for them to have a potential future in front of them when they step out of prison and return to the communities that they were from. Hazen said in the beginning the first thing he did was reach out to the Division Administrator for Public Transportation at ODOT and asked if she had any contacts with the Department of Corrections. She asked one of the Assistant Directors at ODOT, and that person did have a contact. Hazen said he reached out to that person and asked who the right person would be for him to talk to. They put him in contact with an Assistant Director at the Department of Corrections, who was very interested in the program and when DMV heard about the program they were also interested. Hazen said this program will be a partnership between the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Department of Corrections. Hazen explained the benefits of the program and how public transportation will be part of the solution in reducing recidivism and at the same time benefit from tapping into potential employees to fill positions on the ever-declining driver workforce. Hazen discussed how doing background checks can eliminate an applicant before they are interviewed and how he wants to change that approach and spend time meeting and interviewing applicants. Hazen said that we will be working with community leaders and other programs that will partner with us in developing this program locally. Hazen also said that hiring anyone is a risk but there will be a process in place that will screen those going into the program and employers will have their own screening process as well. Executive Director Hazen and Human Resource Manager, Sue Farmer have already met with Clatsop Community Corrections who are on board with the program. They will refer clients that they think would succeed in the program. Hazen said 3 teams were assembled that had 2 meetings and a pilot program using transit funds is being set up with Baker Technical Institute (BTI) in Baker Oregon. BTI is set up with simulators and have experience in doing heavy equipment operation trainings with the Oregon Youth Authority. Also, the Department of Correction is going to allow people in this program to be outside the prison for behind the wheel training and possibly to take their written test at the DMV. They may also be able to take their driving test with a third-party certifier which could allow someone to leave prison with their CDL in hand and take it back to the community they were adjudicated from. Because of the agencies working together and the progress that has been made, Hazen said that training should begin by the end of January. The first program will probably start at the Powder River facility near Baker and then Coffee Creek which is a women's prison. Commissioner Read thanked Executive Director Hazen for his work with this program. Commissioner Read said she has a background in advocacy for criminal justice and a place at the table for criminal justice reform and it will be very interesting to see how the players plow through the red tape and get going on this. Corrections has the best of intentions, but it is a very slow-moving organization. This program could be a way for us to be a united voice for legislative issues that will contribute to the benefit of this. Commissioner Reed also said recidivism is not about recurring criminal violations, it is on the technical things with lack of opportunity to get jobs which includes parole and probation fees, logistics and childcare. Commissioner Read added that this is a big story with a lot of moving parts, but I would be so excited to see the success of this because it would move us all forward nationwide and maybe it's the transportation industry that is going to crack the code and she would love to see it. Commissioner Nino asked who requires blanket bans when doing background checks. Hazen said that they are used for safety sensitive positions which include drivers, and the DMV has control of what offenses eliminate someone from having or their losing their CDL. Commissioner Nino said it is good that it goes through the DMV because it makes it easier. Commissioner Nino also asked if there was consideration of having public relations and a strategy to communicate the program to the public so that there is not any bad publicity. Hazen said we do want to be ahead of that which is why I started with Ethan from the Daily Astorian today. Both ODOT and the Department of Corrections have public relations departments, and we will soon be pulling them in to help us get the message out on a very positive note. Commissioner Withers commented that the public relations will help the formerly incarcerated who may have been out 5 years or

so know that this is an option, that wasn't an option before now. Commissioner Withers also said you cannot blame someone all their life for doing something dumb, but it is easy to do something when your young and dumb and have it held against you forever. We are a nation of second chances, what happened to that? Commissioner Withers added that sometimes formally incarcerated get stereotyped, so I am glad we are trying to get around that. Commissioner Withers said he likes the element of having a Clatsop County Parole and Probation group filter people to us because they know better who might be qualified. Commissioner Withers said that we should impress upon the drivers that we are giving them a second chance and we won't disclose their background to anyone, but we are not going to forget as a manager that they had a robbery 10 years ago and that we expect them to respect the fact that we gave them this opportunity. Lastly Commissioner Withers said he admires the district's moving ahead on this and he hopes we can get this into place and moving quicker. Commissioner MacDonald said that having 2 adopted sons that have done what Commissioner Withers just talked about going joy riding in cars. It does add to the recidivism, and it is really hard when they come out and they don't have any place to go, and it just makes the rest of their life that much more uninteresting. Hazen said he is excited and thankful that the Board is supportive of this and Oregon's going to be the pioneer of this. Hazen said he does not take credit for this but gives all the credit to Julia back in Iowa. She wrote that blog, but I am running with it.

- c. DISTRICT LEGAL COUNSEL CHANGE- Executive Director Hazen presented a letter received by Heather Reynolds who has been the district's legal counsel for several years. Heather will be joining the law firm of Haglund Kelley, LLP on January 1st and is wanting to work less so she is requesting we transfer primary responsibility of the district's work to Joshua Stellman who is the Astoria resident partner at Haglund Kelley LLP. Heather said she will be available for ongoing issues and advice on historical background on any future matter that arises. Executive Director Hazen reviewed Josh's resume that was included with the letter. Chair Boothe-Schmidt said she would like to meet with Josh and get to know him a little bit before approving. Commissioner Read said she would also like to meet with Josh. Executive Director Hazen said he will contact Josh and ask if he can attend the January Board Meeting.

11. CORRESPONDENCE- Executive Director Hazen said we have received a letter from NW Community Alliance saying due to staffing issues as of January 1st they will no longer be providing our cleaning services. Staff is currently looking for another janitorial firm.

12. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT- Executive Director Hazen reviewed his report.

13. LEADERSHIP TEAM REPORTS- Review of Team monthly reports and open discussion with Board.

14. OTHER ITEMS- None

Meeting was adjourned 11:20 AM

Mary Parker, Recording Secretary

Secretary/Treasurer _____
Diana Nino

Date _____