

The Loop - Morrow County Public Transit

Advisory Committee Minutes

July 19, 2022, at 2:00 pm

Boardman City Hall • 200 City Center Circle • Boardman, OR 97818

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Roll Call

a. Call to Order at 2:05

b. Aaron Palmquist: Welcome All

c. Roll Call

- Aaron Palmquist: City of Irrigon - Chair
- Sheryll Bates: Heppner
- George Nairns: Planning Department
- Debbie Radie: Boardman Foods – Vice Chair
- Katie Imes: Transit Manager
- Heidi Turrell: Dispatcher
- Matt Hughart: Kittleson & Associates
- Karen Pettigrew: City of Boardman
- Linda Skendzel: Vet Services

2. Public Comment

a. No Public Comment

3. Approve Minutes

a. April 19th, 2022

b. May 18th, 2022

- **Motion:** To approve the minutes of April 19, 2022, and May 18, 2022, as presented.
- **Motion By:** Sheryll Bates, Motion 2nd by Karen Pettigrew. Motion carries at 2:07

4. Kittelson and Associates – CTP Update Review

CPT Update by Matt Hughart

Aaron: Should we put the date when certain services ended?

Matt: For the sake of this presentation they are not included, but all of the details are in the main document.

Debbie: I have heard from community leaders they don't want to encourage bus/greyhound stations. Have you heard about that? Is this something we are charged with?

Aaron: I have heard about it. Though for this document we include it as this is a planning document, not an execution document correct?

Matt: This document is for planning for the future.

Debbie: The purpose of this committee now, is for all types of transportation. Are we just focusing on The Loop and transportation from local connectors, or are we now in charge of all types of transportation?

Katie: Morrow County receives several revenue streams, we are encouraged to look at the needs and the gaps and where we want to put the revenue. As far as private providers coming into the county, we don't have any control over it, but we can support it. We can support access to private transit providers, but we don't have any sway.

Debbie: Let's say Greyhound, it is our concern to reach out to these companies and make them a nice bus stop, is this our responsibility?

Aaron: We would encourage and work with Transportation initiatives that are going to improve services for people of disabilities, ethnicities, etc. It doesn't mean we are going to go out and do it.

Debbie: Karen, if a company came to the city of Boardman, and say wanted to make a large bus depot, who would they have to go to?

Karen: They would have to come to the city of Boardman for planning services, permits, etc.

Aaron: Do we have an UBER or something similar in our CTP?

Debbie: Is that our responsibility?

Aaron: For this plan it is.

Debbie: This document is going over all the transportation options, are we going to do all of these?

Aaron: This is just a planning document and an overview of what is out there. This is not a budget or anything. This is giving us options. Is there a need for this service?

Debbie: Are we going out for grants to improve... Let's say the Airport or things of that nature.

Katie: No, not at all. That would be public works. This is just an overview of transportation services in the county.

Matt: One way to wrap this discussion up, which is good for clarifications, is that the key term here is Coordinated. Morrow County is relatively small, but if you reach out to coordinate who is there with services already that we can work and connect with?

Aaron: We don't see a lot of items that are difficult items to implement.

Debbie: The question I have, is how will these stops be maintained. will there be bathrooms and trash cans? I think that will be equally important to the success of this.

Matt: That will require both internal and inter-agency coordination. Establishing regular coordination meetings, conducting feedback sessions, and coordinating with the public and private agencies.

Katie: A good example is we have some Veteran Affairs funding that we use in conjunction with some STF funding and both of those programs support multiple population groups. We do have to keep records and reporting separated from that program.

Aaron: Is there a way to put the funding source? Like with Connect Oregon? The city of Boardman with bus stops and businesses.

Aaron: I think we need to update the timelines. A more realistic timeline, broader, that is putting expectations that are not realistic at all.

Katie: But the thing we are facing right now is the buses. I mean if the buses we here today, we would be more than 50% into getting started. With COVID and everything shutting down, the time has increased.

Aaron: the step program with ODOT that's five years out. I think we need to have broader timelines because when you're going to go for some step or even connect Oregon, that's a five-year cycle before you even get into that financial budget, procurement, and authorization with ODOT.

Matt: So that is the meat of the current draft. The next step is to take the feedback I have heard in the presentation today, refine it, and then we will present the final plan to everyone at the Board of Commissioners sometime in the next month and a half, assuming everything goes according to the current schedule.

Debbie: One more question, is there a timeline for this? Is there something pushing you or us to make sure this is done and approved by a certain time?

Matt: There is a contractual element, but I don't think there is a fiscal year timeframe.

Katie: We have a timeline with Kittleson, and it is on the agenda next month. And then with the state of Oregon, we are required to update this every 3 to 5 years and we are past the five years now.

Aaron: Also there is a grant requirement to get this updated to move on to the next step right?

Katie: Yes, we are getting ready to redo our state plan, so this all works together. The sooner this gets updated the better.

Debbie: Do the three county commissioners move to approve this, or is there a county planning? Who has to approve this?

Katie: The commissioners have to approve it.

Debbie: Are we ready to answer any questions they have?

Katie: We are ready to implement the Boardman Circular and the Hermiston Connector. We have done a lot of planning work surrounding these different projects. I feel confident presenting this to the commissioners.

5. Update - Transportation Coordinator, Katie Imes

a. Ridership/Drivers

We are continuing to see an increase in our ridership. Also an increase in non-ambulatory riders. Also an increase in denials, no drivers, or vehicles available.

Aaron: This is only dial-a-ride, will these numbers continue to be tracked separately?

Katie: Yes, both fixed route and dial a ride with being tracked separately.

Katie: Kayak will be responsible for recording their data for the Hermiston Connector.

Debbie: This public transportation is going to need lots of marketing, can't just put a sign somewhere and expect everyone to know about the services. I am not sure what the budget is for this, but I think it is very important for us.

George: I agree, people are so used to driving that they think they will be losing something, so we need to put a positive spin on it. I think that will be the hardest part. Even when we start doing transportation in South county, commuting is part of the culture and everyone is so used to driving everywhere. We need to make sure we are spinning it as a positive so they will see the benefit.

Aaron: Could you make a note on how it would impact the fixed route if people start jumping off this active service? We don't want to lose that, I think it could impact us.

b. Budget

216 STF Budget:

We do have revenue coming, it hasn't all come in yet.

Aaron: Didn't we get any STF funding last year?

Katie: Yes, but ODOT is behind. This budget is not accurate.

225:

Katie: This account is not very active. This is our new vehicle fund.

Category E?: Only bus we have completed transaction, this bus is on its way. This bus is for the Heppner/Boardman bus, and will not be in service for a while.

Aaron: Can we use it somewhere else?

Katie: We could, it's not what is called out for.

Katie: Category D requires CDL though.

Karen: The future expense, that is used for when something like the buses costs more than expected correct?

Katie: That is exactly what it is for.

George: can we use that bus for something else? Doesn't ODOT count the years not the miles for the useful life?

Katie: ODOT counts the mileage in the useful life of a vehicle.

504:

Katie: These are all federal funds. The Vet grant fund was completed last month.

Katie: the 5311 grant is a big dollar grant and we haven't tapped into that because that is for personnel and also to purchase the dispatch software. You see a lot of activity that you see here in the materials and services because of CARES dollars.

George: Question on the Fuel, did we accommodate the increase in the budget?

Katie: Yes we increased it by 30%

Aaron: There is a tax exemption for fuel tax as you are a government organization. You should talk to Sandy at public works. You should explore that as you are tax-exempt.

Debbie: I have a couple of questions. What is the bus shed rent?

Katie: That is Stoke's Landing bus shed. This is a lease agreement.

Debbie: Going forward, we are building a bus shed, we wouldn't be paying bus shed rent in the future. Another question is about volunteer drivers, are there still volunteer drivers? Am I still a volunteer driver?

Katie: Yes, but you are inactive, we do have positions open.

Debbie: Are there still volunteers? Can I still volunteer?

Katie: We do not have any volunteers, but you and Brenda P have been inactive, so we would have to retrain you.

Debbie: So is that \$5,000 in volunteer going away then?

Katie: I don't know for sure, I have to look at the new budget.

Debbie: Is the COVID situation, do we have everything? Are we prepared for COVID if we have to do mitigation?

Katie: That is all based on the rider, The Loop we are doing everything we can do to protect the rider, but no more masks, the barriers are down. The riders can sit in the front seat now. But masks are always available and we sanitize after every ride.

Debbie: What did we do when we shut down?

Katie: We never shut down the services. The vehicles were always running. Our numbers did drop dramatically.

George: Dr. Offices shut down or were doing zoom calls so that didn't help the numbers. It was the choice of riders, not the mandates.

Katie: The commissioners never shut the service down.

- c. 5310 Discretionary Grant Application – **AWARDED \$38,752**
Preventative Maintenance

- d. 5339 Discretionary Facilities Grant Application **AWARDED \$200,000**
Capital and it should be \$250,000.

Katie: This is for phase 2 of our transit facility project, and this is specifically for project administration.

- e. 5339 Discretionary Vehicle Replacement Grant Application **AWARDED \$53,838**

Katie: This is for an ADA van.

Aaron: Where would this vehicle go?

Katie: That is to be determined, but most likely into Irrigon as it has the highest non-ambulatory riders.

Aaron: But they could use this somewhere else?

Katie: Yes for use, Boardman could use it.

Aaron: Where are we parking all of these vehicles?

Katie: The old vehicles get parked outside.

Debbie: One more thing, we are talking about land or a place to build a barn and stuff, There is some land available next to the new fire station in Boardman.

Katie: This is a good time to update the committee on where we are on land. We are doing a feasibility study. There are three sites we have looked at. Site B, we are currently in negotiations on right now, it is on Olsen and Columbia, and we are super close to closing on this property.

- f. Covid Relief Application Review ***Pending \$191,048***

- g. Projects: Transit Facility – Planning Phase, CTP Update, GOHBI/MOU Update, Heppner Office moved to Lexington Public Works, Transit Operations Supervisor Position, STIF Plan Training.

Working with the city of Boardman to finish the sidewalk project along that area. All of our engineers are involved in the process.

GOBHI Update: Cost Analysis of our services versus what we are charging and we went back to them with a contract increase from \$25 one way to \$70 one way.

Office Update: We have moved our office to the Public Works building, so now we have enough space to hire another position. Everything went smoothly. We hope to hire another dispatcher and an Operations Supervisor, and that position will be released in early fall.

STIF Plan Training: ODOT, I will have more information at the next meeting.

6. Other Business

- a. MCPT Committee Membership

1. Six active members, four vacancies

2. Two active alternates, and seven alternate vacancies

Katie: Debbie I have emailed all of the people you recommend and I haven't heard back from anyone of them.

Debbie: I would recommend, is to find a buddy, and bringing them with you to the next meeting. Is that something that we can do?

George: I am wondering if we could even ask the businesses. Get them to realize that we are going to be getting their employees to work. That we need some volunteers.

Karen: Unless you are assigned by your job or an actual user, It has been hard to find a random volunteer for this committee, unless you are really into transportation.

Sheryll?: Maybe create a letter of talking points for use when we are talking to community leaders.

Adjourn

- Meeting Adjourned at 3:48

Next Meeting:

October 18th, 2022 Location: Lexington Public Works Conference Room