

**Rogue Valley Transportation District
The Special Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting
Zoom Video Conference, December 15, 2021 @ 3:00 pm**

Attended:

George Adams
Sue Slack
Julie Ormand
Louise Shawkat
Stan Littrell

Staff:

Tim Fountain, Accessible Transportation Manager
Paige West, Senior Planner
Stacy Chaplin, Recording Secretary

Absent:

Mike Flores
Lynette Kersey
Brooke Anderson-Bonner

Guests:

None

1. Welcome

Meeting called to order at 3:01 pm.

2. Roll Call

Roll Call conducted; 5 members were in attendance.

3. Review and Approve October 20, 2021, Minutes

Louise Shawkat Motioned and Sue Slack 2nd, All in favor, motion passed.

4. RVTD COVID-19 Update

Staff meets once a week, no significant changes. Julie asked if true that Ashland route was cancel. Tim lost 3 staff, doing training for 1 now. Cut the Ashland Connector. Last day on the 11th. Drivers not wanting to test, or they are wanting to work from home. Ashland 1x suspended temporarily.

Paige stated not going to be doing a service increase as planned. Continue to hire, going to be difficult until spring of next year. Have been able to sustain the service, Route 1x suspended for 3 weeks and was planned due to SOU break schedule. Route 10 still available. Following safety guidelines. Masks required through March of 2022. RVTD mostly back in the office. Lost some Admin staff but continuing as best we can with bare bones staff.

Have submitted application for FTA competitive nationwide grant, part of current transportation Bill called FAST Act to build a new transportation building. Its past its useful life. We shouldn't spend any more money on the building. If we get the grant building would be built by end of 2023. It would free up space and then we can look at expanding our fleet and the possibility of going electric.

5. Valley Lift COVID-19 Update

Still wiping down, requiring masks, sanitizing between clients.

Louise asked why connector stopped. Tim stated staffing. Hoping to start up the service again once we have drivers.

Julie asked if we are doing ok for Valley Lift drivers? Tim stated just enough drivers to get by. New driver started on Monday. George asked, how many drivers are you needing? Tim thinks 4-5. With the connector gone, they are able to breath.

George asked, did it come to a complete stop? Tim stated yes and he suspects it will be a while before it starts back up again.

6. Ridership Update

Tim shared his screen. Showed data for Valley Lift. Reported is ridership, miles, trips, and cost. From 2014 to present, then showed just last year. Beginning of 2020. It's improving now, gradually. George stated the green line is hard to see. Usually, December is a little slower. George asked why the dip in April 2020? Tim stated that's when covid really hit. Not sure what new variant will do to ridership. George asked if this preparing for what might be coming up in the future months. Not really relying on this data to forecast. We use this data to see the impact that covid had, changes in fires etc. are reflected. George pointed out Female riders are higher than male riders. Louise asked about Novus on the vehicles. Tim stated no, the rangers on the vehicles, Novus is the scheduling & reporting software. We use query to view the reporting. If there is a discrepancy, then it will alert them and. Louise stated Novus tracks miles on electric cars for the taxes.

George asked do you foresee the vans converting over to battery powered vehicles. Tim stated 2 months ago had a discussion about the technology, but we need a farther mileage range. We have hybrid vans. Waiting for better technology.

Stan stated when on RVTB board, at that time, they were having discussions about electrical vehicles for buses and vans. He thinks the time is coming. Louise is curious about the electric buses in Josephine County. Buses more structured schedule and able to predict where they are for charging purposes vs. the Paratransit service.

7. Suggestions from Brooke & Tim's Meeting

Tim had long convo with Brooke. Talked about things she is concerned about. Concerned about the 5 min wait time. Thinks it should be longer. Tim we can add more time to load or unload for those clients who are slower but after the 5 min have to move on to stay on time for others.

Also doesn't like the No Show letter and feels it should be rewritten in softer language.

Tim stated a lot of room for improvement and its helpful to get feedback. Somethings we can change. Letter can easily be changed but not the 5 min rule.

8. STAC Member Renewal Applications

Sue has decided not to renew. It has really been a learning experience and has an improved respect for what RVTD does.

Tim appreciates Sue for being on the committee. Can't say enough about her commitment.

Julie has also chosen not to renew but is looking for a replacement.

George is putting his application in for another term.

****Sue motioned and Julie second, all in favor, motion passed to send George's Application to the RVTD Board for approval.**

Paige stated it would be helpful to bring several applications to one board meeting instead of individually over several meetings.

George suggesting giving Julie and Sue a member award, and Stacy an employee award.

George took Valley Lift and noticed drivers are running late. Tim stated we are having some ranger issues that we are working through. Louise asked what a ranger is. Tim stated Ranger tells driver what/where they are.

9. Confirm STAC Meeting Dates for 2022

Will wait until January 19th Meeting to decide

10. Next STAC Meeting Date – January 19th @ 3:00 pm

11. Agenda Items for next meeting

Review New STAC Applicants

5310 Proposals

2022 STAC Meeting Dates

12. Other Business / Comments, Questions, Concerns

George Stated OHA is trying to make the mask mandate permanent. Paige has heard rumors. George stated it is a really bad idea that could cause big problems. Tim stated we are participating in those meetings. Tim has heard about it, giving feedback, and it's not sounding like they are wanting to do it permanently. Clarifying expectations but didn't get the sense that it is a forever thing. George concerned if permanent, people will have trouble with banks, and businesses will lose customers.

George – Rule 461 that is going to affect Medicaid. He will review it. Once reviewed, will be sent to CMS then to State Secretary. It's going to change qualifications for Medicaid disability.

George went to ODOT meeting dec 7th. He put his public announcement in of how he felt the money should be spent. Told them its vital funds go to RVTD and Valley Lift. He stood up for Valley Lift and RVTD.

Tim stated in the past few months has gotten calls from Hospitals and other agencies who are looking to partner with us for transportation since they don't have the resources. We are in the same boat with not enough resources to be able to help. It seems like there are a shortage of drivers and that's impacting people with disabilities.

Paige stated having public comment is helping to build the upcoming conversation when Oregon Transportation Commission will be reviewing staff suggestions at the January meeting. This will be developing over time. Its not just public transportation dollars, some dollars are directed towards aviation, rail etc. Public Transportation is just one piece of that, and we can't cross compete. There are some funds we won't be able to access. There are Flex funds that could help in purchasing buses but can't be used for operations. A lot of limitations on those funds. Operations section of it, we won't know what the increases are until spring of 2022. Has heard that there is an increase in the Transportation Operating side. Know there is an increase in the Transportation Capital side which is just buses and buildings. Another wrinkle is census just got finished and we have new transit agencies and providers around the country who have tipped over the 50,000 population mark. Once you tip over the 50,000 mark in your urbanized area you know have access to the same funds that RVTD has access to. Probably going to see 2-3 in the state of Oregon plus all across the United States around 50-100 new competitors for this money. Won't know what that means for RVTD until spring or summer. Hoping it doesn't happen it's a complicated process.

Need to schedule STAC meeting in January to review 5310. Decided to meet January 19 2022.

Louise asked if we need a strategy to replace Sue? Tim stated we can implement the phone recording and put something on our website.

Stan asked how many members do we need? Tim stated 5 needed. We will be at 6.

13. Adjournment

Mr. Adams adjourned the meeting at 4:14 pm

Stacy Chaplin

Stacy Chaplin,
Recording Secretary
