



BENTON COUNTY
SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
September 22, 2020

Present

Steven Black, Chair-elect
Tim Bates, Vice-Chair
Steven Harder
Carmen Ponce
Mary Marsh-King, outgoing Chair
Rocio Munoz (ex-officio)

Staff

Tiffany Plemmons, STF Assistant
Lisa Scherf, Transportation Services
Supervisor
Brad Dillingham, Special and Rural
Transportation Coordinator
Gary Stockhoff, Public Works Director

1. Call Meeting to Order/Introductions

Chair Mary Marsh-King called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM. Marsh-King asked attendees to introduce themselves.

2. Approval of October 14, 2019 Meeting Minutes

The Committee reviewed the October 14, 2019, minutes. Steven Black moved to accept the minutes as submitted. Steve Harder seconded the motion and all approved.

3. Introductions of New Staff

Scherf introduced Special and Rural Transportation Coordinator, Brad Dillingham and Transit Program Assistant, Tiffany Plemmons.

4. STAC Chair and Vice Chair Elections

Chair Marsh-King nominated Steven Black as Chair and Tim Bates as Vice Chair and Steve Harder seconded this. Following a vote, Black was elected Chair and Bates was elected Vice Chair.

5. Status of the Special and Rural Transportation Program

Dillingham reviewed the staff report, noting that staff has been working to understand and fix financial and operational issues the program has been facing. He described how the pandemic has affected ridership and that Dial-a-Bus has been able to serve homebound clients differently by doing essential errands like pharmacy and food shopping trips for them. There was a reduction in State funding to the program several years ago, and program expansions (e.g. Amtrak Connector) and costs for maintenance have combined to contribute to the financial issues. This item was for information only.

6. New Program Policies

Scherf explained the State and federal review in the fall of 2019 led to the recognition of the need for formal program policies. They include Eligibility, Exclusion, Service Animals, and others. Benton County plans to adopt them as Public Works Department policies. The Committee discussed its

thoughts and concerns on the proposed policies.

- Marsh-King expressed concern over the time limit on denial appeals. She would also like to see the qualification based on age (currently 60), be raised to 65, rather than the proposed 70.
- Munoz would like to see a language access policy included in the next draft. She and former Special and Rural Transportation Coordinator Lee Lazaro had started something like this and she would like to share and build upon it. She agreed to email her ideas, not all of which were specifically related to the policies, to staff.
- Harder voiced concerns on behalf of himself and his staff team on several policies, including eligibility and the process for certifying applicants. He would like to maintain the current eligibility age and keep the certification process as-is, with Dial-a-Bus staff handling it.
- Black expressed concern with the policy addressing vehicle and bus stop environment (smoking, music, eating, etc) and noted he would email staff with his specific thoughts.

7. STF/STIF Consolidation

Scherf stated that the Oregon Legislature asked ODOT to examine scenarios for combining STF and STIF revenue sources, which happened in the fall of 2019. This led to the Legislature acting in a 2020 special session to direct those two revenue sources to be combined into one funding stream. ODOT will likely convene another committee to discuss implementation of that and how it affects distribution of the combined funds and the roles of STIF and STF advisory committees.

8. Information Sharing

Staff announced the program will have its own unique name and branding as “Benton Area Transit”. It is being developed and implemented in conjunction with new corporate branding for Benton County.

9. Updates from Members

Bates provided an update on how COVID-19 has affected Corvallis Transit System ridership and service. He noted that CTS will continue to use back door boarding and 3-foot passenger spacing, per Oregon Health Authority guidelines.

Black made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:30 PM. Marsh-King seconded the motion and all approved.

NEXT MEETING: TBD