

**Umatilla County Transportation Advisory Committee**  
**Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
Stafford Hansell Government Center, Hermiston OR 97838  
Zoom virtual option  
December 4, 2024 10:00AM

**AC Members Present:** Staci Kunz (City of Pendleton Transit Coordinator); Jose Garcia (New Horizons); Linda Carter (City of Pendleton); and Teresa Dutcher (Chair)

**AC Members Virtually:** Heidi Zeigler (DHS); JD Tovey (CTUIR/Kayak)

**AC Members Missing:** None

**County Liaison:** Megan Davchevski (Transit Coordinator); Charlet Hotchkiss (Interim Transit Coordinator)

**Public:** Eric Smith (CTUIR Kayak); Josh Ernst (City of Pendleton); Kassidy Ruiz (City of Milton-Freewater); Mark Morgan (City of Hermiston) and Angie Jones (ODOT Region 5 Coordinator)

Chair Dutcher greeted the group and called the Umatilla County Transportation Advisory Committee (UCTAC) meeting to order at 10:04 AM. There were introductions of the UCTAC committee members and guests in the room and online.

**Meeting Minutes:**

No meeting minutes this meeting.

**Review STIF Formula Applications with Providers:**

**CTUIR Kayak:**

Eric provided an overview of Kayak's application. Eric worked with CTUIR Finance to ensure accuracy on potential cost increases over the next few years.

Project 1 is the Hermiston to Boardman Connector Operations. Much of this funding is with carryover, Eric explained the reason for the delay in beginning this route: supply issues with obtaining vehicles. CTUIR Kayak is asking for a total of \$1,031,731 for operations, \$363,029 for administration, \$86,748 for bus stop signs and \$195,000 for match for the West County Bus Barn (property lease, site prep, design).

Project 2 is iTransit which is the technical support and annual subscription for the services, the requested funding amount is \$41,000.

Project 3 is Matching funds for the Pilot Rocket Route, Hermiston Hopper Route, and Milton-Freewater circular route. This will provide matching funds for the discretionary grants. The requested amounts are as follows: Pilot Rocket \$33,400, Hermiston Hopper \$112,793 and Milton-Freewater Circular \$80,200.

Project 4 is operations for Rocket and Hopper to complete needed funding to operate these routes, that was not provided with the discretionary grants. The requested amounts are: Rocket \$132,979 and Hopper \$28,000.

Staci asked why there were two projects for the Rocket. Teresa clarified that Staci was looking at the spreadsheet that Linda brought. Megan asked Linda if she sent that email out to everyone?

Linda said that Kayak is asking for matching funds and extra funds. She found some errors in the total funds

and was correcting it.

Megan clarified that the intention of today is to review the providers applications, allow them to describe their projects and for the committee members to ask questions. Funding amounts will be discussed at a future meeting.

Eric provided ridership information, the Hopper is up over 10%. The Milton-Freewater route is up over 100% from 2022 to 2023 and he expects it to further increase in 2024. The Rocket route ridership was pretty flat. But overall, ridership is increasing across all the routes. Eric added that ODOT released the STIF discretionary funding recommendations. The Hopper, Milton-Freewater and Rocket routes are all receiving less funding than requested. Kayak has some work to do to cover these shortfalls.

Megan asked if the carryover included Kayak's projects, or if it included the County's contingency fund? Eric believed they only looked at Kayak's projects.

Staci asked if they are only short funding on the Hopper, Rocket and Milton-Freewater routes? Eric said yes, as far as the routes that are funded by the County's STIF fund, those are the only three routes that were shorted.

### **Grant County People Mover:**

Megan shared that this project is one the County requests in order to provide free rides for Umatilla County residents to ride the People Mover. The route goes through Ukiah, Pendleton and Walla Walla on Tuesdays. The total request is \$24,000.

Megan shared that there was some miscommunication with Community Counseling Solutions and Good Shepherd. They didn't receive the applications previously, Megan sent the providers the applications yesterday. She emailed Good Shepherd's application to the committee this morning. Community Counseling Solutions will provide their application by the end of the week.

Heidi shared she didn't receive the application. Megan said she will resend it to everyone if they don't have it when they get to their respective offices. Charly passed out hard copies in the room.

### **City of Hermiston:**

Mark said there was some confusion on their application. They are really only asking to maintain their existing services: the WORC taxi program and the senior and disabled taxi program. The WORC program is regional and it serves employees in west-county: Hermiston, Umatilla, Stanfield and Echo. This area has a population of about 40,000 and the average one-way rides for the last two years is 12,000 rides each year. There is no income restriction, however, the City has noticed that once employees reach a certain income to afford a vehicle, they typically stop using the program.

Mark shared information about other public transit programs the City offers, namely the Hermiston HART which is operated by Kayak. The City will go out to bid for their taxi services next year. Linda asked if there is just one taxi company in the area? Mark said yes. Discussion was had about Uber and other ride services.

Megan asked for clarification on the Senior and Disabled program, the application stated that no funding was being requested. Is this accurate? Mark responded that the City is requesting the same funding amounts as last biennium. Linda asked how much that was? Megan responded it was \$98,344 for FY 24 and \$98,343 for FY 25.

Staci asked if they are asking for match for 5310 funding? Linda said the City has more projects than last biennium. Megan clarified that last biennium (2024-2025) the City received 5310 funding and had their match

under the Population funds.

Megan asked if the City was seeking grant funding for the taxi dispatch software again. Mark said no. Megan removed that project match from the application and added the 5310 match to the request in the amounts of \$9,157 for FY 26 and \$9,156 for FY 27.

#### **City of Milton-Freewater:**

Kassidy shared that the City's senior and disabled taxi service has been available since 1971. It provides ride services within city limits and any destination within a 5-mile radius of city limits. The funding request will cover the cost of the taxi service, administration and maintenance of the City's ADA mini-van. Kassidy has been trying to increase ridership by meeting with seniors at the senior center. The City will also be re-advertise for their taxi services this winter. The City is requesting \$96,000/year.

Linda asked about the local match. Is it using the local option tax? Why is it only available in one fiscal year? Kassidy explained that only \$60,000 is estimated to be received by the local option tax. Kassidy inputted the \$96,000 for 5310 under the local funds, she believes this was a typo by her in the application. Teresa noted the \$96,000 should be under the federal funds. Megan explained the \$60,000 for the local option tax should be under local funds.

Linda asked if the City received \$60,000 for both years? Kassidy wasn't sure but she believed it was just for one year but she will check with the Finance Director. Teresa explained its for two years but the tax doesn't kick in until later in the year and it takes about a year to get the money.

Staci shared that the program for two years is \$312,000. She asked if that was correct? Kassidy said yes, she estimates about \$288,000 for two years as the local option tax amount is unknown.

#### **City of Pendleton:**

Staci shared the projects were about the same as the previous biennium. They are asking for a little bit more money for the fixed route. They are also asking for a 5310/5311 match. They are continuing to work with iTransit for services and are also requesting upgrades for the system. The upgrades will include Wi-Fi modems for the busses. The Wi-Fi will be used for the bus's iTransit but they will also offer free Wi-Fi to riders. The City received a grant for a new van, they are requesting match and decals. The City is also requesting funds for the Senior/Disabled taxi rides.

Megan asked how the City will pay for the Wi-Fi services? Linda shared that the Wi-Fi is already paid for with 5311 funds, it's about \$170/month for four busses.

#### **Good Shepherd Carevan:**

Megan shared that Good Shepherd emailed their application this morning. They are requesting \$19,000/year which is less than they had requested last biennium, which was about \$25,000/year. Megan believes they will have carryover so their request is much less than last time.

Megan shared that she will discuss the carryover funding with Good Shepherd prior to the next meeting.

#### **Community Counseling Solutions:**

Megan shared that CCS sent an email that they will complete the STIF application but in their email they stated they are going to request \$9,000/year. Megan shared that CCS also has some carryover to help lower the total request. CCS provides reimbursement for volunteers to drive seniors wherever they need to go.

## **Umatilla County Projects:**

Megan shared that her and Charly have not developed the County's project application yet but she did share their list of projects with funding amounts. Megan explained that she previously overbudgeted for the Transit Coordinator position. There is quite a bit of carryover, but they are requesting new funds in order to work on some planning projects. The first planning project is to explore forming a Transit District. The second is to update the Coordinated Human Services Plan.

Megan explained the need to form a Transit District, and how there is not currently a path forward for the County to form a district with CTUIR with tribal representation on the Board. This project would hire a consultant to receive a legislative fix. JD added and shared that this has been accomplished with other boards like school districts. The conversation has come up with CTUIR's lobbyists and the Governor's Office and everyone seems supportive.

Megan added that the goal is to not have the Transit District be a taxing district. JD shared that he agrees, Tri-Met is a taxing district, but we are looking more at how Grant County operates which is as an organizational district. The idea is to have one single service and to eliminate duplicity. Staci shared it is also confusing for customers.

Teresa shared that the Umatilla County's population centers are over 50,000. She believes the County will be looked at for an MPO. JD shared that the distance between Hermiston and Pendleton will probably preclude that, but Hermiston and Boardman may become an MPO, but that is a while away. Especially with the new MPO rules. Discussion continued about MPOs.

Megan discussed the need to update the County's Coordinated Human Services Plan, the current plan was adopted in October 2020 and they need to be updated every 5 years. The goal is to hire a consultant to complete the updates. Megan is also requesting to use carryover for marketing STIF projects. The reserve fund is the rainy-day fund to continue operations in the event of a loss of funding. The current policy requires the UCTAC to include 10% of the STIF annual allocation to this fund.

The Intercommunity Route Contingency fund will provide additional funding in case grant funds aren't received. The carryover amount on the screen is from June, Megan will make sure it is updated from the last two quarters. She shared it would be a good idea to add more funding to this fund to account for the decreased grant awards for Kayaks projects. It will also cover cost increases for operations.

The Bus Stop Signage project is carryover from the current biennium plus some additional funding to make sure all the stops have signage and improvements where feasible.

## **Discussion:**

Charly announced she wanted to schedule the next morning. She asked the group if the morning of December 18<sup>th</sup> would work? The Board of Commissioner Meeting will be January 2<sup>nd</sup> and applications are due to ODOT January 19<sup>th</sup>.

Heidi shared she is unavailable that day.

Megan shared that they are going to figure out carryover amounts. ODOT is encouraging QEs to include additional 120% projects. Megan and Charly will get these amounts to the committee prior to the next meeting.

Charly asked if the morning of December 19<sup>th</sup> would work? Heidi said yes.

The group scheduled the next meeting for December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 10:30am at the Umatilla County Courthouse in Pendleton.

Staci mentioned that Angie had talked about a regional marketing person that CCO hired with ODOT's assistance. Each provider is supposed to help contribute to this cost. Staci asked if the providers are supposed to plan for this in the STIF funding? Megan responded that she would ask Angie at their meeting this afternoon. Staci thought the amount was \$30,000 for each provider.

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 am.

Submitted by Megan Davchevski, Umatilla County Transit Coordinator