

**COLUMBIA COUNTY**  
**Transportation and Road Advisory Committee**  
**May 16, 2024**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Attendance:**

Rosemary Lohrke – citizen (chair)  
Sabrina Moore - citizen  
Pat LaPointe – citizen  
Mark Pacheco – Columbia County PIO  
Mike Russell – Columbia County PW  
Grant DeJongh – Columbia County PW  
Julie Wheeler – Columbia County PW

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

- RL called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM

**B. INTRODUCTIONS**

- Introductions weren't necessary.

**C. OPEN FORUM**

- Sabrina announced that this will be her last meeting. Due to the language of the new required volunteer form, she will not be signing and therefore will no longer be a member of TRAC.

**D. APPROVE MINUTES**

- No quorum, so minutes from February weren't approved.

**E. UPDATES**

1. Apiary Rd MP 11.8
  - MR: The approval of the fish passage permit is the last permit we're waiting approval on. The State of Oregon will be telling us what fish habitat we will be required to use in the bed of the new culvert. Our goal is to open the road by July 4<sup>th</sup>.
  - SM: Many groups of people are affected by the closure: loggers, builders, contractors, commuters. This extended road closure is a hardship for lots of people.
  - RL: What about other wooden culverts on Apiary and Scappoose Vernonia? MR: There is a Hazard Mitigation fund that is available for such replacements through the State. MR plans to apply for funding to prioritize and design fixes for other similar culverts.
  - PL: What's the plan if one of the wooden culverts give way in the future? MR: We would close the road. Perhaps put a temporary fix in place so that the road may be opened while a permanent solution is finalized and then installed. This would greatly reduce the amount of road closure time. PL: A contingency plan should be put into place for when this happens again. MR: As each storm is different and can cause varying

amounts of damage, there is no prescriptive contingency plan in place other than to respond as needed to keep roads open and comply with applicable laws.

- GD: A culvert just up from 11.8 could've had a steel plate put over the problem area until a permanent fix if it were to give out.
2. East Fork Nehalem River Bridge Replacement (S-V Rd MP 2)
    - MR: This project will not be installed until the summer of 2025.
  3. Millard Rd Realignment
    - MR: This project will be done this summer. Currently ROW work is being done. No permitting is required. The intersection will be squared off and the road reconstructed. The drainage issue will be addressed and taken care of.
    - SM: This work needs to be done before winter sets in. The road is in horrible shape.
    - SM: The other side of Millard, on the west side of the highway, is missing some sort of merge signage such as drawing a merge arrow on the road surface.
    - PL: Water is puddling on the sidewalks of this ODOT project. This should not be the case with a brand-new walkway.
    - SM: ODOT snow plows took out numerous delineators the winter at the Bennett Road/Highway 30 intersection. The committee as a group commented on how the islands can easily be missed by drivers and could potentially more of a hazard than a help.
  4. Fleet Maintenance Software Update
    - GD: We have not begun pre-/post-trip inspections yet. It takes our crew about 10 minutes to complete the performance of the check, which, with one tablet, places the total check in/out time at 30 minutes. We're using the program for cost tracking of the fleet and for invoicing other departments' when the mechanics work on their equipment.
    - PL: Asked if we could purchase more tablets. This seems to be the best option. If a tablet cost \$300 each, ten could be purchased for \$3,000. Quite a savings as opposed to the high-cost equipment repairs.
    - SM: At least there's some movement on pre/post trip inspections. Seems like the department has lots of money to spend on shops and updating the road standards. Just buy the extra tablets and get these inspections done. This is an OSHA issue and must be done.
    - PL: If internet connection is slow in the outlying shops, the service should be analyzed. Perhaps the issue could be quickly fixed. I've set up lots of systems and have always been able to find a way to get connected.
  5. FY2025 Budget
    - MR: Explained the budget spreadsheets.
    - SM: Is Knife River still interested in buying the County's rock pit across the highway?  
MR: Yes, they are. I've been directed by the BOC to negotiate with them on the purchase of a small section. This is needed for them to finish their mining operation and their ability to blast every bit of aggregate out of the pit as they possibly can.
    - SM: It seems as if lately the committee has been in the dark about a lot of very important matters. Too much vital information has been relayed to the public via Facebook and not by means which all of the public may access.

- PL: The subject of spending \$600k on an equipment shed was discussed. It would be worth the effort for the County to find out how colder climate areas house their equipment during winter to prevent sand from freezing up and rendering it not spreadable. GD: Another county I worked for would be tarps over their sand. SM: Perhaps erecting carports to store the sand in and not loading the trucks until prior to heading out to the roads to apply would be a better and more affordable way to go.
- PL: Did we get all of our dump trucks? SM: Is the crew enjoying driving them?
- MR: If the department had an extra \$1m, how should the funds be spent? SR: half of the money should go towards culvert replacement. The other half should be used for a few more road maintenance workers whose focus is maintaining the ditches. PL: Be proactive and keep culverts from washing out. Stay ahead of the game. Perhaps heat tapes on the auger or pipes on the sanding equipment? More tablets so the crew can get on the roads more quickly. Have contingency plans A, B, and C ready to be used if need be. RL: Having a well thought out plan documented on how to spend the money is very important. That way, whoever is directing the department will know what the plan for the future is.

## **F. ROUNDTABLE**

### 1. ROW Construction Permit

- PL: It's very important the Construction Permit work is done according to how it has been approved and monitored that it's been done correctly.
- GD: Discussed issue in Clatskanie where boring is causing problems.
- PL: Clear marking of where the utilities are is important. Telephone pedestals should be cleared of vegetation and further marked when visibility of them is hindered in any way. This is the responsibility of the utility company.

### 2. Road Vacations

- MR: The current road vacation requests are Luma Vista and Mayger Fill Road. Public Works is not in favor of vacating Luma Vista. LDS doesn't support this vacation either. There will be a hearing next week on the Luma Vista on Wednesday at the BOC meeting.
- SM: Road vacations should be discussed at the TRAC meetings.

### 3. Sabrina Moore's Resignation

- SM: There has been a Moore on the committee since its inception. First Melvin, then Rodney, and now me. It's the end of an era.
- MP: Sabrina, please send your issues with signing the volunteer form so that I can bring them up to County Counsel. It seems as if they've created a form/policy which is a, "One size fits all," which is potentially not going to work for all of the volunteers for the County.
- PL: Took back his signed forms. He doesn't wish to sign up for the committee at this time with the current verbiage on the paperwork.
- PL: It would be nice to see more people coming to the TRAC meetings.

**G. ADJOURN**

- Meeting adjourned at 11:47am.
- The next meeting will be August 15, 2024

Respectfully Submitted,

Julie Wheeler  
Scribe