

**COLUMBIA COUNTY**  
**TRANSPORTATION AND ROAD ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Thursday, October 16, 2025, 10 am**

**MINUTES**

- ❖ **Call to Order-10:06 am** **Chair- Rosemary Lohrke**
  
- ❖ **Sign In / Introductions –** **Chair – Rosemary Lohrke**
  - Present: Pat LaPointe (utility community), Ken Parris (CRPUD), Karl Webster (CRPUD), Nita Greene (citizen-at-large), Paul Langner (City of Rainier), Rosemary Lorkhe (citizen-at-large), Mike Russell (CCPW), Grant DeJongh (CCPW)
  
- ❖ **Approve Minutes** **Members**
  - Mr. Langner moved to approve minutes from July meeting.
  - Ms. Greene seconded.
  - Motion passed unanimously.
  
- ❖ **Open Forum for Comments –** **Members and Guests**
  - None
  - No guests
  
- ❖ **Updates/Discussion -** **Mike Russell, PW Director**
  - Projects Updates
    - 2025 chip seal
      - 12 miles (Quincy-Mayger – 4 miles, Scappoose-Vernonia – 8 miles)
      - Used Clatsop County crew, Columbia County crew, purchased rock
      - General satisfaction with state of chip seal
      - Want to expand to 25 miles in 2026 if Clatsop is willing
      - Not a universal treatment – need good pavement condition
      - Much cheaper than paving
      - Questions about the cost of using Clatsop vs. purchasing a chip spreader
        - Clatsop was about \$35,000, machine is mid-six figures
      - Questions about which roads for 2026
        - Working on list
      - Questions about further applicability on Scappoose-Vernonia Road (e.g., near Grandma’s Lane)
        - Will look into it
    - Patch paving
      - Pittsburg, Cater, others
      - Questions about which crew did this work
        - Columbia County did all of the paving this year
      - General satisfaction with County traffic control
    - Hazard mitigation grant
      - FEMA-funded (OEM pass-through) for wooden culvert inspection,

- evaluation, and design
  - Applied for this after the Apiary Road MP 11.8 washout
  - Will result in some preliminary design (30% plans) that can be used to leverage additional money
  - RFP being drafted
  - Questions about how many wooden culverts there are on Apiary Road and Scappoose-Vernonia Road
    - Handful on Apiary Road
    - Many suspected on Scappoose-Vernonia Road, but many of those have likely been replaced with metal culverts
- Scappoose-Vernonia Road MP 2 – East Fork Nehalem Bridge Replacement
  - Goal to go to bid this winter
  - Construction during summer 2026
  - Questions about detour routes and emergency services
    - Detour would be inverse of Apiary Road MP 17.9 project (S-V traffic pushed up to Apiary Road – Meissner Road – Canaan Road)
    - No good alternatives – cost associated with purchasing land or rights, construction prohibitive
    - Emergency services will be notified before closure – coverage will be up to emergency service districts
    - Owners of the property adjacent will be able to access their property throughout construction
    - Could get the route of a single-lane closure, but that pushes construction into two seasons (dramatic increase in cost)
  - Concerns about approach at existing bridge – should be repaired for winter
- Road Maintenance Plan
  - Looking at 2026 road maintenance plan
  - Postponed for Tim Hancock, Road and Bridge Superintendent, to be present
    - Members noticed crews already out doing work – first ditching they have seen in many years
- Budget Update
  - Special session transportation package
    - Passed, but referring to voters if signed
    - Political games going on in Salem
    - ODOT is moving forward assuming that this will go through
    - Will know in January 2026 if signatures were collected – this bill is not popular with voters, neither is the process that was followed
    - Package would mean \$900K for Columbia County in first year, \$1.2M-\$1.4M subsequent years
    - Currently, get about \$5M
    - Requested input from staff, committees – focus on roads, personnel
    - Recently reached an agreement with the union
      - Projected personnel cost increases - >\$1M in next 5 years
      - 2.5%/year COLA based on CPI-West
      - Longevity play

- Premium pay (veg. licenses, *etc.*)
- If we get any money, would propose using it to stabilize budget
- Currently, road fund is deficit spending – good for 3 years, 4<sup>th</sup> year will have to make hard decisions
- Mr. Langner brought up that PERS financing coming to an end and will hit in 2027-2028 – 28% increase
- Issues noted with the difference between CPI and construction price index (8%) – inflation, tariffs, *etc.*, all impact
- Budget committees, local reps are trying to educate governments on this
  - May need to look at additional bonding
- Committee Vacancies
  - Ms. Greene, Ms. Lorkhe terms end 12/31/2025 – need reappointment if want to remain on TRAC
  - Open to nominations for chair
  - Currently, three openings on TRAC
  - Recommendations:
    - Fire districts
    - West Oregon Electric Co-op
    - Schools and bus drivers
    - City reps

❖ **Round Table Discussion**

**Chair & Members**

- Rosemary Lorkhe
  - Road marking – crew hanging out of trucks to collect cones – dangerous
    - ODOT – County crews do not do this
- Pat LaPointe
  - Safety concerns
    - Signs should be moved through work corridor as work progresses
  - Otherwise, doing great job
- Ken Parris
  - Sinkholes on S-V Road
    - Near the stockpile for chips seal (about 100’ apart)
- Nita Greene
  - Mountain View Road (Scappoose)
    - Dip in roadway – could be failed culvert
    - Just before Holaday Road
- Paul Langner
  - ODOT flooding issue
    - Heath Road flooding – comes off of Highway 30 – destroying road base
    - Mill Street in Rainier – same issue
  - Monument damage – County crews filled in corner monuments, County Surveyor now fixing
    - Mr. Russell to look into this

❖ **Next Meeting** – (tent.) January 15, 2026

**Chair**

❖ **Adjourn** – 11:00 AM

**Chair**