

**COLUMBIA COUNTY**  
**TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, March 04, 2026, 07:30 am**

**MINUTES**

- ❖ **Call to Order-07:31 am** **Chair – Jeff Peterson**
  
- ❖ **Sign In / Introductions –** **Chair – Jeff Peterson**
  - Present: Mark Buffington, *ODOT*; Jared Britton, *ODOT*; Dave Sukau, *City of Scappoose*; Alex Bird, *City of Saint Helens*; Jeff Peterson, *Columbia County*; Mike Russell, *Columbia County*; Grant DeJongh, *Columbia County*; Tim Hancock, *Columbia County*; Tatum Flowers, *Columbia County*; Dylan Kean, *Oregon State Policy*; Chris Fluellen, *City of Scappoose Police Department*; Corey Padrón, *Columbia County Emergency Management*; Jay Tappan, *citizen at large*; Rosemary Lohrke, *citizen at large*; Lawrence, *Oregon Impact*; two note-taking robots
  
- ❖ **Meeting minute approval –** **Chair – Jeff Peterson**
  - February 2026 meeting minutes –
    - Jay Tappan motioned approval, Alex Bird seconded – passed unanimously
  
- ❖ **Pittsburg Road sharps issue –** **Tatum Flowers**
  - Recent complaints about sharps along Pittsburg Road in Saint Helens
  - Tatum Flowers, Solid Waste Coordinator, worked with Dumpstoppers (Dave Carlberg) and crew to remove sharps from road and round Milton Creek – 12 bags
  - Traced sharps from about Barr Avenue back to about Robinette Road – seems to get worse closer to Robinette
  - Milton Creek flows to McCormick Park – concerns about spread
  - What can be done
    - Currently, sharps exchange program through fire districts and transfer station – free to public to use
    - Planning on putting up standard Dumpstoppers sign
    - Would like to put up non-MUTCD sign along Pittsburg Road and other hot spots
    - Plan to place billboard ad on Highway 30 for sharps program
    - Suggestion: Get PIO involved (photos, social media posts – talk about free program)
    - Suggestion: Send out mailer for people without social media
    - Suggestion: sharps container on or near the site – it was mentioned that Multnomah County does this, and their public-facing sharps containers are broken into or vandalized for access to the needles
  - It was noted that this is not unique – also an issue on Honeyman Road by Cal-Portland
  - It was questioned whether there is a homeless camp that requires attention in this area
  
- ❖ **Roundtable Updates -** **All Members**
  - A. Law Enforcement (Scappoose)
    - a. Scappoose Police Department worked with Oregon State Police for a blitz around

- Superbowl – no major incidents during this blitz
- b. Two (2) new recruits going through FTO process – will bring total staff to 10
- c. Plan to hire another recruit in a week or two
- d. Jeff Peterson noted that he appreciates the community outreach Scappoose Police provide through social media

B. Law Enforcement (OSP)

- a. Two (2) fatal crashes
  - i. Highway 30 – one at about MP 51 (Rainier hill), one at about MP 64 (Clatskanie)
  - ii. MP 51 – 2 vehicles, one driving erratically and crossing centerline; driver in other vehicle passed; criminal charges proceeding
  - iii. MP 64 – around February 26 – motorcycle crossing centerline; struck two vehicles; rider passed
  - iv. Seeing increase in incidents since weather has improved
  - v. Planning saturation between Clatskanie and Astoria
- b. Two (2) recruits set to graduate at end of March
  - i. Will then go through post-academy training and field training

C. Law Enforcement (CCSO) – absent

D. ODOT

- a. Legislature's last week, and ODOT leadership feels confident that there will be some manner of ODOT funding
- b. Plan is to fund ODOT while leaving vacancies in place
- c. Little winter weather so far, but crews are still lean
- d. Rainier Hill repave and barricade replacement project scheduled for this summer (2026)
- e. Maintenance – response to two fatal crashes; sweeping; tree project; gearing up for spring
- f. Maintenance – will recombine crews if no more winter weather (end shifts)
- g. Question about if ODOT looks at fatalities from an engineering perspective
  - i. Yes, ODOT reviews, has an eye for improvements if there is a design issue
  - ii. From Rainier through Astoria, the problems on Highway 30 are speed related – there are two rock slide areas, but otherwise, if traffic drives 55 MPH, no issues; however, the road was not designed for 70 MPH travel

E. Columbia County Public Works

- a. Still looking into operational changes – no decisions yet; want to implement work plan for preventative maintenance
  - i. Hope to meet with employees soon to discuss, then bring to Board
- b. Gearing up for paving and chip seal (about 20 miles of chip seal, limited paving)
- c. Maintenance – brush cutting; pothole repair; grading; rocking gravel roads; will begin spraying once weather gets better
  - i. Question about a town hall meeting in Clatskanie about herbicide application
  - ii. County was invited, then disinvited – offers no spray program and spray hotline
- d. Concerns about oil prices due to international unrest
- e. Office update – finishing up seasonal materials purchases; finishing up bid packets; finishing up workplan; traffic counters back – will be deploying in next couple of



- iii. Currently working with Chief Pritcher in Scappoose; will be reaching out to other emergency services, law enforcement, public works reps
- c. Co-chair of Lower Columbia River Joint Operations Group
  - i. Question from WSDOT and Cowlitz County Emergency Management: how do Apple Maps and Google Maps get updated with closure information?
    - 1. ODOT TripCheck does not update these apps
    - 2. Could occur through information (notifications, data) provided by public
    - 3. Could occur through mobile app data, GPS; there are vendors who aggregate this information and provide it – could work similarly
- d. Mass Casualty Plan
  - i. Meeting on March 12 in Healy Hall
  - ii. Draft plan is available for review, comment before meeting

L. Columbia County Commissioners – absent

M. School Bus Rep – absent

N. Oregon Impact

- a. Demonstration – drink flashcards – provided for colleges, OLCC server training
- b. Report – why is the no. 1 cause of death for returning veterans traffic crash?
  - i. Standard difference between military driving operations and civilian operation
  - ii. Report should be released in May

O. ODOT Transportation Safety – absent

❖ **Open Discussion**

- A. CCSO brought up the turn pocket at Gable Road and Highway 30
  - a. This is with respect to westbound Gable traffic turning southbound/eastbound on Highway 30
  - b. There are two stop bars – one to the east of the railroad tracks and one at the signal
  - c. If traffic stops at the railroad and there is no vehicle between the railroad and the intersection, the induction loops do not seem to detect the vehicles and the system has to wait until it cycles through
  - d. This leads to a massive rush when the left-turn arrow changes, which encourages unsafe behavior (not paying attention to pedestrians, running red lights, *etc.*)
  - e. This intersection is managed by ODOT – could they look at alternatives to induction loops (radar, cameras, *etc.*)?

❖ **Next Meeting** – Tentatively April 01, 2026 **Chair**

❖ **Adjourn** – 8:27 AM **Chair**