

COLUMBIA COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION AND ROAD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, March 20, 2025, 10 am

MINUTES

- ❖ **Call to Order-10:12 am** **Chair- Rosemary Lohrke**

- ❖ **Approve Minutes of 05/2024 and 11/2024 Meetings** **Chair – Rosemary Lohrke**
 - Unanimous

- ❖ **Sign In / Introductions –** **Chair – Rosemary Lohrke**
 - Present: Pat LaPointe (citizen, former utility rep.), Nita Greene (citizen), Tim Hancock (CCPW), Mike Russell (CCPW), Grant DeJongh (CCPW), Mark Pacheco (CC PIO), Rosemary Lohrke (citizen, chair), Ken Parris (CRPUD)

 - Introduce Tim Hancock, Road and Bridge Superintendent
 - County moved from two supervisors to one superintendent
 - Tim comes from Washington County (19 years), lives in Columbia County

- ❖ **Open Forum for Comments –** **Members and Guests**
 - Paving on Bennett Road (2024 overlay project) looks good, several residents have commented to TRAC members about how much they appreciate the work

- ❖ **Updates/Discussion -** **Mike Russell, PW Director**
 - Projects Updates
 - Scappoose-Vernonia Road MP 2 – East Fork Nehalem Bridge Replacement – delayed until summer 2026 – missed window for bridge element fabrication, would put additional traffic on Apiary Road (which is already conveying OR 47 traffic this construction season)

 - 2025 Chip Seal – Scappoose-Vernonia Road (2 sections, including MP 6 – MP 9); Beaver Falls Road (Depot to Quincy-Mayger); Quincy-Mayger (Beaver Falls to Kallunki) – chip seal will be a partnership with Clatsop County (supplying equipment, labor, expertise) – Columbia County will provide some labor and materials

 - Road Maintenance Work Plan **Tim Hancock, PW Superintendent**
 - Tim observed crew operations when he got here, applied his own background in road maintenance and created annual work plan
 - Generally,
 - Ditching – start with roads to be surface treated, then collectors/arterials; ditch until paving season
 - Grading – grade all gravel roads at least once per year
 - Brushing – same roads as ditching, but before ditching crew gets there
 - Surface treatment – chip/pave

- Would like to get on a rotation for surface treatments; this year will be a dry run for chip sealing to see if this is something we would like to do more often – chip spreaders are very expensive
 - TRAC members raised the question about safety while ditching, including what happens if crews encounter a line that is too shallow.
 - County calls in locates.
 - If a line is found that is too shallow, crews usually pothole around it.
 - If the owner can be determined, crews refer to engineering staff to contact the utility.
 - This work plan changes the County’s operations to a proactive effort rather than a reactive effort. To achieve this, there is more focus on the activity (*e.g.*, ditching) than there is location (*e.g.*, districts). This is a major change for the County.
- Budget Update
 - Currently working on FY26 budget
 - Largely the status quo – no new positions envisioned; reduced equipment procurement budget (doing okay with new equipment); focus on culvert, preventative maintenance
 - No major increases other than personnel – potentially 7% personnel, 10%+ benefits (still being negotiated) – no intention to furlough staff
 - Road fund is separate from the general fund, which has greater budgetary deficits, though road fund may also need to cut back
 - ODOT legislation looked promising for county road funds, but legislative scrutiny of ODOT has put this in jeopardy.
 - Counties now looking at separate maintenance funding mechanism, but only options are taxes and fees
 - Discussion about economic climate in Columbia County and whether there is sufficient electricity for larger operations.
 - Committee Vacancies
 - There are currently vacancies on the committee. Members proposed filling them with:
 - ODOT (regional road issues)
 - Schools (bus drivers see issues)
 - CC Rider (bus drivers see issues)

❖ **Round Table Discussion**

Chair & Members

- Old Portland Road – no signage to direct traffic to Millard Road (no left turn at Hwy 30 and Bennett Road); Public Works to discuss internally
- Scappoose-Vernonia Road – settling near Grandma’s Lane is getting worse (old failing culvert that Public Works tried to fill a couple of years ago); Public Works to inspect

❖ **Next Meeting** – Tentatively May 15, 2025

Chair

❖ **Adjourn** – 11:08 AM

Chair