

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Transportation and Road Advisory Committee

February 16, 2023

Meeting Minutes

Order:

Rosemary Lohrke called the Columbia County Transportation and Road Advisory Committee (CTRAC) meeting to order at 10:15 am. on Thursday, February 16, 2023, in Healy Hall.

Present:

TRAC Members: Andrew Niemi, Pat LaPointe, Rosemary Lohrke, and Nita Greene
Columbia County Staff: Michael Russell, Public Works Director, Grant DeJongh, Public Works Assistant Director; Julie Wheeler, Admin Assistant II

Introductions:

Grant DeJongh was introduced as the new Assistant Public Works Director. The rest of the attendees then made their introductions to the group.

Minutes:

A quorum was not present, so the minutes from the September 22, 2022 meeting were not approved.

Open Forum for Guest Comments:

- No comments were given

Old Business / Updates: Michael Russell & Grant DeJongh

- 2022 Projects in Review
 - The Columbia Soil & Water Conservation District received a grant from NRCS to cover much of the cost for a new bridge on Olson Road in Clatskanie, spanning Perkins Creek. Kynsi Construction constructed the bridge and made water enhancements while the Columbia County Road Department crew paved the approaches.
 - Fishhawk Bridge
 - Snow and ice from the April '22 storm event caused scouring of the bridge. Our crews came up with a solution and shored up the bridge.
 - Paving
 - The following roads were paved: Lentz, Olson (in Clatskanie), & Sykes near Saulser
 - The paving budget wasn't all used, so it was put towards the purchase of two graders, a 2015 John Deere 672GP and a 2012 John Deere 672GP, with relatively low hours in good condition.
 - Fleet Replacement Plan
 - Was approved by the Board of Commissioners
 - We're now waiting for the dump trucks. The loader has already been approved.

Old Business / Updates (continued):

- Hiring
 - Hiring new employees continues to be a struggle. Many of the applicants aren't qualified. Those who are, expect more money than we're able to offer/afford.
 - The following positions are currently open:
 - Road Maintenance Worker I
 - Engineering Technician I
 - Mechanic (internal)
 - Lead Worker - Vernonia (internal)
 - Road Maintenance Worker II – Vernonia (internal)

- Emergency Relief Projects (2015 Storm Event)
 - Meissner Rd Slide Area
 - The road closure for repairs will begin Feb 21st and will last approximately a month. The detours have already been determined and notifications of work have been sent out to haulers and local government agencies. Reader boards are set up and social media was updated by the County's Public Information Officer, Mark Pacheco.
 - Tapani is the contractor performing the work.
 - Fernhill Slide
 - The first section of the road closest to Rainier is going to be closed due to the repairs being made by Tapani. The Road Department is actively working on a sensible detour.
 - Culvert Bundle – Apiary 12.2 & 17.4, Bennett Rd., Fernhill Rd.
 - Apiary Road culverts will be worked on this July through September. Precon is coming up.
 - Fernhill Road culvert won't be done this year.

- Paving
 - Will be doing some contract paving for mile+ sections of Bennett, McDonald, Alston Mayger, and Swedetown.
 - Smith, Pittsburg, Gensman, and Blaha will be done by our crew.

- Bridge Maintenance
 - After the bridge inspections were completed, two were founded in need of work:
 - Scappoose Vernonia Bridge MP 2: This is on the Vernonia end of the highway. ODOT is the lead on this project, and it is using bridge replacement funds.
 - Fishhawk Bridge: Working with ODOT to make improvements needed.

- ARTS Project – Scappoose Vernonia and Apiary Safety Zones and Signage
 - Mowing and vegetation removal along is done.
 - Any trees within 16 feet along the road are going to be evaluated for removal. These trees need to be identified. We may have to contract the tree removal part of the project out.
 - We probably won't be getting back to this project in 2023 and will be prioritized in 2024.
 - Rosemary stated that Ruby Park needs to be severely trimmed back.

Old Business / Updates (continued):

- Bonnie Falls
 - This is on the Department's priority list this spring. First order of business is to shave off the bump. A super will be done at the end of summer.

New Business: Michael Russell & Grant DeJongh

- Storm after Christmas Day
 - The County roads had some damage from the storm with water on the roads and gravel road washout areas.
 - Otto Miller sustained a lot of damage.
 - Apiary MP 8 culvert needs to be addressed and fixed.
 - A Nicolai Road culvert near the Beaver Homes intersection was compromised. Kynsi Construction was hired to reestablish the shoulder. They did a great job.
 - Although we had a skeletal crew, they worked diligently through the event.
 - We partnered with Emergency Management and the Public Information Officer to better communicate current road conditions during the event and to set up a protocol for the next one.

Round Table Discussion:

- Nita Greene voiced concerns about contractor vs Columbia County Road crews doing the projects/fixes to the roads.
- Pat LaPointe mentioned that a lot of bush cutting is being done. He noted that they're doing a fine job.

Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 18, 2023.

A motion to adjourn was made by Andrew Niemi, seconded by Nita Greene. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 11:12 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tori Coy