

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Transportation and Road Advisory Committee

September 22, 2022

Meeting Minutes

Order:

Rosemary Lohrke called the Columbia County Transportation and Road Advisory Committee (CCTRAC) meeting to order at 10:04 am. on Thursday, September 22, 2022, in Healy Hall.

Present:

TRAC Members: Andrew Niemi, Pat LaPointe, Rosemary Lohrke, and Sabrina Moore in person. Robert Stevens and Paul Langner via GoTo Meeting.

Columbia County Staff: Scott Toenjes, Engineering Tech I; Tori Coy, Administrative Assistant I; Michael Russell, Public Works Director

Introductions:

We “went around the room” and introduced who we were and our positions.

Minutes:

A motion was made by Paul Langner and seconded by Pat LaPointe to approve the June 23, 2022 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Open Forum for Guest Comments:

- Robert Stevens mentioned there is a transportation priority survey open as part of a regional plan update. Anyone you know that could be interested in participating in the survey Robert is happy to forward on to. Important for anyone who lives and/or works in Rainier to complete the survey.
- Paul Langner noticed approving the minutes was missing from the agenda, so Paul wanted to start the motion to approve the minutes (approved above).

Old Business / Updates: Michael Russell and Scott Toenjes

- 2022 Project Updates
- Emergency Relief Projects (2015 Storm Event)
 - Michael Russell: We are on the home stretch of these projects. We got emergency relief funding for and ODOT is overseeing these projects. Going to bid this October and should be completed in Summer 2023. There will be some road closures involved which we will be communicating in advance.
 - Culvert Bundle – Apiary 12.2 & 17.4, Bennett Rd., Fernhill Rd.,
 - Scott Toenjes: Apiary – could have a 4-week closure, and Bennett a 4-6 week closure.
 - Sabrina Moore: Make sure that this is all communicated in advance as there may be some weight restricted roads affected. Voiced some concern over how long the closures will take. Mentioned the ODOT Bennett/Millard projects that are still ongoing that started last year.
 - Meissner & Fernhill Slides

- Sabrina Moore: Talked about new apartment buildings going in at Gable/McNulty could create some major traffic issues that the City has not fully addressed.
- 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. Expected to be delivering on this next summer as well.
- ARTS Project – Scappoose Vernonia Safety Zones and signage
 - Mowing and vegetation removal along Scappoose Vernonia. The ARTS grant is for trees/vegetation that are fixed hazards within those 16 feet. Our focus is narrow. We plan to be as reasonable as we can while also making sure we are making this road safer.
 - Any trees within 16 feet along the road are going to be evaluated for removal. We have a 100 ft. right of way (approximately 50 ft from center line) along Scappoose Vernonia. Mowing has already been completed last summer.
 - The whole purpose of this project is to make a safety corridor. We will be coordinating with utilities on this project. But if utility companies want to go beyond that, it'll be up to their discretion/right of way.
 - Trees are the property of the adjacent property owners.
 - Trees on banks won't be removed.
- April 11 Storm Damage: Michael Russell
 - There was a lot of tree damage during this storm in addition to snow removal. Mike had some pictures to show of the event.
 - Colvin Road at Tandy Creek
 - This road is on the old highway, so it parallels hwy. 30. Basically, a lot of debris ended up coming down from the hillside into the creek and into the roadway which remained in the road until July. About an 800 ft section was taken over by the creek/debris. Our goal this July was to get the road back open after being closed. Citizens were very patient. It took time to get the right environment permits as we had to do some in-water work that affected the fish life which is only allowed for a short period of time.
 - Fishhawk Bridge
 - This is close to the Fishhawk Lake community/Fishhawk Lake. We had severe undermining of the bridge structure. The wingwall had lost its support underneath. The bridge itself was fine, but the approaches were at risk of failing due to the undermining under the road and the wingwall.
 - This summer we got the appropriate emergency permitting to do the work to repair the damage.
 - We put in a silk curtain and eco blocks with sandbags to keep the water separated to lower the turbidity. We de-watered and de-fished the area where we would be working to protect the fish life.
 - The crews did an amazing job using two excavators to create a zip line for these eco-blocks to get them under the bridge.
 - We shot-crete the wall to stabilize.
- 2022 Patch Paving – Lentz, Olson, Sykes
 - Finished Lentz for patch paving this year. Next is Olson Road and we hope to get to Sykes Road before the rains come back. Patch paving had a very late start due to the emergency projects listed above.
 - Fortunately, our budget doesn't lose the patch paving funding if it's not used during the current fiscal year. It'll either go into the carry-over or reprogramed for next year's paving budget.

- We did try to go out to bid for paving, but only one stripping bid (no paving) was received so we were unable to get that lined up for this summer. We will probably go out to bid again next year to help us do contracted paving to make sure we can get more accomplished. We got good feedback from potential bidders about how to restructure our bid for a better turnout next year.
- 2022 Paint Striping – Late start due to material shortage, 9.6.22
 - Sabrina would like to get a cost comparison of what is costs for in house striping vs. contracting out. The bid we did receive gave us a good idea of what the prices would be., but we did not move forward with the bid this year as we didn't receive a paving bid to go with it.
 - We did not get our paint due to material shortages until August this year. We did get 4-5 totes of yellow paint. We are focusing on some of our major routes. We are going to order paint earlier to help fix this issue in the future.
 - Typically, it takes us two months to get through the roughly 300 miles of road we stripe each summer.
 - Approximately get 25 miles done in one day depending on the complexity of the road.

New Business: Michael Russell

- 2022-23 Budget Review
 - The 22-23 was passed. There were no major changes to our budget for this year. We are trying to catch up on our deferred maintenance. We did invest in four new dump trucks and one loader/mower. We were told we would have them in October. These are under the lease agreement to lease them to own.
- Public Works Staffing Update
 - Mike Whitfield left the County for the City of Madras in July. We just performed interviews for the Assistant Director position this week. We haven't made an offer yet, but Mike Russell will be checking references and hopefully making an offer this next week.
 - It is very difficult to get experienced PEs to work for the County, as we don't have competitive enough wages to be desirable enough to work here with that experience/education.
 - We have talked about getting an on-call engineer to be paid hourly for services so we can have a resource in case of emergencies.
 - The duty of the next assistant director is to implement the rest of the fleet maintenance plan that Mike Whitfield started. The software has been purchased and downloaded. The equipment is starting to be entered and given QR codes. Mechanics are using the program already. The next task is to get the staff trained up once the new assistant director starts.

Round Table Discussion:

- Rosemary Lohrke: Concerned on Scappoose Vernonia about visibility near the Ruley trailhead side going towards Scappoose. It's a heavily used area and those trees/vegetation needs to be cleared to make this area safer.
 - Mike Russell said we have a wide right of way there, so he thinks this is feasible.
- Andrew Niemi: Discussed the homelessness issue in Columbia County. Feels we need to find a way to be empathetic but also not allow it on our county roads.

- Mike Russell: We have a team between the Sherrif's office and Land Development Services to help combat abandoned vehicles and homeless camps. We are getting those vehicles removed. We do have ordinances to help with the homelessness issue.

Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 19, 2023.

A motion to adjourn was made by Pat LaPointe, seconded by Andrew Niemi. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 11:12 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tori Coy