

**Minutes of Meeting  
November 7, 2024 9:00 AM  
3012 Island Ave.  
La Grande OR  
Virtual MS Teams**

**Members and Alternates present:**

Nolan Perkins, Barry Murphy, Commissioner Jeff Wenholz, Brandon Hammond, Byron Smith, Aaron Palmquist, Commissioner Dan Dorran, Tom Fellows, Commissioner Paul Anderes, Doug Wright, Kyle Carpenter, Commissioner Susan Roberts, Jacob Cain, Robert Strobe, Larry Wightman, Dani Schulte, Mavis Hartz, Kane Lester, Steven Burkett

**Guests Present:**

OTC Commission Jeff Baker, Lisa Brown, John Doherty, Justin Walker, Jane Kerr, Andy Lindsey, Courtney Crowell, Wade Rynearson, Kim Curley, Sandra Alexander, Wade Rynearson

**ODOT Staff:**

Ken Patterson, Sean Maloney, Michelle Owen, Angie Jones

**Opening Meeting:**

- Commissioner Susan Roberts called the meeting to order
- Roll call of voting members – Quorum present
- Announcements: N/A
- September Minutes: Motion made by Commissioner Anderes to approve, Seconded by Tom Fellows. Approved.

**Public and/or Stakeholders Comments:** None

**Presentations:**

**HB 2985 Equity Guidance for ODOT Advisory Committees**-Lisa Brown, ODOT

- Effective January 1, 2022-HB2985 Directs ODOT to diversify committees to reflect Oregon's population (racial, ethnic and ability)
- Discussion of "blind spots" watched brief video presentation
- Reviewed how committees currently meet/don't meet statewide diversity, noting that many committees lack racial diversity and representation of those under 25 years old.
- Continue to make meaningful progress towards diverse committees
- Questions/Comments from attendees
  - Commissioner Dorran asked if multiple categories are counted if a member fills more than one category and how to increase representation on the committee. The response was that a member could count toward multiple diversity categories. Ms. Brown suggested that as new member are added to the committee care should be taken to recruit from a broader range of people.

## North East Area Commission on Transportation (NEACT)

- Dani Schulte and Commissioner Roberts asked what the repercussions were if diversity goals were not met. Ms. Brown stated that she had not heard of any.
- Aaron Palmquist stated that this was a “back door” to affirmative action. He expressed concern that our committee diversity numbers could be used against Region 5 in the future.
- Ken Patterson stated that Region 5 will continue to serve the communities we are in and take opportunities, when presented, to diversify the committee

### **Dam Removal on the Lower Snake River Update-Ken Patterson**

- Ken was appointed as ODOT’s representative to this Committee
- Recently participated in a USDOT workshop in Lewiston, ID
  - Make case for salmon recovery efforts
  - Define commodity volumes and modes
  - Explore alternatives to Port of Lewiston
- Discussion of the 6 Sovereign Agreement (Nez Perce, CTUIR, Warm Springs Reservation, Yakama Reservation, Oregon, Washington) put in place by the Biden Administration which pauses litigation related to the dams and tribal treaty fishing rights while options are considered.
- Working Groups were formed to explore the impact of dam removal on Energy, Irrigation, Recreation and Transportation.
- Topics discussed included:
  - Fish Population and habitat health
  - Tour of the McCoy Elevator
  - Discussion of potential funding programs for alternate modes of transportation
  - Discussion of potential transportation projects in Washington and Oregon
  - Tour of Wallowa County projects
- The Transportation Workshop looked at the commodities (wheat, fiber, etc) that move above Pasco and the volumes of those commodities
  - 50% of US exported wheat moves on the Lower Columbia and Snake Rivers-13.3 metric tons
  - Approximately 300 barges /year are at Lewiston
  - 1 barge tow=14 unit trains=538 semi-trucks
- Potential Oregon Projects include:
  - Buford Grade length restriction
  - Minam Grade climbing land
  - WURR upgrade and grain storage
  - Hwy 334 and Hwy 335 Length Restrictions
  - OR37 Length Restrictions
  - Lower Columbia storage and capacity improvements
- Next Steps include:

## North East Area Commission on Transportation (NEACT)

- Commodity Flows Report due in December (what would change without the Port of Lewiston)
- US Army Corp of Engineers study for OR/ID
- Alternatives Analysis due in 2026
- Benefit/Cost Analysis to see if dam breaching is viable
- Questions/Comments:
  - Ports may need increased storage capacity
  - Finding CDL certified drivers for additional semis would be a challenge
  - In 2025 they will be looking at how to move commodities economically considering the impacts of additional costs to do so

### **Standing Items & Reports:**

- Region Updates-Ken Patterson, Region 5 ODOT
  - Winter is coming and level of service should be the same as last year.
  - ODOT Motor Carrier and OSP are conducting an informational chain inspection in November on I-84
  - Working to allow locals through on some road closures
  - Traffic signal work in Pendleton has resulted in the reinstatement of the signal at Court & Dorian.
  - Had a public meeting in John Day about the removal of the signal there. Public outreach resulted in leaving the signal in place
  - Legislature is working to resolve the HB2017 designated large project shortages
  - Heather Johnson was hired as the R5 Safety manager
- Joint Committee on Transportation to Region 5, Ken Patterson
  - Ken noted that the meetings wrapped up earlier this fall and will be beneficial to legislative representatives as they develop the upcoming budget.
  - OTC Commissioner Jeff Baker stated that transportation funding is a priority for Governor Kotek
  - Ken noted that there were maintenance needs across the state and that is a focus
  - The next OTC meeting is scheduled for December 4, 2024
- Small Cities Allotment/Local Projects-Michelle Owen, ODOT
  - All scoring for the SCA grant were sent to Salem; SCA eligible cities are those with a population of 5,000 or less.
  - R5 will have 5 grant awards with a potential for a 6<sup>th</sup> Number of awards is based on a percent of number of eligible cities in the region, number of grant applications received and the percent of total eligible population by region.
  - The next SCA grant round begins in March

## North East Area Commission on Transportation (NEACT)

- 8 local bridges are being scoped for the next STIP cycle
- Current Construction Projects- Sean Maloney, Area Manager ODOT
  - Sean reviewed a number of current projects
  - Noted that the construction season is winding down for the year
- Regional Solutions Team-Courtney Warner-Crowell, EORST
  - Regional priorities around building economic strategies
  - Great Eastern Oregon-2 meetings to identify things statewide:
    - Housing
    - Community Resilience-energy
    - Infrastructure-broadband
    - Community assistance with drinking water and wastewater treatment infrastructure
- City/County/Tribal/Transit Updates-City/County/Tribal/Transit Representatives
  - Dani Schulte-CTUIR -noted that CTUIR would be updating their local safety plan
  - Doug Wright-Union County- provided an update on the *ConnectOregon* grant at the airport noting that the fuel tanks are on site and the next phase is hangar construction
  - Aaron Palmquist-Irrigon-noted that the SRTS project was complete and had a drone fly over
  - Tom Fellows-Umatilla County-noted that work was progressing on the Thorn Hollow Bridge replacement, but there are more to do in the upcoming STIP
  - Mavis Hart-Bike/Ped-stated that the SRTS infrastructure grants would be selected this month. She encouraged the road departments to prepare the bike lanes for winter as well as the roadways.
  - Commissioner Roberts-Wallowa County-noted that they were preparing for winter and noted that an EV charger has been installed on the south side of the courthouse
  - Commissioner Anderes-Union County- stated that he is working with a group to secure additional jet fuel for eastern Oregon; the City of Elgin is needing to improve their school crossing; Union County has a new Commissioner starting in January-Jake Severt
  - Angie Jones-ODOT Transit-She said that the Seaside Transit conference was well attended; She noted that agencies are working on their STIF funding; She added that hopefully the Morrow County transit loop will be running by January.
  - Steve Burkett-Freight Rep-No new updates

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55am.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 2, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,  
Michelle Owen, R5 Local Agency Liaison