

**Northwest Area Commission on Transportation
Meeting Minutes
June 13, 2024**

The meeting was called to order at 1:00pm by Chair Thompson. NWACT Members in Attendance are denoted with an asterisk:

Clatsop County

Commission (v) **Lianne Thompson***
 Commission (a) **Terry Hendryx***
 Large City (v) **Elisabeth Adams***
 Large City (a)
 Small City (v) **Steve Wright***
 Small City (a)
 Citizen-at-Large **Kathy Kleczek***
 Citizen-at-Large **John Nygaard***

Columbia County

Commission (v) **Casey Garrett***
 Commission (a) Mike Russell
 Large City (v)
 Large City (a) **Dave Sukau***
 Small City (v) Bob Brajcich
 Small City (a) **Scott Jorgenson***
 Citizen-at-Large **Rosemary Lohrke***
 Citizen-at-Large **Betsy Johnson***

Tillamook County

Commission (v) **Doug Olson***
 Commission (a) **Chris Laity***
 Large City (v) Aaron Burriss
 Large City (a) **Nathan George***
 Small City (v) **Lianne Welch***
 Small City (a) **David McCall***
 Citizen-at-Large
 Citizen-at-Large **Patrick McHugh***

Washington County

Commission (v) **Jerry Willey***
 Commission (a) **Stacy Shetler***
 Large City (v)
 Large City (a) Jolynn Becker
 Small City (v) **Marsha Kirk***

Small City (a)
 Citizen-at-Large Don Odermott
 Citizen-at-Large Vacant

Transit Districts

Columbia Co (v) **John Dreeszen***
 Columbia Co (a)
 Clatsop Co (v) **Debbie Boothe Schmidt***
 Clatsop County (a) **Craig Johnston***
 Tillamook Co (v) Mary Johnson
 Tillamook Co (a) **Brian Vitulli***

Ports

Port of Astoria (v) Frank Spence
 Port of Astoria (a) Will Isom
 Port of Columbia Co (v) Nancy Ward
 Port of Columbia Co (a) **Sean Clark***
 Port of Tillamook Bay (v) **Michele Bradley***
 Port of Garibaldi (a) Mike Saindon

Others in attendance:

Grant DeJongh, Washington County
 Jayson Buchholz, ODOT
 Gerry Gitzen, public comment
 Rye Baerg, ODOT
 Stephanie Millar, ODOT
Melyssa Graeper, ODEQ & RST
Mark Buffington, ODOT
Bill Jablonski, ODOT
 Kristi Ward, Wauna
John Boren, ODOT

*Members denoted with asterisks were in attendance.

Item 2: Consent Calendar

April 2024 Minutes were reviewed. Casey Garrett motioned to accept the minutes and Lianne Welch seconded; passed unanimously.

Public Comment: Sean Clark, Executive Director of the Port of Columbia spoke to provide clarify a few points made in a letter received by the NWACT from the Columbia Riverkeepers. As most members of the NWACT know the Port owns and operates the Beaver Dock at Port Westward. Built in 1942, the dock is over 80 years old and was built to support the WWII effort with over 1600 wood piles, although overbuilt to accommodate railcars with ammunition. Senate Bill 1567 requires the Port to complete seismic studies to the dock facilities. Because the existing tank farm is tied to our dock along with a pipeline, we need to complete a full scale study due to possible soil liquification. The Port has applied to the ODOT Connect Oregon funds to address this issue.

The Columbia Riverkeepers letter says that PGE will not use the dock. However, PGE Business Development has told the Port that while it is not currently using the dock they wish to preserve their rights to use the dock in the future. Global Partners is using Berth 1, and we need to strengthen the connection to Berth 2. This design and engineering work is needed to address the seismic requirements of SB 1567 and is not tied to the NEXT Renewable project.

Chair Thompson inserted that these comments pertain to Agenda Item #5, Connect Oregon 9.

ODOT Construction Updates: Chair Thompson noted that we were unable to get the comments out in advance of the meeting; however, there were hard copies of the ODOT Project Updates that had been distributed.

Tillamook County Updates: Dan Olson stated that Chris Layety had been held up because of field visit, and asked to bring this agenda back when he arrived. The main topic of concern in Columbia County is the condition of off-highway arterial roads, particularly Apiary and the Scappoose Vernonia Road. Detours when these roads are not passable are quite long.

Item 3: ODOT 2025 Maintenance & Operations Funding

Chair Thompson introduced Savannah Crawford, ODOT Region 2 Manager to the NWACT. Savannah expressed her appreciation for being present at the meeting and described that she split her work time between Eugene and Salem. She continued by describing that there were two main things she wanted to communicate. First, that she wants to be a resource for the NWACT and everyone in Region 2 by being present. Secondly, she wanted to provide a presentation on ODOT's funding challenges and opportunities related to Safety, Maintenance, and Operations. Lianne Welch asked if Savannah could also provide an update regarding the upcoming Legislative Joint Transportation Committees meeting in Tillamook in the coming week. Savannah continued with a PowerPoint with following key points:

ODOT Priorities:

- Service Functions
- Safety System Investments
- HB 2017 Commitments

ODOT Striving to:

- Maintain state highways, roads, and bridges

- Ensure a Safe System
- Develop a connected Multi-Modal System

Structural Challenges:

A Tale of Two Budgets

- Transportation Projects and Programs
- Maintenance and Operations

State Highway Fund Revenue Mechanics

- Gas Tax
- Motor Carriers
- DMV Fees

Savannah went on to discuss in some detail the challenges facing the revenue picture which included:

- Fuel Tax Revenue Decline
- Reliance on a few sources of revenue
- Rigid Statutory Structure
- Rise of Record Inflation

Savannah then described potential new sources of revenue:

- Index all revenue sources to inflation
- Gas tax
- Road Usage Charge
- Motor Carrier
- DMV Fees
- Tolling
- General Fund
- EV Registration

There was a general discussion between members of the ACT about the efficacy of Road Usage Fees in relationship to existing gas tax system. A discussion occurred about how to not reduce the incentives to the expansion of electrical vehicles.

Chair Thompson thanked Savannah for her presentation and looked forward to working with her on solving these difficult questions to effectively maintain our transportation system.

Item 4 Oregon Legislature Joint Transportation Listening Session -

There was only a brief discussion on this agenda topic, and a reminder for the region to work together to help ensure successful funding for maintenance and priority projects.

Item: 5 - ODOT Connect Oregon 9 Project Review

Caroline Crisp shared a slide deck that outlined the four projects, the Connect Oregon mission, process, and instructions for NWACT members in prioritizing project at this meeting. The four projects for Connect Oregon 9 are all Marine projects. Caroline described each one in detail.

- Port Westward Beavert Dock Modernization Project
- Pier 2 West Rehabilitation & Lift Replacement
- Pacific Seafood Warrenton Fuel and Ice Dock Repair

- Columbia River Bar and Coastal Wave Safety Technology

Liane Welch was asked if there had been an opportunity for applicants to make presentations during the scoring. Caroline described that in an effort to level the playing field that presentations were not included in for the cycle of the Connect Oregon 9 grants. The intent was to rely upon the applications and material presented by the applicants.

Betsy Johnson – described the Columbia River Bar Pilots application and how critical this project was for the entire Columbia River Freight System. She noted that the stand-alone application does not do the project justice.

Commissioner Thompson – noted that she recognized the importance of the project but simply wondered if this project should be funded from another source.

Betsy Johnson – continued to describe that federal funding had been sought but there had been no action, and so other sources of funding was being sought to make the Columbia Bar safe.

John Boren – described the decision-making criteria for the Connect Oregon 9 project.

Commissioner Thompson – noted that we were looking for clear and objective criteria is what we're looking for in some many programs she hoped there would be.

Michelle Bradly – noted that we must judge applicants on the work they submit.

There was a discussion of the merits of relying upon the applications or combining applicants with presentations. Commissioner Thompson suggested to ODOT staff that they provide an opportunity for applicants to get assistance in filling out their applications.

Caroline introduced the idea of rank choice voting to help prioritize project if there was not immediate consensus. Commissioner Olson – said he had done a lot of these processes and he had never seen where Fire, Life, Safety is a prime concern. John Boren noted that there are statutory criteria, but that the NWACT can use Fire, Life, Safety within the larger context to develop a ranking.

Tony Hyde explained that our charge is to rank the projects, not rank the process.

John Boren described the additional input that would be considered by the Final Review Committee. After the Final Review Committee's recommendation goes to the Oregon Transportation Committee Commission in October. John also described additional opportunities for applicants to participate by attending the Super ACT meeting.

Commissioner Thompson asked if the NWACT was ready to recommend the projects as is or would like to rearrange the ranking. Commissioner Garrett suggested a raised hand process. Betsy Johnson suggested how much funding is available to be strategic in our rankings.

There was a discussion about ranked voting by email. Sarah Lu suggested that we have the vote know to respect people who have attended this meeting and have had the benefit of this discussion. It was agreed that voting members would use the project matrix to cast their votes, which would be picked up and calculated in the room with the votes announced at the end of the meeting.

Voting concluded and the following voting results were announced:

1. Columbia River Bar and Coastal Wave Safety Technology
2. Port Westward Beavert Dock Modernization Project
3. Pacific Seafood Warrenton Fuel and Ice Dock Repair
4. Pier 2 West Rehabilitation & Lift Replacement

NWACT Business/Member Updates

Member Update was shorted due to length of the ODOT Region 2 and Connect Oregon 9 Presentations.

Discussion regarding the Banks Fire Department – Blinking Light – on Highway 26. Bill Jablonski described the project concept and the steps necessary to move forward and funding.

There was a brief discussion about Transportation Legislation in the forthcoming 2025 Legislation Session. Senator Weber said we need to continually remind people we are here, people are discussing “the Bridge” and eastern Oregon, and other major projects, but they aren’t talking about the huge influx of visitors to the NW Coast or the necessary maintenance funds. Commissioner Thompson asked Senators Weber’s help for the NWACT to efficiently work with our legislators.

Bill Jablonski acknowledged a successful 6.5-million-dollar grant for improvements in Tillamook County.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.