STIF Advisory Committee meeting minutes on 8-31-18

**Introductions:** David Ross - Community Connection, Jeannie Vice-TAC member, Connie Guentert - Community Connection, Susan Roberts - County Commissioner, Caprice Locke - Wallowa County Grants Coordinator/PTAC member

**Elect Officers:** Caprice nominated Susan Roberts as the Committee Chair with a second from Jeannie, all in favor & passed. Susan nominated Tasha Tanzey as Vice Chair, David seconded, all in favor & passed. Susan took control of the meeting as chair.

**Agenda item #3:** Explain STIF Program and Funding

Connie Guentert explained what the STIF program is and that it is supported by employee taxpayer funds in Wallowa County. This is county funds that will be contracted out to a public transportation provider; Community Connection is currently the only public transportation provider in Wallowa County. The first year projections, 6 months, is $50,000, and then each year a minimum flooring amount of $100,000. Connie explained that larger counties across the state will contribute to minimum flooring counties across that state. There is an aggressive timeline to this project as the first round of grant submission is November 1st, 2018. Since these are Wallowa County funds, the grant must be approved and submitted by the county. This includes plan/grant approval by the County Commissioners after this committee has approved it. The County Commissioners last meeting before the grant due date is October 15th so the grant will need to be in the commissioner’s office the week before so they have time to review, reject or approve. Caprice and Susan will work together to submit the grant.

Connie asked for any questions. Caprice asked if there were specific uses for the funding. Connie stated there are very specific requirements, these funds can’t supplant any existing funding, 1% student requirement serving grades 9-12, creating or expanding transportation services, and serving low-income populations. Any other questions?

Susan stated that it was time to review the material Connie provided for all committee members. Material provided includes OARS, STIF rules, and Committee by-laws. Susan stated that the by-laws will need to be adopted by the committee and will drive how the committee operates. Connie stated that ODOT will ask about how we determine low-income, Connie stated that the entire Wallowa County meets the low-income definition. Jeannie asked what does the minimum grant county mean? Susan explained that some of the grants that the state hands out is based on population, and you have to meet a certain population amount for there to be more money. We don’t get anywhere near the population size, so we always know that at a minimum, we will receive the flooring amount. Which means that we are on the minimum flooring list and are always assured that we will receive that amount if the funds are there.

**Agenda item#4:** Susan had the committee review the by-laws including the STIF requirements that must be included in the by-laws. Connie included all necessary documentation for committee members and each member has a packet. Susan informed the committee that the by-laws may be amended as this committee progresses. Susan asked for a motion to approve the by-laws as presented. Jeannie seconded, no further discussion, unanimously approved.
**Agenda item #5: Public Outreach Meetings and Schedule**

Susan reviewed the meeting schedule with committee members, and explained that we need to ensure that we do our work properly, to include public meetings. Connie explained that the dates are tentative but we must follow county procedure and the advertising is important. Caprice asked if Connie would provide the wording for the advertisement. Connie stated that the advertisement can follow the STF guidelines as long as verbiage is added concerning the STIF requirements of low-income, students, and such. Susan suggested that Connie facilitate the public meeting advertisement as Stacey Fregulia is in the midst of some large projects at this time. Caprice asked about the advertising timeline before the meeting is held. Connie stated that the amount of meetings held is aggressive, and that there is advertising timelines that must be met. The meeting schedule was reviewed to ensure that there was enough advertisement. After review, it was determined that the first set of meetings would need to be adjusted as there was not enough time for advertisement. Susan suggested using the Observer for advertising as it comes out 3 times per week. Connie stated that the amount of meetings being held were above the required amount but she wanted to ensure that any person who wanted to attend, they had more than one opportunity. Meeting schedule was set, and Connie asked for committee members attendance. Members stated what meetings that they could attend. Caprice asked if there has been any feedback yet from riders. Connie informed the committee that Angie Peters, Union County Transit Manager, had developed an online version of a transportation survey which CCNO-Wallowa out on their Facebook page this week. Angie hasn’t received any feedback, nor had we. We are ensuring that there are alternative formats available. Jeannie asked if a public mailing be appropriate. Connie and Susan both stated that our timeline is so short it wouldn’t be feasible but is a great idea for future survey’s. Connie stated that she used ODOT’s public engagement guidelines that are specific to the STIF funding/grant. Jeannie offered assistance with flyers or posters by posting them in local cities. Susan stated that she could attend the meeting on the 20th as a committee member, and possibly the Lostine meeting at 12:00.

**Agenda #6: Additional Discussions**

Connie introduced the transit survey that she has been working on, and she wanted to keep the survey simple. Connie asked for input on the questions and asked for suggestions. Susan suggested adding, “Do you live in a city, and yes, which one” as questions. Jeannie asked about the wheelchair van’s and if that would be an appropriate question in regards to needs. Connie stated that all our vehicles are handicap accessible. Susan asked about the Student access, what are we trying to elicit from the survey. Connie stated that we are using open questions to get as much information from riders as possible. Additionally, this survey is for the entire biennium, not just the next 6 months. Susan stated that the nice thing about this funding is that we can have carry-over for future projects or operational costs, we are not mandated to spend all of the funding each year. A conversation ensued concerning the timeline when STIF will be funded, the date is constantly changed. Susan began to explain the collection process and the issues that the County is facing when trying to send payment. The mechanism is not yet set up by the state to collect the funds when employers are sending in the tax. Discussion ensued concerning collection of taxpayer funds. Conversation came back to the survey and what questions needed to be expanded. Susan stated that she wants a step on, step off trolley. Caprice explained that one thing that she saw was a problem; if students went to a school in a city that they don’t live in, and the buses don’t stop. David discussed how the Enterprise bus picks ups kids from Crow’s Store in Lostine and now the store is closed. The kids are now waiting about 20 minutes outside in all kinds of weather. Jeannie asked
about using the funds for bus shelters. David said that we can use the funds for shelters. Connie explained that the student requirement is only 1% of total funding, so the first year is $500. And years following will be $1000. What many of the providers/QE’s are offering are reduced fare passes for students. If we use go this route, we meet the definition. Conversation continued on to clarify what students meet the requirements, which is the students in grades 9-12. Jeannie asked about the outlying communities of Imnaha and Troy and how transportation service can be used. Susan stated that we can discuss this as the committee continues to meet. Troy school is in jeopardy of closing due to the lack of students and funding but this is an ongoing county discussion. Outlying communities have always been on transits radar and CCNO has tried a once a week bus service to Imnaha without any success. However, this is a worthwhile discussion and we can hold a public meeting in Imnaha to get resident input. Susan stated that as we progress with the STIF program and funding, the committee can make a trip to the outlying communities and gather public input.

Susan called for an adjournment with the motion seconded. Before closing, Connie discussed future meetings after public information gathering.

Minutes respectively submitted by: Connie Guentert

Minutes approved on 10-4-18 at public STIF Advisory Committee meeting.