

SIERRA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
P. O. BOX 98 – DOWNIEVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95936

COMMISSIONERS

SHARON DRYDEN –CHAIRMAN
PAUL ROEN
PETER W. HUEBNER
JOY MARKUM

PAUL CUETO -VICE CHAIR
JERRY GEROW
DARLENE RIEDE
TERRY LEBLANC, COUNTY ALTERNATE

WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 16, 2022
10:00 A.M.

SIERRAVILLE SCHOOL
SIERRAVILLE, CALIFORNIA

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. by Chair Darlene Riede.

Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Dryden; Huebner; Roen; Gerow; Cueto; Riede

Commissioners Absent: Markum

A Quorum was established.

Staff Present: Miriam Dines, Executive Secretary; Bryan Davey, Transportation Planner; Tim Beals, Executive Director

Also in attendance – Sandra Loving, President, Golden Rays Senior Citizens

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Commissioner Roen

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Commission Action: Commissioner Roen moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Commissioner Huebner. Motion was carried unanimously by acclamation.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commission Action: Commissioner Huebner moved to approve the minutes of November 17, 2021; seconded by Commissioner Dryden. Motion was carried by acclamation with Commissioner Roen abstaining.

5. Election of 2022 Chair: Commissioner Riede nominated Commissioner Dryden to serve as Chairperson for 2022; Commissioner Roen seconded. The motion was carried by unanimously by roll call.

Commissioner Dryden assumed the chair.

6. **Election of 2022 Vice-Chair:** Chairman Dryden nominated Commissioner Cueto to serve as Vice-Chairman for 2022; Commissioner Huebner seconded. The motion was carried by unanimously by roll call.

Commissioner Huebner thanked Commissioner Riede for her service as Chairman.

7. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:** No announcements were given.
8. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** No public comment was given.

9. **TRANSIT ISSUES**

Mr. Davey explained that this in an important meeting in that the results of the Mid-Year Review, wherein the Sierra County Auditor provides information to predict funding availability for the next fiscal year, are presented. The Commission determines the amount to make available for funding next years program, and after the meeting the two current providers will be notified of the funding availability.

He reviewed the main sources of transit funding including the ¼% sales tax (LTF – Local Transportation Fund) which is for transit purposes only has come in at \$41,545 year to date, with the expectation that it will land at around \$60,000 for this fiscal year. The FTA 5311 funding for rural operations will come in at \$48,000. In addition, there are 2 allocations of COVID funds that can be utilized for operations. Some of the funds were utilized in the current fiscal year, which was the reason that the total amount of funding to the providers was increased to \$147,050 for this current year. Historically we have provided \$108,000 to the program which has been sustainable. The increased amount due to COVID funds will be available for 3 years, possibly a 4th year at this higher level. The COVID funds are available for operations.

Discussion ensued on how the pandemic has affected the providers. Commissioner Dryden spoke for the Incorporated Senior Citizens stating that they've had a big hit this year as they picked up providing meals to residents in Downieville. Mr. Davey emphasized that this is transit only (transporting people) so transporting meals is not transit, and transit funding can only be used for transporting people. One of the concerns of the higher funding levels due to COVID is developing a dependence on a higher amount when it is in fact finite.

Mr. Davey explained that historically with the lower amounts of funding it was allocated to the two transit agencies in an even split. Last year the Golden Rays presented a budget that did not request an increase and since there is provision to allow for variance in the allocated amounts the Inc. Seniors had an increased allocation.

Ms. Sandy Loving, President of Golden Rays reported that at the current time the Golden Rays are staffed at one driver again and only driving 1 van at a time. She stated that the big hit this year was the audit which cost \$5,000.00 just for the one year. It cost \$1,000.00 to have the taxes prepared. These are large expenses for a small program. The Transit Van has been very busy with the one driver. Covid protocols are still in place which she noted is a federal requirement and is in the current Sierra County Health Order for health care settings. There was an uptick of runs last summer getting the PCT hikers out of town to transportation hubs due to the wildfires. Also acknowledge was the COVID funding that was received from the Sierra County Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Davey recommended to the Commission to continue to make \$142,500 available for next fiscal year.

Commissioner Roen suggests reducing the available amount in order to soften the landing when the COVID funds are not available in a couple years. Ms. Loving briefly discussed the some of the cost increases in operating.

Mr. Davey reported that in addition to operations, there is capital funding and that the vans/buses are typically replaced on a 4-year cycle. This year a request will be put forth to replace 2 vans. Each agency has a minivan and a cutaway bus (Max 9 passengers).

Commission Action: Commissioner Cueto moved to authorize \$130,000 for the operations of the transit program for the next fiscal year; seconded by Commissioner Huebner. Motion was carried unanimously by roll call.

Miriam Dines discussed the required Unmet Transit Needs Public Hearing which requires a 45-day public notice. By consensus the hearing was scheduled for 10:10 a.m. on Wednesday, May 18, 2022.

Mr. Davey explained the Federal Transit Administration 5311 application process and authorizing documents as presented in the meeting packet. The FTA 5311 program provides \$48,000 annually toward the transit program. After brief review the following action was taken:

Commissioner Roen moved to adopt a resolution approving the Section 5311 Transit Grant application and authorizing Executive Director to execute application and related documentation including the Programming of Projects (POP) and authorizing County Counsel to execute Certifications and Assurances for Fiscal Year 21 Transit Funding; seconded by Commissioner Huebner. Motion was carried unanimously by roll call.

10. OVERALL WORK PROGRAM

Mr. Davey reported that we are over halfway through fiscal year and work continues to gain approval of the revised OWP. One serious issue that is still pending is the resolution regarding the new Indirect Cost Rate Plan. The County has the plan because the SCTC has no employees and therefore incurs no indirect costs. In researching this situation, it has been identified that two Master Fund Transfer Agreement are in place so there is a possibility that we may be able to invoice directly in order to get the funding.

Gary Arnold of Caltrans District 3 stated that he had talked to Erin Thomson at Headquarters and found that direct billing may not be the avenue to take. Ms. Thompson will begin joining the weekly meetings in order to provide give some guidance on how to proceed with the billing

Commissioner Dryden questioned the status of the re-submitted OWP and Mr. Arnold expressed confidence that it would be approved, that he didn't expect any further revision to be necessary. Any necessary changes will at this point be administrative in nature. He reiterated that the outstanding issue from last year is the Indirect Cost issue, and they will be working to get that situation resolved prior to submitting this year's invoice.

Commissioner Riede moved to approve the revised Overall Work Program for 2021/2022; seconded by Commissioner Huebner. Motion was carried unanimously by roll call.

Discussion ensued about funding staff for Sierra County Transportation Commission. Mr. Beals referenced a document provide in the agenda packet as a quick summary of what anticipated costs would be to provide a staffing to serve the functions of the SCTC either through county staff or hired consultants. The workload exists and for transportation planning the SCTC receives \$125,000 annually for transportation planning. Mr. Beals opined that he prefers staff as opposed to a

consultant and proposes a combination position of 60% Transportation Planner and 40% Engineering Technician funded in a combination of Road and some solid waste funding. Such a position would serve the functionality of the office very well. He stated that if the Commission supported funding for a position, then he would present to the Sierra County Board of Supervisors on March 1, 2022 to request a position. After further discussion the following action was taken:

Commissioner Huebner moved to authorize funding for a staff person as presented; seconded by Commissioner Cueto. Motion was carried unanimously by roll call.

11. CALTRANS REPORT AND OTHER TRANSPORTATION DISCUSSION/DIRECTION ITEMS AND UPDATES

A fuels reduction program for State Highways was discussed. Mr. Beals noted that he had received information regarding a fuels treatment program along State Route 49, however was troubled that he had had no contact from Caltrans regarding the program and had to reach out in order to find out what was going on with the program. He raised questions regarding how the bid documents might be prepared with regard to computing acreage on 40, 50, and 60% slopes and pointed out that the County is sensitive to the need for coordination around fuels treatment programs in the county and reiterates the need for communication and coordination between Caltrans and the local agency so a project might have an improved probability of success. Commissioner Roen noted that he had been contacted by a potential bidder because they couldn't identify the parameters of the right of way. His opinion is that the project was put out to bid with full expectations of many change orders and extensions.

Mr. Arnold stated that he would get more information on how they developed the bid packet and numbers and will see what comes back from the bid process.

Mr. Roen pointed out that Sierra County has a Master Stewardship Agreement with the Tahoe National Forest and that even the Forest Services was not included in the communication loop for this project. He also identified that landing zones are not identified.

Mr. Arnold stated that he will investigate whether this is considered an emergency contract and will look further into coordination options.

Mr. Beals noted that the purpose for this inquiry was to try to freeze this project in place the County and Caltrans can coordinate on the scope of this project. He is confident that coordination with the County would help Caltrans have a better outcome on this project.

Mr. Davey reported on the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) projects that are being implemented to install guardrail on several county roads. He also reports that the 3 bridge projects are static since last meeting.

Mr. Beals discussed the Rule 20A funds stating the Public Utilizes Commission is putting serious restrictions on the Rule 20 Funds and is trying to clamp down on utility 20A funds that aren't being utilized and allocate them to other communities. He explained that Sierraville, Verdi and Long Valley are served by Liberty Utilities and their reserve for Sierra County is \$600,000 at this time. If a project wanted to be considered or pursued. An area for consideration would be something that is prominently unsightly.

Commissioner Dryden discussed the Smithneck Projects stating that she did a google search for grants to try to enhance the funding for that project and wonders if there is something more that she can do to explore funding options. Discussion ensued regarding grant programs. A number of programs were touched upon during the discussion including State Parks grants such as

Recreational Trails Program, Outdoor Equity Program, Equal Access to Public Lands, Land and Water Conservation grants, as well as the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) grants. Bryan Davey pointed out that the Smithneck project is fully funded and programmed, and it needs to get into the preliminary work and once the project is designed it would be a good time to consider other programs to supplement the funding.

Gary Arnold identified a potential funding opportunity regarding to speed zones and traffic calming. He stated that there will be ongoing coordination with Bryan Davey to make sure the SCTC is informed of funding opportunities and issues.

Darlene Riede reported from the City of Loyalton with regard to the Vault Box that had been damaged, that it had been repaired. She also reported that the speed feedback signs are all working.

12. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for April 13, 2022 at Sierraville School. The meeting after that will be on May 18, 2022 in Sierraville.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Huebner moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Commissioner Riede. Motion was carried unanimously by acclamation.

Chairman Dryden adjourned the meeting at 11:34 a.m.



Sharon Dryden, Chairman
Sierra County Transportation Commission

ATTEST:



Miriam B. Dines, Executive Secretary