

RURAL ROADS OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 12, 2019



Members Present:

Allen Amabisca	David McCoy (alternate)	Gary Virgin
Denny Hruby	Ken Moyle	Lars Wahlstrom
Michael Jamieson	Matt Pihl	
Daniel Morgan (chair)	Doug Riedweg	

Absent:

Michael Lyda (alternate)	Gayle Ostgard
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County Staff Present:

Melissa De Lyser	Sherri McFall	Todd Watkins
Steve Franks	Joe Younkins	
Steve Kelley		

Guests:

Commissioner Jerry Willey

1. Welcome, Introductions and Approval of July 2019 Minutes

Chair Dan Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:31 a.m. Member Pihl moved to approve the July minutes and Member Wahlstrom seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Member Jamieson stated there are regularly items in the minutes that are not followed up on. He requested that we track that in the future. Chair Morgan agreed and indicated that he will take note of them and work with staff to make sure these items come back to future meetings. Steve suggested that we all try to capture those items at the end of each meeting under the regular, last agenda item for every RROMAC meeting: "Confirm Meeting Follow-up (What and Who?) and Set Next Agenda."

2. Guest Comments

There were no guest comments.

3. Division Updates

Capital Project Services (CPS)

Joe Younkens, Division Manager, CPS, shared an update on rural bridge capital projects in the county.

Member McCoy asked which division manages the county's bridge and culvert projects. Joe replied that many projects come out of the needs identified by the Operations and Maintenance Division (Operations) and that the larger projects are delivered by Capital Project Services (CPS). However, some of the smaller projects are handled by the Operations Division. Member Jamieson asked what factors determine whether to replace a bridge with a bridge or culvert. Joe explained that it frequently depends on environmental factors. Todd shared that bridges and culverts used to be built primarily to move the water; today's bridges need to move water but also have strict environmental needs.

Member Jamieson shared that the legislature passed a ditch cleaning bill for farmers which will allow them to remove more material than is currently allowed and place it elsewhere in the floodplain. He commented that farmers may place more material along the berm of existing stream channels to prevent flooding, which could result in increased flow downstream.

Joe discussed the 198th Avenue project. He shared that there are multiple culverts being replaced by two bridges, and we are asking the Board to extend the road closure. Commissioner Willey shared that he'd received a public complaint about that closure and forwarded it to Joe.

Engineering, Traffic and Survey (ETS)

Stacy Shetler was not present.

Operations and Maintenance (Ops)

Todd Watkins shared an update on Operations' activities. He reminded RROMAC that Cornelius Pass Road is closed and discussed some of the recent driver mishaps regarding the detour. He shared a story of a Walmart truck that got stuck in a curve. Multnomah County will now be flagging certain intersections along the detour with extended hours to try to avoid this.

Chair Morgan indicated that the traffic detoured for Cornelius Pass is driving aggressively and suggested sending the Washington County Sherriff's Office out to observe and moderate traffic. Member Amabisca mentioned speed and curve challenges at the detoured intersection of Philips and Helvetia Roads has difficulties, and asked if Washington County can place signage or safety measures there to advise truck drivers to slow down and be aware of the left turn. Todd replied that he will refer this to Traffic Engineering. He added that the main purpose of all our detour signage is to direct trucks to the highway.

Todd stated that we are trying to identify a solution to re-open a portion of Pottratz Road which has been closed for quite a while due to storm damage. There is some Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land that needs access and the portion of road that we'll be re-opening has

quite a bit of overgrowth, so we'll likely need to get the county surveyor involved.

4. Progress Report on Status of "Road Maintenance Program" Work

Todd indicated that he is working with staff to develop some meaningful and easy to reproduce reports associated with road work and expenditures. He shared a couple of examples but they still need refining.

Member Virgin requested that Tile Flat Road beyond Grabhorn Road to Farmington Road be equipped with reflective buttons. He also asked if the potholes on Narup Road were repaired. Todd stated that he will check and report back to Member Virgin. He reminded that potholes are an issue driven by calls from the public, and asked that RROMAC members call our County "Request Road Service" line at 503.846.7623 to report issues that need attention.

Chair Morgan asked about the Vehicle Registration Fee (VRF). Todd indicated the VRF is being spent primarily on road maintenance and we are using primarily contracted services to spend the extra money.

Member Jamieson thanked Todd for sharing this information and asked if it will be available publically online, saying this would be a fantastic resource to inform the public that the County spends its funds in a strategic manner. Todd thanked Member Jamieson and agreed that it is important to illustrate the work we do in terms of cost. There is a plan to share this information with the public in the future.

Member McCoy asked how contracted work is captured in the summary. Todd indicated that it is all combined into the "Contractor" column, though the work itself is in other categories. Member Jamieson said he appreciates seeing what work the County is doing and suggested that the contractor category be split into work sub-categories.

5. Gravel Roads and Bridge Subcommittee Reports

Bridge Subcommittee: Chair Morgan shared an update. He stated that the subcommittee has been working on how and what factors to weigh in determining the priority of bridge repair/replacement. The number of factors considered is approximately 20; the subcommittee needs to reduce the number of factors and determine how to weigh them.

The subcommittee agreed that a weight limit of 50,000 lbs. is a necessary factor in order to prioritize fire and safety functionality. If a bridge doesn't meet this limit, it will move up the list unless there is a good alternate route. What constitutes a good alternate route is also to be determined.

Member Jamieson stated he thinks the key factors can be easily grouped in major categories and then use the rest as considerations. All factors need to be considered.

Gravel Roads Subcommittee: Chair Morgan shared an update. The subcommittee weighted factors used to assess road surface condition. They also discussed surveying traffic usage. Dan

reported that Brian had stated that he would attempt to assess all gravel roads in the next two months; if this is accomplished, it can be presented to RROMAC.

Chair Morgan thanked both subcommittees for diving into the work.

6. Open Forum – RROMAC Members

Todd recently attended an American Public Works Association (APWA) conference. He shared briefly about advances in Artificial Intelligence/Autonomous Vehicles/Smart Cities. Ford Motor Company is one of the nation's leading investors in autonomous vehicles. He also mentioned 5G technology. 5G is a complex technology that utilizes small cell sites that are much smaller and within hundreds of feet of each other at the street level. It will require the creation of Board policies and an entirely new level of cooperation and coordination between agencies, businesses, and the public.

Member Virgin addressed the 5G topic. He stated that there are still portions of Washington County that have no cell service or internet. He shared concern that the support of rural roads will be reduced in order to increase 5G access in urban areas and stated that there are already rural issues that do not receive attention. Member Virgin stated the issue of no viable north-south corridor to divert traffic from rural roads on the west side as an example.

Commissioner Willey addressed Member Virgin's concerns. He shared that the rural areas of the County are being given more priority than may be realized. Legislation was introduced to provide connectivity to rural areas but did not pass. Regarding a north-south connection, it is a deep issue, and multiple public agencies are in opposition of it. The Board is seeking alternatives to mitigate this issue by strengthening rural roads. Todd indicated that we spend about 40% of our budget on rural roads.

Member Jamieson stated that rural areas provide materials that everyone in the urban areas need to survive. Todd acknowledged this and added that the traffic is not exclusively one-way; rural residents commute to urban areas to work every day. Member Virgin stated he's not faulting the maintenance; he's concerned that rural businesses such as Member Hruby's will suffer because one day he won't be able to get out of his driveway onto Clark Hill Road. Member Wahlstrom stated that the customers at his blueberry picking operation are not his neighbors; they all travel from somewhere else.

Member Moyle asked if the Board is considering policies regarding the emerging technology Todd mentioned. Todd responded that the soonest, most likely example we'll see in Land Use & Transportation is an automated flagger on the road.

Member Amabisca shared his pleasure that the changes at Cedar Hills & Hwy 26 are working as designed. He asked about roundabouts and whether the county is looking at different designs for rural and urban roundabouts. Chair Morgan said he'd planned to add that to an upcoming agenda. Member Amabisca also stated that the liability issue is a huge issue for autonomous vehicles. He commented that drones are coming in sooner than autonomous vehicles.

Chair Morgan suggested that an informational agenda item about roundabouts be included at the next meeting. Member Riedwig asked about roundabouts placed in highly travelled intersections, specifically how cross traffic is expected to utilize the roundabout when there is no break in traffic. Joe replied that his group is observing Farmington and River Road, at which River Road has a high number of north-south traffic and the east-west traffic on Farmington would have difficulty getting in. He continued that they don't know what solution will be decided, but this seems like the same sort of situation.

Member Pihl stated that Chair Morgan's dual perspective as a bicyclist and trucker is a good opportunity and asked how he proposes we manage the cyclist/truck issue. Chair Morgan shared an example of both perspectives and indicated that there is a lot to be learned from both. Member Jamieson asked if there is any cyclist education available. Chair Morgan shared that Portland Velo has an excellent cyclist safety course.

Member Riedwig shared that thunderstorms deposited mud, trash, filberts and water from a neighboring filbert orchard over Riedwig Road and into the field below his house. He believes landowners should be held responsible for creating a situation where the mud overflows the road.

Member Hruby shared that cyclists should be licensed and trained, and should share the road in the same way as motorists. Member McCoy commented that visibility gear should be legally required.

7. Confirm Meeting Follow-Up/Action Items: What and Who?

Potential October or other future meeting topics include:

- Willamette Water Supply Program staff possibly returning for follow-up to their May presentation
- Follow-up from Stacy Shetler regarding Johnson School speed results, Blooming Fern speed, and safety of alternate routes
- Roundabouts in rural areas, including their design
- Pottratz Road update
- Update on surface stabilization dual phase method – is it feasible?
- Motor carrier map accessibility for motorists and truckers

Subcommittee meetings are to be scheduled before the next RROMAC meeting.

8. Meeting Adjourned

Member Jamieson moved to adjourn the meeting. Member Hruby seconded. Members voted to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 9:36 a.m.

Next meeting: Thursday, October 10, 7:30 – 9:30 a.m.
