



Clark County Railroad Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 9, 2023, 4:01pm to 4:51pm
Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin St., 6th Floor BOCC
Training Room and virtual via WebEx

Advisory Board-Present: Dan Weaver, Eric Fuller, Jim Malinowski, Jim Pearson, John Hansen, John Shaffer, Mark Daniels, Mark Herceg, Neil Chambers

Advisory Board-Not Present: Kent Cash, Lloyd Lycan

Clark County Staff and Leadership: Kevin Tyler, Rocky Houston, Denielle Cowley, Sue Marshall

BYCX: Randy Williams, Doug Auburg

PVJR: Nathan Bruce

Guests: Dave Rowe, Jackie Lane, Jeff Stewart, Michael O'Connell, Nancy Halvorson, Nathaniel Boyd, Steve Jagelski

4:01pm Quorum present and meeting called to Order – Dan Weaver

4:06pm December 12, 2022, minutes adopted as amended (Motion by John Shaffer)

4:07pm Election of Officers 2023 - Nominations open for Chair and Vice Chair

- Motion by Neil Chambers to re-elect Dan Weaver as Chair of Railroad Advisory Board, second by Jim Malinowski, all in favor, none opposed
- Motion by Neil Chambers to re-elect John Shaffer as Vice Chair of Railroad Advisory Board, second by Jim Malinowski, all in favor, none opposed

PVJR – Nathan Bruce

- 2022 was 3rd busiest year, behind by about 50 cars, future is bright
- Several potential customers
- Roadbed tie rehab between Fruit Valley and Battle Ground should be finished in about two weeks (new ties, not donated)
- Potential expansion in the future, looking at property
- Not delivering plastic pellets to Andersen Dairy in Battle Ground, potential customers to take over Andersen and take over rail presence, all traffic going to Brush Prairie now, will possibly store pellet cars in between places

BYCX Activities – Randy Williams

- Closed 2022 out, a little under 8,000 passengers for the year, half were last four weeks of year during Christmas
- Will finish putting steam engine's boiler back together, manufacturing their own stay bolts due to supply issue, mechanic making them himself now, leak repairs and painting finished – hopefully see it out on Father's Day weekend
- Winery still for sale along railroad tracks, now vacant

- Starting to do maintenance where they need to, small sections
- Working through technicalities of new building. Inflation impacting budget for construction

County Activities – Kevin Tyler:

- RRB 1230 – \$1.5 million grant for track/roadbed rehab work on lower section up to Battle Ground
 - Tentative time for completion is next week, not counting any last minute items found at final walk through, there will be punch list items to address, as of today all ties are in and contractor working on surfacing and tamping with ballast to wrap up, some repairs at crossings to be made
- GCB 3592 - \$2.7 million grant status (Bridge repair and then more roadbed rehab mostly in northern sections)
 - Project Manager working on getting consultants in place to help with getting bridge repair out to bid and someone on board to help with getting roadbed rehab out to bid, started discussions internally about donated ties and talking with WSDOT about grant project and if those can be included
- GCB 1249 - \$500k grant from State of Washington
 - Timeline has been extended through June 2025 which opens up possible extension for \$2.7 million grant (GCB 3592)
- Signal Repairs – St Johns, 72nd, 119th - Contractor here this week to do site visit and hopefully construction will start shortly after that – delay due to flooding in California
- John suggested new agenda item for future meetings to get status updates regarding county improving North Line to meet excepted track status
- Randy asked if current track work will have anything left over to bring to north end: Next two grants, aside from the bridges, are focused on everything north of Battle Ground, scope of 2.7 mil grant is timber trestle bridges 6, 12, 18, 20, 23 and 25, will do priority repairs on those based on last inspection, then roadbed rehab from MP14 northward as far as the money will go, hopefully past Yacolt but depends on pricing and if relay ties work out, 500k grant specifies that it's only to be used on the north line

Comments from Chair

- Sue Marshall introduced herself – family has farmed in Clark County for over 60 years and decided to run as she knew the comprehensive plan update was coming up and is concerned about preserving farmland – she has been watching the railroad and is hoping that communication stays open - her door is always open, area is 159th to freeway and then edge of Salmon Creek and Washington State University, includes Brush Prairie up to Venorsborg, and east from there, and all parts north such as Battle Ground, La Center, Ridgefield, Yacolt, Amboy and a sliver of Woodland – farm is in Ridgefield – District 5
- Dan will draft a letter to council regarding implementation of 5517

Unfinished Business – Dan Weaver

- Update bylaws and county code
 - No progress
 - Code changes need to include keeping seats open for City of Vancouver and Columbia River Economic Development Council – need to be identified so it can be a direct appointment

4:35pm Appointments/Reappointment Recommendations

- Motion to recommend reappointing, Daniel Weaver, John Hansen, and Jim Pearson and appointing Zachary Keith and Gregory Smith to the Railroad Advisory Board, all in favor, none opposed
- Chad Eiken from the City of Vancouver has agreed to commit someone to the RRAB once they have filled a vacant position – in the meantime he will attempt to attend in the interim
- Director of CREDC indicated they are still not fully staffed and could not devote time to it – would appreciate seeing information and agreed to be the contact person until they can provide someone on a more permanent basis

New Business – Dan Weaver

- Eric and Amber concluded we should delay visit to Olympia until there is a topic pertinent to us so we could have a general visit with representatives and support the bill for the tax credits – if anyone wants to go it will probably be short notice

Public Comment – Dan Weaver:

- Dave Rowe – Proposing to request funds from bipartisan infrastructure law for a feasibility study and cost benefit analysis for regional passenger service in SW Washington – Dan Weaver said he spent time going over materials Dave Rowe provided and understands there was a similar request for funds put forward by people who represent Snoqualmie pass (Chair misspoke and Snoqualmie Pass should have been Stampeded Pass) but director of Rail, Freight and Ports for WADOT issued a letter that said “the long journey times, low ridership projections and high costs of construction do not make this route financially or logistically viable. Given these findings it would be impractical for the state to move forward with an investment in this corridor (Seattle to Yakima).” If that is not practical our short corridor with fewer people would be harder to navigate across the river – with other priorities RRAB has on its plate they would not invest a lot of effort into it – Mark could be a sounding board for Dave if he has questions to ask but we cannot devote a lot of time to it – Dave will continue to work on it – John said the RRAB cannot drive this
- Nathaniel Boyd – SPNS 700 volunteer and helps out BYCX – likes hearing discussion in terms of inter-city transit – suggests educating young people about opportunities for rail travel

Good of the Order – Dan Weaver: None

4:51pm Meeting Adjourned

Submitted by Chris Walker

Upcoming Meeting:

Date: February 13, 2023

Time: 4:00pm to 5:30pm

Location: Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin St., 6th Floor BOCC Training Room and virtual via WebEx