



Clark County Railroad Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 11, 2025, 4:00pm to 4:56pm
Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin St., 6th Floor BOCC
Training Room and virtual via Microsoft Teams

Advisory Board-Present: Dan Weaver, Dave Rowe, David Millar, Jerry Jacobus, Jim Malinowski, Jim Pearson, John Hansen, John Shaffer, Mark Daniels, Mark Herceg, Neil Chambers, Terry Gardner

Advisory Board-Not Present: Eric Fuller, Gregg Smith, Zach Keith

Clark County Staff and Leadership: Kathleen Otto, Kevin McDowell, Kevin Tyler

Battle Ground, Yacolt, Chelatchie Prairie Railroad (BYCX): Randy Williams not present – Emailed notes to Kevin Tyler

Portland Vancouver Junction Railroad (PVJR): None Present

Guests: Kim O'Hara, Maggie Derk, Marvin Mathison, Michael O'Connell, Nancy Halvorson

4:00pm Quorum present and meeting called to Order – Dan Weaver

4:06pm June 9, 2025, minutes approved as corrected, attach Kim O'Hara's email to minutes (Motion by Neil Chambers; Second by Mark Daniels).

Comments from the Chair – See statement at end of minutes, Dan also commented on the email Jeff Cox sent in response to Kim O'Hara's email regarding public comment at the last meeting: Jeff said, "All great points and is a theme that carried through the RRAB since its inception almost 10 years ago." Dan said the RRAB was formed in 1995, which is far more than 10 years ago. It's 30 years ago. Jeff said, "The RRAB needs to be disbanded and reconstituted with a different mission statement from 'promote the railroad at all costs' but to one of balanced consideration to the county, public needs, environmental needs, and railroad needs." Dan said if you recall, we went through the process of redoing the mission and the statement in the county records and everything within the last two years was all accepted, approved, legally and brought in front of the County Council, who voted on approving it. So it has been approved in the last two years, and it includes many of those things. And then it (Jeff's email) goes on to talk about the fact that we're just a puppet of the operator, and I want to put on the record that I have not spoken to a representative, either the operator or a representative of his, in the last 12 months. So we are not operating under his guidance, and we are not in any way shape or form condoning any violations that he is doing in the work that he's doing on the railroad. Kim O'Hara responded: I just wanted to comment that my intention in sending out my clarification of my comments that were summarized for the minutes were not intended to produce a response like what Jeff Cox did. I am not in contact with Jeff Cox, so my intention was not to stir up a hornet's nest with you, Dan. That was not the intention. We're not trying to go through everything that the Greater Brush Prairie Neighborhood Association went through all those years ago. It's not my intention, so I just want to be really clear. I just wanted to make sure that my comments were fully represented rather than just partially represented. I was not intending to relitigate all of that and to bring it up as a discussion to promote anything. I did not know that Jeff Cox was on that reply. It was just a reply to Kevin about the summary. That was all that my intention was, so I'm not. I'm not trying to stir that up. I just want to be very clear.

Portland Vancouver Junction Railroad (PVJR) – Not present

Battle Ground, Yacolt, Chelatchie Prairie Railroad (BYCX) – Randy Williams (via email to Kevin)

- Update about recent vandalism/trespassing: Installed locking gates on depot deck and added 'no trespassing' signs to equipment based on the recommendations of Clark County Deputy Sheriff Charles Harris. Since then we have seen a decrease in trespassing.
- Electrical issue with Alco S2 engine. Main generator and turbocharger are being removed for rebuild. Need to be shipped to east coast for maintenance.
- Steam engine 1472 hour rebuild is paused, waiting for new FRA Steam engine inspector to check previously work. Virtually all materials are on site.
- Currently using a privately owned 25-ton locomotive and have reduced our consist to two open cars and a caboose.
- Heavyweight coach is stored and is not popular in the summertime.
- DNR invoked industrial fire protection level 2 on July 31st. BYCX started mandatory fire patrol activity; 10 minutes or one mile behind the train. Randy uses speeder and added water tanks for this activity.
- BYCX and PVJR are working on a possible rail speeder excursion of the entire 33 miles of track, tentatively slated for Monday, September 6th. PVJR has been very generous, allowing this activity. Both BYCX and PVJR have approved this activity and the excursion coordinator is waiting for Clark County to submit their approval before final scheduling. The hope is this event will get newspaper attention and garner some positive PR for PVJR and BYCX.
- Unfortunately, on our mid-July run weekend, we were hit by train robbers at our Moulton station area. The passengers enjoyed the shows. The train robbers vowed to return again, August 16th and 17th, so be careful if you're in the area.

County Activities – Kevin Tyler

- Railroad Roadbed Rehab contract and grant update
 - All activities from railroad rehabilitation project are complete and bridge repairs are complete.
 - Currently looking at expenses as there is money left on one of the grants.
 - Worked with DOT to extend grant for another two-year period. Anticipate putting out another bid later this fall for additional track work in Yacolt area.
 - Oliver, the Construction Manager, will attend next meeting and walk through the two projects to show work done, highlight bridge repairs, and highlight some rehab work done.
 - Bridges to repair – Now that bearings on Hwy 99 bridge are painted, Kevin can transmit information to PVJR. PVJR will be responsible for everything south of Heisson, including bridges and track inspections, except for public crossings, which the county will maintain responsibility. Everything north of Heisson will be BYCX's responsibility. When grant funds are available the county will coordinate with both entities, and ultimately hire an independent contractor or consultant to determine the scope of repairs and determine what the bid package looks like.
 - Question if PVJR is required to have fire insurance and Kevin will look into that.
 - Question if things done on the bridge/additional work is directed by someone the county hires to review – Kevin said we hired an outside consultant, HDR, in 2020 to do bridge inspections. They developed a list of priority repairs that were built into the lease with PVJR. Then a follow up bridge inspection was done by KPFF.
 - OTAK evaluated bridges independently and determined necessary repairs.

- Question if there are weight ratings for all these bridges. Kevin said they need to be reevaluated now that repairs are done on some of the timber trestle bridges. They did ratings on everything they could. Bridges 18 and 20 were in such disrepair that they couldn't do load rating analysis. All documents are available to the public.
- Question if there has been any movement on the PVJR issues with the county. Kevin said the county is working through dispute resolution process.
- Lee Contractors has been brush clearing and installing ties and the sub-contractor, American Track, will be doing ballast and surfacing
- Potential bids for 300k of unspent funds

Unfinished Business – Dan Weaver

- Railroad presentation and open house
 - Dan asked if the board is taking into consideration the activity in the US regarding projects and the economy since the election in their evaluation – for example, clean things that people can get behind as this will effect everything for the next three years – Neil said it wasn't addressed and he will send the link to the presentation so the group can decide what to keep/add. Please look at it and have comments before the next meeting so they can be incorporated
 - Need to select a spokesperson
 - Comment saying railroad is a common carrier, so it doesn't have a lot of choice on what is shipped – John said they need to be ready for questions that pertain to what is allowed to be shipped by rail and what types of businesses will be located along the rail – concerned about PVJR and what may be prohibited by the county – Public may ask why regulations don't seem to apply to PVJR – Kevin McDowell (county attorney) said new development and county permitting process would be looked at on a case by case basis. Question if the railroad operator is subject to county laws, rules and regulations – Kevin McDowell said there is a federal law, ICCTA or Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act, and says certain state and local laws are preemptive and not enforceable to the extent that they would interfere with interstate rail commerce – The county can have laws that apply to a particular business but Kevin is not able to answer that in this forum.
 - When the board feels the presentation is ready for council, Kevin Tyler will start the nine-step request for a work session to be approved and schedule. That is when the board will present to council.
 - Board members need to think of tough questions that public will ask and have answers prepared – may need to research answers

New Business – Dan Weaver - None

Public Comment – Dan Weaver

- Kim O'Hara asked if there is a dollar figure of how much money the train has made for the county. This would not include projected tax or projected buildings coming in. Dan said not very much. John said the money being made in the county is in the jobs, taxes, and property getting reappraised for going from agriculture to industrial. The answer the board gets from the county is that the tax revenue and the employment are what make the railroad worth supporting, and that's why the board is here. Kim said that's intangible because that may or may not happen, and as of right now, you don't know. Kevin Tyler said PVJR is a short line railroad that does business in Clark County, and ships so many cars. When PVJR reaches a certain number of cars, the county receives money for that. What he thinks they are talking about is the businesses that use the railroad. They generate a part of the economy in Clark County, and that's what the board is talking about. What is the part of the economy the railroad contributes to and what happens to the economy when the railroad does more business. Kim said that's down the road projections. Kevin said as of right now, they have several

customers, and they ship about 7-8 hundred cars annually. There's revenue generated by that. Dan said the revenue you get per car is peanuts compared to what you can get from creating 100 jobs, 200 jobs, 500 jobs and what you can get from creating a new business on 10 acres, 50 acres, 100 acres, the tax rate is at least four to five to 10 times as much on that property than it is in some other use. Kim said again that is all projections. John said it's not and to look at Omega Industries on St. John's. It is a big company with lots of employees and if the railroad wasn't there, the county would lose all those employees and all that revenue. They pay sales tax on what they buy, pay employers tax on the earnings, and pay property tax on the land they're using. Kim said this is a quantifiable amount that currently exists and that is what she was looking for. Dan said the board has provided lists in the past that shows the number of companies inquiring about property in Clark County that want to bring a business here and how many people it would bring in. There is a number of people who want rail served property and you have to take that and equate it to how many acres they're going to use and how many employers. That's what you get as the revenue and it's tremendous considering the small footprint that goes on there. We've had those inquiries and don't have the property available for them, so they go someplace else. Kim said she knew about the dairy up north but did not know about Omega. There are other businesses as well. The rail also takes three to four semis off the road so there is less traffic. Kim said to remember there is a cost to that.

Good of the Order – Dan Weaver - None

4:56pm Meeting Adjourned (Motion by Jerry Jacobus, Second by John Shaffer)

Submitted by Chris Walker

Upcoming Meeting:

Date: September 8, 2025

Time: 4:00pm to 5:30pm

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

Statement read by Dan Weaver at the August 11, 2025, Railroad Advisory Board Meeting:

THE RAILROAD IS AN IMPORTANT AND VALUABLE ASSET FOR CLARK COUNTY. IT PROVIDES A MEANS TO DEVELOP INDUSTRY ALONG THE RAILROAD TRACKS TO PROVIDE JOBS TO RESIDENTS OF CLARK COUNTY AND TO PROVIDE AN INCREASED TAX BASE FOR CLARK COUNTY TO GROW AND PROVIDE IMPORTANT SERVICES TO ALL RESIDENTS OF CLARK COUNTY.

THE RAILROAD WAS CONSTRUCTED OVER 100 YEARS AGO IN THE CURRENT LOCATION. I DO NOT BELIEVE THERE ARE ANY RESIDENTS ALONG THE TRACKS THAT PURCHASED THEIR PROPERTY OVER 100 YEARS AGO. I AM TRULY SORRY THAT THE RAILROAD IS A NUISANCE TO THE CURRENT OWNERS ALONG THE TRACKS.

JOHN SHAFFER AND I MET, 8 OR 10 TIMES, WITH MEMBERS OF THE GREATER BRUSH PRAIRIE HOMOWNERS' ASSOCIATION TO GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT COULD BE DONE TO MITIGATE THEIR CONCERNS. ESSENTIALLY THEIR SOLUTION WAS TO ELIMINATE THE RAILROAD AND DESTROY A VALUABLE ASSET OF CLARK COUNTY. WE HAVE TRIED TO BE COGNIZANT OF THOSE CONCERNS AND MAKE ADJUSTMENTS TO HELP MITIGATE THOSE CONCERNS. UNFORTUNATELY, THE RAILROAD TRACKS WERE IN THE CURRENT LOCATION WHEN THE PROPERTY WAS PURCHASED BY THE CURENT OWNERS.

THE OWNER/CONTROLLER OF A LARGE PORTION OF THE POPERTY, ADJACENT TO OR NEAR THE TRACKS IN THE BRUSH PRAIRIE AREA, DESIRES TO CONVERT THE PROPERTY TO HIGH TAXPAYING, PRODUCTIVE INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY TO PROVIDE NEEDED INCREASES IN TAX REVENUE FOR ALL THE RESIDENTS OF CLARK COUNTY AND ALLOW HIM TO RELOCATE HIS OPERATION TO A LOCATION WITH ADDITIONAL SPACE TO EXPAND.

THE RAILROAD ADVISORY BOARD HAS ALWAYS BEEN COGNIZANT OF THE EFFECT OF THE RAILROAD ON THE RESIDENTS OF CLARK COUNTY. WE HAVE WORKED TOWARD MAKING THE RAILROAD A SIGNIFICANT REVENUE SOURCE FOR CLARK COUNTY AND ITS RESIDENTS. CLARK COUNTY COULD AND SHOULD BE A MORE DYNAMIC COMMUNITY AND NOT JUST A BEDROOM COMMUNITY TO PORTALND.

DANIEL C WEAVER
AUGUST 2025