

Okanogan Council of Governments/Regional Transportation Planning Organization  
August 8, 2022 – Meeting Minutes - 5:00 pm  
303 S. Second Ave., Suite A, Okanogan, WA

(253) 215 8782; Meeting ID 929 2149 7263; Passcode: 716493; or link:

<https://zoom.us/j/92921497263?pwd=TU1wZktBZHl4S0Y2UHVuMTFIRjY3UT09>

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Present: Jon Neal, City of Oroville, Mayor – OCOG Chairman  
Chris Branch, Okanogan County, Commissioner – OCOG Vice Chairman  
Josh Thomson, Okanogan County, Engineer – OCOG Treasurer  
\*Brent Timm, TranGO, General Manager - OCOG Secretary  
Paula Brantner-Thomas, TranGO, Clerk of the Board  
\*Wayne Turner, City of Okanogan, Mayor Pro Tem  
Jimmer Tillman, Elmer City, Public Works Director  
Chris Scott, Town of Conconully, Council Member  
Kelly Hook, City of Pateros, Mayor  
Barry Freel, City of Omak, Council Member  
Misty Ruiz, City of Brewster, Clerk  
Teagan Levine, City of Tonasket, Council Member (joined at 5:19 p.m.)  
Jennifer Fitzthum, OCTN, Executive Director  
Bobby Watkins, OCTN, Operations Director  
Maurice Goodall, Okanogan County Emergency Management, Director  
Tony Hawley, Okanogan County Sheriff's Office, Sheriff  
Kathy Murray, WSDOT, NCW Planning Manager  
Kate Tollefson, WSDOT, Regional Liaison (joined at 5:09 p.m.)  
Gabe Philips, WSDOT, Regional Planning Manager  
Aren Murcar, SCJ Alliance, Planner  
Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Economic Alliance, Executive Director

\*These attendees participated in-person

### **Call to Order/Welcome**

Chairman Jon Neal called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

**Additions:** None

**Deletions:** None

### **Approval of Minutes – July 11, 2022 – Regular Meeting**

#### **Motion:**

Secretary Brent Timm moved to approve the July 11, 2022 – Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Council Member Jimmer Tillman and passed unanimously.

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**Update: Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Josh Thomson reported he received a \$21,000 bill in July from SCJ Alliance for the CPT-HSTP, which makes an approximate total of \$47,000 spent of the \$60,000 contract. He had nothing to update on OCOG funding.

He also reminded the cities/towns to send him their Transportation Improvement Plans (TIP) if they haven't done so already. He needs to gather this information for the OCOG Regional TIP due in October.

**Update: Secretary Report**

Secretary Brent Timm reported WSDOT requested a Letter of Support for additional funding for rural RTPO's. The information they provided sounded great and appeared to be exactly what OCOG needed, however in looking at the formula they use, OCOG would receive zero additional funding. OCOG was the only RTPO with zero percent increased funding, however, other non-rural areas would receive additional funding. He emailed the state regarding this issue, spoke with Chairman Neal and Treasurer Thomson, and decided not to provide a Letter of Support.

Gabe Philips, WSDOT Regional Planning Manager, stated unfortunately this demonstrates there is not enough funding for the program and the funding formula is broken. He stated the way they must run the funding formula is based in part by population and the number of counties in the RTPO.

Commissioner/Vice-Chair Chris Branch requested that Secretary Timm forward him the email he received from WSDOT regarding this topic.

**Update: Okanogan County Report**

Commissioner/Vice-Chairman Chris Branch had nothing to report.

Okanogan County Engineer/Treasurer Thomson had nothing to report.

**Update: Washington State Department of Transportation**

WSDOT NCW Planning Manager, Kathy Murray, stated they have Planning vacancies to add this month, so be watching for those open positions. They are working on a Complete Streets project and determining where prioritization is. If this happens to fall in our district, she will let us know. She will also be looking at the Freight Plan and how it pertains to the region. In addition, she and Regional Liaison Kate Tollefson have been reviewing the Teams Service Transportation plan.

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WSDOT Regional Liaison Kate Tollefson reported on the following:

- She has been reviewing the draft Transit Development Plan (TDP) from TranGO and draft CPT-HSTP Plan from SCJ Alliance and will send feedback to each agency.
- Regarding the Consolidated Grant Program, applications to WSDOT will be due in October. It is a great time to apply for funding involving transportation.

Chairman Neal asked if there was an update on the Railroad crossing south of Oroville. Planning Manager Murray stated she didn't know of the specific plans but knew they had made some attempts to repair the railroad and it is still on their list to be completed.

#### **County-Wide Emergency Updates/Discussion**

Okanogan County Emergency Management Director Maurice Goodall reported on the following:

- Cities were sent the 2022 Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan to be adopted. They must be signed up under this plan in order to receive mitigation funds.
- They held a fire meeting at the Fairgrounds a couple weeks ago which had a good turnout, approximately 70 people attended. There was good discussion, communication, and networking.
- The County is currently in burn restriction and will soon be progressing to a burn ban.
- There have been a few fires in the area, but nothing drastic. Things are dry, but it still has been cool during the night which has helped.

Okanogan County Sheriff Tony Hawley reported on the following:

- There were recent Covid issues inside the correctional facility, but it is getting better. They had to restrict some bookings to try and avoid infection rate, but they are getting ready to open back up to the capacity they were at a few weeks ago.
- They are gearing up for the Omak Stampede and needed to make some booking adjustments in preparation for this weekend.

#### **Discussion: Economic Alliance – Retail Strategies**

Economic Alliance Executive Director, Roni Holder-Diefenbach, discussed a program called Retail Strategies which focuses on retail recruitment and assisting communities to focus on retail improvement and development. They received a grant from USDA and last year Pateros was selected to participate in the program which has helped them market their community. Oroville and Brewster are also completing a

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program with Downtown Strategies, a division of Retail Strategies. Because of these programs and tool kits provided, it is an opportunity for the community to support all issues in the county.

They have funded 14 communities within the county and on the Colville Reservation and their focus will be to get communities to participate in these programs. These programs are used to identify gaps and leakage, not necessarily solely promoting retail facilities. They can look at how to market vacant buildings and get people/businesses into those buildings. They are aware every area in the county is different and there are unique needs in different areas. Commissioner/Vice-Chair Branch reported the county used ARPA funds to fund this project within the communities and encouraged everyone to participate if possible.

Anyone interested in learning how to develop businesses in your community can participate. The first kick off call is by phone on September 8, 2022, at 9 a.m. The in-person event will be October 18, 2022, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. She will need to know within next couple weeks who is wanting to participate. She provided her contact info: [rholderdiefenbach@economic-alliance.com](mailto:rholderdiefenbach@economic-alliance.com) 509-826-5107 or cell 509-322-4634.

Ms. Holder-Diefenbach also stated that next they will begin a county-wide Project Prioritization Process, which will start August 22, 2022. They will have a workshop for new applicants on September 01, 2022, deadline for submission is September 30, 2022, and presentation will be October 11, 2022. .09 dollars still have a restriction on them. In 2023, the bond payment will be paid off and some additional funding will then be available.

Commissioner/Vice-Chair Branch reported the Prioritization Process was used to consider ARPA funding over this last year. He encouraged everyone who has a project in mind, to make sure their project is prioritized, especially infrastructure.

Chairman Neal asked that Ms. Holder-Diefenbach forward information on these topics to TranGO Clerk of the Board so it can be dispersed to everyone.

**Discussion: 2022 OCOG CPT-HSTP Draft from SCJ Alliance**

SCJ Alliance Planner Aren Murcar reported he developed a preliminary draft of the CPT-HSTP and is seeking any feedback or suggestions regarding specific areas in the plan/draft. He stated recommendations of this plan, which is updated every 4 years, will form what Okanogan County receives from the Consolidated Grant Program.

His target is to get the final draft to WSDOT by the end of this month. He asked everyone to review pages 33-37 of the draft and provide feedback. He would like final comments by Monday, August 15, 2022, and welcomes one-on-one conversations. Contact info [aren.murcar@scjalliance.com](mailto:aren.murcar@scjalliance.com) or 509-724-7116.

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**Discussion: Review of 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the Okanogan Region**

Secretary Timm stated the current 2040 RTP needs to be reviewed and make sure it's up to date or make any needed changes. The RTP is on the OCOG website. A copy of TranGO's draft Transit Development Plan (TDP) was also sent to everyone as it aligns with regional transportation goals as well.

WSDOT Regional Planning Manager Philips stated per RCW 47.80, what's expected from WSDOT is a biennial review of the plan. OCOG will need to determine if this plan is still the plan of the Council and if so, then send a note to WSDOT stating such. If not, then discussion on revising the plan will need to take place and WSDOT will need to be notified via a memo or Council action.

Chairman Neal requested that members review this plan. He asked Mr. Philips what the timeline was for a decision. Mr. Philips stated there wasn't a specific timeline, but they need to let WSDOT know by the end of the fiscal year, next June. Chairman Neal requested the TranGO Clerk send a link to everyone with the RTP for review and to include it on future agendas for due diligence and a reminder for everyone.

**Discussion: RTPO Administrative Support Position MOU Draft/Update**

Okanogan County Engineer/Treasurer Thomson stated he has been working on this, but it is more complicated than he expected. It has been difficult to come up with an agreement, however their attorney stated they need a simple, but actual agreement. He will work on a draft and will discuss this tomorrow with the Commissioners and provide something for next month's meeting (it will be in written form as he will be absent).

**Discussion: Brewster Jail Fees**

City of Brewster Clerk, Misty Ruiz, reported since last month's meeting they had a few additional comments and recommendations, which were sent to the County. They were going to check with the jail administrator to see if the new recommendations would work but she has not yet received a response.

**Public Comment:**

There was no public comment at this time.

**Roundtable Updates**

Each agency represented is given a few moments, if they wished, to report to the group on important issues going on in their jurisdictions.

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**Adjournment:**

There being no further business to come before the Council, Chairman Neal adjourned the meeting at 5:51 p.m.

**Approved:**

  
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Jon Neal, Chairman

**Attested:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Paula Brantner-Thomas, TranGO, Clerk of the Board