



**BENTON COUNTY
SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Special Coordinated Plan Meeting May 23, 2017**

Present

Mary Marsh-King, Chair
Tim Bates, Vice Chair
Tera Stegner
Drew Foster
Steven Black
Axel Deininger (remote)
Tom Wogaman

STF and City/County Staff

Lee Lazaro, STF Coordinator
Cathy Williams, STF Assistant (Recorder)

Visitors/Presenters

Jennifer Moore, OCWCOG Comm. Services
Mary Newman, Benton Co. Veteran's Svcs
Phil Warnock, Benton Co. Board of Comm.

Absent

Steven Harder
Dave Zaback
Debie Wyne (Benton County Public Works)
Lisa Scherf (City of Corvallis)

1. Introductions

Chair Mary Marsh-King called the meeting to order at 1:41 PM. Committee members present introduced themselves. Mary also acknowledged that there were several guests in attendance as presenters at today's meeting, and asked them to introduce themselves.

2. Review and approval of meeting minutes

The Committee reviewed the April 28th, 2017 minutes. Steven Black moved to accept the minutes and Tim Bates seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.

3. Old Business

- a) Coordinated Plan status update – Lee should receive the final plan this week or next week from Jim Owens to distribute for the June meeting.
- b) Volkswagen Settlement- Mr. Lazaro informed the Committee of the Volkswagen lawsuit settlement, due to the mileage they reported to the EPA. Part of the settlement agreement may involve purchase of alternative-fuel replacement transit buses. Benton County has requested four buses through ODOT. He will report any progress to the STAC when/if it occurs.
- c) Amtrak-Connector Logo – Lee confirmed that the Amtrak-Connector bus logo and the designs for the side of the bus are being finalized.

4. New Business

The focus of this meeting was on Veterans so there were three special guests in attendance to present information regarding their agencies.

a) New OCWCOG Community Service Program Manager – Jennifer Moore is the new Community Services Program Manager at the OCWCOG. Her position is within the Senior and Disability Services Division. She is the Program Manager for all of the community services which includes Veterans Services, two Senior & Disability Services core programs, RSVP, the Foster Grandparent Program, and Meals on Wheels. Jennifer is happy to assist anyone on the STAC with questions or referrals if necessary to the appropriate contact person(s), to ensure your needs are met and that you receive the information requested.

b) Veteran's Pilot Report to Benton County BOC – Phil Warnock is the Community and Economic Development Program Manager at the OCWCOG. He reviewed the Veterans Transportation Assistance Program (VTAP) Final Report that he distributed to the Committee. It was a pilot program operated through the Non-Emergent Medical Transportation – Cascades West Ride Line Brokerage Program. This report recommends that Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA) and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Public Transit Division work together to develop an ongoing program for veterans that would be provided through medical transportation brokers.

Mr. Warnock outlined details regarding data about Veterans transportation needs that was gathered during the program, and the project outcomes. Findings reflected that more than half of all Veterans that requested transportation assistance were actually able to be served by counseling, or determined to be eligible for regular Ride Line services, without receiving direct VTAP-provided rides. The conclusion overall was that Ride Line and other brokerages are very affective at coordinating rides, but to serve Veterans effectively requires further coordination on the insurance and medical provider side. It would be beneficial to continue making brokered transportation available for Veterans in the region, extended to include Lincoln County, and provide greater assistance to those needing to establish VA benefits.

Committee member Steven Black (also a Veteran) brought up the following questions and points to consider to Phil regarding the services provided by the program to Veterans:

1. Knee replacements through the Veteran's Choice Program.
2. Veterans are losing driving privileges (due to age/disability) so the need for transportation services has the potential to increase.
3. Mental illness Veterans – there is a need to make transportation services known and communication/outreach to Veterans, both identified and unidentified Veterans.
4. Gaps in providing transportation to Veterans who have a one-time need for assistance (such as eyes being dilated or sedation during procedures), plus coordination issues, depending on where they are going, what time, and what day.

Committee member Drew Foster asked the following questions to Phil:

1. Were there similar study results in other counties? Phil replied that there were indeed similar results, but mostly the results made everyone aware that they were providing the same services in different ways.
2. Will there be a continuation of intake services now that the pilot study has ended? Phil said that there will continue to be services and possible coordination among

providers, transporters, and agencies involved to provide better services for everyone involved. He stated that the data gathered will impact the possibilities for veterans transportation in the future.

c) Benton County Veteran's Program Overview – Mary Newman, the Benton County Veterans Service Officer, provided an update on the services that their office makes available to Veterans. Ms. Newman provided details to the Committee from the report that she distributed. The report specified improvements such as current year recoveries of income from VA to their Veterans and surviving spouses, increases in Veterans VA benefits, and increases in numbers of Veterans and surviving spouses served. Mary also briefly discussed her veterans' outreach efforts and new programs; information presentations to community partners; and the veteran's referrals wrap-around services.

If her budget funding requests to the VA Administration are approved for additional Assistant Service Office hours, they would be used for additional outreach, Veterans Court, and a community awareness campaign. They would also be used to coordinate trainings with county, community, and COG partners for awareness and additional referral of Veterans or surviving spouses. Funding has historically come from only two sources, which includes County General Funding and Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs. The Oregon Legislature added Expansion and Enhancement funding in 2005. They are expecting some additional funding from Lottery dollars but have no information at this time.

5. Roundtable: Eclipse Planning – Chair Marsh-King brought up a concern for transportation of Dial-A-Bus clients during the solar eclipse weekend in August 2017. She asked Lee Lazaro to provide an update of information, based on the Eclipse Planning meetings he has attended regarding this issue. Mr. Lazaro indicated that there is an ongoing effort by many local and state agencies preparing for this event. Coordination efforts and information-sharing are underway to determine the best utilization of resources among all agencies involved, to ensure that they have the best options in place prior to the arrival of the large expected increase of visitors to the area.

There have been monthly Eclipse planning meetings in the County since January 2017 and these will continue to be held so that the most up-to-date information is communicated to everyone. Some of the methods to share information with the public include news releases, promotion of planned events centered around the eclipse, safety tips to residents within the region to ensure awareness and safety are priorities. Lee emphasized the fact that the biggest concern is keeping roadways clear for emergency response vehicles and hospitals being able to handle the intakes/releases of potential patients. Fire prevention is also a big concern so additional public campgrounds are being opened up to discourage illegal camping and fires. More information can be found at thegreateclipse.com which shows the trajectory path in the United States.

5. Conclusion: The meeting adjourned at 2:56 PM.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, June 27th, 2017, from 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM.