



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Transportation

Rail and Public Transit Division

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May 31, 2019

Mr. Brent DeMoe
Polk County Family & Community Outreach Department
182 SW Academy Street
Dallas, OR 97338

RE: Request for Appeal – FY2019-21 STF Grant

Dear Mr. DeMoe,

In response to your email dated April 30, 2019 requesting an appeal of the final funding decision for your FY2019-21 Special Transportation Fund application by the Cherriots Board of Directors on March 30, 2019 the Oregon Department of Transportation Rail and Public Transit Division (RPTD) has taken the following steps:

We have reviewed all the materials submitted with your appeal. We have also reviewed the meeting minutes of the Salem Area Mass Transit District (SAMTD) STF Advisory Committee, and Cherriots Board of Directors on the Cherriots website. While we did determine that the process had some flaws (listed below), we cannot reverse the decision of the Cherriots Board since it is clear that ultimately they did follow their adopted process. Advisory committees can recommend funding decisions, but the Board makes the final decision on which recommendations from the advisory committee it accepts.

We propose working with the staff at SAMTD to correct the following items for future funding reviews:

- Per Federal Transit Administration and Special Transportation Fund requirements, local selection of projects must follow the priorities of the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. SAMTD's most current Coordinated Plan was adopted in 2016. While solicitation materials included information on available funding and selection criteria, the SAMTD STF Technical Advisory Committee did not seem aware of Coordinated Plan priorities.
- For public comment during local project selection to be equitable, all applicants should be made aware of the opportunity to present new materials. Any new materials, including potential new funding scenarios, should be provided in advance to meeting attendees. There should be time set aside during the meeting for all applicants to comment on these new materials.
- Public comment time limits must be strictly enforced to ensure fairness.
- Meetings must be managed carefully to ensure proper rules are followed.

The RPTD recognizes the need for transit service in Falls City to assist residents facilitate shopping, medical appointments, social services, employment, recreation, and school. We want to see this service succeed and have identified some short-term solutions to help you sustain it:

**For Work Session of June 10, 2019
Agenda Item No. WS.3.c**

- Polk County has offered to provide funding for the current fiscal year.
- The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde of Oregon has offered to provide one day a week service in the next fiscal year if Falls City Direct Connect (FCDC) cannot find alternative sustainable funding.
- If the first two sources do not succeed, the Rail and Public Transit Division has rural emergency funds that could potentially be provided through a grant to Polk County to fund FCDC, as an interim funding solution through the 2019-21 biennium.

FCDC and Polk County will also need to pursue sustained funding for the service, on a long-term basis. Our Regional Transit Coordinator for your area, Arla Miller, will work with Polk County Family and Community Outreach Department and Falls City on finding sustainable funding opportunities. Some long-term solutions for funding might include:

- Working to get a safe, reliable vehicle. Arla Miller is exploring the possibility of obtaining a donated vehicle for FCDC's use.
- Polk County and FCDC partnering with transit providers in the region to better connect, coordinate, and plan service in the area.
- Applying for upcoming FTA Section 5310 Discretionary program funds and referencing the March 2019 update to Cherriots Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan, page 6 - D.7.
- Working with Salem Area Mass Transit District to apply for future funds including, but not limited to, Statewide Transportation Improvement Funds (STIF).
- Having an FCDC representative be a part of future planning events with Salem Area Mass Transit District.
- When Polk County updates their Transportation System Plan (TSP), including FCDC as part of planning for transit in Polk County.

If FCDC is awarded FTA Section 5310 funding in the future, RPTD will work to help you comply with the various requirements in that program such as:

- Defensive Driving and Passenger Assistance Training, which could include partnering with Salem Area Mass Transit District when they train their drivers.
- Having an adopted Title VI Plan approved by the ODOT Office of Civil Rights.
- Developing and adopting other required policies and procedures.
- Ensuring driver licenses meet Commercial Driver License (CDL) requirements including passenger endorsements.
- Drug and alcohol testing and training.
- Reporting requirements, which could again include partnering with Salem Area Mass Transit District.

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Thank you for reaching out to us. We were sorry to hear of your difficult experience and look forward to working with you in the future. If you have additional questions please contact Arla Miller at 503-986-2836.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several fluid, connected strokes that form the initials 'H.A.' followed by a long horizontal line.

H.A. (Hal) Gard, Administrator
ODOT Rail and Public Transit Division