**Baker County Transportation Advisory Committee**

**STIF/FTA 5310 Project Selection**

**December 19, 2022**

Members in attendance: Bonnie Thiel, Joe Hayes

Members on Zoom: Michelle Owens

Guests in attendance: Tamyra Keller (TAC applicant), Stephanie Sanders (representing Elkhorn Taxi), Connie Guentert (CCNO), Kane (CCNO)

Guests on Zoom: Ron (CCNO), Julia Novotny (CCNO), Arla Miller (ODOT)

County Staff: Doni Bruland (Grants Administrator)

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 pm (after technical difficulties were fixed)

Public Participation:

Kane: handed out a Community Connections of NE Oregon (CCNO) transportation summary. It showed the number of riders, miles, and hours that CCNO logged in 2021-2022.

Tamyra: stated that she was an advocate for CCNO and thinks public transportation is important.

Connie: thanked ODOT and Baker Co for funding.

Arla: stated that none of the transit providers met the definition of “public service transportation provider”. Therefore, the Baker County would be developing a Transportation RFP and any Contracts would be for Purchased Services. Doni asked if this meant that the application for STIF and FTA 5310 monies would be done differently. Arla stated yes, the County would ask for the money then, due to the time constraints, award the RFPs at a later date.

Review of By-Laws:

The Committee was told that the legislative changes had required the By-Laws to be updated. This included removing the By-Laws that referred to the Transportation Safety Committee that was no longer a part of this group. There were no questions. Joe made the motion to advise the Baker County Commission to adopt the By-Laws. Bonnie Thiel seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Doni said that the STF funding had been absorbed into the STIF. However, it appeared that STF project could continue to be funded.

Step Forward: the Committee discussed the client-only service provided by Step Forward and agreed that it is important to continue funding it. ($22,000/FY – population based funding only)

Doni asked for the providers to talk about their proposed FTA 5310 projects so that the Committee could discuss them.

Stephanie (Elkhorn Taxi): explained that Elkhorn Taxi rides for seniors and the disabled exploded last year. Ridership increased both in-town and out-of-town for non-emergency transports, especially getting people home from the Emergency Room in the middle of the night. Out-of-town trips increased mainly for veterans going to Boise. There was a good mix of transports during the hours that CCNO was in operation (when CCNO could not transport) and after hours when CCNO was closed. There was an issue with Elkhorn Taxi not having their own ADA vehicle and the shared vehicle with CCNO had maintenance issues. There were several weeks in the summer of 2022 that Baker County did not have an ADA vehicle for non-emergency transport.

Joe: explained that they serve the general public and combine medical and general transportation. They charge $9.61/ride, in and around Baker City. They have a fleet of nine ADA cutaway buses, three ADA minivans, and one ADA Econoline van.

Tamyra: stated that GOBHI needs to be included specific to Medicaid partnerships. Connie said that it is already a coordinated approach.

Doni asked the proposers to describe their proposed STIF projects. She said that there could possibly be contingency funds as there was need last year to have them. Bonnie did not want any contingency included in the STIF application if all the projects could not be fully funded.

Stephanie (Elkhorn Taxi):

Schoolpool: this is a new program that targets children in “walk zones” from schools. Many students face an up to one mile walk to get to school as the school sponsored buses do not operate within that zone. Parents, who do not want their child on a bus with strangers, have contacted the Taxi to transport students to school and after class activities. ($43,200/FY)

Workforce on Demand: this is a continuation of a very successful STIF funded project. Currently, the Taxi consistently takes at least (5) employees to and from work each day. The rider, or employer, purchases a punch-card for $21 for 10 rides. STIF funds make up the difference in the $8/ride fare. ($59,700/ FY 24, $61,000/FY 20205)

Reduced Fares: this project is a Demand Response project that offers rides during and after hours. This will reduce the rider’s taxi fares form the City set fare of $8/ride down to $2/ride. Taxi riders in Baker County are typically seniors, individuals with disabilities, low-income households, and veterans that do not, or will not, ride in vehicles with other riders. ($131,400/ biennium)

Elkhorn Medical Express: the STIF request for funding will be used as a match for FTA 5310 funds. It continues the Rides to Wellness program for seniors and persons with disabilities. The service runs 24-hours/day, 7 days/week and can be called when needed. Out of town transport is also available. ($26,900/biennium)

Transit Manager/Dispatcher: this project would pay a portion of the salary and benefits for the Transit Manager and Staff who run the daily transportation operations. ($129,900/biennium)

ADA Vehicle: CAPITAL EXPENSE: this is to purchase an ADA compliant vehicle dedicated to the Taxi. This promotes transport of persons with disabilities without having to ‘borrow’ the ADA van from CCNO. (not to exceed $130,000)

Joe (CCNO):

Demand Response: this project combines two previous STIF funded projects. 1) the service would become “free fares”, 2) expands the “free fares” to riders outside of the City limits. In addition, it would expand service hours on the Deviated Fixed route by 15-hours/Mon-Fri, and 8 hours on Saturday. ($67,797/FY 2024, $74,577/FY 2025)

Assistant Transit Manager: this project continues the STIF funding from the current biennium. However, it is being requested that the full reimbursement come from the STIF funds and not a combination of State and Federal funds as it has been in the past. ($68,043 FY 2024, $74,847/FY 2025)

Rides to Wellness: would reinstate a previously funded project that was discontinued when funding ran out. This is non-emergency transport that requires a co-pay based on miles. ($30,000 FY 2024, $45,500 FY 2025)

Arla explained that since the funding has to go out as a RFP and the timeline for project submission, the County will submit the STIF and FTA 5310 applications when due. When the Bids come in, then the TAC will be called together again to rank the projects for submission to the Baker County Commission.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35