



**TSCC Regular Business Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday April 19, 2022
12:15 p.m.**

Chair Harmony Quiroz, Commissioners, Ofsink, Norton, and Donahue, were present, as were Executive Director Allegra Willhite and Budget Analyst Tunie Betschart, all via Zoom meeting.

Commissioner Mark Wubbold was absent.

REGULAR MEETING

Chair Quiroz called the meeting to order at noon.

District Budgets to be considered

Executive Director Willhite said the commissioners have three budgets to review at this meeting, Burlington Water District, Corbett Rural Fire Protection District and TriMet.

Burlington Water District's review

The commissioners discussed Burlington Water District's review first. Ms. Betschart gave a brief overview of the budget. She explained that the district is still waiting to receive the State of Oregon debt proceeds they budgeted in FY 22. The governing board is considering amending the FY 23 budget approved in March to include the loan proceeds and the corresponding capital expenditures to carry this work into FY 23. They will follow the necessary steps, post an amended LB-1 form, hold a hearing, and allow the public to comment on the amended budget before adopting the FY 23 budget.

Commissioner Donahue asked why the City of Portland would not be increasing water rates charged to the district. Executive Director Willhite explained that the Portland Water Bureau's rates are rising due to the improvements in their infrastructures. PWB studied how their customers were being charged for water systemwide and proportioned the cost directly to the benefit received by the district. With this restructuring, they realized Burlington Water would not benefit from the improvements. The change in rate structure is good news for the district.

Chair Quiroz moved to certify that the commissioners have no recommendations or objections concerning Burlington Water District's FY 23 budget. Commissioner Ofsink seconded the motion which passed with a unanimous vote.

Corbett Rural Fire Protection District's review

Then commissioners reviewed Corbett Rural Fire Protection District. Executive Director gave a summary of the district's budget and the process. She reported that the day after the budget committee approved the budget, the district staff realized it contained an error in the budget and did not balance. But since it was approved with the mistake, their certification letter will need to address this with an objection requiring the district to fix the error before adopting the budget. The board is aware of the need to change the budget,



and it is an amount that will not require the district to republish the LB-1 form or hold a second hearing since it is less than a 10% increase in the fund. They can make the changes at adoption. The certification letter will contain the following objection:

Objection: In the FY 22-23 budget as approved by the budget committee General Fund Requirements exceed Resources by \$30,000. Per Oregon budget law, all funds must balance. When the Commission "finds that any item is an expenditure not authorized by law to be made by the municipal corporation, the commission may order the item to be stricken from the budget. The levying board of the municipal corporation thereupon shall strike the item from the budget and shall not thereafter levy any tax for the payment of the same" (ORS 294.650). Before adopting the budget, Corbett Fire must correct the errors in the budget so that all funds balance and transfers in and out are equal. Please submit a copy of the budget resolution showing the corrected budget amounts after it is adopted so TSCC can verify the correction is completed.

Staff is aware of the error and brought it to the attention of the TSCC before they submitted their Approved budget. Corbett Fire district staff plan to implement a new policy for verifying numbers before submitting the proposed budget in coming years, and TSCC supports this strategy.

Commissioners discussed how to handle the post-certification of the budget to recognize that before adoption, the district corrected the error. Once evidence of this is received, they suggested Executive Willhite send a letter to the district on behalf of the commissioners stating the district met the conditions of the certification letter and the budget now conforms to Local Budget Law.

Commissioner Ofsink moved to certify the FY 23 budget for Corbett Rural Fire Protection District to include the above objection and give the executive director authority to send a letter to the district on behalf of the commissioners. The letter will indicate the district has made the correction and is now in compliance. Commissioner Norton seconded the motion which carried with a unanimous vote.

The commissioners will hold a hearing on TriMet's 2022-23 budget along with their governing board and staff next week and members of the public. This meeting will be at the University of Oregon, Portland Venue, 70 NW Couch Street, Portland, Oregon. at 8:00 a.m. Wednesday April 27. Since both commissioner Donahue and Executive Director Willhite are new to TSCC and have never attended a budget hearing, Chair Quiroz gave a brief overview of the protocol of TSCC's budget hearings. She explained the procedure for introductions, the district's opening remarks, the questions presented by commissioners, the process of receiving public comments, the closing of the hearing, and the opening of the regular meeting of the TSCC to certify the budget.

TriMet's review

Ms. Betschart gave a brief overview of the agency's budget, including the new 60' articulated buses, incentives to recruit drivers for the buses and trains, reduced ridership due to the pandemic, federal funding, capital projects, and contingency ending fund balance.

Commissioner Norton showed concern about TriMet's use of federal funding to bridge the budget shortfall. Her concern is the consequence of labor costs increasing and the agency's predictions of having a shortfall in revenue for several years. What will this do to the agency?



Executive Director Willhite said the payroll tax has remained strong during the pandemic and could increase if employment increases. However, commissioners may wish to ask at the hearing about this.

After this brief overview, the commissioner discussed the questions they would be asking at TriMet's hearing. Staff and commissioners mentioned using Google Docs to collaborate on the question before the meeting was constructive and time-saving. They changed the sequence of some of the questions, deleted portions of some, added to others and added a couple of possible follow-up questions. When the commissioners finished discussing the questions, they had eleven questions to send to the district, with the last two identified as questions that would only be asked at the hearing if time allowed.

Ms. Betschart explained that in the past, TriMet would prepare written answers to the questions and send them to TSCC. If there were questions the commissioners did not discuss at the hearing because of time limits, TSCC staff would include the written answers provided by TriMet staff in the minutes. Staff would note that the question and answers were not part of the discussion at the hearing due to time limits, but the district provided a written answer included in the minutes for information purposes.

She explained that even though districts are not required to prepare written answers to the commissioners' questions, most of them do and send them to TSCC. So when this information is available, and questions are not asked due to timing, staff will share the information in the hearing minutes and provide the answers to the TSCC Commissioners.

Executive Director Willhite will send the questions to TriMet Staff later today so their staff will have time to research and prepare responses for the hearings.

Ms. Betschart mentioned that handling certification letters at the hearings would be somewhat different from past hearings since staff will be providing the letter to districts electronically following the hearing.

Executive Director Willhite asked what staff needed to provide the commissioners with for the hearing. Commissioners decided to bring copies of the questions on their laptops or paper copies. Staff will email the final copy of the questions to each commissioner and a copy of the opening script to Chair Quiroz.

With no other business, Chair Quiroz closed the Regular Meeting of the TSCC.