

ProRail Board Meeting Minutes: 07/05/2025

Attendees: Clyde Anderson, Dan Bilka, Bridger Corkill, Oluseye Fakinlede, Jim Hanna, Robert Kuzelka, Jeff Poley, David Purdy, Matthew Roque; Richard Schmeling

Discussion Items:

- **Role of ProRail in Public Forums/Town Halls Hosted by Senator Juarez**
- **Locations for Public Forums/Town Halls**
- **Tentative Agenda for Meetings**
- **Postcards and Survey Items**
- **Budget for Part-Time Help (if needed)**
- **Next Meeting is Saturday, July 19th at 2:00PM. Scooters on 27th and Pine Lake. Bridger to set up Zoom Link.**

Detailed Notes:

- **Role of ProRail in Public Forums/Town Halls Hosted by Senator Juarez**
 - Dual purpose hearing with senator Juarez – need to confirm with her office the order of events and what level of support they need from ProRail. Forum to be split between transit and education. Richard to follow up.
 - If there's an option – our preference is to go second.
 - Discussion of having the notifications / invitations to legislators and local officials come from Senator Juarez's office. ProRail can distribute if that's not possible.
 - Invitations and notifications should be distributed to local elected officials like Mayors as well as Chambers of Commerce and Legislators. Transportation committee members and those who have introduced rail legislation in the past.
 - Request to legislators who may be interested in co-hosting events in their district.
 - Work with Senator's office to distribute news releases on the events.
 - Discussion of brining brochures and material about related transit projects and places where people can find more information.
 - Discussion of making sure remote options are available/meetings recorded.
- **Locations for Public Forums/Town Halls**
 - **Columbus – 5:30-7:30 Tuesday, August 19th** – Columbus Public Library
 - **Lincoln – 5:30-7:30 Friday, September 5th** – First Presbyterian Church
 - **North Platte – 5:30-8:00 Tuesday, September 9th** – North Platte Public Library
 - **Grand Island – 5:30-7:30 Tuesday, September 16th** – GI Main Library
 - **Omaha – 5:00-7:30 Monday, September 22nd** – Omaha South Branch Library
- **Tentative Agenda for Meetings**
 - Welcome/legislative introductions from Senator Juarez
 - PRN Officer provides a brief history of rail planning efforts in the state and the need for legislation.
 - Two short videos promoting successful transit projects in the US
 - Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART)
 - Rail Runner (NM)
 - Amtrak Downeaster Boston Portland Improvements
 - PRN Officer or potential video explaining the regional (NE/SD) Amtrak proposals.
 - Open time for questions from Attendees
 - Invite attendees to complete a short survey

- Provide postcards to send feedback directly to elected officials
- **Postcards and Survey Items**
 - Richard/Matt to follow up with Senator Juarez on whether they can send invitations and postcards under their permit.
 - **Postcards**
 - These would be addressed to the governor's office
 - Stating support for rail transit in NE
 - **Survey Items**
 - Have you ever used a passenger train?
 - Do you regularly use public transport?
 - Should Nebraska improve and expand passenger rail services?
 - If daytime service was available on Amtrak, would you use it?
 - What is your hometown?
 - Comment Space:
 - **Motion passed unanimously to approve a ceiling of \$500 in expenses for postcards, surveys, and invitations.**
- **Budget for Part-Time Help (if needed)**
 - If ProRail needs to take on the bulk of the work, then part-time help will be necessary. Developing materials, running the meetings, and following up on various items could be done by someone under the supervision of Bob Kuzelka.
 - Tentative approval of an hourly rate of \$20/hr with an approximate project maximum of 100 hours worked.
 - **Motion passed unanimously to approve a ceiling of \$2000 in expenses for part time assistance (if needed) to develop material, assist with running the meetings, and other tasks as assigned.**
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