

Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Formation Committee – Meeting Recap

Location: Virtual – Zoom

Date: Wednesday, July 9, 2025

Time: 9:00 – 10:30 AM

Attendees: Michael Buccino (City of Steamboat Springs), Sonja Macys (Routt County), Randy Looper (City of Craig), Ryan Banks (Town of Hayden), Stacey Geilert (Town of Yampa), Bryan Swintek (City of Steamboat Springs), Sarah Jones (Steamboat Ski and Resort Corp), Dan Foote (City of Steamboat Springs), Peter Brixius (City of Craig), Mathew Mendisco (Town of Hayden), Jia Carroll (City of Steamboat Springs), Jonathan Flint (City of Steamboat Springs), Louis Finberg (Town of Oak Creek), Skyler McKinley (South Routt), Ciara Bartholomew (South Routt County), Bill Ray (WR Communications), Jason Miller (Fehr & Peers), Mikhail Kaminer (Fehr & Peers), Polly Jessen (Kaplan Kirsch), Kirsten Crawford (Kaplan Kirsch)

Quick recap

The meeting focused on reviewing and revising the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) for the Regional Transit Authority, including discussions about funding mechanisms, ballot questions, and service transition. The committee discussed community outreach efforts through surveys and meetings, with specific attention to timing and coordination of events in different jurisdictions. Decisions were made regarding ballot language options, property tax provisions, and resort contributions, with the team establishing deadlines for finalizing documents and distributing outreach materials by early August.

Next steps

- Committee members to review draft mailer and online survey and provide feedback to Bill by the end of the week.
- Bill to finalize the elevator speech draft and distribute to the group.
- Committee members to add local events to the Google Sheet or email Bill with event details.
- Bill to schedule stakeholder meetings in Craig and Steamboat Springs for July 31st.
- South Routt representatives to determine a suitable date for a stakeholder meeting in their area and inform Bill.
- Bill to write up invitations for stakeholder meetings and coordinate with committee members to distribute them.
- Bill to work with county clerks to get estimates for election costs.
- Polly and Kirsten to finalize the IGA draft by July 31st.

- All jurisdictions to have their attorneys review the final IGA draft before early August.
- Kaplan Kirsch (KK) team to follow up with CDOT for their formal response to the RTA proposal.
- Sarah to forward the campaign meeting invitation for July 17th to interested committee members.
- Bill to procure RTA-branded tent and additional materials.

IGA Adoption and Community Outreach

The meeting focused on reviewing the IGA and community outreach efforts. Bill announced that the first local government considering final adoption of the IGA is expected to do so in about a month. Polly and Kirsten reviewed revisions related to funding and ballot questions. The committee discussed removing the funding measure from the ballot and agreed to determine election costs with county clerks. They decided that Steamboat Springs must be one of the jurisdictions approving the IGA, along with at least one other member jurisdiction.

Refining Authority Funding Agreement

The committee discussed refining the language in the agreement to ensure the future authority board has discretion in allocating funds without mandatory obligations. Committee members agreed to give the authority up to three years to transfer regional bus services, with flexibility in case funding becomes an issue. The funding provisions were revised to include baseline funding from the Steamboat resort pledge, grants and donations, and fees, while authorizing but not requiring taxes. Jurisdictions agreed to have their attorneys review the IGA before the early August deadline, with the final document needed in Craig's council packet by August 12th.

Transit Services Transfer Agreement Review

The IGA was made less prescriptive regarding the transition of Steamboat Springs Transit's regional service to the authority due to uncertainties in timing and funding. Jonathan Flint explained that both assets and liabilities would need to be considered, including vehicles, maintenance equipment, and personnel. Polly presented a provision for the transfer that allows for flexibility over a three-year period, which Michael from the City of Steamboat found acceptable.

IGA Property Tax Prohibition and Resort Contribution

The group discussed whether to include property tax as an option in the IGA. While some members initially wanted to keep it as an option for future flexibility, Bryan expressed concerns about it being seen as a bait and switch, and Sonja strongly opposed it as a last-minute change that could damage relationships. The group ultimately decided to keep the property tax prohibition language in the IGA for now, with Michael agreeing that they could revisit it later if

needed. The committee then reviewed the draft resort contribution agreement, which Polly explained was a simple document to formalize the resort's \$1 million annual pledge over 20 years, contingent on the RTA's formation.

RTA Ballot Option Finalization

The committee discussed two ballot question options for the RTA formation, ultimately deciding to proceed with the simpler version (Option 2) after considering factors like voter comprehension and implementation details. Kirsten will work on finalizing the ballot language, incorporating acronyms and ensuring legal compliance, with the goal of having everything ready by July 31 for inclusion in the IGA packet. The discussion also covered the need for jurisdictions to submit letters to county clerks by July 25, with Bill confirming that Moffitt County's clerk had been notified of the RTA question.

Timeline and Outreach

Committee members addressed the need to follow up with CDOT for a response, as their 90-day timeline is nearly complete. Sonja offered to reach out to the transportation commissioner to expedite the process.

Bill presented a sample mailer and survey for community outreach, requesting feedback by the end of the week to create customized versions for different communities. The goal is to distribute these materials in July, including a QR code and web address for a community survey. Bill mentioned he was finalizing an elevator speech with key messaging guidelines, which he would share with the group soon. Sarah announced she had secured \$15,000 from the resort to support a campaign, and a meeting was scheduled for July 17th to discuss next steps.

The committee discussed creating a Google sheet to track local community events through November, with Bill managing the sheet and Michael explaining it will help coordinate the use of a new Yampa Valley transit authority branded sunshade tent for outreach at various events. They agreed to schedule stakeholder meetings in July and August to educate key community members and leaders across different jurisdictions. Michael agreed to the July 31st timing and encouraged other council members to add desired RTA event dates to a shared Google sheet for better coordination.