

Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Formation Committee – Meeting Recap

Location: Virtual – Zoom

Date: Thursday, July 31, 2025

Time: 10:00 – 11:30 AM

Attendees: Michael Buccino (City of Steamboat Springs), Sonja Macys (Routt County), Randy Looper (City of Craig), Ryan Banks (Town of Hayden), Sarah Jones (Steamboat Ski and Resort Corp), Dan Foote (City of Steamboat Springs), Peter Brixius (City of Craig), Jonathan Flint (City of Steamboat Springs), Ciara Bartholomew (South Routt County), Bill Ray (WR Communications), Polly Jessen (Kaplan Kirsch)

Quick recap

The meeting's main focus was on finalizing the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) and related materials for the upcoming election, including discussions about pledge agreements and payment structures. The group also addressed the transition of transit operations to the RTA and community outreach efforts.

Next steps

- Sarah to finalize and get executed pledge agreement from resort by August 7th.
- All jurisdictions to review and confirm their signature blocks in the IGA document.
- Bill to coordinate and schedule a potential backup meeting in August if needed.
- Bill to circulate draft mailer for South Routt communities for feedback.
- Dan to check with counsel on August 5th regarding city-specific provisions and report back.
- Kaplan Kirsch (KK) to prepare final packet with comparison to March/April version for jurisdictions.
- KK to update ballot language to remove "from time to time" language.
- Bill to proceed with tent structure printing and shipping to Steamboat Springs.

IGA and Pledge Agreement Review

The meeting focused on finalizing the IGA and related materials for the upcoming election. Polly and Kirsten presented the updated IGA, which included the addition of Routt County jurisdictions' contributions to election costs. The group confirmed that the current version of the IGA, including the prohibition on property tax, was acceptable. Sarah provided an update on Steamboat's review of the pledge agreement, which is a required attachment to the IGA. The

group agreed to set up a follow-up call to address any questions about the pledge agreement, with a deadline of August 7th for its execution.

20-Year \$1 Million Annual Pledge Plan

The committee discussed a 20-year pledge of \$1 million per year, payable on January 1st, with potential adjustments to accommodate fiscal year timing. Sarah proposed starting with a \$1 million payment on January 1, 2026, followed by \$500,000 payments split between January 1 and August 1 in subsequent years, while ensuring the total annual payment remains \$1 million. The committee agreed to this structure.

RTA Transit Operations Transition

The committee then discussed the transition of transit operations to the RTA, with Jonathan Flint proposing a January 1, 2026, start date pending voter approval. Polly noted that the RTA would need to be formed and certified by the state, which would take time. Michael suggested budgeting for the regional line to remain in the city's budget for calendar year 2026, since using the Ski Corps funding immediately to pay for the RTA regional line would leave other important needs unfunded. The group agreed that an RFP process for operations might be preferable to a direct contract with the city, but this decision would be made by the RTA board. They concluded that a more gradual transition, potentially stretching into up to three years, would be more realistic than an immediate transition.

IGA Finalization and Ballot Language

The committee transitioned back to discussing the finalization of the IGA and related processes. Polly confirmed that jurisdictions would receive a packet on August 7th, containing the final draft memo, resolution, and a comparison to the March/April version. The group agreed to use a simplified ballot language without the "as may be amended from time to time" phrase. Bill proposed scheduling a meeting in late August or early September as a contingency for any last-minute issues, which Polly and Kirsten supported. The jurisdictions were reminded to review and confirm their signature blocks, with Bill planning to follow up with jurisdictions not present on the call.

Community Outreach Progress Update

The committee discussed the progress of their outreach efforts, including the distribution of mailers in Craig and Steamboat Springs areas. Randy shared feedback from the community, noting mostly positive responses but some confusion about the map included in the mailer. Bill mentioned that the online survey was receiving responses and would be used to inform the RTA board. They also discussed the importance of balancing information in the mailers to avoid confusion, and Bill encouraged committee members to share local events for their events list.

RTA Initiative Outreach Transition

The group discussed the transition from government-led to citizen-driven outreach for the RTA initiative, with Bill noting that taxpayer-funded advocacy must end after jurisdictions' final approvals in early September. Sarah announced that a citizen committee is being formed to lead the campaign through election day, and Michael shared that several community members have volunteered to help with messaging at events like the Hayden Fair. The group clarified that for Steamboat, the quiet period for campaign finance rules would begin on August 19th, the date of the city's resolution adoption, rather than the second reading date, to avoid conflicts with local elections.

Bill reported on upcoming meetings in Craig and Steamboat to provide RTA updates to community leaders. Bill presented a tent structure with graphics for RTA outreach events, which he had ordered. The conversation ended with encouragement for attendees to participate in upcoming stakeholder meetings in Craig and Steamboat.