

Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Formation Committee – Meeting Recap

Location: Virtual – Zoom

Date: Tuesday, August 5, 2025

Time: 10:00 – 11:00 AM

Attendees: Michael Buccino (City of Steamboat Springs), Stacey Geilert (Town of Yampa), Melissa Dobbins (Town of Oak Creek), Randy Looper (City of Craig), Sarah Jones (Steamboat Ski and Resort Corp), Jay Harrington (Routt County), 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), Ciara Bartholomew (South Routt County), Bill Ray (WR Communications), Polly Jessen (Kaplan Kirsch), Kirsten Crawford (Kaplan Kirsch)

Quick recap

The meeting focused on discussing revisions to a pledge agreement with Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation (SSRC) regarding payment structures and conditions tied to the authority's ability to maintain required funding for transit services. Committee members also discussed language requirements for continued funding of Steamboat Springs Transit service and addressed scheduling for different communities, including the need for potential follow-up meetings to address document language changes.

Next steps

- Sarah Jones to get final approval from Rob Perlman on the revised pledge agreement
- Sarah to communicate approval status to the group by Thursday/Friday
- Kirsten Crawford to provide draft ordinance for Craig's IGA approval
- Polly Jessen to update the IGA with the revised language.

Resort Pledge Agreement Payment Plan

Polly discussed revisions to the pledge agreement with the resort, focusing on a new payment structure and conditions. They agreed on an initial payment of \$1,000,000 in 2026, followed by \$500,000 payments every six months for the remaining 19 years, contingent on the authority securing sufficient funding within three years to assume the Steamboat Springs transit regional service. The revised agreement ties the resort's commitment to the authority's ability to maintain the required funding, making it a condition of the resort's ongoing payments.

Sarah explained that while the resort supports the RTA, they require a more robust regional transportation system than just their \$1 million contribution, which cannot fund the original SST component. She noted that the 3-year timeline in the IGA is a compromise, as senior leadership would prefer quicker progress for the RTA providing services. Randy raised a question about the potential for an RFP and how the IGA and SST regional service commitments align, which Polly addressed by confirming their commitment to SST service within the qualified 3-year timeframe, subject to reasonable funding constraints.

Committee members discussed that the RTA would need \$8 to \$15 million to meet its service goals as outlined in the IGA and public-communication materials. They discussed that if local governments and the RTA cannot secure funding within three years, the SSRC's contribution would not be required.

Committee members discussed the language and requirements for continued funding of the Steamboat Springs Transit regional service by the RTA within three years. They clarified that the funding must be sufficient to assume and continue the current service levels, emphasizing that the focus is on the assumption of the regional bus service by the RTA regardless of funding source. Polly agreed that the language should specify "currently operated" to clarify the service levels being referred to in the pledge agreement.

Michael emphasized the importance of SSRC as initial seed money to hire an executive director and get the organization started, but stressed that it should not be the sole long-term funding source. He proposed a three-year timeline to ensure stability, with the goal of passing a funding measure in 2026, though 2027 would be an alternative option. Sarah agreed with this approach, noting that a robust funding system requires multiple stakeholders to have significant investment, rather than relying on a single source like the initial \$1 million from SSRC.

Document Review Follow-Up Meeting

The committee discussed the packet deadline for Craig on August 12. Kirsten Crawford will work on a draft ordinance for Craig, and Randy Looper confirmed that ballot questions are treated as ordinances in their community. The group also discussed the possibility of supplementing the packet for Craig with the pledge agreement after the deadline, pending Sarah's approvals.

The group discussed scheduling a follow-up meeting to address potential language changes in the pledge agreement, with Sarah expressing uncertainty about internal approval but committing to do her best. Randy emphasized the importance of completing the document by Friday, while Polly suggested creating contingency plans for additional meetings. The team agreed to reconvene on Friday morning.