



May 18, 2026

Dear Chair Beam and Members of the Board,

I acknowledge receipt of the May 1, 2026 correspondence directing me to return “all District property and records” and referencing potential censure.

I state unequivocally that I am not in possession of any official District minutes, executive session recordings, or original District records. I do have copies of Board packets that were issued to me and every other Board member as part of conducting the business of the Board and my notes during those meetings. To the best of my knowledge, all official District records remain within District-controlled systems, including Executive Board and District SharePoint, District email servers, on-site files, and the CEO’s computer. Accordingly, there are no District records in my possession to return.

I will continue to comply with Oregon law regarding executive session confidentiality. ORS 192.660 imposes restrictions on the disclosure of executive session communications, and I will not disclose confidential discussions or materials absent lawful authority. I object to any attempt to pressure or coerce disclosure of confidential executive session information through threats of censure or reputational harm.

The Board cannot simultaneously assert that executive session confidentiality is mandatory while attempting to compel selective disclosure of those same confidential discussions for political purposes.

I further assert that the Board violated my statutory rights under ORS 192.660(2)(b). The May 1 correspondence indicates that potential censure and related matters were discussed in executive session. However, I was not provided notice that complaints, charges, discipline, or censure concerning me would be discussed, and I was absent from that meeting. As a result, I was deprived of my statutory right to request an open hearing, which is a condition precedent to the lawful use of executive session under ORS 192.660(2)(b). Furthermore, the agenda for the April 20, 2026 meeting cited only ORS 192.660(2)(f), “to consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection.”

A public body cannot lawfully deliberate disciplinary action against an elected Director in executive session while withholding the notice required for that Director to exercise their statutory right to demand that such matters be heard in open session.

The covert manner in which this matter was addressed prevented me from exercising my statutory protections and raises serious concerns regarding compliance with Oregon Public Meetings Law, including the potential use of executive session, serial communications, or intermediaries to deliberate toward a decision outside lawful public process.

To eliminate any ambiguity going forward, **I expressly request that any discussion of complaints, charges, discipline, or potential censure involving me be conducted in open session.**



I also object to the use of legal counsel to facilitate or legitimize efforts to pressure disclosure of confidential executive session information. This appears less focused on records management and more focused on leveraging threatened censure to compel disclosure of protected information.

Additionally, I assert that my actions related to raising concerns involving ODOT, RLS & Associates, Director Natasha Atkinson, and related compliance matters constitute protected whistleblower activity. To the extent adverse action is being contemplated in response to those concerns, I view such actions as retaliatory and expressly reserve all rights and protections available under Oregon law.

On September 19, 2025, I was deposed at the request of Director Natasha Atkinson as part of her defense in the election integrity lawsuit known as Vaughn v. Loomis. In that deposition, I was pressured to reveal information about discussions held in executive session regarding prior CEO Ben Edtl's severance agreement. I refused to do so, as I have a duty to uphold the confidentiality of those discussions. It remains unclear to me what relevance that information has to the challenge to Natasha Atkinson's seat as Director.

On September 24–25, 2025, Director Natasha Atkinson, Chair Jeana Beam, and CEO Sheri Bleau participated in an RLS interview that would later form the basis of the final report. ODOT's Jennifer Boardman provided the Board with a draft of the issues identified by RLS.

I began raising concerns regarding false statements in the draft of the RLS report on November 19, 2025, in an email to Chair Jeana Beam, CEO Sheri Bleau, and ODOT liaison Jennifer Boardman. In my opinion, defamatory statements were made against prior Board members, the prior CEO, and the prior Operations Manager in that report. RLS interviewed CEO Sheri Bleau, Chair Jeana Beam, and Director Natasha Atkinson to produce the report. Despite my objections and request to be interviewed, revisions were not made to correct the record.

On December 2, 2025, the RLS Report was used by Director Natasha Atkinson at the deposition of Ben Edtl as part of her defense in the Vaughn v. Loomis election case, in which she is a named defendant. This report had been leaked to the media and sent to the Board of Directors that same day. It was not until December 3, 2025 that the RLS Report was officially provided to the Board by CEO Sheri Bleau.

Around this same time, CEO Sheri Bleau attempted to review executive session information from one to two years prior. She demanded access to that information and then had an attorney hired for a personnel matter attempt to pressure me into revealing executive session discussions. I declined.

On February 10, 2026, I requested updates from Executive Committee meetings, including summaries, reports, and materials reviewed. I also requested an update on the Oregon Secretary of State investigation, including any communications and materials reviewed. Additionally, I requested the status of the severance agreement discussed on August 27, 2025, including whether an agreement was executed and any subsequent action taken. I was denied access to all of this information. I note that all Board members are required to be equally apprised of information per our Executive Committee Bylaws adopted April 15, 2024, which explicitly state that the Executive Committee "does not filter information available to the Board of Directors" and "will report and advise the UPTD Board of Directors of any findings."



On February 27, 2026, I provided notice to Chair Jeana Beam of my request for a federal investigation into ODOT, RLS, and the use of the report in Natasha Atkinson's legal defense. This request was sent to the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Regional Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration, the Office of the United States Attorney General, and the White House.

CEO Sheri Bleau responded to my request for records on March 9, 2026, apparently misunderstanding the difference between Executive Committee and executive session. However, she explicitly stated that "Executive Session discussions, legal counsel, and personnel matters... are subject to confidentiality requirements under Oregon's Public Meetings Law." As such, it appears that CEO Sheri Bleau is aware of the limitations on how that information can be distributed, despite attempting to obtain it several months earlier.

I further note that the current Board majority has failed to provide me with requested records, including but not limited to agreements entered into by Board leadership and records related to Executive Committee activities and investigations. Under the District's bylaws and principles of transparent governance, Board members are entitled to equal access to District information. Selectively withholding records while simultaneously accusing a Director of withholding records is inconsistent and improper.

The Board's approach toward prior Board members and former executive leadership has created an adversarial and hostile governance environment, contributing to disruption, loss of institutional knowledge, and confusion regarding record location and management. These conditions are the direct result of Board actions, not the conduct of prior leadership.

Nothing in this response shall be construed as a waiver of any legal rights, defenses, privileges, whistleblower protections, or due process rights available to me. Should the Board pursue further action, I expect full compliance with Oregon law, including public process, proper notice, and an opportunity to respond in open session.

Sincerely,

Michaela Hammerson
Director, Position 2
Umpqua Public Transportation District