

**PORT OF BENTON  
COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2019**

- A. CALL TO ORDER:** The regular monthly meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. at the Walter Clore Wine and Culinary Center, 2140 Wine Country Road, Prosser, Washington. Present were Commissioners Jane F. Hagarty, Roy D. Keck and Robert D. Larson. Staff members present included Interim Executive Director, Diahann Howard, PPM®; Director of Finance, Stuart Dezember, CPA, PPM®; Director of Real Estate, Teresa Hancock; Director of Communications and Marketing, Wally Williams; Director of Special Projects, John Haakenson, Port Counsel, David Billetdeaux and Administrative Assistant, Kelly Thompson. Also, in attendance were Randy Taylor, Rachel Shaw, Marty Groom, Deb Heintz, Abby Cameron, Sue Jetter and Bill O’Neil.
- B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Wally Williams led those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.
- C. CURRENT BUSINESS:**
- 1. CONSENT ITEMS:** A motion was made by Commissioner Robert Larson, seconded by Commissioner Jane Hagarty and unanimously passed by the Commission approving the August 26, 2019 Commission Meeting Minutes and the August 2019 voucher certification.
  
  - 2. DIRECTOR OF FINANCE REPORT:** Vouchers audited by the Auditor as required by RCW 42.24.080 and certified expense reimbursement claims as required by RCW 42.24.090 have been recorded on a listing, which has been made available to the Port Commission and was approved in the consent agenda. Port Commission by unanimous vote approved for payment those vouchers included in said listing and further described as follows: Payroll Warrants numbered 5239 through 5293 totaling \$177,650.32 and General Expense Warrants numbered 71372 through 71500 totaling \$733,428.74 from the General Expense Fund.  
  
The Director of Finance provided a report on Crow Butte Park Rates for various camping/RV rates and fees for the year of 2019, stating the State Auditor has requested the Commission review and formally adopt rates each year. The Director of Finance also reminded the Commission Crow Butte Park rates are competitive for the area and a Discover Pass is not required to enter the park.  
  
**A motion was made by Commissioner Robert Larson, seconded by Commissioner Jane Hagarty and unanimously passed by the Commission approving the 2019 Crow Butte Park rates as discussed.**
  
  - 3. UNSCHEDULED BUSINESS/VISITORS:** There were no comments.

4. **RESOLUTION 19-25, NEIGHBORS BBQ, LLC:** This Resolution was discussed and tabled for the next regularly scheduled Commission Meeting, due to tenant awaiting second contractor bid.
5. **RESOLUTION 19-26, COMMUNITY ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION BOARD (CERB):** The Interim Executive Director stated this was a Resolution approving a Stormwater Master Plan for the 1,341 acres in North Richland. The Port is partnering with the City of Richland to apply for a \$50,000 grant from CERB with a \$50,000 match from the Port and a \$50,000 match from the City of Richland, total project cost \$100,000.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Jane Hagarty, seconded by Commissioner Robert Larson and unanimously passed by the Commission, approving Resolution 19-26, Community Revitalization Board (CERB), for the Stormwater Master Plan for the 1,341 acres in North Richland, total project cost \$100,000.**

6. **RESOLUTION 19-27, REVIEW AND ADOPT NEW COMMISSION POLICY:** This Resolution was discussed and tabled for the next regularly scheduled Commission Meeting. The Commission requested further time for review of policy.

At 8:46 a.m. Commissioner Roy Keck called for a moment of silence in remembrance of the 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the September 11, 2001 acts of terrorism on the United States of America. A moment of silence was observed by all in attendance.

7. **CITY OF PROSSER:** Marty Groom, Public Works Director, provided a presentation on the City's Six Year Transportation Improvement Plan. He then provided a hand-out outlining the City of Prosser's yearly work schedule, highlighting their preventative street maintenance. The Director of Special Projects asked about an easement at Prosser Airport that had been discussed in the past. Mr. Groom stated he would check on this easement. Commissioner Hagarty asked about the widening of both Wamba and Byron Roads and Mr. Groom showed a map and explained the process. Commissioner Keck asked if the yearly work schedule was cost coded back to the City of Prosser's budget. Mr. Groom stated the cost codes were included in the work schedule.
8. **PROSSER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (PEDA):** Deb Heintz, Director, thanked the Port for partnering with them on economic development issues and continued support for Prosser. She also updated the Commission on business recruitment, Leadership Prosser, SR 221 Project, Housing Committee and broadband extension in Prosser.
9. **WALTER CLORE WINE AND CULINARY CENTER:** Abbey Cameron, Director, thanked the Port for their continued support. She reviewed both past and upcoming events scheduled for 2019 at the Clore Center. She stated they have shifted some of their marketing efforts to launching a membership program, which offers more

networking benefits to their members than just the wine club. They have met with members of the Hanford Area Investment Fund Committee (HAIFC) regarding their loan payment schedule and are beginning to form their 2020 budget. Commissioner Larson asked about the change in format for the Legends of Washington Wine Hall of Fame Event. Ms. Cameron stated this is their premiere event, biggest fund raiser and they made some changes based on suggestions by their members. This year the event resulted in over \$90,000 being raised.

**10. GRANTS STATUS:** Sue Jetter reviewed the 2019 Grant Writer Report (April–June) and explained the grants the Port, Benton City and Prosser Economic Development Association are currently pursuing. The Commission thanked Ms. Jetter for her professionalism and partnership regarding her services to all local entities.

**D. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:** Commissioner Jane Hagarty stated that the reports given at today’s meeting covered her comments.

Commissioner Robert Larson stated he attended a Tri City Area Chamber of Commerce Luncheon featuring Representative Dan Newhouse as the speaker. He also stated he attended the READY4NUCLEAR Event in August.

Commissioner Roy Keck stated he attended the READY4NUCLEAR Event in August and stated the industry is now beginning to develop small modular reactors to accommodate specific needs within the industry. He stated Idaho National Laboratories is already developing and using these small modular reactors. The theory is that Hanford area jobs could be replaced by these jobs. He also stated he attended Riverfest Tri Cities last weekend.

**E. COUNSEL COMMENTS:** Counsel stated the Federal Rail Assistance Program (FRAP) and the Federal Rail Investment Program (FRIP) grant in the amount of \$1.5M and the \$250,000 loan have been received. The Port’s match is \$250,000, which had been previously approved at the July 10, 2019 Commission Meeting. Per RCW and grant requirements, the port must request formal permission to begin to spend the funds with an estimated total project cost \$2M.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Robert Larson, seconded by Commissioner Jane Hagarty and unanimously passed by the Commission, authorizing the Interim Executive Director to execute the necessary documents to begin spending the funds for the FRAP (\$1.5M) and FRIP (\$250,000 loan with \$250,000 Port match, for a total project cost of \$2M).**

Counsel stated the Port is preparing to advertise for bids for the bridge replacement ties and the City of Richland has requested permission from the Port to order an additional 200 ties for the City’s use, to leverage procurement resources and this portion would be separately billed to the City of Richland.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Robert Larson, seconded by Commissioner Jane Hagarty and unanimously passed by the Commission, authorizing the Interim Executive Director to execute the necessary documents to procure 200 additional ties.**

Counsel also updated the Commission on the two-day deposition of Randolph Peterson. There will be additional time and money spent in upcoming depositions of Port, City and Tri-City Railroad employees over the next several months, but the Port is convinced Mr. Peterson's claims are without merit. The trial is set for 2020.

The taxpayer lawsuit that the Port won at the Superior Court and Court of Appeals, has been appealed to the Washington Supreme Court by Randolph Peterson.

Counsel stated the remainder of his comments were reserved for Executive Session.

- F. INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COMMENTS:** The Interim Executive Director recognized the passing of Rita Moore, Port maintenance, Jeff Moore's wife. She also discussed the Strategic Plan development which will help the Port align and grow and include an update of the Port's Comprehensive Plan. She also advised Janice Corbin, Sound Employment Solutions, LLC, has met with some of the staff and will be assisting with the selection of the new facilities manager.

Ms. Corbin will also be providing more staff training in the future. Maintenance supervisors are attending training programs. Also, the Port has reposted the position of Facilities Manager and Ms. Corbin will assist with the selection of the new employee. Commissioner Hagarty advised to take our time and not rush to fill this position.

The Interim Executive Director thanked the Director of Real Estate for her work and dedication in updating the leases and working with the Port's many tenants.

The Interim Executive Director thanked the Director of Special Projects for his work and dedication in the absence of the Facilities and Airport Director.

**G. STAFF INFORMATION REPORTS:**

**COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING:** The Director of Marketing provided a draft copy of the 2019 fall newsletter and the updated 2019 Port brochure. He also advised he and the staff directors are updating the Comprehensive Plan and that it will be ready for review in October. He reminded those present of the Great Prosser Balloon Rally, which will be held September 27-28 at the Prosser Airport. He also stated all the Port of Benton "FOR SALE/LEASE" signs are going through the process of updating and a new ad will be running in the Tri-City Journal of Business. The Interim Executive Director reminded the Commission of the Tri Cities Tech Summit, which will be held September 12, in the Uptown, Richland, and of Atomic Frontier Days Centennial, which will be held in Howard Amon Park on Saturday, September 14, 2019.

**GRANTS:** The updated copy of the Grants Status report was reviewed.

**GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS:** The Interim Executive Director provided an update on her current projects. She reminded the Commission and staff of the joint City/Port of Benton tour, scheduled for September 16, 2019 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**SITES UPDATE:** The Director of Real Estate discussed the recent lease for Wautoma Springs in Vintners Village, stating per RCW 53.08.085, the Port must collect surety in an amount equal to six months lease income. The tenant is requesting a reduction to one-month surety.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Jane Hagarty, seconded by Commissioner Robert Larson and unanimously passed by the Commission, authorizing the Interim Executive Director to execute the necessary documents to reduce Wautoma Springs' lease surety to a one-month surety.**

The Director of Real Estate also reminded those present that Alexandria Nicole and Witt Cellars would be hosting a wine tasting event to coincide with the Prosser Balloon Rally in the Prosser Wine and Food Park on Saturday, September 28, 2019 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The Interim Executive Director advised the Richland Innovation Center plat was submitted to the City for final approval.

- H. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** The regular Commission Meeting was recessed at 11:00 a.m. and an Executive Session was convened to discuss Personnel Matters pursuant to RCW 42.30.110 (1)(g). The Commission announced the Executive Session would last no longer than twenty (20) minutes. The Executive Session was adjourned at 11:20 a.m. and the regular Commission Meeting was reconvened.
- I. ADJOURNMENT:** With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

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Robert D. Larson,  
Commission Secretary