

**PORT OF BENTON  
COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
DECEMBER 9, 2020**

**A. CALL TO ORDER:** The regular monthly meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m. at Port of Benton Commission Meeting Room, 3250 Port of Benton Boulevard, Richland, Washington.

**PRESENT:** Commissioner Roy D. Keck (via remote telecommunications), Commissioner Robert D. Larson (via remote telecommunications), Commissioner Jane F. Hagarty. Executive Director, Diahann Howard, PPM® (via remote telecommunications); Director of Economic Development and Governmental Affairs, Miles Thomas (via remote telecommunications); Administrative Tech, Summers Miya (via remote telecommunications); Director of Real Estate, Teresa Hancock (via remote telecommunications); Director of Marketing, Wally Williams (via remote telecommunications); Administrative Assistant, Sheri Collins (via remote telecommunications); Facilities Manager, Ron Branine (via remote telecommunications); Director of Airports, Joe Walker (via remote telecommunications); Director of Special Projects, John Haakenson (via remote telecommunications); Director of Finance/CPA, Danielle Connor (via remote telecommunications); Sundance Aviation, Devin Alder (via remote telecommunications); Century West Engineers, Bryan Condon (via remote telecommunications)

The Commission Meeting was conducted using the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) recommended social distancing protocols for COVID-19 with Commissioners meeting in-person and remotely; public attending remotely and Port staff members participating in-person or remotely, and said meeting was noticed as required by RCW 42.30.070.

Commissioner Hagarty noted that she would read action items aloud alphabetically by last name and asked that each commissioner signify their vote by announcing 'Yes' or 'No' aloud. Further, when a Commissioner wishes to speak, the name of the Commissioner will be announced for those using remote telecommunications.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Commissioner Roy Keck led those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. CONSENT AGENDA:**

**A motion was made by Commissioner Robert Larson, seconded by Commissioner Roy Keck and unanimously passed by the Commission approving the November 17, 2020 Commission Meeting Minutes, and approval of vouchers and certifications, including payroll, for the month of November totaling \$934,594.78.**

**D. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Devin Alder of Sundance addressed the Commission, noting he had questions about the Airport Fee Schedule for 2021 that was included in the packet, as well as questions about the Airport Coordinator position.

Commissioner Hagarty asked Director of Airports, Joe Walker to address these questions during his presentation, which Walker confirmed.

#### **E. ITEMS OF BUSINESS:**

**1. Resolution 20-28, Authorizing a Sale of Real Property by Real Estate Contract (Dufresne-Redding Properties LLC, Brian Brendel):** Director of Real Estate, Teresa Hancock introduced the Resolution, noting that she has been conversation with Brian Brendel for a few years regarding the sale of the property. Hancock noted that the closing date is expected to be January 29, 2021 and per RCW 53.08.091, there will be a 4% down payment, with 6% per annum and there will be a balance of \$987,446, to be paid in monthly installments over a 10-year period, \$10,962mo/\$131,552.16yr.

Hancock added that there is a sale contingency that the purchaser is to construct public improvements with approved receipts, as highlighted on Lot 7, required per the City of Richland, for RS 5306, with a max amount of \$150k and this construction must be completed by December 31, 2021 to receive credit for balance owing.

Hancock stated that the purchaser is working with a new financial officer, but intends to pay off within 24 months at a more favorable interest rate (10-year / 120-month term).

**A motion was made by Commissioner Roy Keck, seconded by Commissioner Robert Larson and unanimously passed by the Commission approving Resolution 20-28, authorizing a sale of real property by real estate contract (Dufresne-Redding Properties LLC, Brian Brendel).**

**2. Resolution 20-56, Authorizing a 5-Year Lease (M'Liss Bierlink dba Sister to Sister on the Ave.):** Director of Real Estate, Teresa Hancock stated that she was pleased to announce the 5-year lease with Sister to Sister on the Ave. in Vintner's Village at 236-B Port Ave. Hancock explained that the tenant is using the space as a working bakery with gifts and apparel, along with wholesale online sales. Hancock added that the tenant has invested over \$70k and Hancock will be stair stepping the lease and provided the Commission with the lease terms:

- Year 1-3, (\$9.00psf) \$21,807 per year
- Year 4-5, \$23,018.50 per year
- Option Term (5 Year): Fair market value market, but not less than previous paid
- Security deposit – 2 months
- Financial Impact (less tenant improvements) initial term: +\$88k

Hancock added that the tenant started in the space in November of 2019 as a temporary space, then COVID-19 halted the long-term lease, but the tenant has been pleased with the space throughout the year and is excited to move forward.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Robert Larson, seconded by Commissioner Roy Keck and unanimously passed by the Commission approving Resolution 20-56, authorizing a 5-year lease to M'Liss Bierlink dba Sister to Sister on the Ave.**

**3. Airport Fee Schedule for 2021:** Director of Airports, Joe Walker introduced the Airport Fee Schedule for 2021 stating that the fees discussed in the documents are for new tenants, operators, and customers of the airport going forward, we would like to implement the fee structure January 2021 and the Port fully intends to fulfill the terms of current leases. Walker continued, noting that there are a

variety of leases at both airports, some which allow and call for rent increases and others that have limitations. Walker stated that going forward, the Port would want to work with every tenant on an individual basis to strike a balance and for any tenant that would have their rate increased significantly, the Port is proposing stair-stepping the rate as to not cause financial strain to the tenants, while providing the airport with fair revenues. Walker added that development of this fee structure is a requirement by FAA within the grant assurances.

Walker provided further detail on the Grant Assurance 24 Fees and Rental Structure:  
*"...maintain a fee and rental structure for the facilities and services at the airport which will make the airport as self-sustaining as possible under the circumstances existing at the particular airport, taking into account such factors as the volume of traffic and economy of collection."*

Walker went through the proposed schedule item by item.

Walker stated that the airport sponsor's obligation to make an airport available for public use does not preclude the owner or sponsor from recovering the cost of providing the facility, and the owner or sponsor is expected to recover its costs through the establishment of fair and reasonable fees, rentals, or other user charges that will make the airport as self-sustaining as possible under the circumstances existing at the particular airport.

Walker remarked that Landing Fees are typically reserved for airports with commercial service, limited ramp space, or very high-demand airports, noting that the Port does not have the operational volume to warrant charging landing fees and in the future, as larger aircraft use the airport, landing fees may become necessary to offset additional costs associated with larger aircraft. Walker noted this item is currently reserved.

Walker continued, commenting that as the airport grows and space becomes more limited, it may be necessary to charge business apron or business operator fees and this item is currently reserved.

Walker continued with an explanation on the Fuel Flowage item, stating that currently, the Prosser Airport collects fuel flowage and Richland does not. Walker added that fuel flowage fees are best practice in the aviation industry, as flowage fees allow the airport sponsor access to fuel licenses, inspections, and environmental reports that also disclose fuel sales, which are reported to the WSDOT, FAA and used in master planning. Walker added that aircraft owners are granted a right to self-fuel aircraft on the airport, fuel co-operatives are still not allowed and the airport can impose reasonable restrictions on self-fueling to ensure all applicable laws are being followed and environmental contamination is not occurring. Walker added that increased flowage for fuel brought from off the airport is due to the increased wear and tear of airport gates and pavement associated with self-fueling.

Walker moved on the Car Rental item, pointing out that currently we do not have an onsite car rental operation, but this gives us a starting point for those operations, should they become available at the airport.

Walker explained the Ground Lease rates item, noting that the rates listed come directly from the AMCG Rent Study and the rates are slightly higher than many other competitive airports in the area. Walker noted that when reviewing the competitive airports around the Richland and Prosser airports, none of them have undergone a recent rent study, and many have never conducted a rent study or regularly update competitive rates. Walker felt it should be noted that while demand has increased, availability of leasable land has not, which is a primary driving factor. Walker stated that land is leased as unimproved and when the improvement is completed, the land migrates to the improved rate and our leases will reflect the improvement.

Walker said that a primary theme that was brought up by himself and several pilots/tenants and addressed with AMCG was the disparity in rates between aeronautical land and non-aeronautical. Walker added that this disparity is caused by multiple factors that include:

- The access of aeronautical property to what is likely well over 30 million in infrastructure, runways, taxiways, approaches, parking, weather equipment
- The business park sits on a piece of property currently zoned industrial, rather than commercial zoning that is more appropriate based on current uses
- There is a large amount of land available outside the airport that devalues the comps that are able to be used for the business park.

Walker stated that these are items that the Port will address over time.

Walker moved on to the Port-Owned buildings item, stating that these are negotiated based on the current market rate and are often verified with comps by the Director of Real Estate to ensure we are receiving the appropriate amount of revenue.

Walker addressed the Port-owned FBO buildings, stating that the Port owns very few buildings on the aeronautical side of the Richland airport and these buildings typically serve a commercial aeronautical use and rates are negotiated with the rent study in mind, but also with an emphasis on the services provided to the users of the airport.

Walker continued, addressing the Monthly Tiedown fee item, stating that while each FBO at each airport operates tiedowns, the airport does not maintain responsibility of some tiedowns outside the leased areas. Walker added that often derelict or abandoned aircraft appear in these locations and become difficult to remove and Washington has a very specific process for removal of derelict aircraft, one of the elements is to identify charges owed to the airport. Walker pointed out that there are currently no charges to identify. Walker added that it is very common for airports to maintain reserved tiedowns for aircraft that spend an extended time parked at the airport.

Walker explained that many airports collect Transient Overnight fees for overnight stays, which is not an uncommon practice and added that this is essentially a daily tiedown rate. Walker noted that the challenge is for the airport operator to collect the fees, since they are charged daily. Walker stated that he will continue to investigate if this is possible and work toward a best practice for these particular fees.

Walker addressed the Terminal Fees item, stating that he anticipates that in the future, there will be a terminal building located at the airport, which would provide for appropriate fees to be charged and this category is reserved for future use.

Walker also stated that the Security Fees are also reserved for possible future implementation of a card access system.

Walker addressed the SASO/Specialized Aviation Service Operator item, noting that this item relates to Grant Assurance 22/Non-Economic Discrimination. Walker added that SASO's provide one or more services, such as aircraft maintenance, avionics or instrument maintenance, aircraft rental or flight training, aircraft charter or aircraft management, aircraft sales and other commercial aeronautical activities. Walker added that fees associated with a SASO are to ensure operators maintain the appropriate business licenses, insurance and remain equally competitive with service that may be offered by an FBO.

Walker moved on to the independent flight instructor fee item, stating that this is for a flight instructor not employed by an FBO or SASO and the Port would like to also verify that the instructor maintains the appropriate insurance while operating at the airport.

Walker next addressed the equipment standby fees, stating that hazmat cleanup fees would be billed to an insurance company if required and these fees are mainly to recover the supply expenses of large cleanups of avgas, jet fuel or oil spills.

Walker concluded the review with an explanation of the Snow Removal Fee, noting that this fee is for removing snow from a tenant leased ground at their request. Walker added that currently,

tenants are free to remove the snow themselves or request the Port remove the snow for a fee after the airport has been sufficiently cleared to maintain safe operations.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Robert Larson, seconded by Commissioner Roy Keck and unanimously passed by the Commission approving a motion to move forward with the 2021 Airport Fee Schedule.**

**4. Northwest Municipal Advisors Bond Refinancing Contract:** Executive Director, Diahann Howard stated that the Port is looking forward to refinancing two bonds and believes that the refinance will drop the annual debt payment from \$500k to \$300k. Howard explained that the Port conducted a review and has selected Northwest Municipal Advisors to assist with the refinance and the contract is \$17,500. Howard stated that the Port expects to have the refinance complete by February or March 2021.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Roy Keck, seconded by Commissioner Robert Larson and unanimously passed by the Commission approving the Northwest Municipal Advisors contract as presented.**

**5. Review Engagement Letter for Bond Counsel:** Executive Director, Diahann Howard explained that the engagement letter for the issuance of limited tax general obligation improvement refunding bonds, 2021 provides a scope of engagement with bond counsel, William G. Tonkin.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Roy Keck, seconded by Commissioner Robert Larson and unanimously passed by the Commission approving the engagement letter for bond counsel.**

**6. 2021 Architect, Engineer and Professional Roster:** Executive Director, Diahann Howard explained that approving the Professional Roster is an annual process that allows the Port to move quickly and to be flexible on projects.

Howard added that the proper processes were followed in preparing the list and more submittals were received, which adds more variety and options to the 2021 roster.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Robert Larson, seconded by Commissioner Roy Keck and unanimously passed by the Commission approving the 2021 professional roster as presented.**

#### **F. INFORMATION REPORTS:**

**1. Grants Update:** Executive Director Howard commented that the EDAi6 2017 grant amendment is a no cost extensions to finish; under \$12k remains, FUSE is over \$268k in cost share and has raised \$1.5 million to date and have placed in equity funds and the Christopher Cree admin fees are paid directly from the grant.

Howard added that last month the Port participated in the Tax Increment Financing seminar with WEDA and WPPA and there were over 190 attendees and WPPA is still getting calls about it. Howard added that the LRF has been renamed and will be using video during the legislative session.

Howard noted that she has met with the recently-hired PEDDA grant writer, who hails from the

Hood River/The Dalles, OR area and is very familiar with Port districts. Howard added that they discussed the various opportunities available and noted that the Port will follow-up regarding the USS Triton project.

Howard noted that the Port would like to proceed with remaining Benton County .09 app, as it takes a great deal of time to secure. Howard added that she would like to focus on new ICC building in the new application.

#### **G. COMMISSIONER REPORTS/COMMENTS:**

Commissioner Keck took the opportunity to commend the entire Port of Benton team on all of their efforts and achievements, particularly with the 2021 budget. Commissioner Keck noted that he has attended all recent meetings via virtual communications and expects that to be the new norm for some time.

Commissioner Larson seconded Commissioner Keck's sentiments about virtual meetings, adding that he has been attending all Rotary meetings via Zoom and he recently attended the WPPA and PNWA Annual Meetings via Zoom. Commissioner Larson remarked that Zoom allows for the opportunity to see and hear others and stay connected.

Commissioner Hagarty commented that she misses the physical interaction with others, including other Commissioners and Port speakers, adding that the WPPA Port Reports did not provide the same level of interaction as they have done in the past, but added that the meetings do allow for certain connections, learning and less isolation.

#### **H: DIRECTOR REPORTS/COMMENTS**

**1. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:** Howard stated that PNWA recently announced the Mission to Washington scheduled for March 14-18 has been changed to an all-virtual format.

Howard provided an update on the Department of Energy, stating that DOE is requiring 100% elimination of staff augmentation subcontracting, effective on day one of the new prime contracts following transition, which is January 25, 2021 for the HMESC and CPCC contracts, which does not allow for sufficient time for the primes to reconfigure the current work in order to be subcontracted going forward as meaningful work. Howard continued, noting that as a result, the prime contractors are planning to terminate their staff augmentation subcontracts, and to self-perform that work using prime contractor employees, beginning on January 25, 2021.

Howard added that for the most part, current subcontractors employees will be offered jobs by the primes and when the primes are eventually able to define and subcontract meaningful scopes of work, in 6-9 months, many of these same employees will be offered jobs with the successful small business, which may or may not be their original employer.

Howard noted that this course of action is unnecessarily harmful to the employees, the small businesses and the local business community and this is happening because DOE is being arbitrary about the end date for staff augmentation – day 1 vs. day 30 or day 60, who whatever it takes to pivot from staff augmentation to meaningful performance-based task subcontracts without putting the current subcontractors out of business.

Howard added that the Port is weekly monitoring but being asked if needed to sign on to a letter or position paper with the contribution/endorsement of key community organizations such as TRIDEC, Regional Chamber, Hanford Communities, noting that the action is correct, but the Port

wanted to ensure discussion with the commission before proceeding.

Howard stated that the Maritime Economic Development Committee through AAPA has recently shared a new team structure, as Ed O'Connell and Aaron Ellis have announced their respective retirements. Howard added that the Maritime Transportation Emergency Relief Act has been implemented, which creates a mechanism to provide funds to ports for emergency situations, such as COVID via NDAA and to make up for revenue shortfalls. Howard added that she is looking into whether or not the Port barge falls into a category to receive emergency aid for improvements.

Howard informed the Commission that the AAPA Annual Meeting & Convention will be held in Austin, TX September 26-29, 2021 and will be held in-person, as well as virtually.

Howard commented that the AWB federal forum, awbinstitute.org combines all trends data and the Tri-Cities region is faring much better than many other similar markets.

Howard added that there will be follow-up conversation with a potential client at the Clore center and the Port hopes to have an agreement by January.

Howard noted that the Port has provided a final review including regarding American Rock and the Port has taken a loss for some time. Discussion between the parties and new terms should be final by the next commission meeting.

Howard concluded with an update that the Port has provided a year-end article to the Journal of Business per their request.

**2. PORT ATTORNEY:** Executive Director Howard announced that Port Attorney David Billetdeaux was out on PTO that week and she would be filling in with an update on rail. Howard added that the Port has learned that TCRY has advised a permanent slow order of 5 mph on the rail. She will coordinate with David upon his return.

**3. FINANCE DIRECTOR/AUDITOR:** Director of Finance/Auditor, Danielle Connor noted that expenditures for November were \$935k, including general operating, project and payroll expenses.

Connor added that a cash forecast model has been created to support strategic timing and proactive response to budget and funding availability. Connor notes that she plans to update regularly to keep an eye on cash balances and upcoming cash needs.

Connor stated that the Port has recently received the November reports from the Benton County Treasurer's office and the Port cash balance at the end of November, including reserved cash was \$3.2M. Connor added that the Port is forecasting starting 2021 with approximately \$2.3M in cash.

Connor added that \$586k of debt payments are due in December, of which have either been paid or are scheduled to be paid, which includes debt from GO Bonds, Banner Bonds and the HAEIFC loan.

Connor noted that the rail project is about complete, there was a large disbursement in November and the Port is preparing to submit for reimbursement from WSDOT, noting the Port expects to receive around \$248k in January or February 2021.

Connor added that with Stormwater project also wrapping up, the Port plans to submit for reimbursement soon from the City of Richland and CERB and expects to receive \$75k in January/February.

Connor stated that the Port has several capital projects that are slotted to begin in January/Quarter 1 of 2021 and \$550k are Port-funded capital projects and \$250k are grant funded.

Connor continued with an update on the Integration Project, stating that the team is still scheduled to go live January 4, 2021 with Intacct and Criterion. Connor noted that the team has made progress with the basic user acceptance testing, and are continuing to define and test advanced processes. Connor added that they are in the process of testing the initial parallel payroll in Criterion

and the second payroll test is scheduled to begin next week.

Connor stated that the Port is continuing to identify a potential application for work orders and some options have been reviewed and evaluated.

**4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS:** Director of Economic Development & Governmental Affairs, Miles Thomas announced that the Port and City of Richland are quickly putting the finishing touches on the joint recruitment webpage, Discoverrichland.com, which will be published prior to the January/February release of site selector magazine. Thomas added that Teresa Hancock has been hard at work preparing the handful of spaces for new lessees and the Port is well on the way to market those properties and many receiving local interest. Thomas added that the materials and sites will be shared broadly locally and afar for recruitment.

Thomas stated that as a result of the Port's collateral material promoting new nuclear business, he has been asked to present to the sustainability committee he sits on for the International Economic Development Council. Thomas noted that Jason Herbert from Energy Northwest will be joining him to speak about the history of Richland, the Manhattan Project and Hanford, before bringing the energy production capacity into the framework of the presentation, including the new opportunity with X-Energy and Energy Northwest.

Thomas shifted to his state governmental affairs duties, highlighting that Port staff has not conducted airport obstruction evaluation meetings with the Cities of Richland and West Richland and Benton County. Thomas explained that these meetings allow the Port to keep a positive rapport with regional partners on opportunities to expand and improve our general aviation airports in their jurisdiction. Thomas added that many positive discussions have commenced, due to these collaborative and educational meetings.

Thomas provided an update on the Tri-Cities Legislative Council, stating that the Council has been holding stakeholder meetings for the last several weeks, which were concluded just last night. Thomas highlighted the draft priorities, which would be discussed for finalization:

- Rural Broadband
- Transportation Infrastructure
- Economic Development Financing
- Higher Education & K-12 Funding
- Clean Energy & Lower Snake River Dams
- Possible Inclusion: Paper on Employer Compensation Tax Proposal; Tourism

Thomas explained that the Council is more specifically working on and supporting the Tax Increment Financing Proposal, Extension of Rural County Capital Funds, and expansion and sustainability to the Community Economic Revitalization Fund (CERB).

Thomas clarified that the Council understands the statewide conversation on broadband access, the Council is not positive that the issues of access are well articulated or at least consistent. Thomas added that this is a complex issue and past initiatives have leveraged enabling Ports to extend fiber, which the Port already does in the business and industrial community, but the Port does not particularly the Port as being the best implementor of broadband in residential areas outside of an advisory knowledge role.

**5. MARKETING:** Director of Marketing, Wally Williams stated that he has been working on the Port of Benton eNews publication that will go out next Monday, as well as four short 60 second videos for Teresa that highlight available real estate and facilities, including the southside of the 3250



building, 2345 Stevens Dr., 2019 Butler Loop and 3100 George Washington Way.

Williams added that he has been working with Director of Airports, Joe Walker to create a new brochure for the Richland Airport that will be similar to the Port of Benton overall brochure and will show the capabilities at the Richland Airport.

Williams noted that he has also been working with Facilities Manager, Ron Branine on the new Port of Benton branding logo decals that will be placed on all Port fleet vehicles in 2021.

**6. REAL ESTATE:** Director of Real Estate, Teresa Hancock stated that in tandem to the recent AMCG rate study and approval of the Port's Strategic Plan outlining Port objectives, the Port recently obtained current market studies for the various property located in Benton City. Hancock shared the values of the properties:

- 515 9<sup>th</sup> (Subway) – Value \$252k
- 719 9<sup>th</sup> (Busy Bee Quilting/Labrie Glass) - \$261k
- 721-723 9<sup>th</sup> (L&G Salon and corner lot) - \$100k

Hancock added that the lease rate range is \$6-\$10psf, with L&G at \$8psf, with escalations and purchase interest.

Hancock stated that an unexpected payoff was requested on December 8, 2020 for the 2015 sale of 22.16 acres formerly known as the "Gap Road Property", which was an 18-year contract with the late Stan Jones. Hancock added that the payoff is expected on Friday, December 11, 2020.

Hancock stated that Notices to Terminate have been received from Busy Bee Quilting at 719 9<sup>th</sup> in Benton City and Vibragenix at 3100 George Washington Way. Hancock added that efforts to backfill 719 9<sup>th</sup> are underway for a single user with multiple parties, expressing interest in both lease and purchase. Hancock noted that turnover maintenance is underway.

Hancock stated that 2345 Stevens Dr. has been subject to evolving occupancy within this flagship facility in the past couple of months, but the Port is working to backfill the areas with market leases and seeing renewal of existing leases for Q1 of 2021.

Hancock concluded with an update that the RIC land sale interest is continuing and she anticipates incoming offers for a few parcels in Q1 of 2021.

**7. SPECIAL PROJECTS:** Director of Special Projects, John Haakenson stated that he has been working with D Hittle on a design pertaining to the irrigation pump failure at Crow Butte Park.

Haakenson added that he has also been working with Facilities Manager, Ron Branine on the Pavement Maintenance plan for 2021 and they hope to partner with the City of Richland on the project.

Haakenson added that he has been working on an inventory at the Park and has also been assisting with internet and service issues.

Director of Economic Development & Governmental Affairs, Miles Thomas added that he recently visited the Park with Ron Branine and uncovered that PocketiNet provides satisfactory internet service to the park and they may discuss extending a satellite for camp hosts. Thomas also noted that the current phone has a 3-4 second delay and they may be switching to Century Link landline phone service to combat that issue. Thomas added that there are bandwidth issues because no provider is interested in extending fiber to the area because there are simply not enough people.

**8. FACILITIES & OPERATIONS:** Facilities Manager, Ron Branine noted that they are finishing up on 3250 within the old BNL Tech space, but there is quite a bit of furniture remaining.

Branine added that they have started on the Intermech space with some minor painting, but still developing the overall plan on what they will do there.

Branine added that they are also working to get the Create building ready for lease and are waiting on a new front door and window replacement. Branine noted that they have been working hard to get the Subway basement watertight and also planning the space in the previous Labrie Glass and Quilting building, which was the old fire station.

Branine commented that they are still testing radios to be able to use for better communications, especially for emergency operations, snow removal and other larger events and several portable radios that work in smaller areas, noting that Crow Butte staff is excited about being able to better communicate within the park.

Branine explained that the other projects that he is developing a scope of work on include: 2345 lighting project and carpet replacement, 3100 access controls and the annual herbicide/pesticide plan.

Branine remarked on Director of Special Projects, John Haakenson's earlier comments and reaffirmed that they hope to partner with the City of Richland this year and if so, the Port dollars will go further.

Branine assured the Commission that they are 100% ready for snow.

**9. AIRPORTS:** Director of Airports, Joe Walker stated that they are moving forward with the Richland Airport Master Plan and they are close to a preferred alternative and appreciate all the feedback from the tenants and individuals on and off the airport, noting that the feedback was very supportive of the future growth of the airport. Walker added that he, along with Miles Thomas and Diahann Howard, met with Benton County Planning to address an area of obstruction identified in the master plan process, which is near the Yakima River. Walker stated that they will continue to work with entities around the airport to ensure the airport remains in the conversation for land use planning. Walker added that meetings thus far have provided a general awareness of potential impacts to both airports and all the agencies contacted have been supportive of the future development of the airport.

Walker added that the Prosser Airport, SVID project has wrapped up on the airport side of the project and is currently being finished outside the airport fence. Walker updated that they continue to work on the 2021 taxi lane construction project and continues to explore options to add additional hangar sites at the Prosser Airport.

**I. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** The regular Commission Meeting was recessed at 10:38 a.m. and an Executive Session was convened at 10:40 a.m. to discuss real estate matters and to review the performance of a public employee. The Commission announced the Executive Session would last no longer than 45 minutes. At 11:25 a.m., the Commission announced the Executive Session would be extended another 30 minutes. At 12:05 p.m., the Commission announced the Executive Session would be extended another 10 minutes. The Executive Session was adjourned at 12:14 p.m. and the regular Commission Meeting was reconvened.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Roy Keck, seconded by Commissioner Robert Larson and unanimously passed by the Commission approving the Executive Director to receive a salary increase from \$155k to \$180k. Additionally, Commissioner Keck added that the Commission agreed to give Executive Director Howard an additional \$2k annual employer contribution to Howard's Deferred Compensation, but no further changes to the Executive Director's existing contract would be made.**

After reconvening the regular meeting, the Commission waited for five (5) minutes for any remote attendance participants to reconnect to the meeting. None did.

**J. ADJOURNMENT:** With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:19 p.m.



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Roy D. Keck  
Commission Secretary