



Application for Appointment to the Port of Benton Commissioner District 2

Thank you for your interest in serving as a Commissioner for the Port of Benton. The position vacancy is for District 2 and must be filled by a resident of District 2; residency requirements must be met by the time of appointment to the commission. To be considered, your application must be submitted in-person (in a sealed envelope) at **3250 Port of Benton, Richland, WA 99354** or by email to david@portofbenton.com no later than 12:00 p.m. on Friday, November 19, 2021. Applications received after 12:00 pm will not be accepted. Additional written information after this date will not be accepted, unless requested by the Port of Benton Commission.

In-Person Application: Delivery of applications in-person must be received between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday (OR) between 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. on Friday, with the last opportunity to submit in-person at 12:00 p.m. on Friday, November 19, 2021.

Emailed Application: Applications submitted by email must be received by email at 12:00 p.m. on Friday, November 19, 2021. If submitting by email, all included attachments must not exceed 10MB total and be formatted as a PDF, DOC, or DOCX file type. Please attach your application and supporting materials to an email and send to david@portofbenton.com.

To verify whether you reside in District 2, please view the map at www.portofbenton.com/commissionmap. In addition to residency in District 2 you must be a current registered voter in Benton County.

The Port Commission will review all applications for content and for completeness. The Commission will, at a special commission meeting on November 22, 2021, review applications and narrow the pool down to a handful of finalists. The exact number of finalists selected will be at the discretion of the Commission. The Port Commission will interview each finalist, in open session, on November 29, 2021. The questions to be asked of the finalists will not be provided in advance.

[For complete instructions, eligibility, additional requirements, and public disclosure information please see 'Supplemental Information for Appointment to Port of Benton Commissioner District 2' on the Port's website at www.portofbenton.com/commissionvacancy.]

Monday, November 8, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.	Applications posted on the Port of Benton Website and available in the Port offices
Friday, November 19 by 12:00 p.m.	Deadline to submit application for vacancy
Monday, November 22 at 9:00 a.m.	Special Commission Meeting to review applications and announce finalists for interview
Monday, November 29 at 8:30 a.m.	Final Interviews held at special commission meeting and announcement of appointment of District 2 Commissioner

Continued on next page.

Please fill out the following questions completely.

Name of Applicant	Justin Raffa				
Street Number and Address	1214 Gowen Avenue				
City	Richland	State	WA	Zip	99352
Preferred Phone		Email			
Are you over the age of eighteen (18)?					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Use a separate page as necessary to complete your response to the following questions. Each answer to open ended questions should be no more than 250 words each.

1. Describe why you're interested in serving on the Port of Benton Commission.

One of the most effective ways to bring about positive change is to become a public servant. Benton County is my home. I care about this community and want it to be the best that it can be for all of its residents.

I have felt called to serve for elected office for some time and have a history of leadership positions with non profit boards and city and state commissions that I will describe through which I've worked to raise the profile of our community across the region and the state. Additionally, many community members have encouraged me to pursue serving as an elected official for many years, including recent inquiries about this particular opportunity, and I am pleased to answer their call.

I seek to bring a balanced approach to decision making and budgeting and see myself as a civil voice in the arena of political discourse. I am ready to dutifully fulfill the responsibilities of the office and leverage my experience as a leader in my industry for the past two decades. The Port of Benton has seen significant growth over the past few years under new staff leadership, and I want to help continue to steer the port in the right direction well into the future.

2. What is your current (or former, if retired) occupation, and are there any relevant skills of that occupation you feel are relevant experience to serve as a Commissioner?

I'm a musician and arts administrator with 20 years of leadership experience in the nonprofit sector. The arts by nature are non-partisan, and I have worked to build relationships with people of all political stripes. My current job is Artistic Director of the Mid-Columbia Mastersingers, a non profit community chorus organization. I work in a creative, entrepreneurial spirited industry where I have learned how to operate on shoestring budgets and make tough decisions about funding allocations. During my tenure over the past 13 years, I have successfully worked to grow our annual operating budget nearly ten fold. In doing so, I helped build up monetary reserves following several consecutive fiscal years ending in a surplus: monies which are now keeping us afloat while our industry was largely shut down during the pandemic.

As a senior staff member, my work experience and skill set is complementary to the duties of Commissioners, including committee participation, budget decisions and stewardship, and accountability to public stakeholders. I help manage over 150 volunteers and oversee a staff of ten in my department. Networking is a key skill to success in the arts and a large part of my role as a director. I plan to leverage my networking experience to keep the Port of Benton connected to area jurisdictions, agencies, and businesses by fostering inclusive relationships of mutual trust and respect.

3. What other qualifications do you hold that you consider relevant to this position?

I served as a community representative on the Port of Kennewick's Vista Vision Task Force in 2014 following the public charette process regarding Vista Field's future, and in 2015 I participated as a member of the Brand Implementation Leadership Team in conjunction with Visit Tri-Cities, the Tri-City Regional Chamber, and TRIDEC following the rebranding study commissioned at that time.

I served as a board member with the Columbia Basin Badger Club, our community's forum for civil discourse, and still regularly attend their presentations.

I was elected Vice-Chair to the board of Leadership Tr-Cities in 2020 and am a proud graduate of the program, having been a member of Class 19.

I'm a Richland Rotarian, having served a term as a board member and successfully completing all three levels of training offered by the Rotary Leadership Institute. I strive to measure my actions against Rotary's four way test.

I've served as an emcee for a variety of local fundraising efforts, including the Domestic Violence Services of Benton & Franklin Counties, the Miss Tri-Cities pageant program, SIGN Fracture Care International, and the annual Norm & Shirley Miller Leadership Awards Banquet.

Mostly recently, I completed an eight year term as a board member with the Arts Center Task Force whose mission is to build a performing arts center for our community.

Regarding my professional industry, I serve on the Northwest Regional board of the American Choral Directors Association.

4. What is your experience holding elected or appointed public office (if any)? If you have held public office, what leadership roles or executive leadership team experience do you have in that office?

Examples may include serving on City Council, County Commission, Advisory Boards and Commissions, Appointments to Community Boards (e.g. Visit Tri-Cities, Chamber of Commerce, etc.)

I've been a member of the board of Visit Tri-Cities since 2015 when I was first appointed by former Chair Rich Cummins. Throughout my board term, I served on the nominating committee several times and provided an important voice to represent the local arts and entertainment industry, specifically as to how it contributes to tourism and economic development.

I was appointed by the Governor to the Washington State Arts Commission in 2016, reappointed in 2019, and was elected by the members to serve as Chair this year.

I served as a member of the City of Richland's Arts Commission from 2014-17 and was elected Chair by its members. During my tenure, I helped to create the musical instrument plaza in Howard Amon Park and supported the city's annual Winterfest celebrations each December. Before joining the commission, they recognized me in 2011 with their the Outstanding Individual Contribution to the Arts Award on behalf of the city.

I was recently appointed to the City of Richland's Board of Adjustment.

My time on these city and state boards and commissions has given me experience in the public sector around open meeting laws, the application of Robert's Rules of Order, how to accept public comment, the need to publish meeting agendas in advance, the important relationship between government transparency and public trust, and a comprehensive understanding of what it means to be a public servant.

5. Do you, your spouse, or another closely related party have a financial interest in, or are an employee or affiliate of any business or agency which does business with the Port of Benton? If so, please explain.

No

6. From what you have learned about the Port of Benton and the community/region, how are you the ideal match for this position?

I am a former candidate for local public office and am familiar with the process of running a campaign, filing with the PDC, and having an increased public profile within the community beyond that of the average citizen that comes with being a candidate. If appointed, I have every intention to run for the seat when the term is up for election again in 2023.

I stand for Governance, not Grandstanding: I don't have the propensity to point fingers and divert blame at public meetings, and I am not beholden to any specific interests or groups in applying for this position. I am a voice committed to civility and respect in our political discourse and believe that the best decisions are made when viewpoints are thoughtfully considered and debated, and, by engaging the public in the process. I am a founding member of the Tri-City Civility Caucus started in the fall of 2018 and have served as Chair since its inception. This is a reflection of relationships I have developed and of my ability to work respectfully with people, no matter their political leanings.

Many jurisdictions are seeking increased diversity of skill sets and experience from their elected officials, and I believe I would compliment those of the existing Commissioners with my appointment.

7. Explain your experience with property management, leases, real estate transactions and business proposals? What is your experience with airports or other specialty service areas?

Beyond my personal experiences with real estate as a homeowner, much of my nonprofit board service over the years has included high level oversight of these items. While I do not have any direct experience working with airports outside of being a frequent flyer, I am well aware of the important role they play in a community's viability regarding both public and private transit services.

8. Is there anything in your background we should know about that would have a negative impact on you or the port if you were appointed? Please explain.

No

Please attach a résumé of no more than two pages to be submitted along with your application.

JUSTIN J. RAFFA

1214 Gowen Ave
Richland, WA 99352



EDUCATION

2008 Master of Music: Choral Conducting

- University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ
- 4.0 Cumulative GPA

2003 Bachelor of Music: Music Education, Voice Concentration

- Westminster Choir College of Rider University, Princeton, NJ
- Magna Cum Laude graduate

RECENT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Chorusmaster

2015-present **Yakima Symphony Orchestra** **Yakima, WA**

- Leader of 60 voice volunteer symphonic choir
- Rehearse and prepare choir for major choral/orchestra repertoire
- Work with conductor to select choral programming for the orchestra season

Artistic Director

2008-present **Mid-Columbia Mastersingers** **Tri-Cities, WA**

- Leader of semi-professional community chorus ranging from 24-150 singers
- Program subscription series, collaborative concerts and special performances
- Spearhead new fundraising and outreach efforts to quintuple budget in first 5 years

Minister of Music

2009-12 **All Saints' Episcopal Church** **Richland, WA**

- Oversaw church music program, selected music for weekly traditional services
- Conducted annual cantata and other special programs, with professional guest musicians
- Directed bell choir, reinstated quarterly Choral Evensong services

Music Director/Conductor

2010-present **Columbia Basin College** **Pasco, WA**

- Served as vocal music director and/or conductor for summer showcase and student musicals
- Coordinated contracting of pit orchestra musicians
- Adjunct faculty 2013 with the theatre department

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

2021-present	Board of Adjustment, City of Richland, WA
2020-present	Board member, Richland Rotary Club, Richland, WA
2017-present	Repertoire & Resources Chair for Community Choirs, Northwest Region ACDA
2016-present	Member, Washington State Arts Commission, Olympia, WA
2015-present	Board member, Visit Tri-Cities, Tri-Cities, WA
2015-18	Board member, Columbia Basin Badger Club, Tri-Cities, WA
2015-17	Member, Brand Implementation Leadership Team, Tri-Cities, WA
2014-17	Member, Richland Arts Commission chair, Richland, WA
2014-15	Member, Vista Vision Task Force with Port of Kennewick, Tri-Cities, WA
2013-17	Repertoire & Standards Chair for Community Choirs, Washington State ACDA
2013-14	Graduate, Leadership Tri-Cities Class XIX, Tri-Cities, WA
2011-19	Board member, Arts Center Task Force, Tri-Cities, WA
2011-13	Citizens for Good Schools Committee, Richland School District, Richland, WA
2010-15	Board member, Richland Rotary Club, Richland, WA
2008-13	Orchestra Manager (paid position), Mid-Columbia Symphony, Tri-Cities, WA
2009-11	Board member, Mid-Columbia Musical Theatre, Tri-Cities, WA
2006-07	Music Coordinator, Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network <i>World AIDS Day Service</i> , Tucson, AZ
2005-06	Board member, Bisbee Arts Commission, Bisbee, AZ
2000-03	Director of Development, The Actors Company at Westminster, Princeton, NJ

AWARDS & HONORS

2014	Friend of Music – Columbia Basin Music Educators Association
2013	Outstanding Emerging Choral Conductor – Washington State ACDA
2011	Outstanding Individual Contribution to the Arts – City of Richland Arts Commission
2008	Outstanding Graduate Student Leadership Award – University of Arizona Graduate & Professional Student Council
2008	Outstanding Graduate Student Leadership Award – University of Arizona Center for Student Involvement & Leadership
2006-08	Clarence L. Torp Music Scholarship, The University of Arizona
2006-08	Marie M. Meier Choral Scholarship, The University of Arizona
2003	Rider University President's Award
1999-2003	Gladys Hayn Scholarship, Westminster Choir College
1999-2003	Dean's Academic Scholarship, Westminster Choir College
1999-2003	Frank and Lydia Bergen Foundation Scholarship, Westminster Choir College
1999-2003	Aden G. Lewis Scholarship, Westminster Choir College
1999-2003	Burns and Alan Dobbins, Jr. Memorial Scholarship, Westminster Choir College