

**PORT OF BENTON  
COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 8, 2022**

**A. CALL TO ORDER:** The regular monthly meeting was called to order at 8:31 a.m. at the Port of Benton Commission meeting room, 3250 Port of Benton Boulevard, Richland, Washington

**PRESENT:** Commissioner Christy L. Rasmussen; Commissioner Roy D. Keck; Commissioner Lori Stevens; Executive Director, Diahann Howard, PPM®; Public Information Officer, Summers Miya; Director of Finance, Danielle Connor; Director of Marketing, Wally Williams; Director of Facilities & Operations, Ron Branine; Senior Accountant, Veronica Serna; Accounting Clerk, Liz Renz; Airport Manager, Quentin Wright; Director of Real Estate, Teresa Hancock; Consultant, Ashley Garza; Theresa Richardson, City of Richland

**The following attendees attended via remote communications:** Contract Specialist, Sheri Collins; Bryan Condon, Century West Engineering; Port Attorney, David Billetdeaux; Roger Wright, RGW Enterprises; Joshua Lott, Anderson Perry

The Commission meeting and public hearing were noticed as required by RCW 42.30.070.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Commission Vice President, Roy Keck led those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. CONSENT AGENDA:**

A motion was made by Commissioner Lori Stevens, seconded by Commissioner Roy Keck, and unanimously passed by the Commission approving the agenda for the November 8, 2022 Commission meeting, approval of minutes from the October 10, 2022 Special Commission Budget Workshop, approval of minutes from the October 11, 2022 Commission meeting, approval of vouchers and certifications, including payroll, for the month of October totaling \$1,317,852.11, approval of project vouchers and certifications for the month of October totaling \$355,609.12 and approval of Resolution 22-36, to cancel U.S. Bank warrant numbers 45449-47300, which were not printed.

**D. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There were no comments from the public.

**E. PUBLIC HEARING**

Commission President Christy Rasmussen opened the public hearing at 8:37 a.m.

1. 2023 Comprehensive Plan of Harbor Improvements

Executive Director, Diahann Howard stated that the Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements (Comp Plan) is a guideline that advised the public what is coming up in the budget and thanked the team for their assistance and support in preparing the 2023 plan.

Howard highlighted the plan, noting the areas that are noted on the plan's maps that have changed from blue to green, which denotes property that the Port may consider for selling.

Howard reminded the Commission that if there is a change throughout the year, there is a process where the public and Commission is noticed of a public hearing to alter the approved comp plan.

Howard went through the plan highlighting Port properties identified for sale or land lease only and property border and highlighted that there is only one property remaining in Benton City (Subway) and Prosser's Bryson Orchard will be identified as for sale going forward. Howard also featured the barge and rail, recognizing the rail facility as land lease only.

Howard added that the draft comp plan has been available in the Port lobby and on the website since the October meeting.

## 2. 2023 Port of Benton Budget

Executive Director, Diahann Howard, stated that the draft preliminary budget has been available in the Port lobby and on the website since the October meeting.

Howard highlighted a few notable changes since the preliminary budget was presented:

- Added \$275k additional operational costs/professional services for 2579 Stevens Drive facility and track temporary operations in 2023
- Added \$150k insurance recovery from BNSF derailment
- Added \$410k of FAA AIP airport projects, assuming to be 100% FAA funded
  - \$160k Richland Airport design of asphalt repair and replacement
  - \$250k Prosser Airport design of lighting and runway and taxiway pavement rehab
- Added \$300k Port-funded critical railroad ties repair
- Reduced capital by approximately \$262k with projects on hold:
  - 2345 Stevens Drive exterior painting \$100k - *on hold*
  - 3250 Port of Benton Blvd. interior lighting \$50k - *on hold*
  - Crow Butte pavement maintenance cut in half - \$112k

Commission President Christy Rasmussen closed the public hearing at 8:46 a.m.

## F. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Resolution 22-37, 2023 Port of Benton Budget; Resolution 22-38, Certifying the Port's 2022 Levy for 2023 Collection; Resolution 22-39, Port of Benton's 2023 Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements

Executive Director explained that this motion will cover Resolution 22-37, 22-38 and 22-39 for adoption of all and the team will then prepare submittal to Benton County.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Roy Keck, seconded by Commissioner Lori Stevens, and unanimously passed by the Commission adopting Resolution 22-37, Port of Benton Budget; Resolution**

**22-38, Certifying the Port's 2022 Levy for 2023 Collection; Resolution 22-39, Port of Benton's Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements**

**2. Resolution 22-40, Accepting Work Completed by Paintmaster, Inc. at 3100 George Washington Way**

Director of Facilities & Operations, Ron Branine informed the Commission that the exterior painting project at 3100 George Washington Way has been completed by Paintmaster, Inc. Branine stated that the contractor has certified the work as completed in accordance with the plans and specifications at a total cost of \$52,500, plus Washington state sales tax, totaling \$57,015.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Lori Stevens, seconded by Commissioner Roy Keck, and unanimously passed by the Commission approving Resolution 22-40, accepting work completed by Paintmaster, Inc. at 3100 George Washington Way.**

**3. Resolution 22-41, Cascade Natural Gas Pipeline Easement within Railroad Right of Way – Steptoe**

Executive Director, Diahann Howard explained that Cascade Natural Gas is extending a natural gas pipeline in south Richland and they need to extend a line near the Columbia Park Trail bridge. Howard explained that the Port is recommending allowing them to use a portion of the track right of way, which will not impact railroad track and will not limit the Port from expanding a second track in the future. Howard added that this a good community service cooperation between two utilities.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Roy Keck, seconded by Commissioner Lori Stevens, and unanimously passed by the Commission approving Resolution 22-41, approving the Cascade Natural Gas Pipeline Easement within Railroad Right of Way – Steptoe.**

**4. Interstate Concrete (ICAC) / AMR 12.73 Acre Ground/Aggregate Lease Amendment – Richland Business Park**

Executive Director, Diahann Howard stated that American Rock Products is coming to an end of the available aggregate in the Port's mining area, but the Port has land that has now opened up adjacent to the existing mine that could be used for aggregate if the Port approves a lease amendment. Howard provided a visual reference to the Commission of the area in reference.

Howard explained that the benefit to the Port is the additional aggregate royalty and additional land pre-leveled for future industrial. Howard added that the Port will need to assist American Rock Product with a special use permit approval with the City of Richland and recommended that the Commission provided preliminary approval of the lease amendment so American Rock can begin the permitting process.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Lori Stevens, seconded by Commissioner Roy Keck, and unanimously passed by the Commission approving the Interstate Concrete (ICAC) / AMR 12.73 acre ground/aggregate lease amendment in the Richland Business Park.**

**5. Revision of Resolution 22-32, City of Richland Interlocal Agreement for Railroad Maintenance to Resolution 22-35**

Executive Director, Diahann Howard explained that this is a housekeeping item, as at the last meeting Resolution 22-32 was presented as the City of Richland Interlocal agreement for railroad maintenance, but Resolution 22-32 was previously approved. Howard asked the Commission to approve changing this resolution to Resolution 22-35.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Roy Keck, seconded by Commissioner Lori Stevens and unanimously passed by the Commission approving the amendment to Resolution 22-32, City of Richland Interlocal Agreement for Railroad Maintenance, to Resolution 22-35.**

6. Resolution 22-42, Approval of Richland Airport Land Lease Rates

Executive Director, Diahann Howard stated as requested by commission appraisals were conducted to establish Richland Airport land lease rates have been completed.

Director of Real Estate, Teresa Hancock reminded the Commission that at the February Special Commission meeting workshop, staff discussed updates to airport budget, rules, regulations, design guidelines, leases and current and comparable lease rates for both Richland and Prosser airports.

Hancock added that the updated airport regulations and minimum standards, standard airport lease and hangar rental agreement, along with airport leasing policies were formally approved at the May 18, 2022 Commission meeting, pending airport appraisal for fees.

Hancock stated that property rates are defined as aeronautical improved, aeronautical non-improved (future) and non-aeronautical. Hancock provided an overview of the rates:

- Aeronautical Improved Land – .26 - .32, up to 2+ acres
- Aeronautical Unimproved Land - .22 - .28, up to 2+ acres
- Non-Aeronautical Land - .32 - .40, up to 2+ acres

Hancock stated that Resolution 22-42 outlines the rates recommended by the report for updating land lease rates at the Richland Airport Park and added that the Port finds these rates as comparable and consistent with Port appraisals and market information for airport property.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Lori Stevens, seconded by Commissioner Roy Keck, and unanimously passed by the Commission approving Resolution 22-42, approval of Richland Airport land lease rates.**

7. Resolution 22-43, Resolution 22-43, Consenting to Assignment of Ground Lease (RAP), Herbert and Jennifer Brayton to Hangar 2060 LLC, 2060 Butler Loop

Director of Real Estate, Teresa Hancock stated that this item pertains to a 50-year lease, dated October 25, 2005 (20-year, + three 10-year option renewals terms) and the ground lease consists of 24,829 square feet.

Hancock stated that Herbert and Jennifer Brayton have requested to assign the ground lease to hangar 2060 LLC, a membership association, with the Brayton's remaining the primary obligator and manager of the association.

Hancock added that at the May meeting, the Commission approved updated lease forms, design guidelines and rules and regulations of which any change in the leasehold affecting the obligated

property, requires prior approval by submittal of a request form. Hancock added that Port staff has discussed the change in policy and provided the form to Mr. Brayton. Hancock stated that Port staff is recommending approval of Resolution 22-43, pending receipt of the signed and completed form as requested.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Roy Keck, seconded by Commissioner Lori Stevens, and unanimously passed by the Commission approving Resolution 22-43, consenting to assignment of ground lease at Richland Airport, Herbert and Jennifer Brayton to Hangar 2060 LLC, 2060 Butler Loop, per the receipt of the signed form.**

8. Resolution 22-44, Consenting to Assignment of Ground Lease (RAP), Herbert and Jennifer Brayton to Hangar 2120 LLC, 2120 Butler Loop

Director of Real Estate, Teresa Hancock stated that this item pertains to a 50-year lease, dated April 26, 2013 (30-year, + two 10-year option renewal terms) and the ground lease consists of 12,338 square feet for multi-t hangar improvements.

Hancock stated that Herbert and Jennifer Brayton have requested to assign the ground lease to Hangar 2120 LLC, a membership association, with the Brayton's remaining the primary obligator and manager of the association.

Hancock added that the Brayton's have been made aware of the change in policy, noted in Resolution 22-43 and have been provided the form to Mr. Brayton. Hancock added that Port staff is recommending approval of Resolution 22-44, pending receipt of the signed and completed form as requested.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Lori Stevens, seconded by Commissioner Roy Keck, and unanimously passed by the Commission approving Resolution 22-44, consenting to assignment of ground lease at Richland Airport, Herbert and Jennifer Brayton to Hangar 2120 LLC, 2120 Butler Loop.**

## **F. INFORMATION REPORTS**

### **1. Grants Update**

Executive Director, Diahann Howard provided further updates on the projects featured on the November grants report.

- Richland Airport – Airfield Signage and Lights – Construction is nearly complete and lights on both runways should be fully functional by November 10. PAPIs and the emergency generator are not planned for delivery for server months. The transition to a more sustainable airport with all LED lighting is complete!
- Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Improvement (CRISI) – Over \$1.4B available and application is in process, due. December 1, 2022.

Howard added that there is a lot of grant activity and reminded the Commission that 2022 had the highest number of capital projects in Port history.

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



Commissioner Lori Stevens announced that she recently had the opportunity to attend a guided Hanford tour, which was extremely informative and included a tour of the control room at the Vitrification plant.

Commissioner Stevens added that she attended the Tri-Cities Regional Chamber of Commerce monthly luncheon with each city's update from the mayor.

Commissioner Stevens noted that Prosser has a number of upcoming holiday events, including the Bubbles & Bites event, which will take place at the Walter Clore Center this Saturday, November 12, a Veteran's Day parade and Shop Local event after Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Stevens added that she attended a recent ribbon-cutting at the John L. Scott real estate office and noted that there are a few new businesses moving into the previous Food Depot location.

Commissioner Roy Keck announced that he attended the PNWA Annual Meeting in Vancouver and the news of the dams is ongoing and added that he is part of the team related to pushback of the dam takeout.

Commissioner Keck added that he also recently attended the AAPA Annual Meeting and noted that one big takeaway from that event was learned that the United States is losing international recognition and business to Canada due to the west coast supply chain issue and Vancouver, BC is also maxed out which is opening up opportunity for Canadian ports.

Commissioner Keck added that he also attended the recent Public Power Forum and noted that the Port and region are well-suited for next generation clean energy, particularly the nuclear baseload. Commissioner Keck added that it is fortunate that the Port has pertinent assets related to this opportunity and we are at the right place at the right time to get us from clean up to clean energy!

Commissioner Christy Rasmussen stated that she also attended the PNWA Annual Meeting and felt they offered amazing and informative sessions. Commissioner Rasmussen added that she also attended the recent Public Power Forum.

Commissioner Rasmussen noted that she recently read an article on the supply chain for nuclear from the American Nuclear Society and encouraged all to read it as well.

Commissioner Rasmussen added that she also attended the Hanford Communities board meeting and the Congressman Newhouse and Kilmer Roundtable where a discussion was led on how best to support each other.

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

##### **1. AIRPORTS**

Executive Director, Diahann Howard introduced the new Airport Manager, Quentin Wright to the Commission. Howard announced that Quentin's first day was Monday, November 7 and Quentin most recently worked for a California company, Wisk Aero, on a flight test team developing electric vehicle takeoff and landing aircraft. Howard added that Quentin also holds an airframe and powerplant mechanic license with inspection authorization privileges. Howard stated that Quentin is a pilot himself and also a user of the Richland Airport and the team is extremely excited to have him on board.

Howard provided an overview on Richland Airport updates, adding that the team is very pleased with Century West and Sierra Electric for their work and cooperation during the electrical replacement

project. Howard stated that the PAPIs and emergency generator are delayed until 2023, but installation will not affect airport operations once received. Howard added an appreciation to Sundance Aviation for their assistance throughout the project.

Howard stated that during the runway closure, Richland Fire Department performed some training exercises, which garnered very positive feedback from the department. Howard reminded the Commission that the long term plan at the airport includes a fire facility.

Howard thanked Quentin for his assistance over the weekend with the facilities team and cleanup involved from the windstorm.

## **2. FACILITIES & OPERATIONS:**

Director of Facilities & Operations, Ron Branine updated the Commission on the recent incident at highway 240 at the rail crossing, stating that a dump truck with its bed up, traveling 40 mph, went over the crossing and totally annihilated the cantilever. Branine stated that the team was able to repair the arm, but the cantilever remains broken until spring when it is replaced as part of the crossing replacement project. Branine added that there was a separate incident that affected the track, involving a truck. Branine stated that Railworks was working nearby and was able to repair the affected track right away.

Executive Director, Diahann Howard notified the Commission that HDR has recommended the immediate replacement of several dozen railroad ties due to safety hazards. Howard pointed out that due to supply chain delays, the Port would like to purchase 1,600 ties immediately to replace many damaged ties.

Howard stated that a motion is needed to order 1,600 ties now but the Port will not be invoiced until 2023.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Roy Keck, seconded by Commissioner Lori Stevens, and unanimously passed by the Commission approving a railroad tie order of \$120,000 with a 10% contingency, which will be paid for in 2023.**

Howard added that once the State Route 240 crossing has been replaced, the speed limit can be raised, but for that to happen at least 1,000 ties must also be replaced. Howard added that in order to reach 25 mph, 10,000 ties need replacement. Howard noted that there are 36k ties across the Port track and at this time, every third tie will be replaced. Howard added that the average lifespan of a tie is 35 years.

Howard noted that 11 proposals for the short term rail operator were received and four interviews have been scheduled before Thanksgiving. Howard added that the agreement will be a one-year agreement and the selected business will still have to compete for the long term operator position.

Branine provided an update on the work at 2345 Stevens Drive, the HMIS facility. Branine noted that the work has started in phases and all doors have been installed with completion expected on Friday. Branine added that the racking system has been installed and the electrical part of the project will be starting this week.

Branine stated that two fire panels have recently failed, one at 3190 George Washington Way and the other at 2345 Stevens Drive. Branine noted that one has been replaced at this time.

Branine provided a visual presentation of the damage caused by the recent windstorm,

featuring several downed trees, roof damage, a 20-foot enclosed trailer that rolled over, airplanes loose from tie-downs and three crossing arms that needed reset.

Branine stated that 80 work orders have been turned in since the October 11, 2022 Commission meeting and the team is seeing an average of 100 work orders a month, with this number fluctuating and then declining once the preventative maintenance program is underway. Branine stated that 821 work orders have been turned in since September 2021, with 70 open work orders. Braine estimates that the work order system is only capturing 50% of what the department is actually doing.

Branine provided an update on Crow Butte Park, noting that the two smart parking meters to capture day use fees are on order with installation planned for the fall. Branine added that the water has been shut off in the park and rained with leaf pickup serving as an ongoing project throughout the season. Branine added that throughout the winter, further cleanup will take place, including a deep cleaning of the buildings and equipment, including training of the new staff.

### **3. REAL ESTATE:**

Director of Real Estate, Teresa Hancock stated that she recently attended the AAPA conference in Orlando, Florida and found the conversation on offshore power, fuels and renewables interesting.

Hancock stated that it has been a busy month and has had four recent showings of properties, which include brewery and commercial fleet interest, hangar sites at both airports, fuel station renewal discussion with operator and an extension of a cell tower lease.

Hancock added that the fuel station lease renewal is in discussion with Washington VERTICAL initiatives.

### **4. MARKETING:**

Public Information Officer, Summers Miya provided a visual presentation highlighting recent projects in the Marketing & Communications department.

Miya stated that one press release was sent out on October 18, 2022 announcing the State Audit Report, the hardcopy fall newsletter was sent out October 19, including website and social media posting. Miya added that weekly communication has continued for the Richland Airport electrical replacement project and a press release has been scheduled announcing its completion.

Miya added that weekly Port eNews has continued, as well as bi-monthly VERTICAL eNews.

Miya provided imagery of the completed riverfront kiosks which feature Port properties, STEM tourism assets in the area and the regional bike map.

Miya added that she has also been working on the upcoming Entrepreneurial Awards event, which is taking place next Tuesday, November 15. Miya noted that she attended the WPPA Small Ports event in Leavenworth.

Miya added that she continues to work on Washington VERTICAL projects, Walter Clore contracts, including the upcoming Bubbles & Bites event and A/V issues at the Clore.

Miya noted that since the Richland Public Library launched their Tumbleweed Tourist program, Triton tours exploded in popularity and Director of Marketing, Wally Williams has been very busy providing tours for over 50 people within just this past month. Miya added that the library staff visited the Port for a personal tour of Triton, which she and Williams led.

Miya added that Williams has been working on a number of various flyers and ads, including building signage.



Miya displayed an image of the "Sleigh the Rose!" in Vintners Village gift basket the Port donated to the United Way Festival of Trees event.

#### **5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS:**

Executive Director, Diahann Howard welcomed consultant, Ashley Garza to the meeting, recognizing Garza's work as critical to the success of the Port. Howard added that Garza also assists the City of Richland with surveying, but soon will be 100% Port-focused.

Garza thanked Howard, noting that she is thrilled to be joining the meeting and is very familiar with the history and projects of the Port and looks forward to future projects.

Howard stated that engineer, Roger Wright is moving forward with projects in the Richland Innovation Center (RIC), using Benton .09 funds and to date, \$800k has been spent. Howard reminded the Commission that bids were rejected in 2022 and the team is working on rescoping the project with the plan to advertise for street lights only.

Howard provided an update on the White Bluffs Archive and Storage project, noting that construction is well underway on the walls and the roof is nearly complete with a focus to get the structure enclosed and protected from winter weather as soon as possible, which will allow for interior projects to be completed. Howard noted that HVAC equipment is not likely to arrive until at least March 2023. Howard reminded the Commission that WSU is currently leasing out 2019 Butler Loop for their storage facility needs until the new facility is completed and racking has been installed.

Howard added that the underground storage tank discovered during construction has been mitigated and backfilled with grading proceeding over the top of the tank.

Howard added that the Port will also honor Bob Ferguson in the spring at this building.

#### **6. FINANCE DIRECTOR:**

Director of Finance/CPA, Danielle Connor announced that November is open enrollment and packets have been provided to all Commissioners, as well as the team. Connor stated that Senior Accountant, Veronica Serna put together a fantastic presentation to the team yesterday and has some documents to pass along to the Commission for reference as well. Connor added that Serna also overviewed other benefits offered by the Port and upcoming tax changes, including Washington State Long-Term Care changes taking place in July 2023.

Connor added that for an organization the size of the Port, at less than 25 employees, the Port offers very competitive benefits at a reasonable cost to the Port. Connor added that typically health benefits can be very pricey.

Connor stated that the Port has a contract with Washington State Health Care Authority and are grandfathered into their Composite rate, HCA closed contracts for Composite rates several years ago. Connor added that this contract allows the Port to provide very competitive rates at a reasonable price. Connor noted that the Port has entertained other brokers, but are likely not worth it. Connor added that the average full premium cost per person for medical and other benefits is \$1,500/month for a full family.

Connor provided an update on the IAP Voyager project, stating that the lease entry task is essentially complete, but is always a moving target. Connor added how surprising it has been to see the many changes per month with leases. Connor provided examples of the various changes received, which are new leases, lease assignments, renewals, terminations.

Connor noted that there is still work to do on lease entry for the 2579 Stevens building, but this is pending the site plan and floor plan, as well as finalized agreements.

Connor added that parallel billing is taking place in October and thanked Senior Accountant Veronica Serna for her work on the testing, as it is a theoretical and somewhat tedious process.

Connor stated that additional parallel billing will take place in November and the integration was tested last week as part of October parallel testing. Connor stated that the process did uncover some changes that needed to be made and this has been communicated with the Voyager developers. Connor added that a call is lined up with the Intacct developers next week to work through some items on the Intacct side and the finance team aims to do a brief demo at next month's Commission meeting.

Connor announced that "GO LIVE" will kick off on December 1 for January 2023 billing. Connor added that the team will look to layer the GASB 87 piece in December, which should be completed in around 80 hours.

Connor provided a financial scorecard report, highlighting the spending trends for the year with a visual graph. Connor pointed out that the graph highlighted inflows from tenants, grants, property tax and other with another slide featuring outflows. Connor featured outflows from operating, leasehold excise tax, payroll, Port-funded capital projects and grant-funded capital projects.

Connor featured an overview on the 2022 project fund, which is dedicated to the White Bluffs Center project and noted that outflows have picked up significantly in the last five months of the year due to project speed.

Connor moved on to an overview of the current financial status report, stating that there is currently \$30k outstanding in Accounts Payable, with \$4k past due. Connor added that there is \$1.4M outstanding in Accounts Receivable, with \$806k from tenant and \$113k (14%) tenant being 90 days past due. Connor added that there was \$76k (12%) past due in the prior month.

Connor added that she will get the 2023 budget sent off to the County Commissioners, which is due by the end of November and then focus on the Yardi Voyager project, which is so close to the finish line!

Connor added that she does anticipate some post go-live fallout and is planning for a stabilization period of 3-6 months.

Connor stated that a 2023 finance initiative will include a focus on reporting, and the internal cost allocation study will push to planning in late 2023 if possible otherwise to 2024.

Connor added that due to the annual floater holiday change, there will be some work on the backend to configure the system to reflect the change in the personnel policy, but there is an annual support agreement with Criterion to use that is set up for assistance with technical changes.

Connor added that the team also has some backend work related to the new Crow Butte parking boxes.

## **7. PORT ATTORNEY:**

Port Attorney, David Billetdeaux greeted the Commission via Zoom communications, stating that he was attending the AAPA Finance and Administrative Seminar in New Orleans. Billetdeaux added that he was taking good notes to bring back and share with the finance team.

Billetdeaux added that the seminar topics have included facts on a looming recession and the best way to hedge a bet against a recession and to take the best advantage of supply chain issues, found to date, is to invest heavily in inland ports. Billetdeaux added that oceanside ports only have 180 degrees of transportation, whereas inland, trucks and trains can come to inland ports from 360 degrees, allowing congestion to ease and bringing in significant dollars.

Billetdeaux noted that the short-term rail operator RFP has closed and the four finalists selected with hopes to bring a recommendation to the Commission at the December meeting.

Billetdeaux stated that he wanted to let the Commission know that multiple "clean-up" letters to non-compliant hangar tenants at airports have been sent, including the tenant with the trailer that flipped during the recent windstorm. Billetdeaux noted that this is a constant task to reiterate minimum standards and guidelines and the list of tenants has dwindled significantly in the past year.

Billetdeaux added that the Port is lucky to have a new airport manager on staff who will be able to devote more time than staff currently has been able to in regards to the airports.

Billetdeaux noted that insurance claims are in place for the SR240 rail crossing damage, minor repairs to the rail just south of Van Giesen, and for the burglary at the facilities shop last month.

Billetdeaux added that he wanted to take a minute to note that on Sunday night a personal friend of his, and a friend of the Port of Benton, passed away in a car accident. Billetdeaux stated that some staff and Commission knew Alex Pappas, as he was a pilot trained at the Richland and Prosser airports, frequented various Port tenant businesses, and actually applied for the open Commission position now filled by Commissioner Rasmussen. Billetdeaux added that Alex cared deeply about the community and will be sorely missed. On behalf of the Port of Benton, condolences to Alex's family.

Billetdeaux stated that the remainder of his topics are reserved for Executive Session.

#### **8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:**

Executive Director, Diahann Howard announced that she recently attended the PNNL Meet & Greet event, as well as the WSU Tri-Cities Career Fair. Howard added that she also attended the recent AAPA Annual Meeting in Orlando and the Public Power Forum.

Howard added that she has been asked to emcee the upcoming Association of Washington Business Energy Solutions Summit, the Entrepreneurial Awards and United Way Festival of Trees event. Howard added that through Rotary International, her family is a host family for an exchange student, which will begin later this month.

Howard added that the team have begun procurement discussions related to the process and flow and the team is taking a recent project to discussion and will outline a visual process. Howard added that the process will be perfected on paper with roles, responsibilities and accountabilities clarified. Howard noted that tightening this procurement process supports the development of the work order software and prepares the team for the State Auditor's Office Lean and leadership discussions.

Howard stated that she recently participated in a meeting with Commerce related to Washington VERTical and she has tightened the strategy going forward. Howard added that the team is working on developing a Washington Nuclear resume and vision document related to the vision.

Howard stated that the next generation focus will be "clean up to clean energy" with the initiatives being new advanced energy and sustainability, deployment and workforce.

Howard added that she has participated in a recent Tri-Cities Research District review and discussion.

Howard announced that she has reserved items related to Atlas and CARB for Executive Session.


**I. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** The regular Commission Meeting was recessed at 10:15 a.m. and an Executive Session was convened at 10:20 a.m. to discuss real estate and personnel matters. It was announced that Executive Session would take 30 minutes and if any action was required, the Regular Commission Meeting will reconvene and bring forward the item at that time.

**K. BREAK:** The Executive Session concluded at 10:50 a.m. and teleconference and Zoom options were terminated. Commission and Port staff took a short break to travel to the 2579 Stevens Drive facility for a tour.

**L. TOUR:** Port engineer, Roger Wright led a tour of the 2579 Stevens Drive facility, focusing on the expansive interior of the property, as well as the exterior of the building, including storage and equipment in the yard.

The tour consisted of current vacant space as well as occupied space by current tenants.

**M. ADJOURNMENT:** The Commission meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m. with an announcement that the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting would be held on Wednesday, December 14, 2022 at 8:30 a.m. and would be held at the Port of Benton Commission meeting room, 3250 Port of Benton Blvd., Richland, Washington.

  
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Lori Stevens  
Commission Secretary