

**PORT OF BENTON
COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 8, 2023**

A. CALL TO ORDER: The regular monthly meeting was called to order at 8:30 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; Executive Director, Diahann Howard, PPM®; Port Attorney, David Billetdeaux, Public Information Officer, Summers Miya; Director of Marketing, Wally Williams; Director of Facilities & Operations, Ron Branine; Accounting Clerk, Liz Renz; Airport Manager, Quentin Wright; Director of Real Estate, Teresa Hancock; Interim Director of Finance, Sara Marshall; Senior Accountant, Veronica Serna; Theresa Richardson, City of Richland

The following attendees attended via remote communications: Commissioner Lori Stevens; Contract Specialist, Sheri Collins; Joshua Lott, Anderson Perry; Bryan Condon, Century West Engineering

The Commission meeting was noticed as required by RCW 42.30.070.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Commission President, Christy Rasmussen led those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. CONSENT AGENDA:

A motion was made by Commissioner Roy Keck, seconded by Commissioner Lori Stevens, and unanimously passed by the Commission approving the agenda for the March 8, 2023 Commission meeting, approval of minutes from the February 8, 2023 Commission meeting, approval of vouchers and certifications, including payroll, for the month of January totaling \$629,417.52, approval of project vouchers and certifications for the month of January totaling \$158,925.29

D. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no public comments.

E. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Resolution 23-04, Opposing the Proposed Scout Wind Energy Horse Heaven Wind Farm Project

Executive Director, Diahann Howard explained that this is a housekeeping-related item, adding that a letter of support was submitted based on Commission input and signed by Commission President Christy Rasmussen. Howard added that the previous Commission had gone on record against this project and the team felt it was important to ratify the stance of the current Commission.

A motion was made by Commissioner Roy Keck, seconded by Commissioner Lori Stevens, and unanimously passed by the Commission approving Resolution 23-04, opposing the proposed Scout Wind Energy Horse Heaven Wind Farm Project.

2. HDR Engineering Contract – Approval of Amendment No. 4

Port Attorney, David Billetdeaux explained that this is a housekeeping-related item for HDR Engineering's 2021 contract that went through December 31, 2022. Billetdeaux stated that due to a number of items of deferred maintenance that had to be addressed, the total original contracted amount went over by \$4,749.55 for a total of \$79,661.55.

A motion was made by Commissioner Lori Stevens, seconded by Commissioner Roy Keck, and unanimously passed by the Commission approving Amendment No. 4 on the 2021 – 2022 HDR Engineering contract.

F. INFORMATION REPORTS

1. Grants Update

Executive Director Diahann Howard pointed out that the grants report was included in the meeting packet and would highlight the following:

- Item 6 – Confirmation received that the SR 240 rail signal and crossing reconstruction project will be moving forward mid to late summer.
- Item 11 – RAISE project being developed for submittal and will be with CRISI, not in addition. Putting in all buckets to move forward to get rail funding. Will be the focus on the PNWA Mission to Washington trip in March. A state direct capital request has also been submitted, which will require more time in Olympia.
- Item 12 – Application has been submitted for the Washington State Department of Commerce Evergreen Manufacturing Growth Grant. 100% grant.
- Energy Northwest is working on a project to add regional electric vehicle charging stations throughout the region, including Richland Business Park and stations would be electric and hydrogen fueling. Howard explained that this project is seeking \$15k unanticipated to support this grant and this item will be added formally to the grants report.

G. COMMISSIONER REPORTS/COMMENTS

Commissioner Roy Keck stated that he attended the Tri-Cities Clean Energy Day and Tri-Cities Day at the Capital, returning the next week for the AWB virtual hill climb, reception and WPPA Ports & Maritime day, which included a roundtable event with Commerce, Stephanie Bowman and other ports. Keck stated that it was a tactical and strategic roundtable.

Commissioner Lori Stevens stated that she has also recently joined the group for the two Olympia trips, including the chance to advocate at the WPPA Ports meeting for the rail. Stevens added that SB5494 is related to rail improvement and feels the efforts will pay off in the long run.

Commissioner Christy Rasmussen announced that she has felt a collaborative spirit in the area and appreciates all efforts Port staff put toward unity and the end goals.

Commissioner Rasmussen added that she also attended the Tri-Cities Clean Energy Day and Capital events and has also recently participated in the Prosser Community Awards banquet and the TRIDEC 60th Annual Meeting event, which she felt was well attended.

H. DIRECTOR REPORTS/COMMENTS:

1. AIRPORTS

Airport Manager, Quentin Wright stated that he has been working toward an agreement on getting multiple aviation businesses into 1865 Bronco Lane, located at the Richland Airport.

Wright added that the Port has gone back to CARB to discuss new options for revenue-producing assets at the Richland Airport and will have more to discuss in Executive Session.

Wright commented the recent article on HB 1554, related to aviation fuel, adding that he will keep the Commission updated on this item.

Executive Director, Diahann Howard added that they will speak to Senator Boehnke on this item related to the text of the bill.

Wright added that WAMA, WPPA and AAPA have all testified on behalf of this bill.

2. FACILITIES & OPERATIONS:

Director of Facilities & Operations, Ron Branine announced that the team has installed four Insta-Hots in the 2579 Stevens Drive building to provide hot water. Branine added that numerous lights and ballasts have been replaced in the building as a temporary fix until the building can be converted to LED. Branine added that two 400-amp heaters were also installed at 2579.

Branine noted that work continues at 2345 Stevens Drive, including the final inside painting project.

Branine noted that several roof repairs have been made on Port buildings recently.

Branine stated that 62 work orders have been turned in since the January Commission meeting, but should be seeing an average of 100 per month. Branine reminded the Commission that this number will fluctuate but will become more consistent as the team gets ahead of things through the Preventative Maintenance program.

Branine reviewed that there has been a total of 998 work orders submitted since September 2021, with 33 open work orders. Branine estimates that the current system is only capturing 50% of what the department is doing.

Branine announced that the Facility Manager work order system is scheduled to start in March, with the first several months being data collecting, similar to the Voyager program. Branine pointed out that the great thing about Facility Manager is that much of the base has already been established thanks to the hard work put in for Voyager from Danielle, Liz, Veronica, Teresa and Ashley.

Branine said that the new self-pay kiosks at Crow Butte are showing real-time numbers of patrons using the marina. Branine noted that updated and new signage is up at the park and the team is hopeful that the kiosks will pay for themselves this summer.

Branine added that an entire new staff has been hired for the season, with two returning from late season 2022 and two returning from 2021. Branine added that they have reduced the number of camp hosts by one person and anticipate no issues.

Branine noted that 37 annual passes were sold this January, compared to four sold in 2022.

Branine stated that the team is averaging one critical call-out every other week, whether it is rail arms down for no reason, vehicle accidents affecting the track and other miscellaneous items that require a response. Branine added that all crossings are currently running normally.

Branine added that the team continues to familiarize with the building and its nuances while continuing cleanup and organization. Branine noted that McKinstry will be out next Tuesday to perform

an initial assessment of the building to determine immediate needs versus long range planning. Branine added that Columbia Rail is slowly transitioning in and has already taken care of several crossing issues. Branine added that the Columbia Rail representative for the rail signals seems very knowledgeable and professional.

Executive Director, Diahann Howard noted that the lighting project at the 2579 Stevens Drive building is not budgeted and they will be taking from other budgeted capital projects to complete, as the team is trying to manage safety needs. Howard added that the team is tightening belts when and where needed.

Howard added that Railworks has completed the Wye derailment repair and replaced the entire area with 115lb rail, formerly 90lb and in the future 130lb rail will be installed.

Howard reminded the Commission that at the regular January Commission meeting, Engineer Roger Wright informed them of the issue with the frog repair and in January authorization was also provided to purchase ties. Howard added that 200 ties have been replaced with Railworks in January, but it has been discovered that the supplier cannot get the ties to the Port until late July. Howard noted that Roger had to reject the top and second bidder for this reason and the third bidder is four weeks out, but will increase the total cost to \$153,788.54, (\$144k originally approved).

Commission President, Christy Rasmussen asked for a motion to revise the previously approved motion and to approve the purchase of ties from new bidder, North American Tie for \$153,788.54.

A motion was made by Commissioner Roy Keck, seconded by Commissioner Lori Stevens, and unanimously passed by the Commission approving the revision to purchase ties from the third bidder, North American Tie at \$153,788.54.

Howard added that the SR240 project previously mentioned during the grants report may get delayed to early 2024.

Howard added that Engineer Roger Wright is working on the scope for construction related to the signal accident at the SR240 crossing.

Howard stated that Columbia Rail officially began on February 1, 2023 and have consistently displayed a quick response to any issues that arise.

Howard added that the White Bluffs Hanford History Project Archive & Storage Facility is on target to allow for occupancy in May. Howard noted that the team recently met with WSU to develop a team communications plan related to the ribbon-cutting, community information and upcoming Bob Ferguson event.

3. REAL ESTATE:

Director of Real Estate, Teresa Hancock provided an updated on the land sale with Pacific Green Engineering, stating that the land sale is now closed between parties on this 2-acre site within the Richland Industrial Center. Hancock added that development is in progress with an architect and geo tech requests. Hancock noted that the current lab, which is located at the 3100 George Washington Way building, will relocate once construction is complete.

Hancock provided an updated on Resolution 22-46, related to the Voegelé Development in Prosser. Hancock noted that the sale has rescinded, as the RV park was privately sold in December.

Hancock noted that she has been fielding numerous inquiries for land and has also been working

on the facility located at 2000 Logston Boulevard, and hopes to bring forward something to share next month.

4. MARKETING:

Director of Marketing, Wally Williams stated that he has created an outline for the spring newsletter and will be moving forward with creation soon. Williams added that ongoing work continues on the updating of many facility signs and he has been working with the facilities and real estate team on this project.

Williams added that he has been working on updating Washington VERTical flyers, real estate site sheets, Crow Butte brochures and signage and Port flags.

Williams added that he recently provided a special Triton tour to KONA radio and additional tour inquiries have been received.

Commissioner Keck thanked Williams for leading an impromptu tour of Triton during the recent WPPA Meet & Greet.

Public Information Officer, Summers Miya announced that the Marketing and Communications team has begun discussions about updating the State of the Ports video. Miya added that the Regional Chamber has informed her that this luncheon will likely take place in June or July.

Miya stated that she has been assisting with the Washington VERTical graphic animation video creation, which will be unveiled at the March 16, 2023 Energy Convening.

Miya added that she has participated in recent meetings with WSU related to the Hanford History Project Archive and storage facility's ribbon cutting and Bob Ferguson recognition ceremony.

Miya noted that she has been working on various events at Walter Clore, including the recent Prosser Community Awards, Washington Wine Industry and most recently the Benton County Cattlemen's Association Annual Banquet. Miya stated that there are many upcoming events scheduled at the Clore for March and beyond.

Miya added that she is also working on lining out specifics for a late summer US Nuclear Industrial Council event in the Tri-Cities.

5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS:

Executive Director, Diahann Howard completed this section during the Executive Director Report.

6. FINANCE DIRECTOR:

Interim Director of Finance/CPA, Sara Marshall provided an updated financial status report, highlighting that available general operating stands at \$3.7M and project fund is \$1.9M.

Marshall stated that \$913k was received in January, including \$403k from tenants and \$510k in grant reimbursements. Marshall added that \$870k in disbursements were issued in January, \$250k being payroll. Marshall noted that there is currently \$181k in outstanding Accounts Payable. Marshall provided an overview of Accounts Receivable outstanding accounts, showing that over \$251k is outstanding.

Marshall highlighted the current finance initiatives, including data validation between the Intacct and Voyager system, integration and stabilization of Voyager billing, GASB 87 and year-end close, financial statement preparation and audit preparation.

Executive Director, Diahann Howard complimented Marshall for hitting the ground running. Howard complimented Senior Accountant, Veronica Serna on the recent closeout of an airport grant.

Howard added that GASB 87 is a big deal and will change the face of business, complimenting Accounting Clerk, Liz Renz for her dedication to gather all leases and ensure standards are being followed.

7. PORT ATTORNEY:

Port Attorney, David Billetdeaux noted that he has personally viewed Columbia Rail putting a lot more effort than seen before on rail cleanup.

Billetdeaux stated that the rail FRA inspection is coming up and warned that findings are likely due to previous issues with the rail operator. Billetdeaux added that FRA will likely work with the Port to address each issue as needed.

Billetdeaux added that he has been working on the Columbia Rail lease agreement and has also been reviewing Atlas documents. Billetdeaux added that the team is hoping for a decision from Atlas soon and stated that originally, the company was more focused on purchasing, then changed to leasing, but is now considering purchasing again.

Billetdeaux stated that he has been researching archiving options, adding that the Port currently utilizes services from Smarsh and LogikCull. Billetdeaux noted that the Port was ahead of a lot of Ports in this area and continues to evaluate other options available related to public archiving systems. Billetdeaux stated that Archive Social has the majority of public contracts in the area and is working with more and more ports. Billetdeaux noted that he will continue to research options to find what is best suited for the Port's needs.

Billetdeaux added that he has reserved a few comments for Executive Session.

8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Executive Director, Diahann Howard announced that the Richland City Council recently approved the Targeted Urban Area Exemption (TUAE) and complimented the City and their leadership, as they are one of the first in the state to approve TUAE.

Howard noted that the Olympia Clean Energy Day went well, adding that she was able to attend the X-energy speaking event while in town and had phenomenal follow-up related to this event.

Howard highlighted Rep. Stephanie Barnard's HB 1584, which would establish a state nuclear caucus. Howard complimented the region for the Tri-Cities support and efforts toward support during Tri-Cities Day at the Capital and the introduction of HB 1584. Howard added that the regional support speaks volumes and the tone in Olympia is changing.

Howard commented on the WPPA Meet & Greet event, welcoming Eric ffitch and added that an itinerary for the upcoming PNWA Mission to Washington trip itinerary will be provided soon, adding that many meetings have been scheduled.

Howard noted that TRIDEC on an event for PNNL Industry Days, April 3-7, with a reception likely the evening of the 5th and added that PNNL is recruiting companies. Howard noted that tours held at FMEF, Local 598 and many more and the Port/Washington VERTical will have the opportunity to present and participate.

Howard provided an overview of the eight VERTical project teams, adding that each team will provide an update at the March 16 Energy Convening event. Howard added that the animation video previously mentioned by Summers Miya outlines the vision of what "*could be*".

Howard added that there is a Clean Energy Supplier Alliance meeting tonight and the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) will speak to support deployment of advanced reactor, SMR and MMR technologies. Howard noted that the guest speaker will be Marc Albert, Project Manager for Advanced Nuclear Technology at EPRI.

Howard stated that there is an advanced reactor summit in Charlotte in June and added that the USNIC event in the fall that Miya mentioned earlier will highlight policy, funding, current needs and also provide the message that "We are ready" to deploy now. Howard noted that approximately 150 attendees are expected at this event.

Howard stated that the Atlas prospect is looking at the 1,641 acres and Energy Northwest, Tucci Power, City of Richland and Department of Energy are aligned on the company's requirements.

Howard noted that a leadership development training was recently held for the staff.

Howard added that she recently participated in a great meeting with Tiger Logistics and also was proud to welcome a group of young researchers to present their Lego builds to the Port, which featured clean energy technologies. Howard hopes to invite the group back for a future presentation.

Howard noted that AAPA has invited her to present at their upcoming leadership conference in Portland. Howard added that she has also been asked to co-chair the WPPA Economic Development committee.

Howard noted that she will have more on personnel for Executive Session.

I. EXECUTIVE SESSION: The regular Commission meeting was recessed at 9:36 a.m. and an Executive Session was convened at 9:45 a.m. to discuss real estate and personnel for 45 minutes. It was noted that if any action was required, we will reconvene the regular meeting and bring forward any item at that time.

J. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m. with an announcement that the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting would be held on Wednesday, March 8, 2023, at 8:30 a.m. at the Walter Clore Wine & Culinary Center at 2140 Wine Country Road, Prosser, Washington.



Lori Stevens
Commission Secretary