

**PORT OF BENTON – CITY OF RICHLAND  
SPECIAL COMMISSION - COUNCIL  
JOINT WORKSHOP  
MINUTES  
JUNE 27, 2023**

- A. CALL TO ORDER:** The Special Commission – Council Joint Workshop was called to order at 4:00 p.m. at the Port of Benton Commission meeting room, 3250 Port of Benton Boulevard, Richland, Washington.

**PRESENT:** Commissioner Christy Rasmussen; Commissioner Lori Stevens; POB Executive Director, Diahann Howard; POB Director of Finance, Jeff Lubeck; POB Public Information Officer, Summers Miya; POB Director of Facilities & Operations, Ron Branine; POB Construction Project Manager, Bryan Bell; POB Director of Real Estate, Teresa Hancock; City of Richland Mayor, Terry Christensen; City of Richland Mayor Pro Tem, Theresa Richardson; City of Richland Councilmember Jhoanna Jones; City of Richland Councilmember Sandra Kent; City of Richland Councilmember Shayne VanDyke; City of Richland Engineer, Pete Rogalsky; City of Richland, Mandy Wallner; City of Richland, Deputy City Manager, Joe Schiessl; City Manager, Jon Amundson; City of Richland, Darin Arrasmith; City of Richland, Kerwin Jensen; Randy Slovic, Community Member; POB Contract Engineer, Roger Wright; POB Contract Engineer, Ashley Wright; Jim Conca, Community Member

**THE FOLLOWING PARTICIPATED VIA REMOTE COMMUNICATIONS:** Commissioner Roy Keck; City of Richland Councilmember Ryan Whitten; POB Airport Manager, Quentin Wright

- B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Commissioner Lori Stevens led those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. INITIATIVES**

**1. Washington VERTICAL**

Port of Benton Executive Director, Diahann Howard presented an overview on Washington VERTICAL via PowerPoint presentation. Washington VERTICAL is part of the Innovation Cluster Accelerator Program under the Washington State Department of Commerce. Its purpose is to accelerate the transition to advanced clean energy technologies, primarily focus being advanced nuclear reactors. The International cluster model focuses on being industry led and is a well-known global economic development model. VERTICAL focus begins in north Richland sharing the community with stakeholders across the state and at a federal level.

VERTICAL has nine key project areas: Facilitate the Next Generation Reactor Demonstration and Deployment, Grow the Advanced Clean Energy Market, Attract Capital for Advanced Nuclear, Coordinate Grant partners to leverage state and federal funds, educate and advocate for advanced nuclear energy, establish the clean energy supplier alliance to create a quality management center of excellence, ready advanced nuclear energy suppliers, train advanced nuclear trades and professional

workforce and accelerate advanced manufacturing. “This is the Place” video was played that further highlighted the partnerships.

## **2. North Richland Industrial Development**

Port of Benton Executive Director, Diahann Howard and Port-contracted Engineer, Roger Wright presented an overview on north Richland industrial development. There has been a long-term economic development and land planning partnership between the city of Richland and the Port of Benton. Recent examples shared with RAISE in 2009 where \$11.9M was invested resulting in over \$494M in private investment and 700 jobs for the regional community. The land transfer of 1,641 acres in 2015 to the city, port and energy northwest along with the Horn Rapids Industrial Park master plan updates, rail studies and joint marketing and recruiting efforts.

Discussion ensued into the 2016 Horn Rapids Park Master Plan and the 2022 City-Port Rail Masterplan that looked at creation of an inland port. Why an inland port at this time? A key change in trucking regulations that has increased the competitiveness of short-haul rail movements is the recent mandate for the use of electronic monitoring devices to enforce drivers’ adherence to Federal Hours-of-Service regulations.


An overview of Washington State ports, port of Benton and the state rail and local rail network was provided along with history of the port’s rail. State and Port investment of \$9.5 million since 2012; recent projects Swift and Van Giessen Crossings, Columbia Park Trail bridge, Yakima River Bridge, and Berry’s (I-182) bridge, to name a few. There is a current federal request of \$8 million to establish a sustainable path forward and working towards quiet zones across the rail crossings through the city but this will take some time.

City and Port staff proposed a joint proposal for the transfer of 240 acres between the entities. The anticipated return on investment is anticipated to be similar to PCA \$50M, Lamb expansion \$200M and 400 jobs, Lineage \$160M, 220 jobs. Current customers include Lamb Weston, Central Washington Corn Processors, Lineage Logistics, and Packaging Corporation of America representing the existing 1.3M tons of cargo.

Our goal is to recruit new value-added ag, advanced manufacturing to the area, as well as the continual use of the rail to support Energy Northwest Columbia Station along with potential in support of the Vitrification Plant located on the Hanford site.

At present, via Department of Commerce Projects Green Fertilizer, Eagle and Cente, all advanced manufacturing companies are seeking a north Richland site and will require daily rail access. Their combined economic impact is \$1.8B and 460 clean energy career jobs for our state. A summary memo was provided and Richland Councilmember VanDyke asked about next steps. City Manager Amundson responded that both staffs will coordinate and bring back to each respective body.

**D. ADJOURNMENT:** With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

  
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Lori Stevens  
Commission Secretary