

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Port of Whitman County

Date: 03/04/21

Observer Reporting: Carolyn Joswig-Jones

Length of Meeting: 2' 7"

Members Present/Absent:

Commissioners: Karl Webber (District 1)
Kristine Meyer (District 2)
Tom Kammerzell (District 3)

Staff:

Joe Poire - Executive Director (ED) Brenda Stav - Finance Director
Kara Riebold - Chief Operating Officer (COO) Sarah Highfield - Communications Director
Debbie Snell - Properties & Development Manager
Seth Woolson, counsel from Chmelik, Sitkin & Davis Attorneys at Law

Others Present (i.e., media, public):

Frank Chmelik - counsel from Chmelik, Sitkin & Davis Attorneys at Law to hear Petrichor update
Tom Handy
Brian Kraft
Aziz Makhani (SBDC)

WPPA (Washington Public Port Association)
POWBAC (Port of Whitman Business Air Center – airport in Colfax)
PIP (Pullman Industrial Parks East and West)
PNWA (Pacific Northwest Waterways Association)
NWRP (Northwest River Partners)
SWEDA (Southeast Washington Economic Development Association)
USACE (United State Army Corps of Engineers)
RCW (Revised Code of WA)
Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB)

Business pertaining to League Positions or topics of interest: (See below for full report of meeting)

- Petrichor still thriving and expanding fiber in WC and surrounding counties – concern with future Port/Petrichor relationship.
- Port was awarded a \$1M grant for dock replacement
- Commission joined Lewis Clark Valley Community in signing a letter in response to Simpson Dam Breaching Plan
- Small Business Development Center (SBDC) presented how business advice is being offered in the community
- Port spending money on trees for Boyer Park.

To view Meeting Agenda, Minutes and all supportive materials follow this link:

<https://portwhitman-web.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/meetings/agendas/2021-03-04/2021-03-04%20Agenda.pdf>

Port of Whitman County Commissioners Meeting took place via Zoom and teleconference. The commissioners and Director Poire are together in conference room all wearing masks. Port staff, if in the office were behind closed doors.

Commissioner and Staff Updates:

Commissioner attended Rail Authority Meeting and reported 2020 was a record year in number of **carloads**. There is an increase in **federal inspections and repairs of rails**.

OLD BUSINESS:

Petrichor Management

Ms. Riebold presented information on modeling **management on Port's relationship with Petrichor** through listing Assumptions and Principles to provide information as per request of the commission last meeting. For details you can go to the Port's agenda via link above. Commissioner Kammerzell questioned "...are we a fiber company with a port attached...?" in regards with Port's commitment to staffing in Assumption #8 "The Port's staffing and succession planning affects the management agreement with Petrichor" and still wants to see staffing time put into Petrichor. Commissioners Meyer and Webber see the relationship being synergistic and see the assumptions and principles are guidelines to help make future decisions.

Commission Meeting Procedures

Noted importance of **updating agenda changes** and the minutes are to reflect the details of those changes.

RCO Construction Grant Update

Staff provided "information on award of a \$1M Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Boating Facilities Program (BFP) Grant for the **Boyer Dock Replacement Project.**"

Lindgren Lease – Portion of Central Ferry Public Port Site

Lease was approved and executed by commission.

Port calendar for remainder of 2021 April-December

Port's **updated calendar** can be seen on the Port's website <https://www.portwhitman.com/port-calendar>

FAA CRRSAA Grant 2021

Commission discussed and moved to approve "application for the 2021 FAA **Airport Coronavirus Response Grant** Program (CRRSAA) Grant for \$9,000 to offset maintenance salary costs at POWBAC."

Airport Consultant Search

"Staff will work with the FAA and Century West (the chosen consultants from the six proposals that were submitted) to finalize the **scope of work** for professional services and estimate and evaluate the cost for airfield development projects that are anticipated to occur within the next five years at the POWBAC."

NEW BUSINESS:

10:30 a.m. – Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Quarterly Update with Brian Kraft and Aziz Makhani

Certified business advisor of SBDC, Aziz Makhani, gave a 25-minute presentation on how he has been offering help through COVID-19 and beyond with advising, educating, and analyzing in connection with **Palouse Knowledge Corridor**. He has also involved high school students to gain experience with marketing assessment.

Simpson Lewis Clark Valley Community Letter Draft

Dam Breaching: Commission agreed to **join in signing** a drafted letter presented by Lewis Clark Valley Community. Draft is attached below.

2020 Quarter 4 Financials- Report can be seen by following the link above for the Port's agenda.

POWBAC Entrance and Lighting Improvements - Commission is happy with plans.

Boyer Park Tree Project

The Port's 2021 **tree project** includes tree removal, trimming and planting at Boyer Park. Port received four bids ranging from \$44,629.20 to \$97,020.00. The lowest bidder withdrew his bid due to bidder error. Top Tree Service, LLC was awarded to do the work which will be completed by April 1, 2021.

Galexis Technologies Lease – Henley Court

Commission determines that a **security deposit** should be required with future leases.

Upcoming Meetings

- Pacific Northwest Waterways Association Mission to Washington, March 15-18 via Zoom
- Washington Public Ports Association 2021 Spring Meeting, May 19-21 via Zoom

Dear [WA & ID Delegation Members],

As residents of the Lewis Clark Valley and surrounding communities, we are writing to urge you to support a science-based response to regional salmon recovery that is informed by our shared values of growing a prosperous regional economy that works for everyone and practicing environmental sustainability to protect and preserve our natural resources, including meeting the demands of addressing climate change.

Campaigning in Portland for the presidency in 1932, future-President Franklin Delano Roosevelt spoke of his vision of developing the Columbia and its tributaries:

This vast water power can be of incalculable value to this whole section of the country. It means cheap manufacturing production, economy and comfort on the farm and in the household.

And so, it has. Not distant generations saw the Pacific Northwest transform. Today, we reap the benefit of that thoughtful, purposeful planning and foresight. We should tend to our legacy carefully.

Harnessing our rivers did not come without costs. Human displacement and negative impacts to ways of life, especially for Tribes, and impacts to native species count among the challenges we must confront and redress. We know that.

The dams along the lower Snake River are not the only sources of clean energy and low-carbon transportation in the region. Neither are they the only source of trouble for many of the things we care about. For a long time, though, some have sought to portray them that way. However, for a question as complex as “What should we do about our regional economy?,” which is embedded, if not explicit, in any question about salmon recovery and the actions taken to achieve it, we are unlikely to find one, simple, elegant solution.

But here we are, with another take it or leave it proposal that ignores the values of civic participation; substitutes its own formulas for the science-informed work performed on fish recovery; destroys clean energy and low-carbon transportation solutions that our region, nation, and world desperately need; and consigns our region’s workers and businesses, and our community’s future, to the trash heap. We urge you to **reject** U.S. Representative Mike Simpson’s proposed “Columbia Basin Plan,” or any similar plans.

Mr. Simpson’s plan would, among other things:

- Put politics over science by replacing a detailed, science-based, federal Columbia-Snake River Operations approach that was informed by significant public outreach and engagement across the Pacific Northwest, with a slideshow developed by one congressional office and informed by a small group of professional campaigners and their funders.

- Remove more than 3,000 MW of clean energy from the grid by breaching the four Lower Snake River Dams. These dams provide over 95 percent effective fish passage and a “firm” power source that is essential to the continued growth of solar and wind power.
- Leave untouched all other dams, including those without fish passage, while trying to take away the public’s ability to be engaged in the federal hydro relicensing process.
- Remove low-carbon, safe, and reliable barge transportation from the Snake River thereby driving up the cost of transporting wheat and other commodities. In 2018, it would have taken nearly 39,000 rail cars or nearly 150,000 semi-trucks to move the cargo that was barged on the Snake River.
- Impose massive infrastructure losses and investments on the Valley, including impacts to recreation, industrial and municipal water and wastewater systems, grain terminals and dock facilities, roads, rail, and other key infrastructure.

We recognize that some Pacific Northwest residents and elected officials may be willing to breach dams and sacrifice our community because they believe that the Simpson plan will advance fish recovery. The Simpson plan is not a viable path to fish recovery and we will continue to make our case throughout this debate.

We also recognize that some Pacific Northwest stakeholders may be inclined to support the Simpson plan because they are willing to sacrifice the four Lower Snake River Dams to protect their core interests. If those stakeholders support putting the Snake River dams on the table, we will suggest ways that their infrastructure can appear on the menu as well. After all, if there is one thing we should all agree on, it is that fish recovery will require collective action and shared sacrifice across the region.

The politics of fish recovery, reliable and clean energy, getting bulk products to market, and supporting jobs and businesses in every corner of the Pacific Northwest do not need to be divisive. In fact, the commitment to a comprehensive approach to fish recovery and the multiuse river system has been strongly bipartisan for decades.

Rather than supporting Mr. Simpson’s de-infrastructure plan, we urge the delegation, in collaboration with federal, state and local agencies, to develop a list of fish recovery projects that could be completed in the next five years if sufficient funding was available, and work to appropriate the dollars needed to advance those efforts. That type of science-based and results-driven approach may not satisfy some politicians and interest groups, but it would be a down payment on solving the problem. And it would align today’s leaders with the vision, foresight, and inheritance passed on to us from those who came before and saw the promise and potential of our region’s rivers. We stand ready to work with you toward solutions that work for everyone.

Sincerely,