

LWV – Pullman – Observer Report

Name of Agency: **Port of Whitman County Commission**

April 4, 2019

Observer Reporting: Bobbie Ryder

Length of mtg: 1.75 hrs

Members Present: Bruce Ensley, John Love, Kristine A.K. Meyer, Tom Kammerzell, Kara Rienbold, Debbie Snell

Guests: Jana Mathia (Colfax Gazette), Brenda Stave (WC Port), Bobbie Ryder (LWV Observer Corps)

What was being discussed:

Kristine Meyer opened the meeting with Commissioner Updates. Most of this short meeting was about what meetings the commissioners had attended. They clearly are active participants at state economic development meetings that have to do with the river, infrastructure and transportation. Kristine A.K. Meyer runs a meeting that stays on track.

Old Business:

Commissioner Updates:

Palouse Coulee City Rail Authority Meeting, March 28th in Spokane: John Love and Bruce Ensley attended the PCC Working Group. They are working on the Hooper to Lacrosse line, which is a 3.5M project. The line will continue to Endicott. PCC will be issuing an RFP for an operator for the PNL Line. They will announce in May. WSDOT spoke about rail operations. They said the Feds are making things difficult (re: opening rail cars) and more certification and paperwork is required. There are 180 private crossings on the system and only one is permitted. Ron Pate, WSDOT Director from Olympia reported on safety issues. His presentation was about operations more than policy. He is very knowledgeable. Bob Westby said that WSDOT Rails Division is moving away from patch and repair. They are developing a higher RR system-wide standard of service. It will cost \$150M to do this completely.

Northwest Partners, March 27th in Spokane Valley: Tom Kammerzell attended this meeting that discussed the **2019 Regional Economic Forecast**. He said that the Spokane Airport is self-sustaining with a 5 year growth projection. They met that projection in the first year. Twenty five percent of the customers are from other countries. The airport growth is due to corporations traveling for business. Companies that support the Boeing industry have been encouraged to come to Spokane from all over the world.

Tom reported that **Whitman County** has an unemployment rate of 4.3%, which is very low (unemployment data is slippery and not sure how this is being interpreted). He also reported that the housing breakdown through the state showed Whitman County as having one of the most affordable housing prices statewide. The housing limitations around Whitman County are zoning and soils. According to Mike Higby, the Pullman Chamber recent housing study states that W.C. is 3 months away from the longest period of growth in its history.

RTPO – Kristine met with Shawn Darveshi to discuss general information about RTPO, but she did not go into detail. There is an upcoming meeting (possibly next week that would include SWEDA).

WPPA Broadband Sub Committee: Kara attended the meeting that worked on developing common construction methods and how to work together on Fiber projects. There was discussion about possibly creating an LLC so that all Ports to work interactively. CERB (Community Economic Revitalization Board) funding for projects was announced. Clarkston is one that received funding. The next meeting will be April 23rd. Tom asked how the funding projections look. Kara hopes they have two models to look at for the next meeting. There are places in Washington that have state-wide needs. For example, WSU would like to have all campuses act as though they are in one geographic location (firewall, etc.). They want to work with one provider. There may be an opportunity to address these concerns.

Appearance of Fairness Memo: Bruce discussed a memo he is working on addressing PCC and Port Commissioner representation so that conflicts of interest are avoided. He will present this at the next Port Board meeting.

New Business:

Port Calendar: Brenda presented a draft calendar. A few items need finalizing before they can publish.

Boyer Park Updates:

Work continues by RTO Design. The permitting package to SEPA is nearly ready to submit for the entire project. Debbie met with Allison Green and they toured the site. The Analysis for the resurfacing project has come in and they will be presenting this at the next board meeting, The Commissioners will be meeting at Boyer Park on May 23rd to review the plans.

Reminders:

- Pioneer Ports Meeting, April 10, 2019, Fonks Coffee House, Colfax, WA, 6 p.m.
- Strategic Planning Meeting, April 23, 2019, 1300 Henley Ct, Pullman, WA, 10 a.m.
- Meeting with Whitman County Commission, May 6, 2019, Port Office, 3 p.m.

Meeting adjourned: At 11:30 am