

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Port of Whitman County

Date: 05/21/20

Observer Reporting: Carolyn Joswig-Jones

Length of Meeting: 1'11"

Members Present

Commissioners: John E. Love (District 1), Kristine Meyer (District 2), Tom Kammerzell (District 3)

Staff:

Joe Poire - Executive Director

Sarah Highfield - Communications Director

Kara Riebold - Chief Operating Officer

Matthew Johnson - Port Attorney

Debbie Snell - Properties & Development Manager

Others Present (i.e., media, public): Victoria Fowler (Gazette), Hailey Lewis (SEL)

Brenda Stav - Finance Director

Below, cut and pasted, are segments of the Agenda and supportive materials supplied by the Port in **Black**

My additional comments are in **Red**. Potential areas of interest to LWV are in **Green**

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

<http://www.portwhitman.com/about/commissionmeeting>

Port meeting calendar: http://www.portwhitman.com/pdf/Port_Calendar_2020.01.01-2020.06.30_Revised.pdf

Port of Whitman County Commissioners Meeting took place **via video and teleconference**. Participation could be online, by phone, or a combination of both. Public are muted during the meeting except during public comment periods at the beginning and before the end of the meeting. All people present were accounted for before the meeting continued. There was an addition to the agenda, the minutes approved, and a few vouchers were questioned by Commissioner Kammerzell and answered by Ms. Riebold.

Old Business:

COVID-19 Update & Forecast

Staff continue to follow and monitor guidance from the Governor's Office, MRSC and health officials.

"The Governor plans to reopen the state in four phases with at least three weeks between each one. On May 15, Whitman County was granted a waiver to enter into Phase 2. Next, Phase 3 will allow customer-facing government services to reopen, among other businesses. However, telework will still be "strongly encouraged." During this phase, Port staff will continue working from home with staggered work shifts in the office to maintain social distancing. The final phase, Phase 4, will allow public interactions to resume, with physical distancing."

"Port staff are proactively planning for what Port operations will look like as staff return to work and the office reopens to the public. The Port will provide a self-check station for employees with a no-contact thermometer, fingertip pulse oximeter and medical-grade sterile alcohol pads for sanitation of these devices. Rigorous daily and weekly cleaning procedures will also be implemented. Signage will encourage public visitors to wear face masks, keep six-foot distance and stay home if they feel sick."

Washington's Phased Approach chart attached below.

Website Maintenance and Reconfiguration

Rather than allocating resources toward a newsletter, **upgrading the Port website** was recommended. Port staff can manage the Content Management System (CMS), making a redesign more customizable and cost effective over time. Customization of the website will also allow the Port to **bolster its communications and outreach efforts**. Staff recommend adding a page that centralizes information about the benefits of the Columbia-Snake River System, as well as a "Media Center," which will house much of the Port's communications work, including press releases, letters to legislators, mentions of the Port in the media and events such as the Snake River Family Festival. Proposals for reconfiguring the Port's website range in price

from \$8,000-\$16,000 with one outlier that quoted \$50,000-60,000. A motion was approved for up to \$16,000 to move forward with this project

Progress on Reformatting Comprehensive Planning Documents

Staff gave an update on the progress of two documents, a Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements and a Strategic Plan, with the goal of making the Port's plans more accessible to the public. The Comprehensive Scheme serves to inform constituents on planned improvements at Port sites, while the Strategic Plan sets the long-term, strategic goals for the Port's business operations. The drafts have a nice overview and an educational component explaining the port projects and will be further prepared for commission and public review at a later date. Commissioners complimented the staff on the work put into these documents.

Northwest RiverPartners Media Campaign

Northwest RiverPartners (NRP) has launched a new digital ad campaign entitled "Our Power is Water." The campaign is focused on environmentally minded members of Generation Z and millennials across the Northwest. The ads will run on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Viant Streaming and NPR podcasts from May 18 to August 9. NRP is requesting an additional funding from its members. The Port is a member of NRP. Commissioner Meyer liked the campaign in that it might change people's image of waterpower and hydro systems. She feels it is important to be part of it and would consider contributing a maximum of \$10,000 to the campaign. Commissioner Kammerzell questioned if there is room in the Port's budget for funding it and wants to see where other groups are at in their funding of this campaign. It sounded like there is room in the budget for funding at some amount to be determined. NRP will continue to provide campaign updates to its members and Port will further investigate potentially funding the campaign at a later date. A sample of the campaign can be seen at <https://nriverpartners.org>.

Clarification of Commission Direction Regarding Staff Time Reporting

In the commission meeting on May 4, 2020, Commissioner Kammerzell inquired about the Petrichor LLC quarterly report (fiber-to-the-home project), as well as a possible newsletter for the Port of Whitman. On May 4, 2020 the commissioners received the Port of Whitman Profit and Loss Report for the Petrichor account showing a profit of \$77,748 for the first quarter of 2020. They also received the Petrichor Q1 Report of activities and audited financial statements. Commissioner Kammerzell asked about the reporting of staff hours indicating he believed staff had been directed to provide this information as part of the quarterly reporting process. Staff hours were not part of either report. There was not consensus between commissioners that quarterly reporting of staff hours in relation to Petrichor management was necessary. The commission receives accounting of staff activity through travel expense reports, commission updates, weekly travel calendar, review of vouchers/expenditures, staff updates in commission meetings and by email when necessary.

Staff recommended a commission vote to clear up any misunderstanding about additional reporting of Port of Whitman County staff hours to the Port Commission.

A lengthy discussion was held among the commissioners. Commissioner Meyer commented that the Port staff has let nothing fall through the cracks and that they are accomplishing all that is needed and doesn't see the need to have staff report time worked separately on Petrichor work. It was brought up that the LLC agreement is to pay up to 75% of the Port's work on this project and does not ask for hourly accounting. Commissioner Kammerzell would like to see the percentage of Port's work that goes into the LLC project and thinks there should be accounting for their time. Commissioner Meyer commented that Petrichor work also benefits the Port as a whole and the work doesn't need to be separated out. Commissioner Love concurred with Commissioner Meyer who then made a motion not to request time in hours. Commissioner Love 2nd the motion and Commissioner Kammerzell was not in favor. Motion passed not to request time in hours.

Knowledge Corridor Palouse Pathfinder Short Course

Asa Brown, Coordinator of WSU's Innovation & Research Engagement office, sent the Executive Director an email regarding this [short course designed to connect businesses with potential customers](#). Please circulate to anyone you think might benefit from completing this program (startups, founders, family business successors, lifestyle companies, etc.).

The cost is \$25 and the initial courses will be held on-line starting May 18. Courses may meet in person starting in June depending on the Covid-19 status in Whitman County.

The link to registration:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfpyymZTkcdKL8v6TdXdCwob8r9lwzNL2f2CHUn8TqFm_ECg/viewform See flyer below.

New Business:

2nd Half 2020 Calendar – review with initial Commission input and will be adopted at the June 18th meeting.

2020 Quarter 1 Financials Report – go to the Port website and the meeting agenda to find these reports.

http://www.portwhitman.com/pdf_agendas/2020-05-21%20Agenda.pdf

Reid Consulting Group proposal for broadband planning

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) authorized a revised program for October: Connect America Fund Auction. [This support program would help provide fixed broadband and voice service to certain eligible areas across the United States.](#) [The Port is looking for involvement and could enter into discussion with telecommunication providers in Whitman County to apply to this program to help pay back and build new service to connect 100% of Whitman County \(one of the Port's goal\).](#) [Petrichor worked on state funding whereas this is on the federal level.](#) [Commissioner Meyer made a motion to explore this deal.](#) [Commissioner Love 2nd the motion.](#) [Commissioner Kammerzell sustained and may need to recuse himself from further votes on this deal being that his property falls in the mapped area to receive these upgrades though he would not benefit or receive above and beyond services planned for that area.](#)

IT Services and IT Security Audit

An informal, internal review of the Port's technology, equipment, and support services has been on-going since early 2019. [Incremental changes and improvements have been made](#) including the development of a shared file system on the cloud, transitioning to laptops for ease of remote work, the addition of other equipment to increase productivity (ex.: docking stations, dual-monitors), and adding additional users to third-party software systems (ex.: Quickbooks). Recent developments, including the addition of a staff member and the COVID-19 situation, have made the need for reliable remote capability, 24/7/365 IT support, and effective tools for sharing work amongst staff more apparent than ever.

Additionally, the Port engaged with the [Office of the Washington State Auditor to conduct an information technology security audit](#) to be started in Summer 2020. The Audit will be completed at no cost to the Port.

The Port will be transitioning its outside IT Services to a [new vendor](#) with a tentative start date of June 1, 2020. Amongst other offerings and benefits, the new vendor, [Aldridge, will provide 24/7/365 IT support](#), proactively monitor and manage IT health, and offers a flat, predictable, and reasonable fee comparable to the robust services offered. Additionally, Aldridge will implement security protocol, including identity management and authentication, as advised by the Washington State Auditor.

[Staff will work with Aldridge to transition/ "on-board" to their platform.](#)

Upcoming Meetings

WPPA Commissioner Seminar, July 21-22, Marcus Whitman Hotel, Walla Walla, WA (will probably not be happening).

Recap: Business pertaining to League Positions or topics of interest:

- Port following and monitoring guidance from the Governor's Office, MRSC and health officials during COVID-19 crisis.
- Motion was made to upgrade the Port's website for up to \$16,000.
- Development of Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements and a Strategic Plan, with the goal of making the Port's plans more accessible to the public
- Northwest RiverPartners (NRP) new ad campaign "Our Power is Water." Port is a member of this group and is considering funding their campaign.
- Clearing up misunderstanding about additional reporting of Port of Whitman County staff hours to the Port Commission.
- Short course designed to connect businesses with potential customers – working with WSU.
- A motion was made to explore the FCC deal to help with Port's goal of fiber-to-the home for 100% of Whitman county.
- Port's Budget reports?
- Important work being done to provide Port with better IT and security.

Process & Protocol:

The clearing up of misunderstanding about additional reporting of Port of Whitman County staff hours to the Port Commission was not fully agreed on but the process was used in a professional manner to pass a motion with noted comments.

I am still impressed by how much they all get through during these meetings and how many projects they work on keeping the Port's goals and interests in mind.

Port staff were well prepared, as usual.

Additional comments: I find Commissioner Meyer to be very articulate and easy to follow.

WASHINGTON'S PHASED APPROACH

Reopening Business and Modifying Physical Distancing Measures

	 Phase 1	 Phase 2	 Phase 3	 Phase 4
High-Risk Populations*	Continue to Stay Home, Stay Healthy	Continue to Stay Home, Stay Healthy	Continue to Stay Home, Stay Healthy	Resume public interactions, with physical distancing
Recreation	Some outdoor recreation (hunting, fishing, golf, boating, hiking)	All outdoor recreation involving fewer than 5 people outside your household (camping, beaches, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outdoor group rec. sports activities (5-50 people) - Recreational facilities at <50% capacity (public pools, etc.) 	Resume all recreational activity
Gatherings (social, spiritual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - None - Drive in spiritual service with one household per vehicle 	Gather with no more than 5 people outside your household per week	Allow gatherings with no more than 50 people	Allow gatherings with >50 people
Travel	Only essential travel	Limited non-essential travel within proximity of your home	Resume non-essential travel	Continue non-essential travel
Business/Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Essential businesses open - Existing construction that meet agreed upon criteria - Landscaping - Automobile sales - Retail (curb-side pick-up orders only) - Car washes - Pet walkers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remaining manufacturing - New construction - In-home/domestic services (nannies, housecleaning, etc.) - Retail (in-store purchases allowed with restrictions) - Real estate - Professional services/office-based businesses (telework remains strongly encouraged) - Hair and nail salons/Barbers - Housecleaning - Restaurants <50% capacity table size no larger than 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restaurants <75% capacity/ table size no larger than 10 - Bars at <25% capacity - Indoor gyms at <50% capacity - Movie theaters at <50% capacity - Government (telework remains strongly encouraged) - Libraries - Museums - All other business activities not yet listed except for nightclubs and events with greater than 50 people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nightclubs - Concert venues - Large sporting events - Resume unrestricted staffing of worksites, but continue to practice physical distancing and good hygiene

* High-risk populations are currently defined by CDC as: persons 65 years of age and older; people of all ages with underlying medical conditions (particularly not well controlled) including people with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma, people who have serious heart conditions, people who are immunocompromised, people with severe obesity, people with diabetes, people with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis, and people with liver disease; people who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility.