

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Port of Whitman County

Date: 07/16/20

Observer Reporting: Carolyn Joswig-Jones

Length of Meeting: 1' 26"

Members Present:

Commissioners: John E. Love (District 1) Retired July 15
Kristine Meyer (District 2)
Tom Kammerzell (District 3)

Staff:

Joe Poire - Executive Director
Kara Riebold - Chief Operating Officer
Debbie Snell - Properties & Development Manager
Brenda Stav - Finance Director
Sarah Highfield - Communications Director
Matthew Johnson - Port Attorney

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

Alex McGregor - LaCrosse Community Pride non-profit organization
Linda Fowler - Whitman County Gazette

WPPA (Washington Public Port Association)

PNWA (Pacific Northwest Waterways Association)

NWRP (Northwest River Partners)

SWEDA (Southeast Washington Economic Development Association)

Business pertaining to League Positions or topics of interest:

(See below for full report of meeting)

- Will be interviewing new candidates for the vacant commissioner position for District #1.
- Fiber backbones continue to grow. (rural fiber extensions to transmitter sites)
- Port approved \$50,000 to support the LaCrosse Rock House Project.
- TMDL (total maximum daily load) Public Comment Draft and the water temperature study from John McKern were not seen.
- Helena Chemical Infrastructure expansion at Central Ferry.

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 **Zoom and teleconference**. Participation can be online, 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.

I believe it is Commissioner Kammerzell who is running the meeting. It was a little difficult to tell who was speaking sometimes.

An executive session was added to the agenda for contract negotiations and the public was put in the "waiting room" from 10:20-10:40. Alex McGregor was added to the agenda to call in at 10:50.

Commissioner and Staff Updates:

Some of the vouchers were questioned by Commissioner Kammerzell and answered by Port staff. Commissioner Kammerzell (?) reported on a **SWEDA** meeting he attended 2 days prior to this meeting. SWEDA funded \$240,000 in **COVID money** to Whitman County to be used only for administration.

There was also an additional \$50,000 to hire a new admin position. Much talk about these moneys but it was difficult to follow.

OLD BUSINESS:

District #1 Commissioner Vacancy

Bruce Ensley, Port Attorney's Office, letter on procedures. Talked about interviewing new candidates for the vacant commissioner position for District #1. Information session and application package by August 14th; Open to public; will be advertised and **press release** here:

<http://www.portwhitman.com/pdf/20200716CommissionerSearch.pdf>

Applicants must live in District #1. **Applications due** Sept 16th for review on Sept 17th. Candidates are to be interviewed Oct 1st. Due date for appointment to be filled by Oct 13th.

Fiber Extension Project

The County committed \$1,000,000 of .09 money to support three rural fiber extensions to transmitter sites in the county. This money was to be used by August 2020, but delays occurred for various reasons and the staff asked for an extension. The Whitman County Commissioners sent a letter approving an extension until August 5, 2021 for these "**fiber backbones**".

LaCrosse Rock House Project

Alex McGregor spoke again about the Rock House Project which includes restoration of some historic rock buildings in the town of LaCrosse for economic development. This follows the presentation last meeting and LaCrosse Community Pride requested \$50,000 from the Port of Whitman. There has been positive feedback from National Parks Service and National Geologic Trail. There was reference to having it connect to 8 natural landmarks in the area. This project has two phases, Phase 1 is estimated to cost \$392,000 and will start this fall. The McGregor Company is committing funding for a project manager and time for two people for a total of \$60,000. A motion was made and the Port "stepped up to the plate" approving \$50,000 in support of this project. Commissioners are looking forward to the end product.

TMDL (total maximum daily load) Public Comment Draft

The Port received the **water temperature study** from John McKern which was not provided to the public during this meeting. The Port's draft public comment on the U.S. EPA's "TMDL for Temperature in the Columbia and Lower Snake Rivers" report was provided to the Commission during the meeting. The draft was not available to the public during the meeting. It seems the Port will hold off on finalizing the comment until after the NWRP release their public comment on July 21st.

Petrichor Second Quarter Report

This report was not available to the public at the time of the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Helena Chemical Infrastructure Project – Central Ferry

Helena Chemical is expanding operations and has met with the Port staff to discuss their plans. Commissioners complimented Ms Snell for her work for this project. Commissioner Kammerzell made a comment about the limited size of the property and that there is so little room to grow on the water. A picture of the plan can be seen below.

Aug 6th VMRD tour 1300 NE Henley Court, Pullman, WA, 12:30 pm

The Port will have the opportunity to tour the Veterinary Medical Research & Development facilities on Henley Ct in the Port's Pullman Industrial Park located on Terre View Dr on the north end of town. WSU is leasing this space from the Port to do research to fight COVID-19.

Upcoming Meetings

WPPA Commissioner Seminar, July 21 - Zoom Meeting Format

PNWA Member/Partner Webinar: -Covid-19 Impacts on Regional Trade and Economic Development, July 20, 10:00 -11:00 a.m., Zoom Meeting Format

PNWA Member/Partner Webinar: Better Data and More Informed Decisions Updating-Port Boundaries and Data Collection Improvements, July 30, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m., Zoom Meeting Format

Process & Protocol:

I didn't see the TMDL (total maximum daily load) Public Comment Draft and the water temperature study from John McKern. I asked about it but it wasn't clear whether I could see the report or the draft of the Port's public comment.

