

## League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

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

**Date:** 08/20/20

**Observer Reporting:** Carolyn Joswig-Jones

**Length of Meeting:** 1' 19"

**Members Present/Absent:**

**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:** Frank J. Chmelik - WPPA Counsel; Linda Fowler - Whitman County Gazette

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](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.

*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)*

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

(See below for full report of meeting)

- Looking for replacement commissioner.
- Linking fiber service in the NW corner of the county.
- Pioneer Ports meeting may be in-person, possible dates are Oct 19, 21 or 22.
- Port insurance coverage increasing by 15.5% for 2021.
- Grading of 8.36 acres at PIP West.
- Little Goose and Lower Monumental Master Plan comment period deadline is tomorrow (Aug 21)
- Small-town libraries have many challenges and the Port is offering to assist in completing the paperwork required to access CARES Act funds and bridge funding if needed.

Commissioner Kammerzell ran the meeting and called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

**Commissioner and Staff Updates:**

The first **WPPA Carbon meeting** was attended by Director Poire and he found it “interesting”. He said there were talks from around the state on how the carbon tax would affect all and that this tax will be statewide, without an eastside/westside consideration. It will be a losing margin for the Port in that it “just can’t quit carbon”. It was mentioned that this may be an attempt to make up a statewide shortfall with loss in user fees and lower transport funds (one example being ferries running at only 40%). Joe reported that Steve Peterson (UI economist) and Brian Craft (Director of business development in the College of Arts and Sciences at WSU) are working together on the **Washington Small Business**

**Development Center** (WSBDC) and will give an update in the next couple of weeks. The Port is working with the universities helping in small business development through this center. It was mentioned that the Port might want to consider having the Port's Communications Director Highfield help out with this project since there is no staff support at this time. The WSBDC did not get a grant to fund staff support and there are many things that need attention.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **Commissioner Appointment Process – Frank Chmelik called-in at 10:30 a.m.**

WPPA Counsel Frank J. Chmelik reviewed best practices for **choosing a commissioner**. Any person interested in running can call him if they have questions about eligibility or the process itself. His phone number will be in the Port minutes. He reviewed the Code of Ethics for Municipal Officers and discussed situations where there may be conflict with the proper performance of duties in the public interest (Chapter 42.23 RCW). The process for the current commissioners to interview and decide on a candidate has to be open to the public though they are allowed to discuss the candidates privately amongst themselves. The position needs to be filled in 90 days of Commissioner Love's retirement or the county commissioners will fill the position. The selected candidate will serve out Commissioner Love's term until Nov. 2021 and will need to run in the next open election in November 2021 in order to retain the seat.

**August 13** - Virtual Informational Session and Applications Posted

Release - <http://www.portwhitman.com/pdf/Commissioner-Info-Session-Release.pdf>

Application - <http://www.portwhitman.com/pdf/Revised-Application-Commissioner-2020.pdf>

**September 16** - Applications due for the vacant commissioner position for District #1.

**September 17** - Review Applications and Select Candidates to Invite for Interviews (open to the public)

**October 1** - Candidate Interviews and New Commissioner Appointment (open to the public)

\*\*\*Follow this link to learn the roles and responsibilities of Commissioners for the Port of Whitman County. <http://www.portwhitman.com/pdf/Commissioner-101-Presentation.pdf>

### **Lamont Library and Broadband Feed**

There is an opportunity to link the NW corner of the county, between Rosalia and the County-owned tower approximately one mile outside of Lamont., with fiber service. Another aspect of the project is a shell building that Lamont built on a grant to be a library. The Port proposed the library building be a co-location for the library and the fiber termination hut. The Port will help in tying this project in with the other library CARES Act funding.

### **Pioneer Ports Meeting – Fall 2020 – Port of Whitman County**

It is the Port of Whitman County's turn to host a Pioneer Ports (Port of Lewiston, Port of Whitman, and Port of Clarkston) meeting in September of 2020, not yet on the calendar. It was discussed to ask the Port of Lewiston to host the meeting because ID doesn't have the restrictions that WA does with regards to COVID and an outdoor venue could be chosen for this meeting. It would be an opportunity to introduce the new commissioner if held in October. The dates they are considering are Oct 19, 21 or 22.

### **2021 Port Insurance Update**

The Port reviewed their 2021 insurance coverage with Enduris, checking for accuracy and updates. Enduris has not made an assessment of Port properties for 3 years and cannot do so now due to COVID restriction of no-travel. It is estimated that there will be an increase of 15.5% (2020:\$84,200 to 2021:\$97,232) in the cost of the policy. The Port made some adjustments on its own with increased values on some of its properties and this may lend to some of the increase in policy cost. Commissioner Kammerzell asked what other Ports do for their insurance. Director Poire stated some ports are self-insured, some are grouped with a private carrier which won't cover additional ports and about 50 ports are covered by Enduris. Director Poire said he would shop around but that it will take about a year to get another estimate. The Port carries separate insurances at Boyer for the Underground Fuel storage tank and airport insurance at POWBAC.

## **Grading of PIP West Port Retained Lots**

The Port made a motion and approved to move forward with getting a bid from Syntier Engineering to grade, level and stabilize the Port retained lots at PIP West, 8.36 acres, for future Port or private sector development.

This is where the Breckenridge Group is starting to mobilize equipment onto their recently purchased lots for the Aspen Heights housing development. Since “they are moving lots of dirt” there anyway, the Port wanted to take advantage and move forward with their proposed project.

## **Little Goose and Lower Monumental Master Plan Comments**

This topic was introduced in the regular meeting on 08-06-2020 which I missed. It concerns future land use around the Little Goose and Lower Monumental pools on the Snake River. Staff requested input from the Commissioners by 08-20-2020 as the deadline for submitting comments to USACE (United State Army Corps of Engineers) is on 08-21-2020. See original letter the Port received from the Corps below. There is a link to drafts of both the Little Goose and Lower Monumental Master Plans. The public comment period has passed.

The Port Properties & Development Manager Snell helped catch me up on this topic. The Port will be submitting comments one of which is that there is noticeable shrinkage of acreage at these sites and that the USACE should increase or at least maintain land for industrial or recreational use. The Port will mention that they are working with the Corps in a land trade north of Central Ferry, owned by the Port. The Port will also comment that they would like to see an extension and water rights at Boyer Park and Marina.

## **CARES Act Funds**

Chief Operating Officer Riebold and Kristie Kirkpatrick, the Director at Whitman County Library, reached out to small towns with proposals for the utilization of CARES Act funds to support the library openings and education within the community.

The funds can be used for:

- Expenses for acquisition of protective supplies, including sanitizing products and personal protective equipment for library employees and patrons
- Expenses for disinfection of public areas and other facilities, including library facilities
- Expenses to facilitate distance learning, including technological improvements, in connection with school closings to enable compliance with COVID-19 precautions, (wireless hot spots in communities and additional equipment that could be distributed to facilitate distance learning)

CARES Act funding per town (\$25,000):

\$1000 - PPE for their libraries and towns: Cleaners/sanitizing supplies (hand sanitizing stations, refills, sprays, gloves, masks, towels, etc.), desk top plexiglass barrier for library (Steve’s Glass)

\$5000 - Increased technology access for all ages: Computers for curbside service at libraries, filtering and administrative costs for tech support, curbside seating solutions, increased bandwidth speeds

\$19,000 - Increased technology access for students: Laptops, Chromebooks, wi-fi hotspots in cooperation with local school

Some of the towns include St John, Rosalia, Tekoa, Endicott, Garfield, Lamont, Malden, Farmington, LaCrosse, Oakesdale. These small-town libraries have many challenges. The Port will offer to assist in completing the paperwork required to access these funds and bridge funding if needed.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **2020 Quarter 2 Financials Report**

Overall Port expenses are lower due to COVID. Office supplies and computer expenses are higher than budgeted for understandably. Full Financial report can be seen in the Port’s meeting agenda on their website (link in the beginning of this report). Commissioner Meyer said they are “doing the right things at

the right time.” Both Commissioners Kammerzell and Meyer complimented Finance Director Stav for improvements in the financials report and the additional footnotes.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

Washington State Transportation Commission Meeting, September 15-16 – Virtual Format

Inland NW Partners Virtual Fall Meeting, September 23, 9:00 -11:00 a.m. (If previously registered for the INP Spring meeting, you have been automatically re-registered)

2020 Regional Economic Forecast: Economic Implications of the Unimaginable o WPPA Environmental Seminar, Sept. 24 & 25, Online Zoom meeting

PNWA Annual Meeting, October 6-8, General sessions 1:00 - 3:00 p.m., via Zoom meetings and webinar

Inland NW Partners Virtual Fall Meeting, October 28, 9:00 -11:00 a.m. (If previously registered for the INP Spring meeting, you have been automatically re-registered) - The Importance of Digital Inclusion

### **Process & Protocol:**

It was difficult to hear sometimes and distinguish between persons speaking. Zoom meeting is not set up where you can see individuals. Commissioners Kammerzell and Meyer complimented Finance Director Stav for improvements in the budget report and the additional footnotes. I called Debbie Snell - Properties & Development Manager to help me with some of my questions and she is very generous with her time and patient with my questions.



Planning, Programs and Project Management Division

Dear Interested Party:

July 20, 2020

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District (Corps), invites your review of and comments on two revised draft Master Plans (MPs) with the associated draft Findings of No Significant Impact (FONSIs) and Environmental Assessments (EAs), pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. The 1966 Master Plan for Development and Management of Lower Monumental Reservoir and the 1969 Master Plan for Development and Management of Little Goose Reservoir are being updated to guide how the Corps manages federal lands relative to recreation, natural resources and cultural resources for the next 20 years. MPs do *not* address dam operations (e.g., spill, fish passage, or dam breaching), flood risk management (e.g., levees), or navigation.

The revised draft MPs and draft FONSIs and EAs are available on the following webpages: Lower Monumental: [https://www.nww.usace.army.mil/Locations/District-Locks-and-](https://www.nww.usace.army.mil/Locations/District-Locks-and-Dams/Lower-Monumental-Lock-and-Dam/Lower-Monumental-Master-Plan/)

[Dams/Lower-Monumental-Lock-and-Dam/Lower-Monumental-Master-Plan/](https://www.nww.usace.army.mil/Locations/District-Locks-and-Dams/Lower-Monumental-Lock-and-Dam/Lower-Monumental-Master-Plan/)

Little Goose: <https://www.nww.usace.army.mil/Locations/District-Locks-and-Dams/Little-Goose-Lock-and-Dam/Little-Goose-Master-Plan/>

Written comments on the MPs, FONSIs, and EAs will be accepted only from July 20 through August 21, 2020, by email ([LowerMonumentalMP@usace.army.mil](mailto:LowerMonumentalMP@usace.army.mil) or [LittleGooseMP@usace.army.mil](mailto:LittleGooseMP@usace.army.mil)), the online comment form on the webpages listed above, or through U.S. mail to:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District ATTN: Master Plan  
201 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
Walla Walla, Washington 99362-1876

For more information regarding the MP revisions, please contact the Corps Master Planner at 509-527-7137. For more information on the FONSIs and EAs, please contact the Environmental Coordinator at 509-527-7245.

Sincerely,

Michael S. Erickson  
Chief, Environmental Compliance Section