

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Port of Whitman County

Date: 1/7/20

Observer Reporting: Carolyn Joswig-Jones

Length of Meeting: 1' 50"

Members Present:

Commissioners: Karl Webber (District 1)
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):

Frank and Seth from Chmelik, Sitkin & Davis Attorneys at Law
Jessica Wilund
Radio Station person ?
Anthony Kuipers Moscow-Pullman Daily News
Blair Ruffner
Delgado?

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)

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

<https://portwhitman-web.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/meetings/agendas/2021-01-07/2021-01-07%20Agenda.pdf>

Port of Whitman County Commissioners Meeting took place via Zoom and teleconference. The Port is back to all online meetings since Governor proclamation. Port staff, if in the office were behind closed doors.

Business pertaining to League Positions or topics of interest:

(See below for full report of meeting)

- **Port Strategic Planning Meeting** - Public is encouraged to attend. Jan. 25, 2021, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
- Riley's River Ranch approved to buy the unused firehouse at Port of Central Ferry, with new long-term lease.
- Port will only consider lease of last lot at POWBAC to Hennigar Trucking as to still have control for environmental concerns due to proximity to creek.
- Vet Med Research and Development approved to purchase Port's 8 plus acre lots (lot 19-21) at the Pullman Industrial Park after Public hearing with no public comments.
- Palouse Knowledge Corridor (PKC) is reformatting its mission and board positions, wants Port Commissioner as board member.
- Port still exploring the feasibility of developing the Washington State University (WSU) steam plant into a commercialization center and seeks expertise in guiding Port through grant applications for planning and cleanup. The "Re-Use" project plan is attached below report for more detail. Fun pictures for possible development.
- Seeking more collaboration between the Port and SEWEDA

Port Industrial Development Corporation Meeting (10:11-10:14)

Minutes approved; Board Officer Positions Election: Commissioner Kammerzell - President, Commissioner Meyer - Vice President, Commissioner Webber – Secretary; Resolution 21-01 Banking Authority - approved

Public comment: none

Commissioner and Staff Updates:

Port of Seattle starting up their **Solar Project** again and will be looking for **property in Whitman County** for use in this project. Something about Pullman Depot Heritage Center taking over the front section of track.

OLD BUSINESS:

Executive Director’s Authority Resolution was approved-This resolution was adopted and “delegates administrative powers and duties of the executive director and designees and repeals prior resolutions dealing with the same.” A copy is availed by following the link to the Port agenda above.

Commission Rules-Commission Rules, which were reviewed with counsel at the last meeting, was adopted and a copy of this policy is available by following the link to the Port agenda above. Will revise agenda to match consent meeting format. **The two sections most relevant to LWV, public hearings and public comment, are attached below.**

Policy Project Summary- All policies have been updated, and the project is completed.

Fire District 8 Building – Port of Central Ferry

Commission approved of the **sale of the building** contingent upon negotiating a long-term lease with Chad Lindgren adding the .24 acres to the leasehold by addendum and increasing the lease rate accordingly. This is an expansion of an existing family business, **Riley River Ranch**, and the location and minimal acreage of the site does not make it attractive for alternate development. Lease rate was \$1,075.00 per year plus leasehold tax and will increase to \$1,137.50 per year for the total 4.54 acres.

Lot 8 – Port of Whitman Business Air Center

The Port was considering a request to purchase the last remaining lot zoned for heavy industrial by Hennigar Trucking for fuel tank and parking, and long-term fueling station. Commission questioned environmental feasibility because of proximity to Rebel Flat Creek. Concerned if sold and not leased, Port would not have any control. There is 12 acres owned by Port across from the creek but there is no access to that land.

Commission is willing to offer lease of lot 8, but not sale, to Hennigar Trucking.

NEW BUSINESS:

>Public Hearing – Surplus of Lots 19-21 Locust Grove Industrial Park Plat S - 11:00 a.m.

Vet Med Research and Development was authorized to **purchase Lots 19-21 at PIP West**, 8 plus acres. The use of these lots by VMRD is to create a buffer between their business and the Aspen Heights development and for potential expansion by their business in future. Public hearing, with no public comments, lasted 4 minutes. Commission supported the sale to provide property for development. Two people may have tried to join the meeting but were late missing the public hearing and left the meeting without comment.

>Palouse Knowledge Corridor (PKC) Board Position- PKC is reformatting its mission and board positions. Brian Kraft, WSU loaned executive to PKC has **requested the Port have a seat on the board**. Will have two boards, an executive board and working board. Commissioner Webber was chosen to be placed on the boards (Commissioner Kammerzell is backup).

>**T-Hangar Availability, demand, and potential future development**

T-Hangar B at POWBAC is nearing capacity with only two hangars vacant as of the 1st week of 2021. Drawings of Port’s t-hangars A & B showing current tenants/owners is available by following the link to the Port agenda above. With a waiting list interested in hangars and having limited availability, the staff is evaluating the possibility of a private sector multi-hangar development at POWBAC. Commission recommended advertising of available airport land with a focus of attracting an entrepreneur to build and manage private sector, multi-tenant hangars. Looking to have this go out to bid to local businesses. Will come back to this at the next meeting.

>**Steam Plant Project - Integrated Planning Grant Application**

The Port will be applying for grants and funding for **exploring the feasibility of developing the Washington State University (WSU) steam plant into a commercialization center in partnership with WSU**. The Commission approved hiring Maul Foster Alongi for a not-to-exceed cost of \$8,000 to guide Port staff through the Integrated Planning Grant application since Port does not have expertise in environmental law, engineering, or project planning for this complex project. The project plan **named “Adaptive Reuse Project: College Avenue Steam Plan”** is attached below for more detail.

WSU President Schulz provided a letter of support for this project. The Port is requesting a letter of support from State Senator Mark Schoesler to assist in submitting a strong application for a **Department of Ecology Integrated Planning Grant (IPG)** to explore the potential adaptive reuse of Washington State University’s College Avenue Steam Plant because **the site has prior soil contamination** according to the Department of Ecology. Copies of these drafted letters are availed by following the link to the Port agenda above.

>**Southeast Washington Economic Development Association (SEWEDA) Discussion**

Commissioner Webber raised some questions about the **Port’s relationship with Southeast Washington Economic Development Association (SEWEDA) and its board governance**. Talked about increasing collaboration. Port not allowed to have a voting seat on SEWEDA board but also has had personality conflicts in the past. A recommendation was put forth for the commission to put together a list of what the Port wants the local Associated Economic Development Organization (ADO) to do.

Upcoming Meetings

*****Port’s Strategic Planning Meeting** - The Port will hold a strategic planning Commission meeting. The public is encouraged to attend. January 25, 2021, 10:00 a.m. — 2:00 p.m.

Washington Public Ports Association 2021 Port Day, February 2, 2021 at the Washington Capitol in Olympia

PNW meeting on March 15-18, 2020

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# Adaptive Reuse Project: College Avenue Steam Plan - Partnership Project 2021

## Washington State University-Port of Whitman County

**Purpose:** Explore the adaptive re-use of the College Avenue Steam Plant (the Steam Plant) through a partnership agreement with the Port of Whitman (Port) and Washington State University (University).

### When was the plant built and then de-commissioned?

The original Steam Plant, 800 NE College Ave., Pullman, was constructed and made operational in 1927 by the University. It underwent seven additions and major modifications until its closure in 2003. The facility was replaced with newer technology at a new location that uses natural gas. The historic building on College Avenue, however, still houses two gas fired boilers and a small electrical substation, but substantial space for redevelopment exists within the building and associated grounds.

### If the Port and University agree to proceed, are there feasibility and planning grants readily available?

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) Integrated Planning Grants (IPGs) provide opportunities for local governments to develop an integrated plan for cleanup and evaluate potential future land uses of a contaminated site or a group of sites. These grants do not require any matching funds. IPGs can be for a maximum of \$200,000 for a single site or \$300,000 for multiple sites. The applicant does not need to own the property; however there needs to be "intent" to acquire it through purchase, licensing, or leasing. A partnership agreement would meet this requirement. Ecology and the Washington Department of Commerce also offer a suite of grants to support any necessary clean-up that may be required, or to support development of needed infrastructure.

### What are the environmental conditions on the site?

A review of Environmental Data Review (EDR) records reveals several environmental conditions that an IPG, and other grants, could address:

- Hazardous building materials such as asbestos and lead-based paint are environmental concerns. The building is listed in Ecology's asbestos database, specifically for vinyl asbestos tile and roofing material.
- The Property is listed in Ecology's cleanup site database as Cleanup Site ID 785 (WA WSU POWER PLANT OIL BULKING). Based on investigations conducted in 1990s, there is confirmed petroleum and PCB contamination in soil above Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) cleanup levels and suspected petroleum and PCB impacts in groundwater. The site is listed as cleanup started through the independent cleanup pathway.
- Petroleum hydrocarbon products and other hazardous substances have been in use on the property for over a century.
- A rail line, not in service is directly west of Property boundary. The potential for commodities or petroleum products to have spilled along the railroad and the Property and impact soil from either a locomotive having a fuel spill or hydraulic leak or from hauling of open-top hopper cars and tanker cars on the railroad.
- Potential impacts (solvents, diesel and gasoline) may have migrated onto the site from the Chevron Bulk Storage Facility, located 90 feet to the site.

Additionally, coal has been stored on the property for many decades. Coal handling can result in soil and groundwater contamination from coal residues (e.g., heavy metals). Coal handling practices (e.g., dust suppression using diesel) can also result in possible contamination to soil and groundwater.

**What would be entailed in a feasibility study?** A feasibility study would assess key project components and include a 'next steps' recommendation that:

- Provide a clear understanding of the specific assets to be included in the analysis.
- Identify adaptive reuse possibilities based on market demand or institutional need. Evaluate the on-site environmental conditions and, if necessary, identify how to address known environmental conditions.
- Evaluate structural conditions of the building to inform the feasibility of adaptive reuse.
- Build a plan of finance that leverages grants, relies on equity and attracts private partner investors benefiting from historic tax credits.

The feasibility study could include a visioning process accompanied by renderings and site plans to communicate the possible development opportunities. The feasibility study would be designed to culminate in a 'go or no-go' decision.

#### **What criteria does Ecology use in awarding a grant?**

Ecology will prioritize eligible projects for funding or limit funding for eligible projects based on six categories. Each category contains a list of related question that are scored as follows:

**Category #1:** Faster Cleanup (10% of potential points)

**Category #2:** Improve Human Health (10% of potential points)

**Category #3:** Improve the Environment and Natural Resources (10% of potential points)

**Category #4:** Equitable Distribution (23% of potential points)

**Category #5:** Redevelopment and Reuse in Cleanups (23% of potential points)

**Category #6:** Meaningful Investment in Communities (23% of potential points)

#### **What are the next steps?**

1. Consider an intergovernmental agreement to capture the intentions and expectations of the parties. This would be a preliminary agreement or acknowledgement that would be non-committal as to disposition of the real property, but that would provide sufficient basis for proceeding to a grant application to Ecology. Possible language for such an acknowledgement from the University could include:

*"Washington State University (University) and the Port of Whitman (Port) are undertaking a collaborative process to explore the adaptive re-use of the University's historic steam plant building and property located at 800 NE College Ave., Pullman, WA. (the plant). The intent of the collaboration is to conduct a feasibility study on the possible adaptive re-uses of the plant and in doing so addresses any legacy environmental concerns.*

*The feasibility study will explore preferred re-uses thought to be commercial or institutional; the suitability of the building and property for a feasible conversion to a preferred use; the technical approach to addressing any legacy environmental concerns; a plan of finance to include the use of grants, public debt, and private equity; and a focused implementation plan and schedule. It is the intent of the parties to assess market demand, institutional needs, and community interest in the facility and property through the feasibility planning.*

*It is the University's understanding that the Port will be seeking grant funding from the State of Washington, including the Department of Ecology's Integrated Planning Grant program, to fund the feasibility study. We look forward to working with the Port on this important endeavor and uncovering the potential re-use of this historic facility."*

2. The lead party, the Port, submit a grant application to Ecology by January 30, 2021 for an IPG. (This is the 2021 window for applications) In addition it is recommended that the Port submit a 'grant inquiry' to Ecology at the same time. The purpose of the 'grant inquiry' is to ask Ecology to identify other state and federal grant sources for the project beyond the IPG.



## What are the development possibilities?

The following is a regional example of successful adaptive reuse projects:

### ***1907 SIERR Building at the McKinstry Station, Spokane WA***



<http://www.dci-engineers.com/project/sierr-building-mckinstry-station>

### ***Steam Plant Square, Spokane WA***



<http://www.dci-engineers.com/project/steam-plant-square>

### ***The Innovation Den, Coeur d'Alene ID***



<http://www.dci-engineers.com/project/innovation-den>

## **Newly drafted Commission Rules (Public portion)**

6. Public Hearings. The Commission President will preside over any public hearing. Prior to taking public testimony the Commission President will announce the purpose of the public hearing and any time limitations on public testimony. Other than providing a name so that the Commission President can call people to testify in order no other information will be required.

a. Conduct of Public Hearings. Recognizing that the purpose of a public hearing is to hear from the public, the commissioners generally will listen but not respond to public testimony. However, a commissioner may ask for clarification of testimony.

7. Public Comment. The Commission President will preside over any public comment. Prior to taking public comment the Commission President will announce the time limitations on each person's comment. Other than providing a name so that the Commission President can call people to testify in order no other information will be required.

a. Conduct of Public Comment. Recognizing the purpose of a public comment is to hear from the public, the commissioners generally will listen but not respond to public comment. However, a commissioner may ask for clarification of comment. It is recommended anyone commenting read a written version of their comment as to stay on point and best get their message heard.

b. Formal Presentation to the Port Commission. To request inclusion on the Port Commission agenda with up to a fifteen-minute opportunity to present, members of the public may contact the port staff in writing or by email at least one week prior to the next regular meeting with their name, contact information, topic of discussion and goals sought from the Port Commission. It is recognized that the Port Commission may decide to allow the presentation.

**Public Comment Policy for Commission Meetings Adopted  
November 2, 2017.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD/COMMISSIONER MEETINGS.** A **MOTION** was made to adopt the following policy providing for a public comment period during Port meetings:

The Port of Whitman County shall have two methods by which the public may address the port commission at their meetings;

1) If a member of the public has a short comment they wish to make regarding a particular port project or activity, there will be a brief time period at the beginning of the agenda for individuals wishing to comment to have three minutes. If there are multiple individuals who wish to speak, the same rule will apply. It is recommended anyone commenting read a written version of their comment as to stay on point and best get their message heard.

2) To be included formally on the Commission meeting agenda with up to a fifteen minute opportunity to talk, members of the public may contact the port staff in writing or by email at least one week prior to the next regular meeting with their name, contact information, topic of discussion and goals sought from the commission.

The **MOTION** carried. The staff was asked to add information on the policy to the Port website.