# League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

 Name of Agency:
 Port of Whitman County
 Date:
 04/15/21

 Observer Reporting:
 Carolyn Joswig-Jones
 Length of Meeting:
 1' 20"

 Members Present:
 Karl Webber (District 1)
 Kristine Meyer (District 2)
 Tom Kammerzell (District 3)

 Staff:
 Staff:
 Date:
 04/15/21

Joe Poire - Executive Director (ED)Brenda Stav - Finance DirectorKara Riebold - Chief Operating Officer (COO)Sarah Highfield - Communications DirectorDebbie Snell - Properties & Development ManagerSeth Woolson / Frank Chmelik - counsel from Chmelik, Sitkin & Davis Attorneys at Law

**Others Present:** Debbie Sherman – Heritage Center

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) Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB)

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

https://portwhitman-web.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/meetings/agendas/2021-04-15/2021-04-

15%20Agenda.pdf

Port of Whitman County Commissioners Meeting took place via Zoom and teleconference. The commissioners, Director Poire, and COO Riebold were together in conference room all wearing masks. Port staff, if in the office were behind closed doors or remote.

Business pertaining to League Positions or topics of interest: (See below for full report of meeting)

- Snake River Family Festival registration opens May 1 on the festival's Facebook page
- Pullman Depot Heritage Center asking Port for \$50,000. Will be a nice addition for Pullman.
- Port gets lessons in forming an industrial development district and tax levy
- Whitman County Redistricting
- Director Poire asked to be a PWB board member which is a Governor appointed position

# **Commissioner and Staff Updates:**

Commissioner Webber attended the **SWEDA** meeting. He pointed out some concerns with transparency within the organization and that Whitman County is a contributor to this organization but has no representation. SWEDA approved new executive board members, now 5 people, though their website only lists 3 board members.

Director Poire mentioned **Port retail Authority Bill and State Right-of-Way Bill passed**. **<u>OLD BUSINESS:</u>** 

Assignment of Lease – Central Ferry Terminal Association (CFTA) to Pomeroy Grain – Site C Port of Central Ferry -- Commission authorized execution of this lease

# 2021 Snake River Family Festival

Online registration will open on May 1 on the festival's Facebook page. Tickets for goodie bags and free ice cream will be capped at 500 people. Boyer Park store hours in May: Sunday – Thursday: 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday and Saturday: 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

### **State Auditor Data Breach**

Close-out letter from Washington State Auditor's Office (SAO) - no personal information was breached.

### **Contract for Fiber extension**

A motion was approved to award Skyview Construction to carry out the fiber extension project.

### **Boyer Dock Rehab Contract**

Final evaluation for dock rehab was carried out.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **Pullman Depot Heritage Center**

Debbie Sherman presented background for the Pullman Depot Heritage Center, a project of the Whitman County Historical Society, and they are asking for a \$50,000 grant from the Port. Commission is in support of this project which would fall under **tourism and economic development** and Port staff will prepare for adding it to the Port's budget. Interesting documents, information and a master plan about this project can be found in the Port's agenda and supportive documents using the link above.

### **Industrial Development Districts**

Frank Chmelik, Port counsel, gave a "Brief Overview of two separate, but related actions: Forming Industrial Development District and Adopting an Industrial Development Tax Levy"

Takeaways:

- Complicated statutes that need further study and planning before implementation
- Powerful tool for development
- Taxing decision is made on a yearly basis and within Commission discretion
- Consider linking any tax to a specific project" (with public support)

See the slides for this presentation in the Port's agenda and supportive materials using the link above.

# Whitman County Redistricting

"Frank Chmelik wrote a column for WPPA in March of 2021 regarding redistricting based upon data from the 2020 census. The Port utilizes the same district boundaries as the County Commission and Port staff does not anticipate much change in the rural districts. However, the **district boundaries in Pullman may be impacted** due to multiple subdivisions being built since the last census."

Mr Chmelik's column can be seen in full in the Port's agenda and supportive materials using the link above.

#### **2020 Annual Financial Report**

"Annual Reports are to be certified and filed with the State Auditor's Office (SAO) within 150 days (May 30, 2021) after the close of each fiscal year. The preliminary report for fiscal year 2020 will be provided at the Commission meeting. After the report is filed, an audit will be scheduled with the SAO."

# **Public Works Trust Fund Board Application**

"With the passage of Senate Bill 5511 in 2019, the Public Works Board (PWB) received funding for broadband infrastructure, which ports may apply for." Director Poire has been asked to be a PWB board member which is a Governor-appointed position. This would give the Port ability to have a positive influence in the PWB. Director Poire will only be working for the Port for 17 months before he retires from this position, and the appointment would be for 4 years. The appointment is independent from working for the Port.

# **Upcoming Meetings**

- Washington Public Ports Association 2021 Spring Meeting, May 19-21 via Zoom
- Pacific Northwest Waterways Association 2021 Summer Conference, June 22-24