

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Port of Whitman County

Date: 08/05/21

Observer Reporting: Carolyn Joswig-Jones

Length of Meeting: 1' 37"

Members Present:

Commissioners: Karl Webber (District 1), Kristine Meyer (District 2), Tom Kammerzell (District 3)

Staff:

Joe Poire - Executive Director (ED)

Brenda Stav - Finance Director

Kara Riebold - Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Sarah Highfield - Communications Director

Debbie Snell - Properties & Development Manager

Kalvin Johanson - Special Projects

Seth Woolson / ~~Frank Chmelik~~ - counsel from Chmelik, Sitkin & Davis Attorneys at Law

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

CERB (Community Economic Revitalization Board)

NWRP (Northwest River Partners)

PIP (Pullman Industrial Parks East and West)

PNWA (Pacific Northwest Waterways Association)

POWBAC (Port of Whitman Business Air Center – airport in Colfax)

RCW (Revised Code of WA)

SWEDA (Southeast Washington Economic Development Association)

USACE (United State Army Corps of Engineers)

WPPA (Washington Public Port Association)

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

- Pullman Depot Heritage Center Project is interesting - seeking funding
- Port is slotted to present on fiber focus in the Eastern Washington Legislative Tour (Oct 10-12)
- CERB planning grant application for Steam Plant passed its first step
- The Port staff evaluating feasibility of obtaining the Central Ferry North HMU land
- Port looking to apply for a Public Works Board Broadband Federal Funding Grant
- Strategic Planning meeting on August 19th following the regular commission meeting

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

<https://portwhitman-web.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/meetings/agendas/2021-08-05/2021-08-05%20Agenda.pdf> Port of Whitman County Commissioners Meeting took place in person for commissioners and staff. Public attended via Zoom or teleconference.

Commissioner and Staff Updates:

Commissioner Webber reported there were 16 **applicants for the Palouse Knowledge Corridor Executive Director position**. 7 applicants will participate in 30-minute sessions next week then formal interviews.

Ms. Snell reported that a **boat at Boyer Park** is being recovered, pulled out of the water at present, and a letter of thanks will be sent to Mike Olmsted, manager at Boyer Park, for his appropriate actions during this situation.

Executive Session (no public) was moved to the front of this general meeting to deal with 3 items; Discussion of potential litigation with legal counsel, Performance of a Public Employee, and a real-estate transaction. (1 hour)

OLD BUSINESS:

Economic Development Agreement – Whitman County Historical Society

Commission agreed to move forward with a request for financial support of the Pullman Depot Heritage Center Project in the amount of \$50,000. This will be put into the Port's budget for next year. There is a nice presentation including historical information, the facility planning master list, a budget plan and a

copy of the economic development agreement draft for this project in the meeting agenda and supportive materials using the link above.

Wilma Road Project

A bid for the Wilma Road Project was approved by the commission. This is a project that is welcomed, long overdue.

Eastern Washington Legislative Tour (EWALT)

Oct 10-12, 2021. A drafted agenda was presented and is available to view in the meeting agenda and supportive materials using the link above. Port is to speak on fiber/broadband. Time slot may change.

CERB Planning Grant - Steam Plant

“Port staff submitted a Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) planning grant application requesting \$50,000 in funding with a \$12,500 match funding. The Port was notified that CERB staff reviewed the application, and the application passed their threshold. Port staff will prepare a presentation to be made to CERB during their September 16, 2021, board meeting to receive approval. Once approved, CERB will send an initial offer package stating approval and instructions for the pre-contract conditions.”

NEW BUSINESS:

Annual review of Pacific Northwest Waterways Policies and Projects documents

PNWA has asked its members to review the PNWA Policies and Projects documents. The Port, as a member, will submit suggestions to this document which “is used to guide PNWA’s federal advocacy activities throughout the year, so it is crucial that it reflects the most updated needs of PNWA’s membership.” **Here are some of the Port specific projects:**

HIGHWAY FREIGHT MOBILITY PROJECTS

Port of Whitman County. Wawawai Road construction from Wawawai Bay to Lower Granite Dam to complete the road link between Lewiston and Almota. (*This proposed road has been in there a long time with no momentum.*)

AVIATION PROJECTS

Proposed addition - Six Bay T-hanger at Port of Whitman Business Air Center

Central Ferry North Land Use Site Selector Proposals

The consideration for transfer of this land from the CORPS to the Port has been approved (Water Resources Development Act authorized consideration for land transfer) and now the Port is looking “to evaluate the market and financial feasibility of improving approximately 288 acres of land it is considering acquiring.” It is slated for the Port’s 2022 budget.

Letter to Congress Supporting Rural and Tribal Cellular Networks

“Inland Cellular asked the Port to consider sending a letter to Congress to consider the importance of rural and tribal networks in the current broadband bill.” Port looking at a revised version of the letter to show support for full connectivity not just mobil-911/emergency connectivity as presented in draft letter.

Public Works Board Broadband (PWB) Construction Federally Funded Grants

“PWB announced the opening of its grant funding cycle. There are approximately \$43,310,000 in grants available for award through a competitive process. The maximum amount of funding available for any applicant is \$2 million. Projects in rural counties, or areas identified as *Indian* country, qualify for exception up to \$5 million dollars. Applications are due October 1, 2021, and all entities providing broadband service near the proposed project area must be notified prior to August 26th. Award focus is

acquisitions, installation and construction of last-mile infrastructure that support broadband services in underserved and underserved areas defined as speeds below 25/3.”

Upcoming Meetings

- Port Strategic Planning meeting, 8/19/21
- Inland NW Partners Fall Webinar, 9/16/21, 9-11:15 a.m., Virtual
- WPPA Environmental Seminar, 9/23-24/21, Union, WA
- PNWA Annual Convention, 10/19-21/21, Vancouver, WA
- WPPA Small Ports Meeting, 12/1-3/21, Leavenworth, WA

One historical picture from Pullman Depot Heritage Center Project. To see more about this project, go to the meeting agenda and supportive material in the link above.



Cougar Special c. 1925

Town's people meeting students at the depot to provide rides to campus.