

PORT OF COLUMBIA
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2020

Chairman Marvin opened the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

Present: Commissioners Earle Marvin, Fred Crowe, and Dan Aschenbrenner, Jennie Dickinson, Jennifer DeLannoy, Kelly Hinds

Press: Melissa Gemmell, Michele Smith

Touchet Valley Trail Concerned Citizens: Chuck Beleny was not present, so Seth Murdock spoke on his behalf. Mr. Murdock asked the commissioners if they had walked the area of the proposed trail as they had been asked to do in the previous meeting. All commissioners stated that have walked and driven the trail route. One citizen brought up concerns of public safety, such as falling while crossing the tracks. Commissioner Marvin said that he wrote a statement regarding the trail that he asked Dickinson to share with the other commissioners. Here is the statement he read:

“Anderson Perry Associates, architects and engineers of Walla Walla, WA is currently under contract with the Port of Columbia to, among other tasks, perform a preliminary engineering and conceptual design study of the Touchet Valley Trail along the Port-owned railway right-of-way between Dayton and Waitsburg. It is expected that this work currently being performed by Anderson Perry will be completed sometime in the fall of 2020. I would prefer to see this work being performed by Anderson Perry through to completion. At that point, the Port should have enough answers to the many questions that have been raised concerning the Trail that would allow it to hold a public hearing on whether or not to continue further with development of the trail.” Commissioners Aschenbrenner and Crowe both stated they agree with Commission Marvin’s comments.

Dickinson explained the legal research she has been doing pertaining to the previous request to put the trail to a vote on a ballot. After consulting the Secretary of State, the Columbia County Auditor and Prosecuting Attorney, the Port attorney, and the Municipal Research Services Center, Dickinson has not been able find evidence that the Port has the legislative authority to put an advisory vote on the ballot. Cities and Counties can, but not Ports. Dickinson clarified that if there was a proposal to INCREASE local taxes to construct or maintain the trail, that would be required by law to be put on the ballot for a vote of the people. Dickinson also said that Anderson Perry is willing to meet with any landowners adjacent to the proposed trail that have concerns. Several community members spoke up and said that they came to the meeting to express support of the proposed trail.

Broadband Study Presentation: PocketiNet representatives were introduced to provide an overview of the community broadband feasibility study they have conducted on behalf of the Port. Port Commissioners received an executive summary prior to the meeting, and were given a full written report at the meeting. Todd Brandenburg, PocketiNet CEO, reviewed the short- and long-term benefits of high-speed fiber optic internet service for the community. Wrandoll Brenes provided information on the installation of the dark fiber network, and how any and all internet service providers would be able to lease fiber from the Port and serve their existing and/or new customers with a small investment of new head end equipment. Giselle Hepker, CFO, discussed the estimated cost to install the fiber network, potential revenue projections and the return on investment. Commissioners thanked PocketiNet for their thorough work.

Introduction of new employees: Jennifer DeLannoy started March 11th as the Economic Development Coordinator. Kelly Hinds started early February as the administrative assistant.

The previous month’s minutes were discussed. **MOTION:** Commissioner Aschenbrenner moved to approve the minutes as written, and Commissioner Crowe seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Monthly Budget Report: Dickinson reviewed the report that was sent to the commissioners prior to the meeting. Income and expenses were routine and ordinary.

Leases: No new leases or renewals to sign. Rey’s Roast asked to continue on a month-to-month lease, rather than signing a new two-year lease, due to potential retirement. No action is required as the lease automatically changes to month-to-month if no renewal or termination is initiated.

Lyons Ferry Marina: Nothing to report.

Rock Hill Industrial Park: Two tenants looking for more/larger space.

Blue Mountain Station: Commercial kitchen has been very busy. New market manager Valerie Mudry is doing a great job. Verdurous Gardens has been on the premise to prepare the garden. Dickinson met with contractor regarding parking improvements in the front of Building #2. Will start with gravel until we can afford to pave it. The Artisan Food Center hot water boiler failed and required approximately \$1,500 in repair, only to find the expansion tank also needs to be replaced at an estimated cost of \$4,500. The HVAC in Suite H is currently malfunctioning and we may have to cut concrete to find the faulty wire. Apollo checked for propane leaks during their semi-annual maintenance work and found none. We had run out of propane and couldn't figure out why. Now we know that if there is a strong odor it means the propane tank is running low and needs to be filled.

CWW Railroad: Dickinson is working with Paul Didelius regarding the damage due to flooding. FEMA is anticipating funding to aid in repairs, and an emergency proclamation was made in order to take care of the imminent danger caused by the damage.

Resolution #2020-02 – Emergency Proclamation Regarding Flood. **MOTION:** Commissioner Aschenbrenner made a motion to adopt the resolution, and Commissioner Crowe seconded it. Motion carried.

Economic Development Report: Dickinson attended an Innovia Foundation conference the first week of March. She said there was some pretty shocking demographic information shared at the conference about our aging population, not only in Columbia County but across eastern Washington, and said the conference speakers shared ideas on attracting new families and younger people to our communities, including outdoor activities such as the trail and adequate preschool, daycare, and housing. Dickinson and DeLannoy will be attending the Business Summit in Walla Walla on April 1st, and Pacific Power has offered a grant to cover the cost of Port staff attendance. Dickinson has participated in a conference call regarding the COVID-19 outbreak and is looking into SBA and other funding available to local business being affected by the crisis.

The following vouchers were presented for approval of payment in the approved amount of \$ 42,899.91.

10377 - 10388	Payroll	14521.55	10404	Crown Paper & Janitorial Supply	473.02
10389	Banner Bank	4,216.67	10405	Dayton Mercantile	10.57
10390	Banner Bank	2,440.84	10406	Dingle's	23.82
10391	Banner Bank	3,205.27	10407	Ferrellgas	1252.27
10392	Banner Bank	1,475.05	10408	Leaf	201.73
10393	Banner Bank	2,380.98	10409	Orkin	268.51
10394	Mid Valley Restaurant Equipment/Service	4,525.86	10410	Pacific Power	1328.93
10395	Jennifer S Dickinson{O}	111.28	10411	Roto Rooter	610.83
10396	Kelly M Hinds	47.65	10412	Total Office Concepts	39.79
10397	A-1 Plumbing	154.47	10413	Touchet Valley Landscapes	353.60
10398	Apollo Heating & Cooling	460.97	10414	Touchet Valley Television	65.00
10399	Basin Disposal	111.22	10415	US Linen	128.50
10400	Brewer's Bookkeeping & Payroll	1,200.00	10416	Basin Disposal	151.54
10401	Cardmember Services	1,500.00			
10402	Century Link	316.24			
10403	City of Dayton	1,323.75			

Meeting was adjourned at 5:03 p.m. Next meeting will take place on April 8th at Port of Columbia office.

Dan Aschenbrenner, Secretary