

PORT OF COLUMBIA
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
November 10th, 2020

Chairman Marvin opened the meeting at 3:30 pm

Present Via Zoom: Commissioners Earle Marvin, Sean Milligan, and Shawn Brown, Executive Director Jennie Dickinson, Port Administrative Assistant Kelly Hinds, Paul Didelius, owner of Columbia Rail, Consultant Paul Weber from HDR Engineering, members of the press Hector del Castillo, Michele Smith, and Melissa Gemmell.

Marvin asked for any public comments: None at this time.

Minutes: Minutes from October 14th, 2020 were reviewed.

MOTION: Commissioner Milligan moved to approve the minutes, and Commissioner Brown seconded it. Motion carried unanimously.

Review monthly budget: Received tax revenue in October. Tax revenue Port is down about \$40,000 for the year. Maintenance expenses included window glass replacement and painting at Dayton Tractor and garage door repair at Mama Monacelli's.

Public Hearing - 2021 Port Budget: Chairman Marvin opened the public hearing. Dickinson provided background on the proposed budget. The Port has been able to build the reserve back up by operating with limited staff this year. Blue Mountain Station is bringing in about \$65,000 in private lease revenue, plus house rental and crop income for a total of almost \$80,000 per year. This is contrary to public impression that tax revenue supports the business park. Budget includes 1% levy increase, which is a proposed increase of \$4,453 per year, and salary increases of between 2% and 3% for Port staff. There were no salary increases the previous year. Broadband matching funds have been left in the budget in hopes of finding more funds for the project next year. There was no public comment, so commissioner Marvin closed the public hearing.

Motion: Commissioner Milligan made a motion to adopt Resolution #2020-5 – Levy Certification, and commissioner Brown seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Commissioner Brown made a motion to adopt the 2021 Port Budget as presented, and commissioner Milligan seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Leases: Columbia County Hospital District and Dayton Electric both agreed to 2-year leases with a 2% rent increase. Commissioners will sign leases at the Port office after the meeting. Lyons Ferry operators KKnFAM, Joanne and Wally Knouf, have been running the marina for the past two years and are working to buy the businesses from our concessionaire, Seven K's of Washington. Their sublease expires November 15, 2020, so it will revert to month-to-month until the transaction can be closed. A new lease with KKnFAM will need to be approved by the commissioners and the Corps of Engineers. Dickinson hopes to have a new lease ready for our December meeting.

Redundancy Plan: No change at this time. Dickinson is gathering information and is setting January 2021 as a target date to present a plan.

Comprehensive Plan Review Workshop: The Commissioners have set a date of Friday, December 18th at 1:00

for a workshop to discuss the comprehensive and strategic plans and review with new commissioners. Dickinson will notify the press of a special meeting.

Rock Hill Industrial Park: There was a roof leak in Office Bldg. #3 after a heavy rain.

Lyons Ferry Marina: Business has slowed down for the winter, and the store and restaurant are now closed.

Blue Mountain Station: The commercial kitchen use has been fairly steady and has had a couple of new businesses using it. A-1 plumbing was called for a faucet repair in the kitchen as well as an outside faucet that was dripping.

CWW Railroad: Discussed rail funding study with Paul Didelius, owner of Columbia Rail and consultant Paul Weber of HDR Engineering. HDR was hired to help put together a funding strategy for rail line rehabilitation. Paul Didelius stated that the tracks are over 100 years old and that crossing maintenance is a large expense due to the fact that they are very antiquated. We are sending grain semi-trucks over crossings designed on wagon roads. The crossings are also hard to maintain as they are typically buried on a residential road. Paul says there just isn't enough revenue to take care of it all. It would be easier to ask for funds to replace 200 feet of track, including the crossing, which would be considered a full reconstruction. FRAP is a freight railroad assistant program, funding from the state. Funding applications from FRAP closed in the fall, but reopen on a regular schedule. It takes approximately one year after application to receive funding. With limited activity on the railroad and no demand growth by shippers, it makes it difficult to be approved for more funding. FRAP might be more willing to help provide funds if someone else is willing to match that funding by at least 20-30%. There are other shared areas on the railroad in adjoining counties that need attention as well to make it work together cohesively. A draft study report was reviewed, specifically a phased rehabilitation list with associated costs. Phase 1 cost is estimated at \$16,705,533, Phase 2 - \$4,901,009, and Phase 3 - \$5,871,876 for a total estimated rehabilitation cost of \$27.5 million. The cost of ties is the biggest item at the moment. A basic maintenance plan replaces about 2.5% of the ties per year, and a line needs 33% good ties to have a safe 10 mph operation speed. Paul from HDR pointed out that the study includes the same phased approach to cost estimates for the Walla Walla to Wallula stretch of rail line, which the Port of Columbia does not own. Didelius brought up an issue at Wallula with access to the Port Kelly grain terminal. He would like to build a new 1-mile stretch of rail that would allow access without using Union Pacific track, which would then allow him to move grain for Northwest Grain Growers to the facility. Commissioner Brown asked for clarification – did he hear correctly that Didelius would prefer the Port help lobby for that new 1-mile stretch of line rather than seek funds for our portion of the line? Not entirely, Didelius answered. He still would like assistance seeking funds for tie replacement. Dickinson asked where the Port of Walla Walla stands on supporting that idea. Paul responded that they seem more interested in big industrial opportunities in that area, but they understand the frustration with Union Pacific that causes no grain to be shipped by rail out of Walla Walla County. Dickinson said she would like to see more involvement from the Port of Walla Walla and Northwest Grain Growers as that site is not in our county nor on our stretch of rail line. She asked commissioners how much time they want her expend seeking funds during this session when state revenues are likely down. Commissioner Marvin said he would like to push forward or we won't have a rail line. Commissioner Milligan asked what our justification is for asking for funds when there is so little traffic and as Paul stated, storage car revenue is what is keeping the lights on. Didelius says that 100 miles of railroad could better care for itself with a relatively small amount of service. He said Dayton and Milton-Freewater are where any of the cars on the line are coming from right now. Walla Walla has very little. Dickinson agreed to prepare a very brief summary of the needs of the rail line and have it ready by January 1 to be shared with legislators.

Community & Economic Development:

- **Executive Director Report:** Dickinson participated in a listening session with other short line rail owners and operators and the Department of Transportation. Dickinson has been working with a new start-up business hoping to take over Dayton Cut & Wrap. They are currently working with the owner of the building and looking for a butcher.
- **Broadband Project:** The Port of Columbia was not awarded a grant at this time. There was huge demand and not enough funds to go around. Dickinson had a meeting with the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) to discuss future funding opportunities. More funds will not be available until July of 2021. Dickinson is looking into a design program and will continue to try to find funding.
- **Grant Program update:** Eleven grants will be funded with the last of the CARES Act funds from the City and the County. Approximately \$410,000 has been facilitated to the community resulting in a lot of positive feed back and gratitude for the Port's work.

Approval of vouchers: Commissioners approved regular monthly vouchers in the amount of \$134,405.47.

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10805	Payroll	12,021.03	10827	Overhead Door Co. of Walla Walla, Inc.	746.61
10806	Anderson Perry, Inc.	17,129.95	10828	Pacific Northwest Waterways Association	720.00
10807	Armored Knights Locksmith	142.00	10829	Pacific Power	789.53
10808	Artil, Inc.	600.00	10830	Quality Roofing	3,468.80
10809	Banner Bank - 1585	3,205.27	10831	Sun Pest Management	63.84
10810	Banner Bank - 1593	1,475.05	10832	Total Comfort Solutions, LLC	1,455.29
10811	Banner Bank - GO Bond - 3946	2,380.98	10833	Total Office Concepts	13.11
10812	Banner Bank IB#2 - 1189	4,216.67	10834	Touchet Valley Television, Inc	65.00
10813	Banner Bank BMS #2 Bond - 9342	2,440.84	10835	US Linen & Uniform	117.22
10814	Basin Disposal of Walla Walla	137.20	10836	WEDA	400.00
10815	Brewer's Bookkeeping & Payroll Services	1,100.00	10837	Basin Disposal Inc	54.34
10816	Cardmember Service	2,342.74	10838	The Barn at Blue Meadows	8,343.15
10817	CenturyLink	322.79	10839	Gracyn Farms	10,000.00
10818	City Lumber	738.91	10840	Hogeye Hollow Preschool	997.88
10819	City of Dayton	1,704.82	10841	Jordan Henderson Fine Art	8,400.00
10820	Crown Paper & Janitorial Supply, Inc	41.25	10842	Lu-Rob Corp	10,000.00
10821	Dayton Mercantile	112.21	10843	Moose Creek Bakery	10,000.00
10822	Double T Construction	1,790.34	10844	Royal Preet, LLC	10,000.00
10823	Ferrellgas	722.23	10845	Santa Fe Distributing	10,000.00
10824	Jennifer S Dickinson{O}	42.26	10846	Touchet Valley Landscapes	10,000.00
10825	LEAF	201.73	10847	Trademark Quarter Horses	10,000.00
10826	MBG Cleaning Services	1,210.00	10848	Whoop-em Up Meat Co	6,666.96

The meeting was adjourned at 4:42 p.m. by Earle Marvin


Sean Milligan, Secretary

