

Port of Columbia
Special Meeting Minutes
March 30, 2022

Chairperson Crowe opened the meeting at 5:00pm

Present Commissioners Genie Crowe, Seth Bryan and Johnny Watts, Executive Director Jennie Dickinson, Port Office Manager Melody Shahan, Port Attorney Kim Boggs and Melissa Bryan.

Present via Zoom: Tabitha Haney and Patti Jo Amerein. Members of the press Max Erikson and Dayton Chronicle.

The topic of this workshop was to review Port policies #11 Code of Conduct and #12 Rules of Procedure.

The Code of Conduct was adopted in 2013 and has not required any revisions since. The policy was enacted to establish rules to abide by during a meeting and establish consequences to unruly behavior.

The commissioners discussed Commissioner Crowe's email from the previous meeting. The email was in regards to keeping personal opinions and thoughts from Port discussions.

Commissioner Bryan felt the letter from Commissioner Crowe was inappropriate. He stated he'd written an outline for his speech about the childcare facility including how he came to his decision.

Commissioner Watts said a topic should be researched before making a decision and be open to constructive discussions. He felt he was on topic when he gave his speech at the previous commission meeting when he shared his opinion and thoughts.

Commissioner Crowe said decisions should be based on facts, not about personal opinions. She stated that when making decisions regarding the Port to remember the oath they took to remain impartial.

Dickinson suggested commissioners should try to "stay in their lane", using specific, economic development criteria to make rental decisions.

Kim said that the Port has mandates stating a Port shall do certain things. She can provide resources if requested. She suggested questions to consider when making a decision are "Is it within our authority and is it why the port was created?". Both should be answered affirmatively. The Port's comprehensive plan lays out our goals and direction, and should provide guidance for decision making. The Port's special purpose is economic development and cannot just be stopped.

Dickinson requested that complaints regarding a tenant should to be brought to Port staff outside of a public meeting so the issue can be resolved privately. Businesses may feel singled out if issues are brought up publicly.

Commissioner Watts stated he preferred to use the land at Blue Mountain Station for a different project and would rather leave the space available.

Commissioner Bryan, referring to the code of conduct, does not want judgements made by what is said. He would like people to not interrupt during a meeting, people to speak clearly, take their time and prepare for a meeting without time limits if necessary.

Dickinson asked Commissioner Bryan if he wanted to revise his statement that she interrupted Commissioner Watts. She yawned and Commissioner Watts assumed she was going to interrupt even though she did not.

The Chair can assert authority if harassing or bullying behavior is being displayed during the meeting. All agree that people in the audience and on Zoom should not interrupt others when someone is speaking.

Commissioner Bryan stated that a member of the public told him they joined toward the end of the previous workshop and waited on Zoom 14 minutes to be admitted.

Commissioner Bryan said that people are not required to provide their name when attending a public meeting, but they must state their name if they want to give public comment.

Rules of procedure

Commissioner Bryan said the chair should be leading the direction of the conversation and moving the meeting along but should not allow it to go off topic or control what is being said.

Commissioner Watts said that everyone should give their opinion by following within the code of conduct and be respectful.

Dickinson said the commissioners can speak with her individually as needed between meetings.

Commissioner Crowe called the executive session based on RCW 42.30.110. No action would be taken. She stated the executive session would be conducted for 20 minutes and return at 5:55pm. The executive session was extended for an additional 20 minutes.

Commissioners came out of the executive session at 6:16pm.

Commissioner Crowe adjourned the meeting at 6:17pm

