

**Port of Columbia**  
Special Meeting Minutes  
October 26, 2022

Chair Crowe opened the meeting at 6:30pm

**Present:** Commissioners Crowe, Bryan, and Watts, Port Staff Jennie Dickinson & Tracy Clark, 18 members of the public and 35 attending via zoom.

**Public Comment:** Chair Crowe asked for any public comments. Public comment was heard from Jerry Kaiser, Maura Trainor and Dave Harvey.

Commissioners Crowe, Bryan and Watts received the tablets they requested.

**2023 Preliminary Budget Discussion** - The 1% tax levy increase was discussed. Commissioner Crowe presented the tax levy rate sheet to show that the levy increase would be based on 1% of 4% of the taxes received by the county, which would mean \$0.04 on the dollar. Genie would like to see that 1% levy increase included in the budget. Seth stated he made a promise to the people not to raise taxes. Dickinson reported that WSDOT will require repayment of the \$400,000 already spent if we cancel the contract. Dickinson explained there was no change to the Admin & General Salaries line item even if the COLA's are not approved due to the fact the Port is operating very lean. She would like to see us get back to previous staffing levels. Crowe presented her position on giving a 5% COLA to the Port staff due to inflation. Watts asked how many employees that would affect. Dickinson answered 4. Watts asked if any employees are on probation. Dickinson stated no one is on probation. Watts wanted to know what positions Dickinson would like to add back in to her staff. Dickinson would like a half-time Economic Development Coordinator. Watts would like to see that position re-staffed possibly with a contract worker. Watts asked for more information on COLA's. Dickinson normally recommends a 2% COLA. Crowe recommended 5% COLA for the employees. Bryan recommends 2.5 or 3%. Watts agreed. More discussion was held. Genie conceded and agreed with 3% COLA for the employees. Dickinson continued to point out line items that have been adjusted. Dickinson stated a public notice has been sent to the paper and the clean budget has been added to our website, but it can be changed. Public hearing has been scheduled for the 9<sup>th</sup> at 5:45. The Commissioners agreed the preliminary budget is acceptable. A member of the gallery asked about the removal of the commissioners salaries as discussed at an earlier meeting. Dickinson left them in. Watts is not willing to donate his salary at this time since the budget is balanced. Bryan agreed with Johnny that he is not willing to donate his salary either.

**Touchet Valley Broadband Contract:** The Public Works Board broadband contract has been reviewed by the Port's attorney. She is in agreement to sign it as is. There are 3 committed service providers. There are things in the contract that need to be watched carefully such as, advertising the PWB's name and subcontracting requirements. The timeline was explained by Dickinson. Seth asked about the federal audit. Dickinson will ask our state auditor and find out the answers to the questions. Seth moved to authorize Dickinson to sign the Public Works broadband contract, Johnny seconded. Motion approved.

More public comments were made prior to executive session.

**Executive Session:** An executive session as per RCW 42.30.110 (1) (g) was held to evaluate personnel. The executive session began at 7:15 and was expected to last no more than 30 minutes. The meeting will end after that. After 30 minutes, the commissioners extended the executive session another 30 minutes.

Chair Crowe adjourned the meeting at 8:25pm.

  
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Johnny Watts, Secretary