

Port of Hood River Commission
Meeting Minutes of November 14, 2023 Fall Planning Work Session
Via Remote Video Conference & Marina Center Boardroom
5:00 p.m.

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL until approved by the Port Commission at the next regular meeting.

Fall Planning Work Session

PRESENT: Commissioners: Kristi Chapman, Ben Sheppard, Heather Gehring (left at 3:46 p.m.), Mike Fox, and Tor Bieker. **Legal Counsel:** None. **Staff:** Kevin Greenwood, Genevieve Scholl, Debbie Smith-Wagar, Greg Hagbery, Daryl Stafford, Ryan Klapprich, and Patty Rosas. **HNTB:** Michael Shannon **Guests:** None

ABSENT: None

MEDIA: Noah Noteboom, Columbia Gorge News

- I. **WELCOME:** Commissioner Chapman opened the work session at 1:36 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- II. **MEETING OVERVIEW:** Kevin Greenwood, Executive Director, provided a brief overview of Fall Planning. The purpose of the meeting was to review goals and projects set forth in the prior year budget process and prepare for spring planning in the next budget cycle. In addition, Greenwood addressed items that staff saw as a priority.
- III. **MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT:** Commissioner Tor Bieker led a group discussion on drafting a new mission and vision statement that would more closely align with the transition that the Port of Hood River ("Port") will be facing in the next few years. The Commission identified key components for the mission and vision statement that included development, accessibility, excellent service, and supporting other agencies and businesses in the community. The discussion concluded with direction to staff to provide mission and vision statement options that focus on the next five years and present it to the Commission at the next meeting.

Genevieve Scholl, Deputy Executive Director, discussed the need for a Public Relations (PR) firm to increase and enhance public awareness of Port provided public services. A discussion ensued regarding the PR scope of work. There was consensus from the Commission not to proceed with the proposed economic impact study from EcoNorthwest. Furthermore, the Commission suggested a working committee to help plan the bridge centennial celebration and use the PR firm for assistance but not make it their primary role. The PR firm should also focus on the Ports future and highlight success stories from tenants and other users.

- IV. **CURRENT FINANCIAL OVERVIEW:** Debbie Smith-Wagar, Finance Director, reviewed the proposed changes to the financial policies that are no longer relevant to the Port. These changes include the Return-on-Investment calculation related to the investment value, and cash reserves being referred to as a percentage of the Ports net depreciable assets. Commissioner Fox requested that there be accountability across the entire organization and added that each operating center manager should be responsible for their operating center in terms of cost and revenue.

Smith-Wagar noted that as they move forward with new financial software, the fund structure will need to be updated to reflect the activities and needs of the current Port. Smith-Wagar summarized the proposed structure of the accounting system which consists of combining the current General Fund and portions of the existing Revenue Fund. As well as pulling bridge operations out of the Revenue Fund and combining it with the current Bridge Repair Fund. There was consensus from the Commission to move forward with the proposed fund structure.

Smith-Wagar sought feedback on a proposed five-year capital improvement plan that will help determine amounts that will need to be held in reserve to either pay for the improvements or facilitate borrowing to make the improvements. Smith-Wagar provided an example of the proposed structure. Commissioner Fox suggested including a summary describing the projects, as well as including a revenue forecast.

- V. WATERFRONT PARKS & RECREATION SUSTAINABILITY:** Greenwood presented a chart that breaks the waterfront recreation into calendar years to see activity more easily without splitting the summer up between two fiscal years. Greenwood noted that although pay to park was a great success in reducing the negative net income, more still needs to be done. A list of ideas was presented to the Commission to help close the gap. A discussion ensued and concluded with direction to staff to consider the possibility of hiring out Port staff to other governmental agencies and using private landscaping businesses for park maintenance. A five-year operating levy and transfer of parks should be considered as a last resort. Furthermore, the Commission does not want to reduce services at the parks, and fees for events and concessionaires should align with the fair market rate.

Daryl Stafford, Waterfront Manager, discussed waterfront recreation service levels and amenities and touched on key issues such as maintaining current levels of service, parking congestion, and limited access to launch for watersports. Stafford suggested adding Marina Beach to paid parking in 2025 to address issues and achieve goals. The Commission directed staff to identify ownership of the Marina Jetty and update records if it is owned by the Port. Staff was also directed to engage with American Cruise Lines, Inc. for possible development at the Marina Jetty.

Scholl sought direction from the Commission on parking system changes such as lowering the cost of parking in the Marina Boat Launch parking lot and offering a senior discount in the parking lots. There was consensus from the Commission to proceed with a premium pass that can be used at the Event Site, West Jensen, and the Marina Boat Launch parking lot for \$200. The single pass for the Marina Boat Launch parking lot at \$100 with a senior discount of 25% that only applies to the Marina Boat Launch parking lot.

VI. KEY ISSUES FOR FY 2023-24:

- a. **Lower Mill Financing Options** – There was consensus from the Commission not to proceed with development at the Lower Mill property in Odell at this time. A discussion followed regarding temporary housing for the bridge effort. Greenwood noted that he met with the community development director to discuss the feasibility of temporary housing at Lower Mill, and it was determined that there was an opening for workforce housing for the bridge effort though it is not an easy process. Staff was directed to proceed with the effort of temporary housing at Lower Mill.
- b. **New Administration Location** – Greenwood addressed the relocation of the current Port administrative and maintenance facilities and proposed acquiring the services of an architect to help determine the best location. The Commission debated on the new administration location and determined that the most feasible location was the Marina #1 building. Staff was directed to bring in the services of an architect to determine the best use of the site and surrounding areas. Lastly, it was noted that the administrative office and maintenance facilities should be relocated no later than the start of 2025.
- c. **Lot 1 Improvements** – The Commission reached consensus on pursuing the development of a roundabout at Second Street and Riverside. There was also consensus to amend the KPFF contract to change the scope of work and pursue other grants. The question was posed to the Commission

whether the Port would commit \$1.7 million to complete the EDA project if no other grants were obtained. The Commissions response was for the Port to partner with the City of Hood River.

- d. **South Apron Development** – Greg Hagbery, Property Manager, summarized available grants for the construction of 10 T-Hangars at the Ken Jernstedt Airfield (4S2). In a best-case scenario, the project would require 4S2 to invest at least \$396,430, and in a worst-case scenario 4S2 would need to invest \$715,100. Hagbery added that the Critical Oregon Airport Relief (COAR) grant program may be able to provide up to \$318,000 in grant reimbursement when the airport sponsor is bringing more than that in additional match dollars to complete a project. A discussion followed and concluded with consensus from the Commission to proceed with the construction of the T-Hangars and pursue all available funding. Commissioner Fox recommended identifying the reserves that are available for investment.
- e. **Bridge Replacement Impacts** – Michael Shannon, HNTB Project Director, summarized issues that will have a direct impact on Port property and operations. The main issue is construction that is anticipated to begin in October 2025. The construction will have an impact on things such as the relocation of the Port administrative functions, and the boat launch. Many of the issues will be addressed in an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) which the Hood River-White Salmon Bridge Authority (HRWSBA) is currently drafting. Shannon advised the Commission that it would be in their best interest to relocate with in the next year to accommodate construction. There was direction from the Commission to look at the possibility of adding a boat launch, boat storage, and relocating operational functions by the start of 2025.
- f. **Bridge Repairs/Maintenance** – Greenwood provided an update on bridge repairs and noted that several projects that are on the budget have been completed. In addition, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. (WJE) scope of work for electrical and mechanical was higher than expected and staff may need to go out for bid. Commissioner Fox requested follow up with WJE for a more detailed explanation of why the cost was much higher than expected. A discussion ensued regarding the reduction of the load rating to help minimize further damage to the bridge. The Commission reached consensus to lower the load rating and inform the truckers of what is happening and why. Staff will draft a resolution for approval at the next meeting.
- g. **Employee Handbook Update** – Scholl walked through the employee handbook recommended changes for the Commissions consideration. One of those changes includes implementing and incentivizing career-track professional development and skills training programs for certain positions. A discussion followed and concluded with deferring this item to the next meeting.

VII. **OTHER:** None

VIII. **ADJOURN:** The Fall Planning Work Session was adjourned by unanimous consent at 4:27 p.m. The Commission was called back into Regular Session at 4:27 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Kristi Chapman, President

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Mike Fox
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Michael Fox, Secretary