

PORT COMMISSION REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING – Wednesday, February 10, 2021

The Port of Port Townsend Commission met for a regular business session via Zoom online.

Present via Zoom online video: Commissioners Hanke, Petranek and Putney
Executive Director Berg
Deputy Director Toews
Finance Director & Port Auditor Berg
Capital Projects Director & Port Engineer Love
Port Recorder Erickson
Port Attorney Woolson

I. CALL TO ORDER (00:00:01)

Commissioner Hanke called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (00:00:11)

Commissioner Putney moved to approve the Agenda as presented and Commissioner Petranek seconded the motion. The agenda was approved by unanimous vote.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS (00:00:56) given in person and sent in earlier via email and read aloud:

Al Latham thanked the Port for all the years of supporting Gatheringplace, which is essential to the Intellectual/Developmentally Disabled (I/DD) community in Port Townsend, and he hoped that the Port could be a part of their solution moving into the future. Regarding the Carl Nomura (Skookum) building, he later wrote in to inform/remind Commission that the bulk of the building's construction was financed by a \$500,000 State Community Development Block Grant specifically for the Skookum programs for the I/DD community.

Bob Wheeler thanked the Port for its continuing support of Gatheringplace and encouraged the Port to help Gatheringplace look for long-term solutions. He said it is a critical service for the I/DD population in East Jefferson County, allowing them to be a part of our community in ways they would not otherwise be able to. He thought that the Nomura building was built with community grant funding that came with restrictions on how it could be used.

Linda Ferris, Executive Director of Gatheringplace, commented that Public Law 94-142 was passed in 1975 guaranteeing a free appropriate public education to each child with a disability, but there are very few opportunities for adults with I/DD. Gatheringplace was created in 1994, and Skookum in 1995, to begin to fill this gap as students moved from public education to an adult life. She said there is no State funding available for a program like Gatheringplace, and they run on a tight budget of community support, and sales of calendars and dog biscuits. She said that they have greatly appreciated the support of the Port commissioners and staff for a location to hold their motivating instruction and training, and that they are thankful to be able to remain at the Skookum building until they can locate and customize a space for baking dog biscuits.

Randy Rosens commented that he moved here to get involved with Olympic Neighbors building housing for people with I/DD and he learned from Gatheringplace that the Port gave great support to the I/DD population, not only to shipwrights and marine trades. He said he greatly appreciated the Port's support over the last 20 years and hoped the Port would continue to support Gatheringplace in providing or helping to find the kind of space they need, while continuing to be sustainable and viable to the community.

Bertram Levy commented on Strong Towns lecturer Charles Marohn last week on KPTZ and suggested that to implement some of his ideas, he could imagine an annex to Port Townsend within the city limits that allows small complex growth built on well-designed existing infrastructure at the Howard Street Industrial Sector, calling it Port Townsend West.

Peter West commented on the recent Strong Towns session and said he was thrilled to see the Port Commission engage with Chuck Marohn with such openness and thoughtful respect. He wrote that he is a Strong Towns member and was inspired by our great questions.

David King commented that after seeing Charles Marohn's Strong Towns presentation he observed that the Port of Port Townsend is the community's thriving "complex adaptive system." The Port's flexibility and low barriers to entry allowed him to arrive in 1978 with a truck full of tools and retire leaving improved facilities for the next generation.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA (00:19:25)

A. Approval of Special & Business Meeting Minutes from January 27, 2021.

B. Approval & Ratification of Warrants

Warrants #063363 through #063370 in the amount of \$33,991.44 and Electronic Payment in the amount of \$146,156.71 for Payroll & Benefits,

Warrants #063371 through #063425 in the amount of \$183,311.08 for Accounts Payable.

C. Ratification of Executive Order 2021-01, waiving competitive bids for emergency at JCIA.

Commissioner Petranek moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented and Commissioner Putney seconded the motion. The Consent Agenda was approved by unanimous vote.

V. SECOND READING ~ none

VI. FIRST READING ~ none

VII. REGULAR BUSINESS (00:20:15)

A. Debrief: Intergovernmental Collaborative Group (ICG) Community Discussion re Strong Towns with Chuck Marohn.

Commissioner Petranek began the discussion by saying it was very excited and humbled to have Mr. Marohn speak with our community, and have community participants ask questions that exposed our vulnerabilities. She said she took to heart his comment that our interjurisdictional group was quite a unique way for governance to lead a community. She was heartened by the positive interaction and participation of the community.

Commissioner Putney referred to Mr. Marohn's slides showing a jungle (complex adaptive system) vs. a corn field (merely complicated) and said that the diversity of the complex adaptive system was what he saw a future for here in Jefferson County.

Commissioner Hanke commented that he was struck by the photos Mr. Marohn showed of his hometown over the years, and how it changed, and said that Port Townsend's downtown has not changed that much. He said that although we have infrastructure problems that may haunt us going forward, there are not a lot of communities like ours with an interjurisdictional communication line that is open. He thought this placed our community ahead of others, because we are talking to each other and finding solutions to some of our problems.

Commissioner Petranek agreed with David King's public comments on how Boat Haven is a poster child of a complex adaptive system. She referred to the example in the talk of the small business being the better supporter of this kind of system, and said that the Port could frame its lease policy to support this kind of business. When he talked about three things that PT can do right now, she felt the Port were already in the process of doing these things: (1) "thicken it up"—more businesses and boats in the yard; (2) "lower the bar of entry"—small startups; "change the way we do public investments"—the Port is in the process of making better use of what we have, not building more. She thought that the Q&A session went well with excellent questions and community participation. She said her takeaway was the great feeling of four government groups working together to share a way forward for county-wide prosperity. She said she would send Mr. Marohn the questions that didn't get asked because of the time limit, and she hopes there can be a discussion at the upcoming Intergovernmental Collaborative Group (ICG) meeting (on 2/18/21) about next steps on this topic.

Executive Director Berg reviewed the agenda for the ICG meeting on 2/18/21 and reminded commission that there were 8 meetings planned for 2021, with 6 more after the meeting on 2/18/21. In addition, there will be more talks in the speaker series (Chuck Marohn's Strong Towns was the first).

Commissioner Putney said that the subject that comes up most often with constituents is affordable housing, and he thought it would be much more effective to create a list of things that need to be done towards this goal, with deadlines set for them to be done, so that the ICG doesn't just spend time discussing it.

Commissioner Hanke commented that our community has benefited from small businesses that employ people with a sense of mobility—moving up in the business, with more and more responsibilities. He said he was concerned that a number of businesses have shut down for a number of months, and may not recover.

Executive Director Berg suggested that Commission decide what its message is at the ICG meeting. He also was curious about what commissioners think about Chuck Marohn's position on the perils of massive infrastructure development for minimal revenue generation long term; thinking in terms of Port infrastructure, what is the future of marinas and breakwaters and maintenance over time?

Commissioner Hanke said the Port had moved from replacing to repairing dock infrastructure, which he saw as a clear path to maintaining Port infrastructure. Instead of spending a ton of money to replace all at once, he felt that repairing in smaller increments was a better path, keeping it as a positive cash flow over time.

Commissioner Putney thought it is hard to say what is the direct return to the organization on keeping a piece of infrastructure was vs. the indirect return to the community. He said that the Port has to take a broader look than just the return on investment, keeping the community investment in mind.

Commissioner Petranek thought incremental fixes along the way was a good idea, and that the Port’s maintenance team was very capable of doing this. She thought business retention within the Port was important—creating an educated workforce and transitioning new businesses to replace retiring businesses.

There was a discussion about the Port’s message at the next ICG meeting, and general agreement that affordable/available housing affects the whole county and would therefore be a good place to start for the next interjurisdictional action plan.

VIII. STAFF COMMENTS (01:02:12)

Port Engineer Love commented that the Port had received its new excavator and was putting it to good use demolishing a boat and excavating some of the stormwater treatment facilities. He said that the Port had hired an engineer to look at City Dock to analyze the condition of the dock after the storm late last year.

Finance Director Berg commented that the Port had hired two new replacement Customer Service Reps (CSRs), one to start on 2/16 and one to start on 3/1. She said that Port staff is working with MOLO to make sure its public-facing online reservation system is perfect, and that its delivery, and therefore implementation has been delayed until early March. She said that the Port had added to the phone contract so that voicemails would come in email as texts instead of only as audio, which would allow CSRs to read the message instead of just listening to it, and would help them respond more quickly. Otherwise, she said she was focusing on getting December closed and getting a preliminary 2020 report to them next week.

IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS (01:08:32)

Commissioner Putney commented that he was keeping up with constituent email, talking to legislative aides about expanding Port authorities on broadband, and had met with the WPPA Broadband committee, JBAT, and with Maria Cantwell’s Legislative aide about broadband issues.

Commissioner Petranek commented that she would send questions to Chuck Marohn that the community didn’t get to ask because we were short on time, along with her notes on the meeting and the three public comments about his talk given at today’s meeting. She said she would coordinate with Recorder Erickson to get a thank you out to him.

Commissioner Hanke gave a shout out to staff dealing with Tailspin Tommy’s asbestos issue. He appreciated the quick response, and was amazed at how well staff dealt with this big issue. He gave a shout out to our state representatives in their help getting our county to Phase 2 in the Governor’s plan to recover from COVID-19.

X. NEXT REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING (01:12:43)

Next Meeting of the Commission: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 Port Retreat beginning at 10:00 a.m., via Zoom

Next Regular Business Meeting: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., via Zoom

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION (01:13:00) - To discuss with legal counsel representing the Port litigation or potential litigation - RCW 42.30.110(1)(i)

Commission Hanke closed the meeting to Executive Session at 2:15 p.m., estimating that the Executive Session would last approximately 20 minutes, with no action to be taken.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 3:02 p.m., there being no further business before the Commission.

ATTEST:

William W. Putney III, Secretary

Peter W. Hanke, President

Pamela A. Petranek, Vice President