

Port of Columbia
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2025

Chair Bryan opened the meeting at 5:00pm.

Present: Commissioners Bryan and Spring, Port Attorney Ryan Ortuno, Port Staff Jennie Dickinson, Shane Laib, and Tracy Clark, along with 3 members of the public. Commissioner Watts and 3 members of the public attended via Zoom. **Absent:** None.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment: None were made.

Approval of Minutes: Spring moved to approve the minutes of the August 13th meeting, seconded by Watts. Motion approved. Watts moved to approve the minutes of the September 3rd special workshop meeting, seconded by Spring. Motion approved.

Finances: Monthly Budget Report & Approve Vouchers – Dickinson reported that we just found out that the commissioners received an increase to their meeting wages, which is now \$161 per day, dating back to January 1, 2024. They will receive back pay on their September paycheck along with the increase moving forward. The budget report was presented to the commission. Dickinson explained some of the larger and more unusual invoices. The vouchers were approved. There were no comments or questions.

2026 Rough Draft Budget Discussion: Dickinson presented the draft budget. On the revenue side she will do a more in-depth review of leases that have an automatic yearly increase. She also increased and adjusted our grant line item. On the expense side she suggested a 3% COLA for employees, which is in line with the CPI. She discussed with the commissioners the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association's large dues increase, from \$920 in 2024 to \$5,000 on 2026, and whether we should continue to participate or use the money elsewhere. Bryan and Watts do not see the value of this group. Spring has seen the value and would like to find out if there is a way to lower our dues. Dickinson will reach out to them to see what can be done. Other changes to the draft budget include increases to payroll items, office equipment costs, the Port's share of the Lyon Ferry Pull Thru match, and broadband maintenance and operations.

Leases: Blue Mountain Station has a new tenant in Suite B, Hummingbird Tea. This will be a 1-year lease. Cedar Rain is not able to vacate BMS #2 by the end of the month. They have asked to move to a month-to-month lease moving forward. They hope to be out by the end of October. Dickinson and Laib will continue to work on getting the pasta company to lease that building. An HVAC unit still needs to be installed in that building, but no word yet on the USDA funds that will help pay for it.

Rock Hill Industrial Park: Nothing new to report.

Lyons Ferry Marina: Dickinson reported the prospective buyer out of Seattle has reconsidered purchasing the concessionaire's business. The current concessionaire will continue to operate LFM until a new buyer can be found. Dickinson will meet with her and 7 K's regarding funding for the pull thru project. Anderson Perry has prepared a schedule for construction that is required for the grant. Dickinson attended a meeting with the RCO and is waiting on a contract for design.

Blue Mountain Station: Dickinson reported that lease negotiations for the craft malt facility are underway between the lawyers with a deadline for completion on October 8th. 100% of the building design is complete. Neumann is tasked with raising money in order to move forward with this project. Senator Cantwell's office was not able to secure funding through congressional directed spending. Dickinson told of the Fall Family Festival / Oktoberfest to be held on September 27th. It will have an inflatable obstacle course, German style food, pizza, Baskin Robbins ice cream and more.

CWW Railroad: Per Didelius' request Dickinson will be meeting with CWW's operations manager, Stuart Smith, on September 16th to discuss future potential agreement with the Port.

Commissioner Bryan read an email that was sent to the commissioners. Spring asked who that was from. Bryan said if you want to know, submit a public records request or check your email. Spring made a motion to reject the sale of the railroad to CWW and work with them to strike a deal to keep the railroad in operation with him operating. If we don't strike a deal with him, we would immediately go to request for proposals. There was no second to that motion.

Discussion took place amongst the commissioners about their desire to continue maintaining operation of the rail line whether that be with the current operator or someone different.

Spring spoke of his vision for the rail line; Leveraging partnerships with local businesses and regional businesses. Anticipating needs for our local short line to provide a robust service for our service center. Supporting local ag in Columbia and Walla Walla counties. Working with local users and others to utilize the short line to its maximum. Secure grants to further upgrades. Continue to maintain the right of way. Explore tourist excursions. Work with an operator to secure grants. Partner with the mainline operators. Work with legislative initiatives to further our goals.

Bryan's future vision is to continue servicing our existing shippers and any potential future shippers. To keep this railroad improving, keep repairs happening, maintain a good relationship with the current tenant.

Watts would like to know how much more needs to be put into the line to assist with feasible operation. There is a need to improve it.

There was discussion on how the Port along with the operator can fund improvements to the rail. One avenue is federal funding, one is increasing our budgeted spending, one is reaching out to current and future shipping partners, one is tourist trains, another is revenue generated by Prescott shippers.

Dickinson asked why the focus seems to be on the rail being in such disrepair? Time and considerable money has been spent on keeping the rail in operation. What level of improvement are commissioners looking for? Bryan stated that it is operating at an extremely restricted and limited capacity. The community and current operator would like to see it operating more efficiently and at a higher capacity. Heavier weight cars and increased speed would be the goal. The current goal is to keep it operating and serving customers. Watts wants to improve it where we can to continue moving forward and where it is feasible. There is no need if there is no increase to use. But we need to be ready to assist if it comes to that.

The next steps will be to hear what comes from the meeting with Dickinson and the operator.

Broadband: Dickinson said she is working on the IRU with Inland Cellular for the buildout of service to Starbuck, the E911 and public safety communication towers. Pre-contract documents have been drafted with verified match. Dickinson will attend the next Starbuck City Council meeting. BEAD has given preliminary award to Inland Cellular for improved service to multiple counties in our area in the amount of \$300m+. This will be used for a mix of fiber and hybrid service.

Staff Reports on Community and Economic Development: Dickinson reported Laib showcased Columbia County's 150-year existence with the entire front booth of the pavilion building at the fair this year. There were lots of good comments made by attendees and it was awarded several large ribbons. Dickinson also told of Laib's extensive help to the organizer of the pavilion's director during setup for the fair. October 4th will be the county's Sesquicentennial celebration event. The event schedule is on the Port's website and will be available throughout town. A mailer will be sent to every household in our immediate area. Dickinson attended a CERB Rural Program meeting, and a ribbon cutting event at Bennington Lake. Laib reported there is no change to the Clean Slate project. He continues to work with the organizer of the Harvest & Harmony event.

Housing: No report.

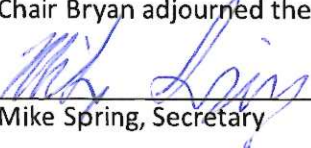
Dayton Development Task Force: Spring gave a brief overview of items discussed at last month's Task Force meeting.

Final Comments: Scott Hudson thanked Spring for presenting his vision of the railroad as requested by the commissioners at the special workshop. He thinks operating the rail as status quo is a mistake. You need to look to the future, 10 to 20 years beyond today's operations. Chuck Ketterman asked why it is the responsibility of the Port to do marketing for new clients to use the rail. It is usually the businessman who looks to find new business.

Approval of Vouchers: Commissioners approved regular monthly vouchers in the amount of: \$152,098.78.

09/02/2025	13699-13708	Payroll	26,971.09	09/09/2025	13730	Herres Enterprises, LLC	110.00
09/09/2025	13709	Jennifer S Dickinson{O}	77.25	09/09/2025	13731	Inland Cellular	66.74
09/09/2025	13710	Shane Laib {o}	432.60	09/09/2025	13732	Jamestown Networks	198.23
09/09/2025	13711	2Over Publishing	300.00	09/09/2025	13733	LEAF	327.42
09/09/2025	13712	Anderson Perry, Inc.	15,792.50	09/09/2025	13734	MBG Cleaning Services	1,480.00
09/09/2025	13713	Banner Bank - 1585	1,354.30	09/09/2025	13735	Mill Creek Mechanical	473.36
09/09/2025	13714	Banner Bank - 1593	1,475.05	09/09/2025	13736	One Call Concepts, Inc.	4.17
09/09/2025	13715	Banner Bank - GO Bond - 3946	2,431.59	09/09/2025	13737	Pacific Power	1,391.94
09/09/2025	13716	Banner Bank BMS #2 Bond - 9342	2,440.84	09/09/2025	13738	Pendleton DJ Co.	600.00
09/09/2025	13717	Basin Disposal Inc	69.06	09/09/2025	13739	Petrichor Broadband, LLC	2,626.25
09/09/2025	13718	Basin Disposal of Walla Walla	139.06	09/09/2025	13740	RL Bank & Associates, Inc.	4,131.25
09/09/2025	13719	Blue Mountain Irrigation & Landscape	2,322.35	09/09/2025	13741	Sandy's U-Rent	1,363.82
09/09/2025	13720	Boe Designs	45.00	09/09/2025	13742	Senske	79.46
09/09/2025	13721	Brewer's Bookkeeping & Payroll Srv	400.00	09/09/2025	13743	Shaelyn Jenkins	600.00
09/09/2025	13722	Cardmember Service	1,822.85	09/09/2025	13744	Tri-Cities Forklift	2,147.94
09/09/2025	13723	City Lumber	18.41	09/09/2025	13745	Urban Patterns, LLC	37,808.80
09/09/2025	13724	City of Dayton	3,542.34	09/09/2025	13746	US Linen & Uniform	106.04
09/09/2025	13725	Columbia iConnect	156.39	09/09/2025	13747	Valley Wide Pasco Propane	219.38
09/09/2025	13726	CSG Forte	437.26	09/09/2025	13748	Young's Heating and Cooling LLC	9,924.02
09/09/2025	13727	DiJulio Displays, Inc.	4,142.02	09/09/2025	13749	Divine Hive Mind	6,000.00
09/09/2025	13728	Divine Hive Mind	12,000.00	09/09/2025	13750	Divine Hive Mind	6,000.00
09/09/2025	13729	Emerge Technologies	70.00				

Chair Bryan adjourned the meeting at 6:19 pm.


Mike Spring, Secretary