



**MEETING MINUTES
MAY 17, 2022**

**PORT OF ASTORIA
WORKSHOP SESSION
PIER ONE BUILDING
#10 PIER 1, SUITE 209
ASTORIA, OR 97103**

Call to Order:

Chairman Spence called the Workshop Session to order at 4:00 pm.

Roll Call:

Commissioners Present: Frank Spence; Robert Stevens; Dirk Rohne; Jim Campbell, and Scott McClaine.

Staff Present: Executive Director Will Isom; Deputy Director Matt McGrath; Finance, HR & Business Services Manager Melanie Howard; and Executive Assistant/Administrative Coordinator Stacy Bandy.

Port Counsel: Eileen Eakins was not present for this session.

Also Attending: Senator Rachel Armitage; Lindsay Davis & Laura Wilkeson; and Ethan Myers of *The Astorian*.

Changes/Additions to the Agenda:

There were no changes or additions to the agenda.

Public Comment:

No public comment was received.

Presentation:

6a. Oregon Board of Forestry Habitat Conservation Plan – Lindsay Davis & Laura Wilkeson

Laura Wilkeson, the State Forest Policy Director with Hampton Lumber, presents a PowerPoint presentation via Zoom. The presentation explains the Oregon Department of Forestry Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) proposals and their various outcomes.

- The state is obligated to support the environmental, economic, and social values of state forest lands. Wilkeson adds that the plan is focused on environmental impacts and does not balance economic or social factors.
- The HCP has been in progress since 2018. County representatives have asked to be included in the drafting process of the HCP, and their requests were denied.
- The current draft of the HCP would set aside roughly 50% of forest lands for habitat creation. This would result in a 25-30% reduction in Oregon state timber harvest and a 50% budget deficit for the Oregon Department of Forestry.
- Clatsop County would have a 38% reduction in timber harvests and a \$13 million annual reduction in revenue.
- There are five alternatives in the environmental impact statement analysis (EIS). There are few differences between the alternatives regarding the amount of timber harvested.
- Last year, Clatsop County proposed a “county alternative” that released more acres for

harvest while protecting species. This proposal was not included in the alternative options.

- The Public comment period for the HCP closes on June 1st, and final EIS and federal approval is expected in early 2023, with final approval of the HCP in the spring of 2023.
- Public comments to the Board of Forestry, the State Forester, and the Governor's office are encouraged.
- Commissioner Rohne asks since the governor appoints the Board of Forestry, does the conversation change after the election? Wilkeson answers that board members serve four-year terms, and three members' terms expire in the fall of this year. A new governor could institute new boards and commissions. Rohne suggests that the Port work with the City and County to coordinate a response. Isom ask Commissioner Spence asks
- Isom inquires if any of the local taxing districts in the area have commented on the HCP. Wilkeson answers that she doesn't believe they have provided public comment as of yet. Wilkeson adds that the City of Warrenton has provided letters concerning the HCP for the last several years.
- Spence notes that staff needs to study this further. He is not in favor of any reduction in timber revenues. During the pandemic, the Port has been struggling financially with the lack of cruise ship revenue.
- Isom adds that there should be a separation of the everyday business of the Port versus outside issues that would be addressed at the Commission level. If the Port is going to take action or provide comment, it should be as the wish of the Commission instead of a recommendation from staff.
- Commissioner Stevens asks what the primary concerns are for National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration Fisheries (NOAA). Wilkeson answers that NOAA is the lead agency, but it is a joint effort with the Fish and Wildlife Services. NOAA's concerns include 17 endangered species.
- Commissioner Rohne offers to research the topic and contact the County Commission to find an appropriate way to share the Port's concerns. Rohne will share his findings with staff and the Commission before the public comment period closes on June 1st.
- Commissioner Spence thanks Laura Wilkeson and Lindsay Davis for their presentation.

6b. Senator Armitage

Senator Armitage introduces herself to the Commission. Armitage begins by sharing the accomplishments of the 2022 legislative short session.

- The Broadband Advisory Council has received historic levels of federal broadband funds in recent years. House Bill 4092 creates a development structure to oversee the distribution of funds. Armitage will work to ensure the district's needs are met in that body.
- After more than a year of mediation, Senate Bill 1501, the Private Forest Accord, has been passed. All parties have agreed on various environmental standards for harvesting timber moving forward.
- The Economic Equity Investment Program was instituted to bring economic development funds to many areas of the district. Oregonians living in rural communities will gain access to a wide variety of economic development services through Business Oregon.
- Helped secure \$7 million for the Hyak Maritime mobile lift project.
- Armitage continues that she is proud of what was accomplished, though it was disappointing that the Cyber Security Center of Excellence program was not passed. This bill would have used federal dollars to fund security upgrades for governing bodies across the state.

Armitage thanks the Commission for their time and encourages the Commission to reach out to her office with any concerns.

- Commissioner Spence asked if there would be another legislative session scheduled before

the election in November. Armitage answers that there will be legislative days in June. Armitage adds that she is working on bill drafts and policy priorities to hand off to whoever is elected in November.

- Commission Rohne notes that in recent years the Port of Astoria has worked hard to establish positive relationships with state officials. The Port has developed strategic plans and prioritized infrastructure needs. There is a lot of money going to different agencies, but the Port hasn't been a recipient. Rohne notes that he appreciates Armitage's work with Hyak and encourages Armitage to tour Port facilities.
- Commissioner Stevens adds that it is a goal of the Port to become self-sustaining. It is vital that the Port receive support from Salem. Much of the economy of this area is reliant on the Port.
- Commissioner Campbell notes that the condition of Highway 30 is a deterrent to attracting business. Thousands of vehicles, especially logging trucks, use the highway daily. Campbell would like highway 30 infrastructure upgrades to be prioritized.
- Commissioner McClaine thanks Armitage for her visit and her work in helping Hyak secure funding.
- Director Isom notes that public entities are competing with private interests for the same pool of dollars. The Connect Oregon program is an example. Isom finds it odd for the Port to be in competition with a private agency. Isom asks Armitage if she has comments on this topic. Armitage answers that Isom has an interesting point, and she has not thought of this process before. Isom adds that he is in support of Hyak's project.

Discussion with Senator Armitage continues. For the complete meeting discussion, please see meeting audio. The Commissioners thank Armitage for her time.

Commission Comments:

Commissioner Campbell did not have any comments.

Commissioner Stevens did not have any comments.

Commissioner McClaine commented on the following:

- There was a wonderful article in *The Astorian* covering the Hyak Maritime grant.

Commissioner Rohne did not have any comments.

Commissioner Spence commented on the following:

- Astoria City Manager, Brett Estes, has announced his departure. Estes has been a great friend and supporter of the Port. Spence thanks Estes for his efforts and wishes him well in his future endeavors.
- The last sprint cruise ship departed the Port today. The next ships will be arriving in the fall.
- Drove by the boatyard today and noticed a lot of gill net trawlers. The Port is awaiting the results of the feasibility study currently in progress. Spence inquires when the plan will be ready. Isom answers that the study is expected to be presented to the Commission in June.

7c. Executive Director Update

- The Boatyard Feasibility Study will be forthcoming in June.
- The Port and the International Longshore Warehouse Union Local 50 (ILWU) have agreed, in principle, to a new collective bargaining agreement. The contract will be presented to the Commission in June for approval. Isom thanks the bargaining unit and the representatives from the local 50 for their efforts.
- The Regatta departed today. The Port is working through kinks before ships return in the fall.

- Isom notes that Brett Estes has done a good job at the City and has been a great resource for Isom and the Port. With his new role at the Department of Land Conservation, he will be a regional representative and remain local.
- The second Budget Committee meeting will be tomorrow at 1 pm. Isom thanks Melanie Howard for her efforts. Isom refers to the announcement of Howard's promotion at the last meeting and notes that Howard has been covering the role of three positions. In the two years that Howard has been with the Port, she has been instrumental in the Port's progress and achievements.
- The Executive Director of the Port of Hood River, Michael McElwee, has announced his retirement.

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

- Budget Committee Meeting – May 18, 2022 at 1:00 PM
- Regular Session – June 7, 2022 at 4:00 PM
- Workshop Session – June 21, 2022 at 4:00 PM

Adjourned:

Chairman Spence adjourned the meeting at 5:15 PM.

APPROVED:

Rohne, Board Chairman
Board of Commissioners**ATTEST:**

Spence, Secretary
Board of Commissioners

Respectfully submitted by:
Stacy Bandy
Executive Assistant / Administrative Coordinator

July 5, 2022

Date Approved by Commission