
Special Commission Meeting Minutes
February 24, 2025 – 2:00 pm
2 Marine Drive, Boardman, Oregon 97818

I. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Joe called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Rick Stokoe, Joe Taylor, John Murray, Kelly Doherty, and Joel Peterson

Staff Present: Eileen Hendricks, Mark Patton, and Brandy Warburton

Visitors Present: Diane Kilkenny, Thomas Roberts, John Kilkenny, Les Zaitz

By Zoom Meeting: (Staff) Lisa Mittelsdorf and Erika Morton
(Guests) Chris Sykes, Jim Doherty, Gary Conklin, Lindsay, ChristopherA, Aaron Palmquist, Molly Tucker Hasenbank, Raven Hayes, Jenn, John Doherty, Fred Ziari, Justin Nelson, Kyla, Misha Isaak, Ryann Gleason, Kristin, Brandon Hammond, Morrow County, Kim Cutsforth, Julie Jensen, Morrow, “S”, “J”, Yes, iPhone User, Citizen, iPhone 3, Samsung User, iPhone, GOD

II. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Land Transfer** – Joe read the executive session statement below and recessed the open session at 2:06 PM. The public session was reopened at 2:21 PM.

John made the motion to formally approve the purchase option agreement we discussed in 2021 and execute it with Windwave for the land they are on now. With the caveat that Joe would execute that document. Rick seconded the motion. No further discussion was had. The motion passed unanimously.

Joel Peterson - Yes
John Murray – Yes
Joe Taylor – Yes
Rick Stokoe – Yes
Kelly Doherty – Yes

- B. AWS Support Letter** – Lisa explained that AWS has requested a zoning change on property owned by Threemile Canyon Farms, and they have requested we submit a letter of support. A draft support letter was given to the commission. The land is currently zoned

Space Age Industrial and they would like to change it to General Industrial. Mark answered questions regarding the change and property from the commission.

Rick made the motion to approve the letter of support for AWS and authorize Joe to sign. Joel seconded the motion. Kelly stated she is opposed to removing EFU zoning and changing it to industrial. John felt it would increase competition with the Port and would rather not cause that conflict. Kelly stated she doesn't feel we should be involved with a land use decision. Rick said that we are just offering a letter of support, not making the decision. The motion failed.

Joel Peterson - Yes

John Murray – No

Joe Taylor – No

Rick Stokoe – Yes

Kelly Doherty – No

C. CTUIR/Kayak Support Letter – Brandy explained the letter of support from CTUIR. The due date was yesterday. John stated he would support anything that helps employees get to the Port from Hermiston, but without knowing more information. No action was taken.

D. CDA Update – John requested to read the following statement which is his opinion:

This is my personal opinion as one commissioner.

It is with concern and disappointment that I heard of the decision of the Federal government through the OLDCC (Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation), to first suspend and then stop grant funding to the Columbia Development Authority (CDA) though I understand why.

In my opinion, the Port, and myself, owes an apology for allowing this to happen. An apology to the Federal government, the citizens of Morrow County and our partners in the CDA.

And I would add an apology to an employee of the Port of Morrow for allowing an untenable situation to exist in the first place, and to continue to this day. Until recently I did not know of the 2015 letter from the port to OLDCC, stating that the port, as fiscal agent for the CDA, was responsible for the executive director's timecard oversight. I do not understand how leadership at the time (2015) thought this was a good idea and continued to be a good idea once activity and time requirements of CDA staff increased significantly over the years. On the flip side of this, however, to be fair to the commission, we cannot fix what we don't know about. Situations like this one must be communicated to us with a

request for assistance.

The grant was vital to moving forward in the process of privatizing this federal property so I understand the need and desire for these grant funds, but, because the CDA board at that time, thought the person holding the executive director position was the correct person for the job, the port should have reached out to OLDCC for an alternate payment mechanism for staff wages. Leaving staff 'hanging out to dry' through commitments made by others, is in no way something I as a port commissioner condone or will allow to happen in the future. I make the same apology to our fellow CDA board members, that we have let you down on our oversight of the grant process by not addressing this issue.

Again, in my opinion, the Port of Morrow is now in the position that it must end functioning as the fiscal agent of the CDA and relinquish the OLDCC grant, for the selfish reason of maintaining our ability to qualify for future federal grants. Where does this leave our cda partners however, who counted on these funds to help complete the CDA property transfer?

This is not how I want the Port of Morrow to conduct business or treat our constituents and partners.

The CDA property conversion to local control is a tremendous goal benefiting local governments and organizations and subsequently the people of the area. How does the CDA now complete this project? If the grant is relinquished by the Port of Morrow does that mean that OLDCC funds are no longer available? Is it possible for one of the other CDA members to act as fiscal agent, apply for the grant and oversee its application? Do any of them want to. Or are we in a position where private investment can fund this transfer process?

The CDA has significant monetary needs that even in the best of scenarios (aka lack of lawsuits among members and staff) that the OLDCC grant would not have been able to cover. Yes, we are blessed with a \$7 million state grant to begin to build roads but even that project has a \$12 million price tag. Other required projects are water, sewer, power, extended roadways, and required cultural or historical projects to name a few. These would have to be funded through our own efforts as well. I am suggesting that maybe it's time to look at the very real economic opportunities that this site offers for funding the continuation of CDA development and completion.

On another topic of concern to me, and I assume to the cda organization and the public,

that being the administration of the CDA. As I have said in recent Port commission meetings, I want the CDA to be successful in its task, preferably without damaging relationships in our region that we need to maintain and support each other as fellow East Oregonian governments. Heaven knows we have enough serious issues to deal with, to not add infighting amongst ourselves. Yes, it's true, the CDA has competing member interests and it is difficult to reconcile them sometimes, and yes, the majority does rule in an organization like the CDA, but I believe it's not only what we do to work toward a goal, but also how we do it that's important. I believe there is much room for improvement here.

We have lawsuits against all of us and I Do Not wish to exacerbate or increase them today by my words, but I have concerns that need, and as far as I'm concerned WILL, be addressed on very important topics when the correct time comes. Employment issues is one but it must be addressed in a fair and legal way. As mad and disappointed as I am that things have progressed in this way, to this point, I will not partake in making them worse with my actions today. Do I have a plan for improving the situation, you bet. It will be requested in the right way and at the correct time, which, to be frank, had better be soon.

*Respectfully submitted,
John Murray, Port of Morrow Commissioner*

- a. **Resolution** – Joe stated the resolution is regarding a Morrow County property sale which is on the CDA agenda for tomorrow. There was a discussion regarding it with answers from legal counselors Sam and Misha. The commission would like more specific information before making a final decision in support of the CDA's resolution.
- b. **OLDCC Grant Update** – Lisa gave an update on the OLDCC grant and the commission were given a copy of a letter that we received which asked the Port to voluntarily terminate the grant. There was a lengthy discussion regarding CDA funding and budget. The Port commission does not want to jeopardize future federal grants. John and Kelly both would prefer that the Port not be the fiscal agent for the CDA.

John asked about the agenda item for the CDA board tomorrow regarding the fire service update and there was a lengthy discussion. John made a motion and amended it twice, regarding the desire to advocate and support the Irrigon Fire District's opportunity to annex the CDA Morrow County properties into their taxing district. Kelly seconded the motion. Irrigon Fire District Chief Thomas Roberts answered questions regarding the ability of Irrigon Fire to respond to fire emergencies to the property. He also talked about the benefits of mutual aid and partnerships.

John amended his motion a third time to instruct Joe, as our CDA delegate, to ask for a modification such that the CDA does not advocate for Boardman Fire, or any specific fire district to annex the property into their taxing district but instead to wait for the eventual owners of the property to make that recommendation to the county court; and to leave Boardman Fire, with appreciation, serving the temporary needs of the CDA. Kelly agreed and seconded the amendment.

Joel Peterson - Yes

John Murray – Yes

Joe Taylor – Yes

Rick Stokoe – Yes, with a comment that he hopes there isn't a binding legal contract.

Kelly Doherty – Yes

E. Other

No other new business was discussed at the time.

III. EXECUTIVE SESSION

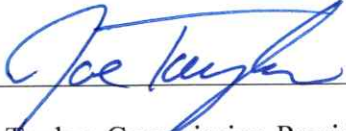
The Port will hold an executive session meeting for the permissible reason(s) stated below under ORS 192.660(2). Representatives of the news media and designated staff and other persons shall be allowed to attend the executive session. All other members of the audience will be asked to leave the room. The public virtual Zoom Meeting link will be closed during the executive session as permissible executive session meetings are not subject to HB2560. Representatives of the news media are specifically directed not to report on any of the deliberations during the executive session, except to state the general subject of the session as previously announced. No decision will be made in this executive session.

A. For the Purpose of Consideration of Deliberations with the Port's Executive Director and Other Staff Members Who Have Been Designated by the Port to Negotiate Real Property Transactions– ORS 192.660 (2)(e)

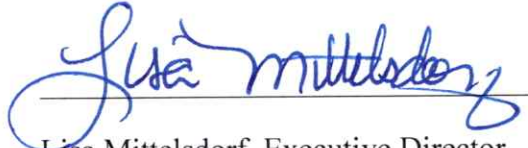
B. For the Purpose of Consultation with Counsel Concerning the Legal Rights and Duties of a Public Body with Regard to Current Litigation or Litigation Likely to be Filed – ORS 192.660 (2)(h)

Joe adjourned the meeting at 4:06 PM.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Taylor", written over a horizontal line.

Joe Taylor, Commission President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lisa Mittelsdorf", written over a horizontal line.

Lisa Mittelsdorf, Executive Director

