
Special Commission Meeting Minutes
February 3, 2025 – 1:30 pm
2 Marine Drive, Boardman, Oregon 97818

I. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Joe called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

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

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

Visitors Present: Gus Peterson, Matt Jensen

By Zoom Meeting: (Staff) Erika Morton
(Guests) Greg Smith, Lez Zaitz, Kyla Baumgartner, Torrie Griggs, Sam Tucker, Ryann Gleason, Aaron Palmquist, Tamra Mabbott, C. Gardiner, IRIDS, Justin Nelson, Emily Collins

II. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Ordinance 2025-01 Morrow County Consortium – Lisa explained the purpose for the ordinance is ORS 190-085 to enact the IGA between Morrow County and the Port. Rick made a motion to approve the ordinance, John seconded, and Sam reminded the commissioners that according to state statutes that if they don't want to read the ordinance in entirety, they needed to unanimously pass a motion agreeing to read the title only in lieu of the entire ordinance.

Rick rescinded his motion and made a motion to waive reading the entire ordinance and accept the title only. John seconded the motion. No discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

John made a motion to approve Ordinance 2025-01, Ratifying the creation of a public improvement consortium known as the Morrow County Clean Water Consortium, in accordance with ORS 190.085. Rick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. CDA Update – Greg gave an update regarding the lawsuit with Umatilla County. The recent trial hearing was cancelled due to a conflict of interest with the judge and one of the Port of Umatilla Commissioners and recused himself. Sam Tucker added a few

remarks that they're hoping a resolution may be forthcoming. Greg also commented on legal expenses and the hope the Port will be reimbursed for legal expenses that have not been paid by other CDA members. A discussion was had on this topic. Additionally, there were questions, answers, and discussion regarding OLDCC budget and personnel issues and road access to the CDA property.

C. HB 2797 Discussion – Rick read the following statement:

“Fellow commissioners, I strongly urge you to oppose HB2797, which proposes adding two governor-appointed commissioners to our board. This measure undermines the democratic process, erodes local control, and introduces potential political influence that could undermine the interests of our community.

While I understand Representative Greg Smith’s intention to modernize the commission, I believe that appointing commissioners based solely on trade sector experience could result in undue influence from special interest groups. This shift may compromise our ability to serve the broader interest of Morrow County and the diverse needs of our community.

Democratic accountability is a cornerstone of our governance, particularly at the local level. The voters of Morrow County should have the power to determine who represents them, especially when it comes to managing critical economic assets like the Port of Morrow. Local control ensures that decisions are made by those who understand our community’s unique needs.

Rather than removing voters from this decision-making process, I am going to ask Representative Smith to reconsider this proposal and support our current commission structure. A balanced approach – combining professional qualifications with local accountability – is essential for the continued success and sustainability of the Port of Morrow.

I ask you to vote against HB2797 and stand firm in preserving the democratic process and local control that our community rightfully deserves.”

Greg asked to address the commission and explained his job as representative is to “...follow the leads of the folks who sent him to Salem. My job is to listen and to address the concerns that are brought forward to me.” He shared that this legislation was originally introduced as a result of several folks who represent industry within the Port of Morrow. Since then, he has spent numerous hours with Commissioner Stokoe, who has shared his thoughts and concerns with this legislation. As a result of those conversations, Greg has removed his name from the bill. It was his intention not to take away from the Port, but to add to it. He understands now where the legislation is not necessary at this time. He thanked the commission for their feedback and the commission thanked him for reconsidering. Rick asked him to share what the benefits

might be. Greg explained that industry experts might be able to contribute specific knowledge when needed. John stated that he would possibly be interested in an advisory committee if it would help the Port commission be better informed and provide guidance when needed.

- D. HB 2725 Discussion** – Ryann said it is her understanding that HB2725 regarding port districts and strategic investment programs will be changing and that there will be an amendment to the wording presently so that ports west or east of Cascade Locks would be affected differently, but specific language for that amendment is not available yet. She also provided background with HB 2009 and history leading up to this house bill. Lisa provided more information and stated that we want to be partners with the County. Ryann stated this bill was originally intended to fix a specific issue in the greater Portland area, not impact ports statewide. After Gus Peterson read a letter from the county commissioners requesting the Port of Morrow formally declare that they oppose HB 2009. There was a lengthy discussion between Gus and Matt from the county, the port commission, with input from Ryann and Greg regarding SIPs and the impacts.

John made a motion to table this item until our next commission meeting. Joel seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

- E. Resolution 2025-02 Wastewater Rate Increase** – Eileen explained this resolution raises the wastewater rates 15% as discussed in the last meeting. Rick made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-02, A Resolution of the Port of Morrow Commission, Morrow County, Oregon, establishing wastewater rates for Morrow Industrial Park tenants. John seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.
- F. Other** – John stated that we received a letter from the City of Irrigon, and he would like it included as an agenda item at the next meeting. At a recent CREZ meeting, the topic of fire protection/service provider was brought up and the desire to hear from landowners regarding their wishes. He would like to begin a discussion.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION – There was no executive session.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:04 PM.

Submitted by:



Joe Taylor, Commission President



Lisa Mittelsdorf, Executive Director

PORT OF MORROW

Special Commission Meeting

February 3, 2025

SIGN-IN SHEET

NAME PLEASE PRINT	COMPANY REPRESENTING	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS <small>(If we don't have it)</small>
Matt Jensen	Morrow CO	541-676-25-29	
Gus Petersen	Morrow CO		gpetersen@morrowcountysgov

Port of Morrow Commission
Public Comment Sign-in Sheet



If you are interested in addressing the Commission under the Public Comment portion of the Agenda, please sign-in below before the meeting starts. A copy of the Public Comment Policy is available to any member of the public who wishes to speak.

DATE: February 3, 2025

FULL NAME:

PHONE:

TOPIC:
