

**Port of Hood River Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes of January 21, 2025 Regular Session**  
**Via Remote Video Conference & Marina Center Boardroom**  
**5:00 p.m.**

---

**THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL until approved by the Port Commission at the next regular meeting.**

---

**Regular Session**

**PRESENT: Commissioners:** Mike Fox, Ben Sheppard, and Tor Bieker. **Staff:** Kevin Greenwood, Debbie Smith-Wagar, Daryl Stafford, Ryan Klapprich, Patty Rosas, **Guests:** Scott Reynier, Columbia River Insurance; Tom Bacci, Kidder Mathews; Jeff Renard, Aviation Management Service; Valori Worth, Toll Collector; Christina Halseth, Former Toll Collector; Rudy Kellner, pFriem; Kelly Wilson, Sum Design; Eric Hoffman, Sum Design.

**ABSENT:** Commissioner Kristi Chapman (excused), and Commissioner Heather Gehring (excused).

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Commissioner Ben Sheppard called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

a. **Modifications, Additions to Agenda:** None

b. **Public Comment:**

1. **Valori Worth, Port Toll Collector**, inquired about the plan for handling traffic in the summer if toll collectors are not present. She expressed concern that without toll collectors, drivers may stop to figure out how to pay, leading to significant backups. Especially since delays already occur even with toll takers.

**2. CONSENT AGENDA:**

- a. Approve Minutes from the December 17, 2024, Regular Session
- b. Approve 2024 Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners
- c. Approve Job Description for Operations Administrator Position
- d. Approve contract with BBSI for temporary administrative support
- e. Approve accounts payable to Beery, Elsner & Hammond, LLP

**Motion:** Move to approve Consent Agenda.

**Move:** Bieker

**Second:** Fox

**Discussion:** None

**Vote:** **Ayes:** Sheppard, Fox, and Bieker

**Absent:** Chapman and Gehring

**MOTION CARRIED**

**3. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS:**

- a. **Monthly Financial Report** – No discussion.

**4. PRESENTATIONS & DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

- a. **pFriem Yer in Review** – Rudy Kellner, Co-Founder & CEO of pFriem, provided an update on the company's growth and future plans. pFriem is the Port of Hood River's largest revenue-generating tenant and has maintained a strong tenancy for the past 12 years. Kellner highlighted ongoing efforts to assess and implement building upgrades, including replacing doors and bay doors to enhance security and safety. Plans also include expanding restroom capacity, increasing fermentation space, and developing additional outdoor space to support business growth. pFriem continues to collaborate with the Port to ensure a smooth process for these improvements.
- b. **Administration Relocation Criteria** – Kelley Wilson, Sum Design, provided an update on the programming and needs assessment, confirming that the project was on track. He outlined the

final report, due in May, which will include property rankings and summaries of their pros and cons. Wilson emphasized the importance of comparing property types and developing an economic model for cost analysis.

The discussion then shifted to the implications of new bridge construction on staffing and space needs. Wilson highlighted potential changes after the bridge's completion, suggesting separate administrative and maintenance spaces. He recommended maintaining the current space size when searching for a new location. Commissioner Mike Fox proposed using the current building replacement project as a catalyst for future developments, such as a new facility at the airport.

Wilson reviewed the property criteria evaluation. The Commission agreed to continue evaluating properties using a decision matrix, factoring in site characteristics, acquisition considerations, and cost. Commissioners will provide input on the importance of each factor, which staff will compile and analyze and re-submit for Commission review in February.

**5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:** Executive Director Kevin Greenwood reported that the waterfront parking lot development is progressing, with HRK Engineering potentially presenting in February or March. The Hood River City Council appointed Mayor Paul Blackburn as liaison to the Port, and Commissioner Tor Bieker volunteered to meet with Mayor Blackburn for reciprocal communication. Senator Merkley’s Town Hall is upcoming, with Commissioners invited and Commissioner Fox attending. Tom Bacci from Kidder Mathews provided a real estate update, noting interest in leasing the Big 7 building, short-term storage in Odell, and a proposal to install cell structures at the Jensen Building to improve reception for waterfront visitors using the parking app. The Commission reached a consensus for staff to engage with the city on the potential installation. Additionally, two unsolicited discussions for leasing land for a boutique hotel at the marina site have been had, and the Commission requested to review what has been proposed. The Commission also discussed seeking public input on these proposals to ensure transparency. Lastly, Facilities Manager Ryan Klapprich informed the Commission of an incident occurring on the bridge during the meeting.

**6. COMMISSIONER, COMMITTEE REPORTS:** None

**7. ACTION ITEMS:**

- a. **Approve 2025 SDIS Property/General Liability Insurance Policy** – Debbie Smith-Wagar, Finance Director, discussed the recent increase in liability insurance for the Port, attributing it to a clerical error by SDIS that was corrected this year, leading to a significant increase in premium. Smith-Wagar also mentioned working with Scott Reynier from Columbia River Insurance, their insurance agent, to increase deductibles in an attempt to reduce premiums. A discussion ensued regarding the policy.

**Motion:** Move to approve the SDIS property general liability insurance policy.  
**Move:** Bieker  
**Second:** Fox  
**Discussion:** None  
**Vote:** **Ayes:** Sheppard, Fox, and Bieker  
**Absent:** Chapman and Gehring  
**MOTION CARRIED**

- b. **Approve 2025 CHUBB Bridge Insurance Policy Renewal** – Reynier provided an update on the bridge insurance, highlighting a significant premium reduction offered by CHUBB. However, the coverage was also reduced, particularly regarding lost revenue, where the insurance now only covers one year of lost toll revenue, down from three years. Reynier expressed concern over the

reduction in coverage but noted it was due to factors beyond the Port's control, such as the recent Baltimore bridge collapse. Staff considered other coverage options, but they were much more expensive. The conversation also touched on the potential catastrophic risk to the bridge, which could lead to significant financial pressure on the Port.

**Motion:** Move to approve the 2025 CHUBB bridge insurance policy renewal in the amount of \$229,812.63.  
**Move:** Bieker  
**Second:** Fox  
**Discussion:** None  
**Vote:** **Ayes:** Sheppard, Fox, and Bieker  
**Absent:** Chapman and Gehring  
**MOTION CARRIED**

- c. **Approve Permanent Tollbooth Closure** – Smith-Wagar discussed the potential closure of the tollbooth, which was initially raised by the Commission and aligned with the Port’s ongoing evaluation of cost-saving measures due to a decline in traffic and rising costs. It was estimated that closing the tollbooth could save the Port around \$100,000 annually. The plan involves replacing signage to clearly communicate the switch to all-electronic tolling. While challenges are anticipated, particularly with drivers not reading the signs, the shift aligns with the broader trend toward electronic tolling systems worldwide. Smith-Wagar also discussed severance packages for tollbooth employees and measures to mitigate potential traffic queuing issues, including increased signage and possible staff presence during peak periods.

**Motion:** Move to approve Resolution No. 2024-25-17 for the permanent closure of the tollbooth and transition to all electronic tolling, effective April 1, 2025, including the severance package and support measures for affected employees.  
**Move:** Fox  
**Second:** Bieker  
**Discussion:** None  
**Vote:** **Ayes:** Sheppard, Fox, and Bieker  
**Absent:** Chapman and Gehring  
**MOTION CARRIED**

- d. **Approve RFP for Invoice Printing and Mailing Services** – Smith-Wagar discussed the need for an external mailing service to handle the high volume of toll invoices, particularly during peak summer months when up to 20,000 invoices per week may be processed. Given the equipment and staffing requirements, an in-house solution would be costly and inefficient. Instead, staff intends to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for mailing services, seeking vendors experienced in large-scale invoice processing, including automated printing, folding, and pre-sorting for postal discounts.

**Motion:** Move to approve the RFP for invoice and mailing services.  
**Move:** Bieker  
**Second:** Fox  
**Discussion:** None  
**Vote:** **Ayes:** Sheppard, Fox, and Bieker  
**Absent:** Chapman and Gehring  
**MOTION CARRIED**

8. **COMMISSION CALL:** None

9. **UPCOMING MEETINGS:** No Discussion

10. **CONFIRMATION OF DIRECTIVES:**


- a. Staff to follow through on process for reviewing proposals for a boutique hotel at the Marina site.

11. **ADJOURN:** The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

**ATTEST:**

Signed by:  
  
00DEADE439F8421...

Kristi Chapman, President

DocuSigned by:  
  
1D968775DD2542A...

Michael Fox, Secretary