

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
PORT OF EPHRATA COMMISSIONERS
JUNE 3, 2021**

The Board of Commissioners for the Port District No. 9 of Grant County met in special session on June 3, 2021 in the City of Ephrata Council Chambers. Commissioner Karen Moore called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Port of Ephrata: Commissioners: Karen Moore, George Sisson and Shelly Rivard Detrick. Staff: Mike Wren, Executive Director. City of Ephrata: Mayor Bruce Reim, Councilman Matt Moore and Mike Warren, City Administrator. Grant County: Commissioner Cindy Carter, Sheriff Tom Jones (Virtual), Development Services Director Damian Hooper (Virtual), Central Services Director Tom Gaines. Grant County Journal: Randy Bracht. General Public: Mike Moore, David Hunt.

OPENING COMMENTS: Commissioner Moore thanked everyone for attending. She communicated how important it was to begin discussions with respect to The County approaching the Port of Ephrata about constructing a new jail facility on Port Property. She then introduced the participants of the meeting.

PROJECT PRESENTATION: Tom Gaines of the Grant County Central Services Department gave a presentation on the jail project. The design is basically conceptual at this time, but in general, it would be constructed as a single-story facility that could accommodate approximately 500 inmates and require the remainder of the “block” that the work release facility is currently located on.

PORT OF EPHRATA COMMISSIONER QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

Commissioner Sisson: Asked how the additional 500 bed facility would impact the water and sewer capacity and performance on the Port and Northeast quadrant of the city; which is already known to have water pressure challenges. Mr. Gaines stated that those particular impacts were unknown at this time, but would be studied as part of the design. Mike Warren, City administrator brought up that the City and Port have been in discussions with respect to a potential easement on Port property to locate both a water tower and well to address that problem in the future. Commissioner Sisson then asked about the process for release of inmates. Specifically, the concern was that an inmate would be released in the late evening/early morning hours and be wondering the residential areas. Sheriff Jones stated that that had been the situation in the past but that it may be possible to hold inmates until the daylight hours before release. Mr. Hunt (citizen) stated that he did not believe that was possible and that if a person was released on bond, that they must be released immediately. There is more research to be done on that issue.

Commissioner Detrick: Asked about the landscaping profile, especially from Division Ave and how that would lessen the visual impact of having a large jail facility on site. Since the design is still conceptual, there really wasn't an answer to the question, however they would ensure that would be evaluated as part of the design concept. She then commented on how The Port must consider the impact of this proposed facility on future marketing efforts and the impact on current tenant's desires to remain on the Port of Ephrata. Finally, she commented that the potential impact upon adjacent businesses (day care facility across the street) and homes that are

located on the Port boundary. Due to these issues as well as the others brought up by the other commissioners, there is a clear need to have further public discussion regarding this project.

Commissioner Moore: Reiterated that this project is to be considered on its merit just as others are that come to the Port asking to purchase property. One of the factors to be considered is the number of jobs so she asked what the potential increase in jobs for the community might be. Sheriff Jones estimated that number to be approximately 15 above what is currently employed. She then voiced her concern of the impact of a hypothetical heavy industrial tenant locating next to the jail and how the noise from those types of operation might impact the inmates and ultimately end in complaints against the industrial tenant. Grant County Commissioner Carter commented that due to the security elements that are part of construction of a facility of this type, you are unable to hear those sorts of noises inside a jail cell. Commissioner Moore acknowledged that the project was still in design, but shared concerns that the electrical power capacity on the Port was adequate. Commissioner Moore then asked Port Executive Director Mike Wren to describe the process involved in a land sale. Mike first reiterated that though the County has been involved in this process for over a year, this is the beginning of the Port's process in determining the viability and compatibility of this project on Port property. He voiced that though the public may have been fully aware of the jail project in the county, that is a very different thing from Port neighbors discovering that it may be build "in their back yard". That said, the public opinion of this project; especially by our neighbors will be aggressively pursued and weighed. He then briefly described the requirements laid out in RCW 53 as to excessing property and removing it from the Industrial Development District as a public process. It will require a relatively final design concept to include infrastructure. RCW 53 also requires 2 independent appraisals be done to establish the minimum sales price. He also touched on the additional requirement for the Port of Ephrata to comply with the federal release action required by the Federal Aviation Administration. This submittal requires items to include National Environmental Protection Act documentation (NEPA) (many times satisfied by the State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA)), wet lands survey, phase II environmental study, traffic study, FAA 7460 and archeological survey. The challenge being that much of this must be completed before a buyer has the confirmation that the release will be approved.

CITY OF EPHRATA COMMENTS: Both Mayor Reim and City administrator Warren reiterated the city's commitment to resolve the water issue not simply for this project, but for the long term.

GRANT COUNTY COMMISSION COMMENTS: There were no further comments from Commissioner Carter

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mike Moore asked if there was any planned use for the old jail facility. Mr. Gaines stated that there were multiple uses under consideration, but nothing certain at this time. The final question voiced by Commissioner Moore as a concerned citizen was whether a person recreating on the Port's walking paths etc. will still feel safe doing so. The County representatives spoke to the coating placed on the windows that allowed light into a cell, but prevented inmates from seeing what was outside, thus preventing any discomfort from a walker (for example) being 'watched' by an inmate.

FINAL COMMENTS: Commissioner Moore reiterated her thanks to everyone who attended and emphasized that there will be future meetings for this project.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to conduct, Commissioner Karen Moore declared the meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Karen Moore, President

George Sisson, Vice President

Shelly Rivard Detrick, Secretary

ATTEST: _____

Michael G. Wren

2021