

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
PORT OF EPHRATA COMMISSIONERS  
July 28, 2021**

The Board of Commissioners for the Port District No. 9 of Grant County met in special session on July 28, 2021 in the Port conference room. Commissioner Moore called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Commissioners: Commissioner Karen Moore, Commissioner George Sisson and Commissioner Shelly Rivard Detrick. Staff: Greg Becken, Executive Director. Guests: See Sign-in Sheets.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Public input on the sale of land to the County for the new jail.

Commissioner Moore spoke about the proposed county jail location on the current work release site. Commissioner Moore referenced the proposed land sale location on the slide prepared by staff, she then continued to discuss what a Port is established for and what our mission is. This public meeting is to seek public opinion regarding the land sale specifically, should we increase the property footprint of a County Jail facility in the Port of Ephrata Industrial Park.

Brian Saunders, local land owner, shared concerns regarding safety of family and property value. Brian bought his house without the jail and asked what will this mean for his land value and personal safety. Brian asked if the Port decided to not sell land would that stop the jail from going in this location, commissioners responded by saying that it is unknown at this time.

Marty Devine asked why was work release closed? Commissioner Sisson responded that funding has ended for that program, stating that was what he was told by the Sheriff's office.

David Hunt, stated the current work release facility security level is changing from security level minimum to maximum, going from work release to an actual jail. He also questioned if there was an environmental study, specifically water capacity, given the city's limited ability currently and a fire suppression test (flow test being one of the tests)? David also asked about a traffic mitigation study and the increased use of Port maintained roads. Hunt also questioned the statement from Sheriff Jones that he would hold people over once they bond out, Hunt doesn't believe this is legal.

Commissioner Moore responded to Hunt's comment regarding road maintenance, that is why the Port prefers to lease land so that we can add a road maintenance surcharge to the lease depending on traffic flow of the lease. Once land is sold, we lose that ability.

Matt Moore (Ephrata City Council Member), Stated that while he applauds Jones for taking ownership of this project, the county has approached this in a backward way and the county is now attempting to get caught up. Also, the city is moving very quickly to catch up or keep up. Moore also stated that current estimates show the utility lines will support sewage, but actual usage has not been determined yet.

Bruce Reim (Mayor for the City of Ephrata), responded to the sewage capacity question stating that it is estimated to be adequate.

Follow up comment: Jones stated in a previous meeting that the budget might not allow the move of all offices to the new locations.

Follow up comment: (Matt Moore), the Port has a process to sell land, the city also has a process to sell land and the processes are not the same.

Marty Devine commented on Matt Moore's previous comment, stating that if the Sheriff's Office moved with the jail and the jail went out of town, would Ephrata lose revenue?

Follow up comment: (Matt Moore), the city of Ephrata has anchored the city around government jobs, their associated properties are considered tax neutral and don't affect the city tax levy.

Commissioner Rivard Detrick asks ED Greg Becken to speak about future marketing with a jail. Greg referenced two other locations in the state that have a jail in an industrial setting, after speaking with these locations the jail has not been an asset to business recruitment.

Paul Rohweder, local resident, stated he is for the jail.

Rosalinda Kibby (Columbia Basin Hospital CEO), stated mental health beds would be a huge value and that she supports that part of the jail.

Valorie Temple asked, would it not be helpful if all the players came together for one meeting to inform the community? Commissioner Moore agreed and state that they hosted a public meeting at City Hall on June 3<sup>rd</sup> where County Commissioner Cindy Carter, Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Kevin McCrae, City Mayor Reim, City Council Member Matt Moore and County Representative Tom Gaines, Central Services Director, met with limited citizen participation.

Subsequently, the Port distributed door flyers for the July 28<sup>th</sup> and the August 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Matt Moore, commented to the commissioners that the community and the county have stated that commissioners need to make a very public statement about what they decide and soon. And public perception of the Port's willingness to encourage development could be negatively impacted.

Beverly Diehard (remote participant), local resident, was concerned about the location of the jail.

Of all the comments in favor of the new jail, none state that it needs to be at this location.

Commissioner Rivard Detrick wrapped up the meeting, thanking everyone who attended, assuring all in attendance that the Port Commission is very committed to economic development.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business to conduct, Commissioner Moore declared the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

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Karen Moore, President

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George Sisson, Vice President

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Shelly Rivard Detrick, Secretary

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

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Greg Becken