

Port of Cascade Locks

The Port of Cascade Locks Commission Special Meeting was held Thursday, January 28, 2016, at the Community Center at House 3 in Marine Park , Cascade Locks, OR 97014.

1. **Meeting called to order/ Pledge of Allegiance:** Commission President Groves called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
2. **Roll Call:** Commissioners Groves, Lipps and Lorang were present. Commissioner Caldwell was excused.

Commissioner Stipan arrived at 6:30pm.

- **Others Present:** GM Paul Koch, Secretary Sally Moore, Marketing and Development Manager Holly Howell, Accounting Specialist Melissa Warren, Maintenance and Construction Manager Todd Mohr, Consultant Pat Albaugh and Bridge Engineer David McCurry.

3. **Modifications, Additions and changes in the Agenda :** None
4. **Declaration of Potential Conflicts of Interests :** None
5. **Report of Issues dealing with the Bridge of the Gods – Reports from Consultant, Pat Albaugh and Bridge Engineer David McCurry with HDR Engineering.**

a. **Report from Pat Albaugh, Consultant, and David McCurry, Bridge Engineer regarding toll technology project status, and historic review of the Port's interest in toll technology. Bringing the Commission up to date and exploring all available options and potential costs.** GM Koch gave a brief synopsis stating that in 2014 the Commission requested that staff research toll technology. In 2015, the Port put out an RFP; two firms responded with costs estimated at \$900,000 to \$1.2 million. The Port rejected both offers and the Commissioners directed staff to pursue other options including aligning with the Port of Hood River as they are doing upgrades to their "Breeze By" presently. This may result in both bridges possibly using the same transponder card (if used) for those who wish to purchase/use one. CP Groves gave a brief explanation on how the Port got to this position. In 2012, when the bridge had its weight limitation, a deal was made with ODOT to create a 10 year Maintenance and Operation plan, and with a lot of work, the Bridge of Gods was restored to its weight limitation of 80,000 lbs. At that time the Commission considered a toll technology program. Pat Albaugh, Consultant and David McCurry, Bridge Engineer with HNTB have explored the options available. David explained that technology will allow to count truck axles accurately as many times some are not counted until after they pay and pass. There is lost revenue. Pat had a lot of information on the bridge and was hired as a Consultant to research all aspects of toll technology. Pat stated that one option would be to implement the technology in stages. David McCurry stated it would be a good idea to get on the "Fast Act" to obtain funding for phases of the technology. The Fixing

America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act is five-year legislation to improve the Nation's surface transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges, transit systems, and rail transportation network. The bill reforms and strengthens transportation programs, refocuses on national priorities, provides long-term certainty and more flexibility for states and local governments, streamlines project approval processes, and maintains a strong commitment to safety. The Port will apply for some of these monies and if received, would help pay for the toll technology. Commissioner Lorang stated the POHR has a lot more traffic than BOG and asked if it would be worth it. He asked if there would be a less expensive route. Pat stated the payoff is not related to tolling rates. Pat stated there are more advantages. Accountably is one. At this point there is no way of knowing how much revenue may be lost. Another advantage is there would be less cash handling allowing for less errors. He stated the technology can save customers time and can increase customers crossing, as in the summer it backs up on to Wa Na Pa Street. Another idea was the BOG could do summer and winter rates, time of day rates, etc. There are very many options. This is used around the country to change traffic patterns. It would improve customer service by having a transponder as it can automatically be reloaded. If the POHR and the BOG use same transponder, it would make it easier for travelers. One goal would be to link in to the standardized Washington State tolling system. There is a nationwide effort to make this an initiative to standardize all tolling across the United States. With technology you could add vehicle weight scale, camera with license recognitions for Police, etc. Commissioner Lorang asked if a transponder could be related to a vehicle. Pat stated each customer has one transponder account. They can be moved from car to car. David asked toll experts what savings there would be with working with the POHR. Pat stated both Ports could both use the same back office accounting system and save money. Pat also stated another advantage is the new technology would teach a higher set of skills for the toll taker. Toll Booth Supervisor Jean Pearson stated a lot of problems stem from the truckers. Some companies do not allow their drivers to have money to pay the toll. A lot of these companies have transponders for many other bridges however. Dealing with this causes a slow down at the toll booth for those crossings and is frustrating for the toll taker and the cars waiting. Pat said a function can be added to send a bill to a trucking company for those who do not have the money to pay the toll. Bridge Engineer, David McCurry stated it is costing more money to keep up the aging bridge. He added the local people should not have to bear all of the burden of the costs as tourism increases. This cost can be added for the tourist and possibly charge them a higher toll and keep the tolls the same for locals that cross. The technology can take of this as well. A system would have to be decided upon by the Commission. He added the bigger trucks put more wear and tear on the bridge than any other vehicle and need to pay a higher toll. Tolls may have to be raised for them. Commissioner Lipps stated charging more tolls for local and Vancouver Portland residents may not be feasible. David McCurry says the increase in traffic will continue and impact the infrastructure as locals pay for that. There are different ways to remedy this. Commissioner Lipps asked how this will affect currently employed toll takers. Pat stated there will be more full time toll takers and less part time and seasonal. Commissioner Caldwell asked who would pay for cars that did not pay. Pat stated it could go to local court or the driver can be sent an invoice. The camera system will capture the license plates. GM Koch stated there will always be a "No Money" tally sheet

for those who cannot pay until the end of the month. It is very effective and those on the list pay the toll when they are paid. Many are going to minimum wage jobs. Discussed were disadvantages, phasing of electronic tolling. One disadvantage is the initial investment of between \$950,000 and \$1,000,000. There would be a monthly maintenance fee of possible \$10,000 a month. This would require technical expertise that the Port does not currently have.

GM Koch asked the Commission if they are looking to slow down and budget for a second flex to bring more business. He asked the Commissioners what is more important. He suggested delaying the technology for a few years could be an option, and any increased tolls can be saved for future technology. CP Groves stated it may be a good idea to look at building a second Flex building. No action was taken.

b. Review all toll options and preliminary determination of future direction regarding tolls and toll increases. This discussion was a first of many regarding increasing tolls. The Commission took no action in 2015 to raise tolls. Toll increases go generally go into effect on May 1. At this time, there are three options for toll increases; the first is increase tolls for all classes of vehicles by .25 cents. The estimated revenue would be \$349,486.50. The second option is to increase tolls for 2 axle trucks and up. Do not raise tolls for cars and pick-up trucks for local patrons. Increase the toll from .50 cents to \$1.00 for pedestrians and bicycles. The estimated revenue is \$485,930.50. The third option is increase the tolls incrementally over the next few years and take 50% of the revenue and add it to the Bridge Fund and the 10 Year Maintenance and Operation Plan. . Commissioner Lipps stated keeping the ticket books for the locals may work. Commissioner Stipan stated he sees drivers going over the bridge at 25+ miles an hour frequently, and believes citations with the new technology program should be issued. Different options were discussed. No action was taken. Engineer David McCurry will continue to explore options on toll increases all look at all aspects that were discussed.

Another option is to budget monies for next budget year 2017-18 to analyze what revenue it toll increases would make. Port Engineer David McCurry was asked to do a projected revenue analysis. Another option is to "Leapfrog" the Hood River Bridge and follow their technology in the next two years. CP Groves stated the Commission needs to decide who is "local". Other options discussed were to put an expiration date on the ticket books. Commissioner Lipps stated the Port needs to find out who the frequent "users" are. The last time tolls were raised for big trucks was in 2014 and there meetings held in CL and Stevenson. There was no car toll increase. Pat Albaugh, Contractor was directed to contact the toll takers and get their opinions and ideas.

Sally Moore, Secretary stated that ORS 244.050 requires certain public officials to file an Annual Verified Statement of Economic Interest (SEI) by April 15 of each year.

This will be the first year that the Government Ethics Commission will release an Electronic Filing System (EFS). Sometime in February, the Commissioners will receive an email from the Government Ethics Board; this form can be filled out electronically and returned to them via email.

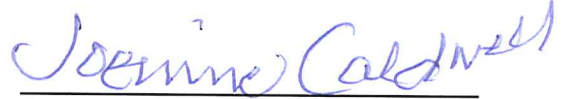
6. **Adjournment: CP Groves adjourned the meeting at 8:30pm.**

Port of Cascade Locks:



Jess Groves, President
Port Commission

Attest:



Joenne Caldwell, Secretary
Port Commission

DATE APPROVED: 2-19-16
Prepared by: Sally Moore