

AGENDA
THE PORT DISTRICT OF SOUTH WHIDBEY ISLAND
SPECIAL MEETING of the BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Thursday, May 3, 2012 at 6:00 pm
Port Office Conference Room
1804 Scott Road, Freeland, WA

6:00 PM - SPECIAL MEETING CALL TO ORDER

1. Port Operations**
 - A. Finance Manager Interview(s) (if applicable)
 - B. Executive Session (if needed)
 - C. Finance Manager Hiring Direction
 - D. Search Firm Consideration (if applicable)

2. Adjournment

PORT DISTRICT OF SOUTH WHIDBEY ISLAND

Minutes of the Special Meeting

May 3, 2012

Freeland, Washington

Commissioners Present: Curt Gordon (Clinton), Chris Jerome (Langley) and Dennis Gregoire (Freeland)

Others Present:

Port Staff: Ron Rhinehart (Port Finance Manager) and Molly MacLeod-Roberts (Port Clerk); **Others:** Wayne Morrison (Clinton) and two applicants for the position of Port Finance Manager **Absent:** Ed Field (Port Operations Manager)

MEETING CALL TO ORDER: The Special Meeting (in workshop format) of the Port District of South Whidbey Island's Board of Commissioners was convened on Thursday, May 3, 2012, in the Port office conference room at 1804 Scott Rd. in Freeland, WA. As announced, the primary purpose of the Special Meeting was for Commission and Staff review, discussion and direction for the Finance Manager interview and hiring process. Although the Meeting was of course open to the public, it was scheduled for Commission interviews and consideration of specific applicant(s), and public participation was not on the Agenda.

Commissioner Gordon, President, called the Special Meeting to order at 6:20 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

PORT OPERATIONS: Port Finance Manager Ron Rhinehart said two qualified applicants would be available for interviewing by the Commission at this evening's meeting. He and Port Operations Manager Ed Field had met and interviewed each of them the day before for an hour or so, and believed both showed enough potential to warrant Commission interview. Rhinehart provided the Commission with the resumes of each candidate and a blank Candidate Evaluation Matrix (**EXHIBIT A**) to allow them to provide a rating of 1-5 for each of the following criteria: Accounting knowledge, Financial analysis/modeling, Grant application/administration, Strategic planning, Organizational management, Public Agency Funding and Attitude/Initiative. The candidates are expecting each of their interviews to last 45-60 minutes; with the 1st scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. and the 2nd at 7:30 p.m. Rhinehart said the interviews would be held during Executive Session, with final action to be taken during the open public meeting.

Gordon said that prior to starting the interviews, he would like to have a brief Executive Session for the Commission to discuss to review and evaluate the performance of an existing staff member. The Commission agreed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION #1: The Board of Commissioners went into Executive Session at 6:25 p.m. for an expected duration of 5 minutes to review the performance of a public employee. The Board came out of Executive Session at 6:34 p.m.

Finance Manager Interviews

EXECUTIVE SESSION #2: The Board of Commissioners went into Executive Session at 6:35 p.m. for an expected duration of 2 hours to interview the two Finance Manager candidates. The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:25 p.m.

Finance Manager Hiring Direction/Discussion: Jerome and Gordon agreed both candidates were qualified. Gregoire said he was not comfortable hiring either candidate at this point, because he saw a bigger opportunity to make some significant changes to the administrative structure. Gordon said there are two possible scenarios: 1) Hire one of the candidates (for at least the next couple of years) and make them into the best we can for the position that is coming (an executive director). He added, *“But the Port is not in the position to go out & hire a \$130,000/year Executive Director, and I don’t think we can get someone to do the job of an executive director for \$75,000/year. We can’t afford more than we’re paying, and we need someone to take over the position when Rhinehart leaves.”* 2) Put the brakes on this process, hire a search firm, perhaps change the description a bit, and hope we can find a candidate with what we’re offering. Gregoire said the search firm process would take a while, so the Port would need some accounting support during that time.

Gregoire said, *“I think we need some help from a third party to help define what it is that we want in our administrative position. We need someone who has been in the port industry who can interview us and get Commission and Staff perspectives and help us understand the structure we have, what we want to do and where we think we want to go with the Port. With this Staff change, we have an opportunity to get a good assessment and understanding of what type of administrative structure we want to serve us as we move ahead. Unless we’ve got that strong voice coming from the Staff to help guide and shape the Commission – which we don’t have – we will continue to stumble and have the frustration and problems the Port has experienced. The Comp Scheme Committee made a strong recommendation for Staff to do one other step – a detailed business plan for the marina. It’s not done. It wasn’t the Commission’s fault – it was the structure’s fault. We had no one to say ‘Hey, guys – here’s how you’re going to go.’ I think we need to use a third party (before the search firm) to define what the administrative structure should be, and in the meantime, we fill the gap with an outside consultant for the accounting tasks.”*

Gordon said, *“I feel this Commission has gotten a hold on it, and there have been numerous projections of marina revenue and expenses. Every time a different option came up, former Finance Manager Dane Anderson ran it through the financial model. I think we’ve done a good job as a Commission to be able to help Staff. The biggest part of our urgency today is that we’re losing our finance person. If Rhinehart wasn’t leaving, there wouldn’t be an urgency to look at the administrative structure so bringing in that party might be premature. I don’t think we can find the type of applicant to fill all of the job description on our budget. I think we need to push forward – we’re in crisis mode.”*

After additional discussion, the Commission agreed the three most important criteria for the finance manager position over the next year are (in order of importance):

1. Financial forecasting
2. Grant administration
3. Staff supervision

Rhinehart said the accounting/auditing officer tasks could be handled by Edwards & Associates until such time as the finance manager could take them on.

Noting that the Port’s budget is not going to change over the next 2-3 years and it is unlikely that they will find someone with all the qualifications who is willing to do the job for \$30-\$35/hour, Jerome didn’t see any alternative but to hire one of the two candidates to do the critical functions. The two search firms Rhinehart spoke with indicated that it would take two weeks to develop a pool. The Port would then need to 2 weeks for interviews, plus 2 more weeks for the individual to give notice and the best case scenario would be 5-6 weeks total before someone could fill the position. Both search firms also indicated that the compensation would be an issue, and Rhinehart said it was a strong possibility that they wouldn’t find anybody for what the Port is offering. He explained that the Port is asking for some relatively sophisticated skill sets, and layering in public agency grant stuff. It is a hard group of skill sets to fill and

the Port is geographically challenged. He said, *“Trying to overcome those two things generally comes at a price.”*

Gordon believed that both candidates were capable of handling the three most important criteria that the Commission had agreed upon (financial forecasting, grant administration and staff supervision) to the degree that it would be less disruptive to the Port than taking 5-6 weeks for a search firm to find someone that will probably cost more money that we can't even afford. He recalled that when he first started with the South Whidbey Parks & Recreation District, there was not enough money for staff, so the 5-member board actually ran the District. After 5 years, they were financially able to hire a manager and then after a several more years they were finally able to afford an executive director. He said, *“There are different phases to junior taxing districts and different income structures. We are fortunate to have three fairly experienced Commissioners that have to stay somewhat involved and that's part of being a small taxing district. I suggest we could take either candidate, work with them over the next year and they could develop the rest of the skills needed.”*


ACTION: A Motion was made by Jerome and seconded by Gordon to offer the position of Port Finance Manager to Angela Mozer, subject to background check and reference verification. The Motion passed by a margin of 2-1, with Gregoire voting against.

After additional discussion, the Commission agreed to offer Mozer compensation of \$65,000 annual salary based on full-time employment, with an opportunity for increase after completion of the University of Washington's Grantsmanship Center training program (paid for by Port) and in-house training for accounting and auditing.


Search Firm Consideration: Not applicable.

ADJOURNMENT: The Special Meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Approved:



Commissioner Curt Gordon, Clinton



Commissioner Dennis Gregoire, Freeland



Commissioner Chris Jerome, Langley

Minutes edited by:



Edwin S. Field, Port Operations Manager

Exhibit A: Candidate Evaluation Matrix