



OBSERVER REPORT FORM

Port of Tacoma Commission - Regular Meeting

April 15, 2021

Observer: Rosemary Powers

10:30 am Opening and Executive Session.

Commission President Dick Marzano called the meeting to order with all five commissioners present: Marzano, Myers, Ang, McCarthy, and Keller. Also present: Port Executive Director Eric Johnson. Commission recessed to executive session to consider one item related to litigation or potential litigation and one item related to site or acquisition of real estate. No decisions made or actions taken at this session.

12:00 noon – 1:01 pm Public Meeting

Opening items:

Commission president Marzano reconvened Commission for public meeting, noting the need to meet virtually and sharing how the public can participate. This was followed by usual opening items of flag salute, approval of agenda, and consideration of consent agenda.

Consent Agenda was approved by unanimous vote. It included Commission minutes of March 18, 2021 and Voluntary Continuation of the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Pursuant to the American Rescue Plan Act. A separate vote was taken regarding a payment to the state auditor. Motion passed with McCarthy abstaining as he is related to state auditor.

Public Comment:

President Marzano invited public comment but no one had requested time.

Executive Director Report

Executive Director Eric Johnson provided information on multiple topics:

- 1) Provided update on conversations with City of Tacoma planning and development commission. They have addressed some of the concerns about land use brought by the Port, and Port staff are now working on a brief document to send asap that addresses the Port's remaining concerns. Permanent regulations are expected to be adopted by first week of June so Port hopes to have some more impact.
- 2) Noted good news about boat building (a contract with Ukraine and other boat builders) that fosters a prosperous boat building process and fits well in strategic plan.
- 3) Reported that the Port has successfully completed successful internal financial audit.
- 4) Announced his upcoming trip to DC to join partners (Chamber and others) to present to Congressional representatives the importance of infrastructure needs (including City of Fife's work on I-5 connections that are essential to Port business).

- 5) Mentioned elements of state transportation budget with expected preliminary funding for some things important to Port (e.g. Fishing Wars bridge) --will advocate for infrastructure for Port.
- 6) Announced the Port's improved bond ratings. During a time some local governments are struggling, the Port of Tacoma improved in two categories, so is considered more credit-worthy now than last year.
- 7) Reminded Commissioners to expect Mid-year financial report presentation in June, and that the Commission is scheduled to conduct his yearly executive performance evaluation during the coming month.

Commission Actions

Action requested of the Port Commission:

Adoption of the 2021-2026 Port of Tacoma Strategic Plan via Resolution 2021-09-PT.

“. . . Be it resolved that: the 2021–2026 Strategic Plan is adopted, as set forth in Exhibit “A” attached to this resolution and by this reference incorporated herein, for the purpose of establishing the future direction of the Port of Tacoma” (Strategic plan noted here as Exhibit “A” available at <https://www.portoftacoma.com/about/strategic-plan>).

The resolution states that the purpose of the plan is to:

- “1. Create a roadmap for the next five years, laying out the Port's goals in key priority areas, along with specific strategies to help us achieve these goals.
2. Determine the use of resources to maintain, improve and grow our operations in a fiscally and environmentally responsible manner — key components of the Port's business model as we continue to drive prosperity for our stakeholders and community.
3. Make strategic investments that enhance the Port's infrastructure (waterways, terminals, roads, rail, industrial properties) that create the most efficient, productive and cost-effective system possible to move our customers' freight to the marketplace.
4. Provide strong fiscal stewardship of public funds, active marketing and development of Port assets to promote business growth and jobs, environmental remediation of Port owned properties, and building stronger relationships with our customers, partners, and the community.”

Motion to approve made and seconded.

Discussion began with comments by Port Executive Eric Johnson drawing attention to the final draft of the plan, and summarizing the history of work on this plan:

- 1) The Port began work on the strategic plan in 12/2019 with target of 12/2020. Work was extended to Spring 2021 due to communication challenges during pandemic.

- 2) Staff addressed challenge of creating virtual opportunities for community input and expert interviews. They received significant input through virtual channels, providing an online open house and the Port website as main avenues to share potential goals and seek public comment. There were 3823 visitors to open house site, 460 survey responses, 13 public commission meetings (on line study sessions, and special meetings); 50 local community and business meeting presentations. Staff sent out 24,000 emails, posted 24 times on social media, and conducted 41 one-on-one interviews with subject matter experts.
- 3) The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) non-project review resulted in issuance of determination of non-significance as of April 12.
- 4) Next steps: Commissioners' concerns and feedback are reflected in clear statement that Strategic plan is living document that may be amended as new information becomes available, that updates will be coordinated with Port's annual budget process, and that "The Port will create and utilize an Implementation Plan that promotes momentum and alignment aiming to achieve the foundational goals of the Strategic Plan."

Jim Darling, the consultant hired to facilitate the planning process (in collaboration with Port staff, especially Project Manager and Senior Planning Manager Deirdre Wilson) stated that the Commission has "written the book" on doing a strategic plan during a pandemic (having to do everything remotely). He noted that, based on overall plan being approved today, the implementation plan would be presented by June, so action will begin and Commission can assess progress.

Commissioner comments and amendment:

Commission members had all received copy of final plan and expressed thanks to staff for the work and for incorporating commissioner concerns in the development of the document.

Keller thanked all for their work on this effort.

Meyer expressed appreciation to staff, and noted that the resolution didn't mention at all the licensed properties with the NorthWest Seaport Alliance (NWSA), and thinks that should be explicitly mentioned in the resolution. McCarthy not averse to adding, but thinks this is redundant. Ang notes that comments from public show some lack of clarity about which sites are managed under what auspices, so this might help public see the explicit distinction between NWSA licensed properties, restoration habitat, and other Port business sites.

The resolution was amended to add language to the resolution's second purpose point (see above) to read: *"including NWSA licensed properties."* **All agreed to add this to the resolution.**

McCarthy noted that this is a five-year plan, while previous one was a 10-year plan and that it was decided not to include in the plan the specific action items suggested by all comment ideas as those should be part of the implementation plan which will be key (for example, items like a new building for administration).

Ang offered that more people may have commented using the virtual format than would have otherwise since they did not have to show up in person. For example, people from Gig Harbor sent their hopes for

collaborations. She is pleased to see that this plan will guide the organization with regard to transportation, environment, diversity and equity.

Marzano stated that the Implementation Action Plan will be the heart of what we do and keeping scorecard will help us monitor our progress.

Meyer noted that the public outreach here was unusually good. Believes that adoption of this plan is direction-setting with a lot of public participation and is looking forward to bold actions as we implement the plan.

Resolution approved by unanimous vote.

Non-action or new business

Keller: would like to consider in future having an advisory council made up of community members, port staff, commissioners to continue gaining input for specific strategies.

Ang : Has been paying attention to the Commission's pollution reviews. Would like to know if Port's lease with PSE permits them to operate while the lease is under appeal. Johnson says will check but thinks it is permitted. Also, regarding an advisory group, she stated that it would be nice to have people in the community who could be advisors in numerous ways (e.g., the greater Tacoma Community Foundation may be interested in some sort of academy movement from high school to maritime. There will be money and funding for this. They were happy to hear about our DEI considerations.)

Keller: added that Kathy Littman has connected her to the Sea Scouts and noted a lot of interest in creating a maritime high school.

Committee reports:

Ang reported on Diversity Equity and Inclusion, noting that 12 staff met with her and Marzano. Commissioners met to listen. Since DEI work is part of strategic plan and also needs to be part of regional economic recovery that is equitable, the Commission needs to do this work. The Port may need outside help on this as it is something new. Marzano said he was impressed with interest from staff, and agreed that this will be a long process that will take time and money and agree that may need outside consultant to assist.. Will continue to meet and keep informed. Staff impressed them with need for this.

Issue briefings:

No briefings were provided

Commissioner Comments

Ang commented on the importance of the Port's ability to pivot in response to Covid, and Keller reminded all of Pierce County's return to phase 2, signaling even more the need to get vaccinated.

McCarthy presented 3 items:

- 1) Stated that it is important that the Commission meet in public as soon as legally allowed to. Being limited to virtual meetings, but public deserves to see Commissioners and each other.
- 2) As Port representative to Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board, he noted that the board gives a small amount of money new initiatives but haven't been able to make any investments recently. Understands there are other priorities right now but is asking for assistance with house transportation legislation to provide some support for this as future opportunities emerge.
- 3) Has some concern about Port of Tacoma and NWSA's relationship in distinguishing NWSA projects from home Port projects. Wants to be careful to have careful consideration for NWSA funding for items that have largest impact on either Seattle Port or Tacoma Port. Noted that the Highway 167 project is a regional project that has consequences for NWSA, but remembers when he was co-chair, that a Seattle Port person insisted that the West Seattle Bridge project was more important than the 167 interchange (with implications for funding priority). He wants to insure that Tacoma Port Staff have say in projects for which we may pay 50% as NWSA partners but may currently have little engagement.

Adjournment at 1:01pm