

WILLAMETTE FALLS LOCKS AUTHORITY

Authority Meeting

June 26, 2024 – 2:00-3:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

(Minutes: Pat Vivian and Sandy Carter)

Authority Board Members Present:

Russ Axelrod [*Geologist, former West Linn Mayor*]

Mary Baumgardner [*President, West Linn City Council*]

Sandy Carter [*Advocates for Willamette Falls Heritage*]

Robert Kentta [*Tribal Council Treasurer, Confederated Tribes of Siletz*]

Christine Lewis [*Metro Council*]

Denyse McGriff [*Mayor, Oregon City*]

Chris Mercier [*Vice Chair, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde*]

Mini Sharma Ogle [*PGE*]

David Penilton [*Clackamas County Tourism/MERC Commission*]

Excused Absences:

Tootie Smith [*Chair, Clackamas County*] - Excused

Staff:

Reed Wagner [*WFLA Executive Director*]

Georgia Langer [*Metro*]

Pat Vivian [*notetaker*]

Doug Riggs [*Public Affairs*]

Others Present:

David J. Bernert

Sen. Mark Meek

Jerry Hermann [*President, Rivers of Life*]

Laura Hicks [*ACOE*]

Keith Hobson [*Keith Hobson Consulting*]

Martha Pellegrino

Will Worth [*Rep. Walters*]

McKenzie Worthington [*Senate Pres. Wagner*]

1. Welcome, Agenda Review, Minutes Approval and Accounting Update

Chair Christine Lewis called the meeting to order. A quorum was present. Minutes for the May 22 board meeting and the April 24 budget committee meeting were up for review.

ACTION: Russ Axelrod moved to approve both sets of minutes, seconded by Denyse McGriff. Sandy Carter requested that the motion be amended to omit her comments,

which were editorial, not substantive. Both minutes were unanimously approved with Sandy's edits included.

1a. Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Denyse McGriff reported that budget vs. actuals indicate spending is on track. Russ Axelrod asked if there are plans for other basin Tribes to supplement the \$10,000 Grand Ronde contribution. This question was deferred to the budget hearing (see section 4 below). In response to a question from Denyse, Reed noted that the Authority is a member of the Pacific NW Waterways Association.

ACTION: Russ Axelrod made a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented, seconded by Mini Sharma Ogle. The treasurer's report was unanimously approved.

2. Rivers of Life Presentation

Executive Director Reed Wagner introduced Jerry Hermann, Rivers of Life President, who gave a slide presentation. Jerry shared a list of professional tourism groups that comprise the River Assets and Opportunities Task Force. This group has been meeting since 2017 and will hold its next meeting at 9-11 am, August 21, at the Rivershore Hotel, 1900 Clackamette Drive, Oregon City. They've invited former Gov. Kate Brown, recently appointed President of the Willamette Falls Trust; members of the WFLA board are also invited.

Other slides showcased past recreational opportunities, such as a luxury jet boat, a series of six dinner concerts called Harmony on the Water, and a Gladstone hundred-year celebration in 2011. The River Asset Group, which consists of 12 commercial and nonprofit entities, is working to promote cultural history and entertainment on the river. Their goal is to attract commercial interests that bring in revenue for Locks operation.

Chair Lewis noted that this presentation was included on today's agenda as a public portion of the WFLA budget hearing (see agenda item 4 below).

3. WFLA Director's Report and Business Plan Updates

3a. 2024-25 Work Plan and 3-Year Summary. Director Reed Wagner gave a slide presentation on Willamette Falls Locks work plan milestones. The 2024-25 plan includes collaboration with state and federal partners on the transfer of ownership and covers how operations and capital construction will be financed; this may have to be discussed with ACOE.

The 2024-25 work plan includes:

1. Continue working with ACOE on transfer
2. Engage on operating fee options
3. Establish user groups
4. Develop user groups
5. Develop scope/RFP to begin design/construction

The 2025-27 work plan includes:

1. Complete transfer of ownership
2. Begin and complete capital upgrades
3. Establish administrative policies and Locks training
4. Develop an operations plan for level of service desired
5. Develop a maintenance strategy for the Locks
6. Establish rates for all types of users

3b. Recreation and Tourism Update. [Technical difficulties temporarily caused interruptions to the call] August board meeting. Reed thanked David Penilton for attending the meeting, where there was good conversation about tourism strategy.

3c. Financial Decisions and Policies. Keith Hobson led a discussion to approve the last three financial policies/chapters of the WFLA financial policy manual. These chapters were previously discussed at the June board meeting.

- Chapter 2, budget, focuses on roles and process compliance.
- Chapter 7, financial reports, covers year-end reporting, attestation services for agreed-upon procedures, and standard interim reporting.
- Chapter 8, investment policy, is the most detailed because it's modeled after the State Treasurer's investment policy, which specifies investment maturities of no more than 18 months. Adopting this policy avoids the need for review by the state treasurer's office.

Russ asked for correction of a typo on page 6 of chapter 2; Keith made the correction. Russ also suggested that chapter 8, top of page 3, specify a small group "shall" (not "may") serve on an investment committee to advise the investment officer (Executive Director) who is responsible for all WFLA transactions. The language doesn't limit board participation or preclude forming an investment committee as a budget committee subset, Treasurer McGriff responded. Chair Lewis said an investment committee isn't needed yet because preliminary work won't be finished this year. Russ agreed and withdrew his comment.

ACTION: Sandy Carter made a motion to adopt the financial policies in chapters 2, 7 and 8, seconded by David Penilton. Support was unanimous with no abstentions.

3d. Army Corps of Engineers and KPFF Update. The KPFF engineering firm plans to update its 2018 report on the cost of restoring Locks operation and present it to the next WFLA board meeting. Laura Hicks, ACOE Project Manager, has agreed to give regular updates at WFLA board meetings; she gave an update on issues ACOE is tracking in preparation for the transfer:

1. Perpetual road easements. Progress has been made in negotiations with the two adjacent property owners. The easements will be transferred to the Authority.
2. The phase 1 environmental site assessment is almost complete.
3. SHPO historic preservation work is going well.
4. Repairs for seismic and safety risks are complete and the contractor has left the site. Repairs are under warranty until April 15, 2025, and will still be under warranty when ownership is transferred.

Sandy asked whether the city of West Linn or other state jurisdictions will have a role in the easement process; Laura didn't know. ACOE is working with the two adjacent property owners.

Russ asked about plans for phase 1 of the environmental assessment. Phase 1 involves walking through the site and interviewing and distributing literature to landowners, Laura replied. The ACOE will receive a report from the contractor explaining whether to do further environmental investigation. Denyse asked whether the ACOE anticipates a phase 2 as some property owners expressed a "gut feel" that more sampling is needed. The ACOE will move to phase 2 only if phase 1 indicates a reason to do so, Laura replied.

4. WFLA Budget Hearing

Keith Hobson led a discussion of the FY 2024-25 document produced in collaboration with Executive Director Reed Wagner and the budget committee. Treasurer McGriff asked whether the full board should vote on the budget or just the committee; Chair Lewis said the full board should vote, followed by a public comment period. The public presentation by Rivers of Life today was considered part of today's budget hearing public comment period.

The document, approved by the budget committee on June 24, includes a proposed and approved budget. The goal of today's hearing was to adopt the budget, which the board can adjust as needed. Establishing a FY 2024-25 budget establishes legal authority to spend funds.

Russ asked whether other basin Tribes will contribute to the interagency revenue line item, noting that the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde made a \$10,000 pledge to the Commission two years ago. Robert Kentta offered to inquire.

ACTION: Russ made a motion to adopt measure 2024-03 approving the FY 2024-25 budget as presented, seconded by Denyse McGriff. The FY 2024-25 budget was approved with unanimous support.

5. Wrap Up and Adjourn

The WFLA board will take a summer break in July, meeting next on the fourth Wednesday in August.