



Willamette Falls Locks AUTHORITY

WILLAMETTE FALLS LOCKS AUTHORITY

Authority Meeting

September 25, 2024 – 2:00-3:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

(Minutes: Pat Vivian and Reed Wagner)

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*]

Denyse McGriff [*Mayor, Oregon City*]

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

Mini Sharma Ogle [*PGE*]

Tootie Smith [*Chair, Clackamas County*]

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

Excused Absences:

Christine Lewis [*Metro Council*]

Staff:

Reed Wagner [*WFLA Executive Director*]

Nicholas Cooley [*Metro*]

Pat Vivian [*notetaker*]

Doug Riggs [*Public Affairs*]

Others Present:

Bob and Donna Hansen

Rep. James Hieb

Laura Hicks [*ACOE*]

Keith Hobson [*Keith Hobson Consulting*]

Martha Pellegrino

Rep. Jules Walters

1. Welcome, Meeting Minutes and Treasurer's Update

1a. Chair's Welcome and Meeting Minutes (August 2024). Chair Christine Lewis was excused, and Russ Axelrod led the meeting.

Denyse McGriff moved to approve the minutes. Mini Sharma Ogle, who was not present at the August meeting, asked about the seepage issue raised at that meeting.

There was consensus to move ahead with approval of meeting minutes as a separate process from the seepage issue, which was discussed further (see section 2d).

Regarding the minutes, Reed raised several edits to dates and estimates, to be completed by Nicholas following today's meeting.

The WFLA budget workgroup will refine the numbers to be presented to the Legislature for funding.

ACTION: Denyse McGriff made a motion that the August minutes be approved as amended; Robert Kentta seconded the motion. It passed with unanimous support (Chair Tootie Smith abstained).

1b. Treasurer's Report (July 2024). Treasurer Denyse McGriff reported on the budget vs actuals for July, available in today's meeting packet. She did not identify any issues in the report.

Keith Hobson gave an update on the end of FY 2024 and next steps. The July report shows revenue of \$103,000, which is reimbursement from PSU's Oregon Solutions for costs incurred last year. The audit accountant said these costs should have been recorded in the 2023 fiscal year. Only a few items remain to be reviewed as a result of the CPA firm's audit. He's expecting a report in time for the October board meeting.

ACTION: Sandy Carter moved to accept the treasurer's report for July 31, seconded by Chris Mercier. Approval of the treasurer's report was unanimous.

2. Executive Director's Report

2a. National Waterways Conference. Last week Executive Director Reed Wagner attended the National Waterways Association conference, which offered informative seminars, including Army Corps of Engineers nationwide priorities. Next week he will attend the Northwest Waterways Association conference.

2b. Legislative Agenda and Timing Update. Doug Riggs has spoken with Sen. Wagner's and Rep. Walters' offices regarding financial and statutory aspects of the upcoming ask.

December 1 is the deadline for pre-filing a bill for the 2025 session.

There was discussion of what the additional amount should be. An outstanding question is whether that amount will carry over into the next biennium. Doug Riggs said starting construction within the year is usually sufficient to ensure that funding will be carried over into the next biennium. Reed and Doug will follow up on this and inform the Board whether it can start spending those dollars in 2025.

2c. Federal Approach for 2024-25. ACOE Project Manager Laura Hicks said the Corps is currently negotiating easements for access to the property.

Reed asked about seismic upgrades. Laura said she's doing a final review of the seismic contractor's work and will share her findings. There was continued discussion about seismic upgrades.

2d. Seepage Issue. Discussion returned to the seepage issue raised earlier today. Russ said it's important for the Board to understand the issue better. If work has to be done, the Board needs to include that in its funding request to the Legislature.

ACTION: Mini Sharma Ogle will provide a seepage update at the October Board meeting.

2e. WFLA Bylaws. Executive Director Reed Wagner mentioned that the bylaws are due for an update now that the Authority is a government entity. He is working with legal counsel on updating the bylaws.

3. User Group Discussion

There was no additional feedback from the user group members who spoke at the August meeting. Russ Axelrod said he looks forward to future communication; it's important to be engaged with the public we're serving. Sandy Carter recognized several folks who've been active Locks supporters for years.

Denyse suggested reaching out to commercial and industrial users. Reed said he plans to connect personally with such users at the Northwest Waterways conference. He's also planning a tour for Oregon Tourism Commission members prior to the legislative session.

4. Adjourn Meeting

The next Board meeting will be October 23 at the Oregon City Council Chambers in person with a hybrid option.

Board members decided to have a combined November/December meeting on December 4 at 2 pm.