

WILLAMETTE FALLS LOCKS AUTHORITY

Authority Meeting

January 22, 2025 – 2:00-3:15 PM

Meeting Minutes

(Minutes: Pat Vivian and Reed Wagner)

Authority Members Present:

Mary Baumgardner [West Linn Council President]

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]

Excused Absence:

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

Unexcused Absences:

David Penilton [Clackamas County Tourism/MERC Commission]

Russ Axelrod [Geologist, former West Linn Mayor]

Staff:

Reed Wagner [WFLA Executive Director]

Nicholas Cooley [Metro, Authority Intern]

Pat Vivian [Notetaker]

Doug Riggs [Public Affairs]

Keith Hobson [Keith Hobson Consulting]

1. Welcome, Meeting Minutes and Treasurer’s Report

1a. Chair’s Welcome. Chair Christine Lewis opened the meeting, noting a quorum was present.

1b. Approval of Meeting Minutes (December 2024). Mayor Denyse McGriff made a motion to approve the December meeting minutes as submitted, which was seconded by Sandy Carter. The minutes were unanimously approved.

1c. Treasurer’s Report (Budget vs. Actuals, Oct-Nov 2024). Treasurer Denyse McGriff reviewed the items sent and saw nothing unusual. She regularly tracks income to monitor whether partnering entities meet their funding commitments. The line item for state payment via Portland State University has been reconciled.

Executive Director Reed Wagner thanked the Treasurer for doubling her responsibilities. Per the auditor's recommendation, she now reviews monthly bank reconciliation statements as well as projected vs. actual expenses.

Chair Lewis asked whether the Authority would support submitting an application for nonprofit funds. Robert Kentta will check on the application deadline, and Chair Lewis will work with Executive Director Reed Wagner to complete the application.

ACTION: Mary Baumgardner made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Sandy Carter. The Treasurer's Report was unanimously accepted.

2. Executive Director's Report

2a. Mid-Year Budget Review and Adjustments. Executive Director Reed Wagner reported the new Corps of Engineers National Historic Property Program Manager has contacted him. The Authority is prepared to review the program documents and respond by the end of January. The Corps legal team has also provided an access permit, which will facilitate inspections and design for the Locks upgrade.

Keith Hobson discussed the budget document included in the meeting packet, which shows projected and actual expenses through November 2024. It was noted that this year's budget is similar to last year's. Next year's budget will include specific capital expenses and will look different next year in part because the Authority will pay a consulting engineer pre-construction. Professional guidance is needed on the cost breakdowns that will inform cash flow projections. Keith Hobson noted there might be a cost associated with acquiring that expertise next year. The packet materials include a calendar for development of next year's budget, and Reed Wagner said that the budget committee, made up of three Authority members and one legislator, would be called together again at the February meeting.

Keith Hobson asked for approval of the budget calendar, noting that it can be changed without public review and approval. It may be important to include legislative deadlines because the Authority is making a financial ask. Keith also noted that the Corps will ask the Authority to designate the budget.

ACTION: Sandy made a motion to support the budget calendar, seconded by Denyse McGriff. The budget calendar was unanimously supported.

2b. Vacancies Update: Authority Membership. There are currently four vacancies on the Authority, Reed Wagner reported. Chair Lewis plans to reach out soon to the Governor's office with recommendations to fill these roles. Reed will update the Authority when he has more information on the process of appointing new members.

2c. December Locks Tour. Reed Wagner reported the recent tour of the Locks was a success; members of the tourism community and Business Oregon were included. The attention was well timed in terms of the upcoming legislative session.

2d. Travel Oregon Grants Submission. The Authority has submitted a letter of intent to apply for a Travel Oregon grant. Sandy Carter handled the grant writing process, and intern Nicholas Cooley helped gather cost estimates. The application focuses on providing education, information, and signage for the Locks area, with the goal of educating the public before restoration work begins.

2e. February SDAO Conference and March PNWA Mission to D.C. Reed Wagner plans to attend a conference on public procurement in central Oregon during the second week of February. He also plans to attend the Pacific Northwest Waterways legislative summit in Washington D.C. in the second week of March, together with Chair Lewis. These conferences offer the Authority an opportunity to publicize its mission and funding needs.

2f. Capital Plan for 2021 Lottery Bonds. In December the state Department of Administrative Services contacted the Authority regarding the \$7.25 million lottery bond fund allocation. The Authority will work with its engineering partners to develop a timeline for spending those funds within the three-year work window. The money can be used for preconstruction and construction, with most of the dollars covering capital expenses. A capital project manager will also be hired.

3. Discussions

3a. Authority Membership. Chair Lewis reported that Republican leader Christine Drazan, who served on the Willamette Falls Locks Commission, expressed interest in becoming an Authority member. Chair Lewis has been working with Clackamas County to appoint a replacement for former Chair Tootie Smith. Sandy Carter and Russ Axelrod have both elected to continue serving as Authority members. PGE is in the process of appointing a member to fill Mini Sharma Ogle's seat.

3b. State Legislative Agenda. Doug Riggs gave an update, stating that the Locks restoration bill is HB 2574, introduced by Rep. Walters and cosponsored by Sen. Meek along with four other legislators. HB 2574 was assigned to the House Committee on Transportation; Doug will meet with committee staff on Monday to schedule it for a hearing.

Doug Riggs has been working with members of the delegation on a one-pager to promote support for the Locks, with a focus on their potential for transportation and emergency management. Recent events have led to heightened awareness of infrastructure developments

that might be essential in responding to a disaster such as a Cascadian subduction event. Doug Riggs will keep the Authority posted on progress in Salem.

Sandy Carter asked whether the access agreement will provide more opportunities to offer an impromptu tour of the Locks. Doug said several members of the committee are already familiar with the Locks and their function. Chair Lewis said Locks support will be an easy win for a committee that faces some difficult decisions

Chair Lewis noted that the Corps of Engineers sent the Authority two emails recently regarding the Memorandum of Agreement for Locks closure. Comments are due February 21, which is before the next WFLA meeting. One email addresses historic property management, the other addresses the draft storage map. Reed Wagner and Chair Lewis have been working on a response. Authority members were asked to review the materials and comment.

4. Adjourn Meeting

The next WFLA meeting will be February 26, 2025.

Today's packet includes the rest of the meeting dates for 2025: March 26, April 23, May 28, June 25, July 23, September 24, October 22, and December 3 (combined November/December meeting). No meeting is planned for August.