

**PORTAGE PORT AUTHORITY**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**FEBRUARY 9, 2023**  
**5:00P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Steve Nelson. Present were:

Carl Simpson  
Barb Lusco  
Allen Ekdahl  
Dave Burhans  
Pam Passera

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all in attendance.

**MINUTES**

Mr. Nelson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 12, 2023, meeting as they are a matter of public record and posted in the Marina Office. Ms. Lusco made a motion to approve the minutes from January 12, 2023. Mr. Simpson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**TREASURER'S REPORT – P. Passera**

Ms. Passera said that the treasurer's report is as of 1/31/2023:

**Port Authority**

Balance Year to Date           \$91,953.41

**Marina Operating Fund**

Balance Year to Date           \$333,905.67

Mr. Nelson asked if there was a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Mr. Simpson made a motion to approve the treasurer's report. Ms. Lusco seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**CLAIMS – S. Nelson**

Mr. Nelson asked if everyone had a chance to review the claims and if there was a motion to pay them. Mr. Ekdahl made a motion to approve the claims for payment. Mr. Simpson

seconded the motion. Ms. Passera and Ms. Lusco asked is Athena Energy Services billing seems high. Ms. Perez said that it does seem higher than normal. Mr. Simpson asked what the South Shore Marine invoice for \$1,200.00 was. Mr. Lunn said it was for the buoy. Mr. Simpson asked what the JWS Marine invoice was for. Ms. Lusco said it was for the new bubblers. Motion passed.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **LEGAL**

Attorney Whitten said that he had nothing to report at this time.

### **MARINA FACILITY**

#### **PAYMENTS**

Ms. Lusco said they are collecting payments daily for next season. Ms. Lusco said that half the balances are due on February 15<sup>th</sup> and the remaining balance is due on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### **OPEN SLIPS**

Ms. Lusco said there were 12 open slips at this time for next season. She said it is more difficult to fill slips on I-Dock and J-Dock but said they are reaching out to people on the wait list.

#### **FISHERMEN**

Ms. Lusco said that there are fishermen going out regularly.

#### **MARINA SIGN**

Ms. Lusco said that the new marina sign is complete.

#### **DNR**

Ms. Lusco said that the DNR will be speaking later in the meeting requesting a slip in the marina.

#### **FLOATATION DOCKS**

Mr. Nelson said that he and Mr. Lunn have been in discussion with floatation docks concerning the added floatation to the end of the docks. He said that it seems the cost will be \$1,100.00 per dock and feels that this needs to be done to keep the docks in working condition until they can be replaced. Ms. Lusco made a motion to take the next step. Mr. Burhans seconded the motion. Mr. Ekdahl asked if it was possible to remove some weight from the landing. Mr. Nelson said that the float would go under the landing. Mr. Ekdahl asked about moving the gates to the top of the landing. Mr. Nelson said they will be re-decking the ramps. Mr. Simpson feels this is a great idea to see how it works. He also asked if they have reached out to other

companies for quotes. Mr. Nelson said they have in the past and did not receive a reply. Mr. Simpson said he sees three other companies online that do the same. Mr. Nelson asked Mr. Simpson to give the information to Mr. Lunn so he could contact them. Motion passed.

### **SAFETY**

Mr. Burhans said he had nothing to report at this time.

### **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

#### **GRANT OPPORTUNITY**

Mr. Keiser said that he met with the DNR and they are very favorable of moving forward with the grant opportunity for the fish cleaning station and the public fishing pier. He said they would like to move forward with it. Mr. Keiser said that they will be applying for the grant. Mr. Nelson asked what the numbers were for the grant. Mr. Keiser said they were an 80/20 matching grant for two million. Mr. Nelson feels it was for 1.2 million if he remembers correctly. Mr. Keiser said that the DNR requested that a committee be put together to take care of grant issues between meetings. Mr. Nelson said that would be taken care of. He said that they need to move forward in the grant process. Ms. Lusco made a motion to proceed in the grant process. Mr. Burhans seconded the motion. Mr. Simpson does not feel they should proceed. He feels they should take care of the marina. Motion passed. In favor Mr. Burhans, Ms. Passera, Ms. Lusco and Mr. Nelson. Opposed Mr. Ekdahl and Mr. Simpson.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **RAISES**

Ms. Passera said that her, Mr. Fleming, and Mr. Burhans met to discuss raises for the Harbor Master and the Maintenance person. She made a motion to give the maintenance position a 5% raise and to give the Harbor Master a 5% raise plus \$115.00 per pay for supplemental insurance. Mr. Burhans seconded the motion. Motion passed.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **GRANT OPPORTUNITY COMMITTEE**

Mr. Nelson stated as acting chairman he was appointing Mr. Fleming as chairman of the grant committee with Ms. Lusco and him as members to keep the grant process moving between meetings. Mr. Simpson expressed that he was disappointed that they met last week and did not send any information to the rest of the board until this morning. Mr. Nelson said that the committee is just to handle issues with the grant process and will report to the board. Mr. Simpson asked that they report to the board in a timely manner. Mr. Nelson said that there was nothing to share up until this point. Mr. Ekdahl said a three-person committee cannot sign anything for the board. He also said that everything should be looked at by the attorney first.

Attorney Whitten asked what the committee would be empowered to do. Mr. Simpson does not think that was voted on. Ms. Lusco said that Mr. Fleming has always been authorized to sign documents after they are reviewed by the attorney. She made a motion for Mr. Fleming to be signee with attorney's review. Mr. Ekdahl said there was a motion on the table. Mr. Nelson said that was not a motion that as acting chairman he can appoint the committee. Mr. Ekdahl feels that the committee appointed does not give room for an apposed view. Mr. Nelson said that this is the first process that the projects are not beginning. He said they are simply going forward to obtain the grant. Mr. Burhans seconded the motion. Mr. Simpson asked if nothing will happen until after attorney review and the board votes on it. Mr. Nelson said that is not what the motion states. He said the committee is just there to keep the paperwork going forward on the grant. Mr. Simpson said that the committee has no authorization to spend money. Attorney Whitten said that funds cannot be spent without board approval. Mr. Nelson said the committee is just in place to take care of the paperwork involved. Motion passed. In favor Mr. Burhans, Ms. Passera, Ms. Lusco, Mr. Ekdahl, and Mr. Nelson. Motion was apposed by Mr. Simpson.

#### **PUBLIC INPUT**

##### **BOATER CONCERNS**

Denise Little of Portage, Indiana asked if the board must go before city council for approval. Mr. Nelson said that they do not. She asked if the \$1.2 million could be spent without public input. Attorney Whitten said that they can vote to spend the money. He explained that only the match would be spent. Mr. Simpson asked if it was a 75/25 match on the grant. Mr. Nelson said that it is.

##### **DNR SLIP REQUEST**

Nicole Baumann Conservation Officer with the DNR came to the board requesting a slip to put a boat at the marina. She explained they received a boat with grant funds and have one in Hammond as well as Michigan City. Ms. Baumann said they hope to place this one at the Portage marina. Ms. Lusco asked if it was 23ft not including the motor. Ms. Baumann said it was. Mr. Nelson said the board would discuss this and let them know. He asked how many parking spaces they would need. Ms. Baumann said they would need two parking spaces. Mr. Burhans asked how many slips the fire department has. Mr. Nelson said they have one slip and one jet ski slip.

##### **BOATER CONCERNS CONTINUED**

Dean McBrayer of Portage, Indiana came to the board saying that he does not feel the board should be looking into a fish cleaning station and public fishing pier while the marina is in disarray. He said that he sees a few things have been taken care of but there are a lot more

items that need to be attended to. Mr. McBrayer feels that a \$1.2 million dollar grant with an 80/20 or 75/25 match will be around \$320,000.00 and will wipe out all funds from slip renters. Mr. Nelson said they are aware of what needs to be done and it is a big project coming. Mr. McBrayer said there are enough places to fish along the water way. Mr. Nelson said they are hoping not to touch the funds at all for the match. He said they will be going and looking for funding in other areas. Mr. Nelson said that they are aware that dock replacement is necessary. Mr. Simpson said that it is part of the master plan.

Rob Bolt of Ogden Dunes, Indiana came to the board with parking concerns on K-Dock. He said K-Dock parking is full most of the time due to public fisherman that are not supposed to park there. Mr. Bolt feels it will be worse if the police boat is put in and they get two spaces. He said the two spaces for the fire trucks are not long enough. Mr. Nelson said to report to the office when vehicles are there that should not be. Mr. Bolt said there is some much needed maintenance. Mr. Nelson agrees that there is.

Aaron Schmidt of Valparaiso, Indiana asked what the board felt the outcome would be if they did a survey about the projects. Mr. Nelson said that the entire city would be surveyed not just boaters. Mr. Schmidt said that the land on the other side of the ditch is an eyesore. He said metal was coming out of the banks. Mr. Nelson said it is an eighty-year-old wreck. He said they cleaned it up and it looks like a jungle again. Mr. Schmidt asks that what they have be maintained and beautified. Mr. Simpson asked if Mr. Schmidt was talking about the property straight across. Mr. Schmidt said he was talking about the property by the supervisors club.

Bill Flatly of Oak Forest, Illinois came to the board saying that the cameras do not work. He said he has a friend have their motor stolen. Mr. Flatly said that the garbage is not picked up properly and is bad on the weekends. He said that the urinal in the men's bathroom was not fixed for three months. Mr. Flatly said that there are lose boards that people can trip on, and they have been marked with tape. Mr. Lunn said that the tape on the boards was not reported to him, but they have been replaced and repaired.

Mike Wirtz of Portage, Indiana asked if union contractors would be used for these projects. Ms. Lusco said union contractors are always used. Mr. Nelson said the city has a policy on this matter. Mr. Wirtz asked how they were going to pay the 25% match. Mr. Nelson said that they are looking for outside funding to cover the match. Mr. Nelson said this is just the beginning stages of the project. Mr. Burhans said it is part of the grant. Mr. Wirtz asked if the covid funds would be used for this. Mr. Nelson said that they would not be. Mr. Ekdahl said everything with the covid funds changed. Mr. Simpson said that those funds cannot be used to match funds for grants.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn the February 9, 2023, meeting was made by Ms. Lusco. Ms. Passera seconded the motion. Motion Passed.