



**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING OF THE  
BELLINGHAM-WHATCOM PUBLIC FACILITIES DISTRICT  
THURSDAY, JUNE 27, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Daniel Larner, President, called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Board members present were Loraine Boland, Dunham Gooding, Daniel Larner, and Brent Walker. Also present were Andrew Asbjornsen, Alison Henshaw, Patricia Leach, Mayor Kim Lund, John Purdie, and Tara Sundin.

**BUSINESS**

**1. Further discussion of the future of the Bellingham-Whatcom Public Facilities District.**

Tara Sundin gave some background on the PFD. Currently, the PFD is set to be dissolved in 2027. However, recent legislation allows the extension of public facilities districts until 2042. Tara explained that the memorandum sent to board members on June 26 was produced after one meeting of a City staff team created under direction of the mayor. The team is considering extending the life of the PFD and therefore the receipt of further revenue from state sales tax by 15 years. Whenever the PFD expires, its assets will be returned to the City.

The City staff team members are Tara Sundin, Andy Asbjornsen, Forrest Longman, Matt Stamps, Joel Pfundt, and Alison Henshaw. The team expects a legal brief to be produced at the end of the project, as well as a capital needs assessment for the Mount Baker Theatre and Lightcatcher Museum. Andy will look at a projection of the additional revenue expected for the additional 15 years. The memorandum is an approach only, and will be run by the Mayor and the PFD board.

Dunham indicated that he sees the use of PFD funds for maintenance as not consistent with the original intent for PFD's when they were authorized by the state legislature and not consistent with the work of our PFD since its establishment. He remarked that the legislature's goal was creating facilities that would strengthen the economies of the participating communities. He would be interested in discussing a potential new asset.

Tara mentioned that the PFD prioritized capital projects initially; now maintenance of those capital assets is important.

Daniel Larner said while he appreciates the City's work, he was shocked to receive the memorandum a day before the meeting.

Andy Asbjornsen responded that the City team was formed as a result of the board members' questions at the April meeting, particularly what can be done under the RCWs and bond documents, including a potential new asset.

Daniel Larner expressed a wish for answers to the board's legal questions sooner rather than later.

Loraine Boland is concerned that the next regular meeting of the board isn't until October, and wants to know if anything can be done before that meeting.

Tara mentioned Matt Stamps would like to hire outside counsel most knowledgeable about public facilities districts, such as Pacifica Law Group.

Andy stressed that there is no funding currently available for the work. Budget authority would be needed in order to go forward in October preliminarily then more so in 2025. The budget authority would come to the PFD Board either at its regular meeting in October or at a special meeting. Resources are needed to hire legal counsel and conduct the capital needs assessment. PFD funds should be used for this.

Brent Walker would like the public facilities districts legislation clarified to find out what is possible. Andy responded that maintenance of the existing PFD assets is assured but the Washington State Department of Commerce would need details of any new asset.

Daniel Larner believes a great deal is already known about the Mount Baker Theatre and Lightcatcher Museum buildings. Andy agreed but pointed out that resources would be needed to collect that information. Tara added that the Mayor will be formulating resources to get the work done. City Facilities staff know about the near term needs of the Mount Baker Theatre but would want to understand what is needed in the next 20 years.

Mayor Lund pointed out that the scope of work has no hierarchy and some tasks could be done at the same time. The City and PFD want to be excellent stewards of the assets and be fully informed with a legal framework of what is possible. Then, the conversation can move forward.

Andy pointed out that the City is not looking at shifting maintenance costs from the City to the PFD; more like improvements and bigger projects to lengthen the lifetime of the Mount Baker Theatre and Lightcatcher.

Dunham said it sounds like the City has already decided that the funds should be used for maintenance rather than a capital project or improvement and that it should not do that without working with the PFD Board. Tara responded she could modify the scope to reflect that steps can happen concurrently and provide options of what is allowed. Dunham asked Tara for a monthly update or to have a representative of the PFD on the City team. He would also like a special meeting held for the budget ordinance.

Tara will work with Matt Stamps to obtain a proposal from Pacifica Law Group. Dunham doesn't want to wait until October. Daniel wants Tara to let him know when the proposal is prepared so he can call a special board meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Daniel Larner adjourned the meeting at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Alison M. Henshaw, Administrative Assistant.

**Final Minutes Approved:**

  
**Daniel Larner, President**

