

MINUTES
PORT AUTHORITY SPECIAL MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 5, 2021
4:00 P.M.
LOWER-LEVEL CONFERENCE ROOM

Members Present: Commissioners Jerry McCarthy, Jeff Austin, Jason Baskin, Lee Bjorndal, Chuck Moline, Michael Bednar, and Jerry Mohrfeld.

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Port Authority Attorney Craig Byram, Port Authority Executive Director Craig Clark and Port Authority Secretary Tom Dankert.

Others Present: Hormel Institute representatives Dr. Robert Clarke, Gail Dennison, Elizabeth Fedie, Dr. Jarrod French, Dr. Jeff McDonald, and Dr. Amer Alam.

Others Present via Zoom: Dr. Bin Liu (Hormel Institute)

President McCarthy called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Item #2. – Approval of minutes of the March 10, 2021 special meeting: Motion by Commissioner Moline, seconded by Commissioner Mohrfeld to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2021 special meeting. Carried 7-0.

Item #3. – The Hormel Institute state bonding request: Mr. Clark introduced the proposed support for a nearly \$20 million expansion of The Hormel institute. Mr. Clark did note this competes with the City’s \$13 million bonding request for wastewater treatment plant upgrades. Additionally, if the project does get state bonding money, discussion will need to ensue regarding a project manager for the City as our staff do not currently have that expertise.

Executive Director of The Hormel Institute Dr. Robert Clarke noted this was a unique opportunity for us as we currently have the only Cryo-EM microscope in the State of Minnesota. However, ours is always in use by staff. Other smaller entities within the area are looking for ways to be able to use our microscope, so we are working with NIH for a grant to purchase a second Cryo-EM microscope that could be rented out to others. The focus of this newly proposed addition would be for external users and could reach into the markets in Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota. The project has support from Mayo, the University of Minnesota, and The Hormel Foundation. This is a very competitive grant, but NIH has already funded three of these in the United States, none of which are in the Midwest.

Dr. Jarrod French noted this powerful microscope can look at diseased tissues from all angles. This type of technology allows us to get answers quicker.

Dr. Amer Alam noted we have a great center with a great reputation. Mr. Alam noted he came to The Hormel Institute because of its capabilities with the Cryo-EM microscope. Another Cryo-EM microscope that would be available for external users could allow for a revenues stream from all over the world, and people would be climbing over each other to get access.

Gail Dennison noted that the cost is just over \$18 million, and if we do get an NIH grant that would reduce the need for other sources.

Commissioner McCarthy questioned if external users would have to pay for access. Dr. Clarke noted yes, they would pay. Other entities have established a cost structure and we would do the same. Since this is proposed to be government funded, our “cost price” would just cover the costs. For-profit entities would end up paying more for use.

Commissioner Baskin questioned what sense does staff get from the legislature on this project? Dr. Clarke noted nobody else has this in the entire State of Minnesota, so people get excited about it.

President McCarthy questioned staff as to how the project would work. Mr. Dankert noted he envisioned it would work similar to the Hormel Institute Phase 2 project as bonding money has to flow to a public entity, and the public entity would need to own the project/addition. Funds would flow into the Port Authority from all sources, we would pay the bills and own the project. Mr. Dankert noted we would need to hire a construction manager like what Jon Erichson did for us last time.

After further discussion, motion by Commissioner Bednar, seconded by Commissioner Moline to approve the resolution in support of The Hormel Institute bonding request. Carried 7-0.

Item #4. – Executive Director Report: Mr. Clark noted the Nu-Tek project has a City redevelopment agreement on the April 19, 2021 council meeting for approval.

Additionally, Terry Hall has submitted a request for an interest free loan for a sprinkler system to be installed at his former State Bank Building project. If there is interest from the Port Authority, we can place this on the Regular meeting scheduled for April 28, 2021. No objections noted.

Item #5. – Any other business: None.

Item #6. Adjournment: With no further business, motion by Commissioner Bjorndal, seconded by Commissioner Austin to adjourn the meeting at 4:29 pm. Carried 7-0.

Approved: _____

President: _____

Secretary: _____