



**AGENDA**  
**Special Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Fort Worden Public Development Authority (FWPDA)**  
**Thursday, September 10, 2020 | 9 a.m.**  
**Via Zoom (Remote Meeting Per Governor Inslee's Proclamation 20-28.8)**

**Public Meeting Access Information:**

*To join the webinar by computer:*

<https://zoom.us/j/93686791222?pwd=ODk4K0pOZVJ2REJ5d2llcmREY09zZz09>

*By phone only dial:*

1+ 253-215-8782

Meeting ID: 936 8679 1222

[no participant ID]

Password: 323810

\*9 to request to speak during public comment

**Public Meeting Agenda**

- I. Call to Order
- II. Resolution 20-17 Regarding a Grant Anticipation Note with Kitsap Bank
  - A. Staff Report
  - B. Board Discussion
    - Action:** Motion to approve **Resolution 20-17** authorizing the PDA board co-chairs to sign a \$1.2 million grant anticipation note with Kitsap Bank.
- III. Round Robin Staff Status Report on Reopening
- IV. Board Report
- V. Public Comment (limited to agenda topics)
- VI. Next Meetings (tentative)
  - Finance and Audit Committee – September 21st
  - Board of Directors – September 23rd
- VII. Adjourn



*Fort Worden*

— PORT TOWNSEND —  
A HISTORIC GATHERING PLACE

September 1, 2020

Dear Norm and Todd,

As you know, we began discussing my retirement and transition from the PDA to the Fort Worden Foundation last October. 2020 was forecasted to be a banner year for the PDA: Glamping launched by May, Makers Square completed in July and a larger, three-day, THING 2 festival, that would have been held just last weekend. We had discussed embarking upon a national search for my successor to provide a little overlap this summer and I had hoped to begin my transition in July and retire from the PDA after THING. But, then COVID hit and it posed an urgent threat to the organization.

With David Timmons coming on board in August as the Acting Associate Executive Director overseeing daily operations and management, I believe it is a good time now for me to begin my transition. I respectfully request that I formally retire from the PDA on November 15, 2020. I have some pressing family issues and personal medical needs that demand my attention before the end of the year.

November 15 is the scheduled construction completion of Makers Square. My continuing to work to this date will provide me time to help secure the HTCs, seek additional funding for Makers Square, complete the RFP for Makers Square, identify funding for the Fort Worden reimagining process in cooperation with the Fort Worden Collaborative and assist the PDA to set in motion the process for developing a new business model for the Fort post COVID. Ideally, the PDA can begin this business plan process with a qualified consulting team towards the end of the year with new staff and board leadership in place.

I have been honored and privileged to work with you both, the board and staff, as well as the partners to grow the organization. Since May 2014, the PDA grew from 14 employees with an operating budget of a little over one million dollars to a 2019 operating budget of over \$7 million with staffing of 170 employees during peak season. Our partnership with State Parks is strong, and the combined investments of more than \$30 million we have made over the past six years in the campus facilities, infrastructure and grounds are hugely impressive.

The vision of the Fort as a Lifelong Learning Center is still inspiring and can be reformed to become more financially sustainable over the long term. It will take patience, some difficult trade-offs and the ability to maintain and build trust and strong working relationships with State Parks, the City, the partners and our community. I would be honored to continue to help part-time in some capacity with the Fort Worden Foundation. Herb Cook and I will be discussing this with the Foundation board at our meeting on September 30<sup>th</sup>.

I remain a champion of this noble effort and offer my deep gratitude for the opportunity to help bring it forward.

Respectfully,

Dave Robison

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September 8, 2020

## **Fort Worden PDA Executive Director Announces Retirement** *Succession Plans Underway*

PORT TOWNSEND, WASH.—

Dave Robison has announced that he will retire this fall after serving as the Executive Director of the Fort Worden Public Development Authority (FWPDA) for nine years. Robison will retire on November 15th, 2020.

Robison's retirement marks the formal end of a 30-year career of working to make Port Townsend a stronger community. "It has been an honor to work for the PDA and to grow the organization," Robison said. "The vision of the Fort's Lifelong Learning Center is inspiring and noble, and we are fortunate to have passionate partners and community stakeholders invested in the effort to make it work."

Robison led the process beginning in 2010 to form the FWPDA to co-manage Fort Worden State Park's 90-acre campus. Since the FWPDA officially began operating and managing the campus on May 1, 2014 with Robison as executive director, the organization grew from 14 employees with an operating budget of a little over \$1 million to a 2019 operating budget of over \$7 million and 170 employees during peak season.

Board Co-Chair Norm Tonina said Robison's leadership has been key to the FWPDA's growth and vitality. "Dave's vision, passion, and ability to build and leverage a broad network of stakeholder relationships are what propelled the Fort Worden PDA's progress all the way back to 2011, when the PDA was first chartered by the City of Port Townsend," Tonina said. "As a result of Dave's leadership, we have watched revenues and capital investment accelerate and the attraction of new and exciting lifelong learning opportunities from organizations such as the Port Townsend School of the Arts and Seattle Theater Group's THING festival."

Robison's retirement has been in the works since last year. He began discussing his retirement plans with board leaders in October 2019, with the goal of having an executive director search and transition plan underway in early 2020. FWPDA leaders began consulting with search firms with the capability to recruit candidates nationally but put the plan on hold when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and posed an urgent threat to the organization.

### **Succession Plans**

With the successful resumption of limited lodging and restaurant operations, the Board of Directors is ready to take the next steps following Robison's announcement. At a September 10<sup>th</sup> board meeting, co-chairs Norm Tonina and Todd Hutton will recommend to the board that former Port Townsend City Manager David Timmons be offered an employment contract as interim executive director until the PDA is able to recruit a new executive director.

The PDA hired Timmons in March 2020 to assist with emergency response efforts while Robison focused on addressing financial challenges related to the closure. Timmons began serving as the acting associate executive director in August. Hutton noted that Timmons was instrumental in the creation of the PDA, hiring Robison to

lead the effort while Timmons was City Manager, and is familiar with its history, its challenges, and its opportunities.

“David Timmons is a proven leader who has the ability to guide a complex organization, build teams, and relate to a diversity of stakeholders,” Hutton said. “Since he began working for us, David has developed an even deeper understanding of the organization and is well positioned to serve in an interim role.”

Tonina agreed that Timmons’ leadership will be essential to the transition. “This will help the board focus on a search for a new executive director, which we’ll launch when a thorough and safe process can be held amid COVID-19 restrictions. We look forward to participation from partner representatives, the City, and other stakeholders in the search for a new executive director.”

### **Ending on a High Note**

Robison’s retirement on November 15<sup>th</sup> will coincide with the expected date for the completion of Makers Square, a \$12 million project to rehabilitate three historic buildings for a year-round community of makers, artists, and educators. Robison said Timmons’ involvement has made it possible for him to focus on fundraising and finalizing plans for Makers Square operations and transition to retirement with confidence. Robison also is working with the FWPDA’s campus partners on reimagining a more sustainable business model for the Fort. Robison will continue as acting Executive Director of the Fort Worden Foundation and is looking to stay involved in the Foundation in some capacity after he retires. The nonprofit Foundation raises funds to support the rehabilitation of Fort Worden’s historic campus and strengthen established and new partnerships.

Robison’s career includes working as a planner and eventually the director of the planning department for the City of Port Townsend from 1990 to 1996. He led the City’s efforts in preparing the Urban Waterfront Plan and the Point Hudson Master Plan, as well as the four-year process to complete the City’s Comprehensive Plan under the Growth Management Act. In 1998 Robison became the founding director of the Northwest Maritime Center, overseeing the planning, design, fundraising and development of the 27,000-square-foot maritime educational and cultural waterfront facility. Later, while co-owner of a planning and development consulting firm, he led the formation of the City of Port Townsend Public Development Authority, which eventually became the Fort Worden Public Development Authority.

Robison said, “I have been so lucky, honored and privileged to have been entrusted to work on many public projects that have helped retain Port Townsend’s special community character and guide its future growth.”

Essential to the formation of the FWPDA was Robison’s leadership in the negotiation of a 50-year master lease with the Washington State Parks Commission. This involved securing support from the Governor and legislators and raising \$600,000 for mobilization and start-up funding. Robison and his team then turned around the operation and management of the Fort’s conference and hospitality services, which was losing more than \$700,000 annually, to be financially sustainable in first year.

Tonina commended Robison for building a strong and collaborative partnership with State Parks. “The combined investments of more than \$30 million the PDA has made over the past six years in the campus facilities, infrastructure and grounds are significant,” Tonina said.

“The co-management approach to Fort Worden’s future and the resulting day-to-day partnership with State Parks are what continue to fuel the evolution of Fort Worden and its lifelong learning center mission,” Tonina added. “While COVID has thrown an existential challenge at the PDA, the organization is using the crisis as an opportunity to refine our business model and reimagine lifelong learning at Fort Worden, which Dave will lead until his retirement.”

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