

# Port of Longview to vote on budget next week, set date for commissioner interviews

A former Cowlitz County commissioner heads the list of five candidates the Port of Longview announced Wednesday as applicants to replace port commissioner, who stepped down last month.

The port also released its preliminary 2019 budget, which projects revenues of \$36 million and a \$3.4 million profit after expenses.

The five candidates to replace Bagaason are:

- George Raiter of Longview. He is a former county commissioner and Longview mayor and city councilman
- Megan Richie of Longview. She ran unsuccessfully last year for Longview City Council
- Robert Beringer of Kelso. He is co-owner of a horse farm in the Ostrander area.
- Allan Erickson, a Longview businessman
- Brian Loos, safety and risk manager for the City of Longview.

The commissioners will interview the five applicants at their public meeting on Nov. 28 and may make a decision during that time.

The commissioners are scheduled to adopt a budget on their meeting Nov. 14. Budget discussions Wednesday led to one disagreement — about boat launch fees at Willow Grove Park.

Commissioner Jeff Wilson said the fees — \$5 for a daily permit and \$40 for annual use — should be eliminated.

“The community, to me, has spoken very well,” Wilson said. “Those boat launch fees need to go.”

Commissioner Doug Averett said he favors keeping the fees, even raising them, because they help keep the launch clean and safe.

The port will retain its tax levy, which will cost property owners 26 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value, or \$52 on a \$200,000 home. It will raise \$2.3 million next year, with \$1.1 million designated for the port’s capital budget and \$1.2 million earmarked for debt payments.

The port will spend \$2.1 million to move port offices to the colonial-style “White House” building off International Way. The historic building is the former headquarters of Long-Bell Lumber Co. That amount would cover the move as well as updates necessary to make the building operational.

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