

December 20, 2022
6:00 P.M.
Newport, OR

PORT OF NEWPORT COMMISSION MINUTES

This is not an exact transcript. The video of the session is available on the Port's website.

The Port of Newport Commission met on the above date and time at the South Beach Activity Room, 2120 SE Marine Science Dr., and virtually via Microsoft Teams. In attendance were Commissioners Lackey, Burke, and Chuck. Commissioners Sylvia and Retherford were excused. Also in attendance were General Manager Paula Miranda, Operations Director Aaron Bretz, Administrative Assistant Gloria Tucker, and PR Consultant Angela Nebel. Visitors from the public included Rex Capri, Larry Osborne, and Paul Zellman.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Capri stated he wanted to talk about the Newport International Terminal. He noted some years ago, a project was undertaken to revive and diversify that facility at quite an expense. He indicated the Port is still paying on it. He added it is probably one of the most valuable assets of the Port. He stated he thinks it is vastly underutilized. He noted it's mainly used by one user group. He asked if it has the biggest liability of any Port asset. Miranda replied there are no losses, no liability, beyond what's covered by insurance.

Capri asked if there is still a debt. Miranda replied the Port didn't just improve the terminal, but mostly undertook environmental work that had to be done because of a leak. She explained the Port did borrow some funds from Business Oregon and issued a bond. She noted the Port is still paying for that. She added at this point, the International Terminal is not losing money, it just could do better. Capri suggested the Commission prioritize any necessary improvements to the terminal and prioritize new users to that facility.

Burke thanked him for input. He noted grants that the Port has applied for, and that outreach continues to other potential users. Miranda added getting equipment for opportunities is the biggest problem.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION was made by Chuck, seconded by Lackey, to approve the consent calendar as amended. The motion carried unanimously in a voice vote.

OLD BUSINESS

Approval of Rondy's Lease Amendment. Burke introduced the agenda item. Miranda reported staff have not been able to remove the dredge material on the Rondy's property. She explained that property's lease is one dollar per year, and the benefit they receive is the taxes. She noted Bretz has been trying to get a contractor to take the materials out, but they won't be able to do anything until after February. She indicated she asked Rondy's to extend another six months, and they were amicable. She added if the Port extends after that, they will likely want to charge more money.

MOTION was made by Lackey, seconded by Chuck, to authorize the General Manager to execute the third lease amendment as presented. The motion carried unanimously in a voice vote.

NEW BUSINESS

Appointment of Budget Committee Members. Burke introduced the agenda item. Miranda reported the Port was one committee member short last year, and two more openings have occurred. She noted three folks have applied, Paul Zellman, Larry Osborne, and Carol DeLong. She indicated their letters of interest are included in the packet. She added the Commission needs to appoint them to terms that expire at different times. The Commission thanked them for their interest and participation.

MOTION was made by Lackey, seconded by Chuck, to appoint Larry Osborne and Carol DeLong, for terms expiring in 2024, and Paul Zellman, for a term expiring in 2025, to the Port of Newport Budget Committee. The motion carried unanimously in a voice vote.

STAFF REPORTS

General Manager. Miranda reported this has been a short month with holidays and moving up the meeting, but that doesn't mean staff haven't been doing a whole lot at the Port. She stated folks at South Beach have completed several repairs at the docks. She noted she entered into permits for the Seafood and Wine Festival, and the RV Park is already full. She explained this year the event is February 23-26. She indicated she also gave a permit to Ardor Adventures who do a bunch of races through Port property. She added the Port grants those in exchange for sponsorship.

Miranda reported staff continue working on dredging permits for the International Terminal and NOAA. She stated Bretz believes the Port will be able to get the work done in this water window. She noted the Administration Building has been delayed, and she doesn't know if she has the latest information. She indicated there is a chance the Port will not be able to get the building completed until the very end of January. She added there have been more delays on the electrical parts.

Miranda reported staff were scheduled to move on January 20, but chances are that will change. She noted she was thinking about changing the Commission meeting, but it is best to keep it January 24. She stated the Port is also having some issues trying to get pavement done in the winter. She indicated the commercial marina's dock assignment has been mostly completed. She added this is something that has been desired for a long time. She explained staff put out lots of announcements so that visitors from other areas can see the change. She stated the Port doesn't have any obligation to provide space to folks who do not have a moorage assignment.

Miranda reported there have been coordination meetings between the Army Corps and the consultant on Port Dock 7. Bretz reported staff have been getting DOWL up to speed on what the Army Corps has accomplished and working toward on the Section 107 project, which is to establish the channel. He stated the Port has benefited from their survey work within its project area for Port Dock 7. He explained the Army Corps are as concerned with the Port project progressing as they are with theirs. He indicated he is contacting Port Dock 7 users and future users so they can give some input into the plan. He added he talked with non-fishing interests over there. Miranda added the project is not to the communication piece yet. She explained staff are just trying to engage with consultant, and there will be meetings scheduled that will include all the

users, including the Oregon Boating Foundation and Yacht Club. She emphasized they will be included in the process.

Miranda reported Port Dock 5A repairs are underway, and staff completed repairs to 5C. She stated at the International Terminal, the RORO Dock piling assessment is complete, and staff are coming up with a repair plan. She noted it will most likely fit on next fiscal year's budget, unless there is something absolutely necessary to fix. She indicated she has been entertaining folks who might use the terminal, some related to wave energy and some forestry industry. She added wave energy is waiting on timing, and forestry is waiting on equipment.

Miranda reported last year, companies tried to rent equipment and couldn't, but they will try again this summer. She noted the Port was not successful in its grant application with the Maritime Administration for equipment but will keep on trying. She indicated financial reports and project reports are included in the packet.

Chuck confirmed with staff Rony used all the dredge spoils they need. Miranda noted at this point in time, most of the stuff there is not usable for construction. Bretz added the city took about 1,000 yards³ this year. Miranda noted the Port tried to advertise it as free, but people are not interested. Chuck asked if the Port has to pay the DSL royalty. Bretz replied it's been paid in full. Lackey asked if staff can cold call municipalities or construction companies. Bretz replied he has done that, but more can be done.

Chuck noted NOAA has four vessels and asked if the dredging would be an issue. Bretz replied it's out for bid now, and that's everyone's concern. He stated when dredging is closer, if they haven't moved and permits are in place, staff will ask the Army Corps for an extension. He explained it takes five or six days to do the dredging, but there is a short window. Miranda stated the Port has an obligation under its lease to maintain the berth, but NOAA knows when that window is, and either they have to work with the Port or waive it. Chuck added that agency put that window in.


Chuck asked if staff see eel grass habitat becoming more and more an impediment to future dredging. Bretz replied the Port Dock 7 project will be a good litmus test. He noted there are a couple of challenges. He explained there are many different opinions on what successful mitigation is. He stated the root of the challenge is that there is not a lot of good information on how to create eel grass habitat on the west coast. He noted it would make sense if the permitting agencies allowed for people to start building that information as a part of mitigation; contribution to the picture of how to fix the problem of eel grass habitat should be part of mitigation. Miranda stated it's a moving target, and it depends on who is handling the agency at the moment. She noted when it comes to the environment, everyone wants to be the one with the good idea and push for more restrictions. She added she brings this up a lot at Pacific Northwest Waterways Association, PNWA.

Chuck stated replacing docks may allow more eel grass to grow, and he doesn't want the Port to shoot themselves in the foot. Miranda replied it's like creating a ditch that becomes a wetland, and that's why ports need folks like PNWA to keep working in Washington, DC. She added the Mission to Washington is March 19-23, and to let her know interest in attending.


Miranda added there will be a SDAO training before the Commission meeting on January 24.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.



James Burke, President



Walter Chuck, Secretary/Treasurer