

June 7, 2024
12:11 p.m.
Newport, OR

PORT OF NEWPORT COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING 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 virtually via Microsoft Teams. In attendance were Commissioners Sylvia, Retherford, and Ruddiman. Commissioner Chuck and Lackey were excused. Also in attendance were Executive Director Paula Miranda, Director of Business and Finance Services Mark Brown, Operations Director Aaron Bretz, and Administrative Assistant Gloria Tucker. Visitors included James Deam.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Deam introduced himself as a resident of South Beach and a member of the LGBTQIA+ community. He stated he appreciated the opportunity to address Commission regarding his recent experience with the Port of Newport hiring process. He noted on June 6, he applied for the position of receptionist for the Port of Newport, confident that his extensive experience in office administration including receptionist roles made him a strong candidate. He said he invested significant time and effort into preparing his application and ensuring his resume accurately reflected his qualifications. He added to his dismay, less than two hours after submitting his application, he received a swift rejection, leaving him disheartened and frustrated.

Deam stated while he understands the importance of efficient hiring processes, he believes that such a rapid dismissal without thorough consideration is indicative of a systematic issue within the Port of Newport's recruitment practices. He noted, furthermore, if the hiring personnel had concerns regarding the dates on his resume, they could have easily reached out to seek clarification. He said, instead, he was summarily rejected without the opportunity to address any potential concerns or provide any additional information. He added this experience not only highlights the need for greater transparency and accountability within the hiring process, but also calls to question the Port of Newport's commitment to listening to the concerns of its community members.

Deam stated as a resident of South Beach and someone who has heard numerous complaints from local, commercial fishermen regarding failing infrastructure and a lack of follow up from the Port, he believes there is a disconnect between the Port's priorities and the needs of the community it serves. He noted it appears the Port of Newport is more focused on maintaining its image as a tourist destination and allocating resources to projects that may not directly benefit the local economy. He said this is evident in the allocation of grant money toward flashy fish processing stations while essential infrastructure projects go unaddressed. He added he believes the six-month probation period for new hires is excessively long and may deter qualified candidates from pursuing employment opportunities with the Port of Newport.

Deam stated a shorter probation period would not only be more reasonable, but also demonstrate a greater commitment to supporting and retaining valuable employees. He noted he had requested his resume and screenshots of Mark Brown's responses be attached for review. He said the multiple instances of defensiveness displayed by Brown's staff in response to his simple comment and suggestion without seeking feedback is appalling. He added he urges the Commissioners to reevaluate the Port of Newport's hiring practices and prioritize fairness, transparency, and community engagement.

Deam stated by fostering a culture of inclusivity and accountability, [everyone] can work together to ensure the Port of Newport serves the best interest of all its stakeholders. He noted it is wrong and telling how Mark Brown and Paula Miranda displayed so much decisiveness and defensiveness to his simple comment and suggestion. He requested an apology for being rude and dismissive. He added they could not handle him sending them emails without retorting to lashing back and blaming him multiple times. Tucker noted she shared the resume and screenshots. Miranda replied she has no comments and shared Deam's emails with the Commission. She stated usually the Commission does not respond to public comments [at the meeting].

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Funds for Rogue Seawall Additional Piling Investigation. Sylvia introduced the agenda item. Bretz reported while finishing up the Rogue Brewery Seawall repairs for the season, a survey of the piling locations revealed an issue around pilings 15 and 16. He stated there is some deflection there that equates to about 3 inches or so. He noted he really doesn't know for sure what the cause is. He indicated it is reasonable to assume there is some kind of issue with tiebacks in that area because there are tiebacks on each piling that hold them in place. He added staff can't be sure unless they are opened.

Bretz reported Commission should authorize some funds to do some excavation and investigation of that area to figure out the cause to determine the best fix. He stated he included an image of the most recent survey. He explained there have been three surveys on the pilings, and they have not moved. He recommended getting in there and figuring out the cause. He noted he does not recommend making assumptions because it is a safety issue. He indicated if the contractors find what the problem is and can affect a simple repair, that would be the plan. Miranda added this is very unfortunate, but it isn't different than remodeling an old house and opening a wall; you don't know what you are going to find.

Retherford noted the exclusions in the contract. She asked what does the extra \$6,000 cover. Bretz replied the extra funding is intended for potential repair if that option is available. He explained those exclusions were put in there to be clear that work is still not a part of their project. He noted the Port does not expect them to put the asphalt back; the Port will have to do that. He added as an example for the extra funding, if something needs to be welded, it can get done immediately.

Sylvia clarified with staff the \$60,000 only includes a quick, on the spot repair. He asked if they find major damage, would it require looking at all the tiebacks. Bretz replied that depends on what they see, but it could potentially. He explained when the contractors looked at tiebacks at the beginning of this project, they looked at tiebacks at the other end of the wall; they expected the west end would be in the worst shape. He stated if they see corrosion as a major factor, the Port will have to consider what to do. He added it is encouraging there hasn't been any movement at the other pilings.

Retherford asked if where they are digging is where the foam fill has already been injected. Bretz confirmed it is, and the contractors will have to go through that and replace that with material again. He noted while they will undo some of the work just completed, the main point is to affect a very small area. He emphasized they will keep the excavation as small as possible.

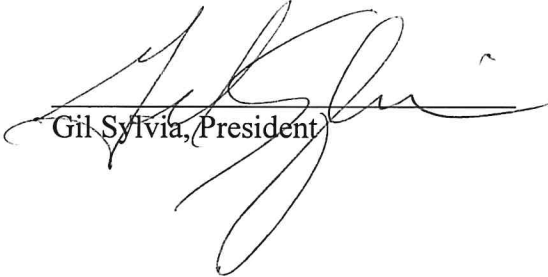
MOTION was made by Retherford, seconded by Ruddiman, to approve contract amendments for PBS Engineering and Bergerson Construction not to exceed \$60,000 to

investigate and potentially repair the piling deflection on pilings 15 and 16 on the Rogue Brewery Seawall. The motion carried unanimously in a voice vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:26 p.m.

ATTESTED:



Gil Sylvia, President



Walter Chuck, Secretary/Treasurer

