June 23, 2026
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 Administration Building, 600 SE Bay Blvd., and virtually via Microsoft Teams. In attendance were Commissioners Sylvia, Retherford, Ruddiman, Dziak, and Osborne. Also in attendance were Executive Director Paula Miranda, Deputy Executive Director Aaron Bretz, Director of Finance and Business Services Mark Brown, and Administrative Assistant Gloria Tucker. Members of the audience included Rex Capri, Laura Rittall, Diane Henkels, Shannon Tower, Laura Wilkeson, and Summit PR Representative Angela Nebel. Rittall, Henkels, Tower, and Wilkeson attended online.

BUDGET HEARING

Approval of Resolution 2026-04 Adopting the Budget, Making Appropriations, and Categorizing the Tax. Sylvia opened the public hearing at 6:00 p.m. Brown reported the budget included was approved by the Budget Committee. He stated at this point the Commission can make any changes to the budget up to 10 percent. He indicated if the change is greater, then the Commission would need to have another budget hearing. He noted there will be a supplemental budget for NOAA. He added the Port received the bids back, and they will be about $487,000 to $500,000. He explained [the supplemental budget] may need to have a special meeting.

Brown reported repairs are going to start early next month, and staff want to make sure the funds are approved before they start work. He noted it will be $500,000 in and out. Miranda recommended a virtual meeting. She explained the insurance is paying for the repairs. Dziak confirmed with staff the tax rate is the same as last year. Retherford clarified with staff that the budget message mentioning the ConnectOregon grant did not need to be updated to approve the budget. There was no further public comment.

MOTION was made by Dziak, seconded by Ruddiman, to adopt the budget for Fiscal Year 2026 as stated in Resolution No. 2026-04. Sylvia, Ruddiman, Dziak, and Osborne voted in favor. Retherford abstained due to missing the Budget Committee meeting.

Sylvia closed the public hearing at 6:06 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

PUBLIC COMMENT

Henkels, co-historian of the Yaquina Bay Yacht Club, stated it has been about two years since she last spoke to Commission. She encouraged the Commission to visit in person and introduced the Vice Commodore.

Rittell, Vice Commodore of the Yaquina Bay Yacht Club, stated she has been a member of the club for about five years. She noted when she joined she was new to the area and sailing. She explained joining this club helped her engage with the community and become a pretty good sailor. She indicated the club has about 100 memberships that help support their events. She added the club has two to four regattas a year, high school sailing classes, and a youth regatta.

Rittall stated they had about 20 high schoolers in the classes, and the youth regatta drew 60 kids and their families from all over Oregon and Washington. She noted between April and October, Wednesday night racing makes a great show for folks visiting the bayfront. She indicated this year's Sailstice brought more than 50 people out on the boats. She added the club has had a lease with the Port since 2004, and it is one of the best spaces [to rent] for events because of the view. She invited Commission to attend events, their monthly potlucks, September tour of boats, and chili contest in January.

Retherford stated it is nice to have the club in the community. She noted it's beautiful to see activities for kids and families. She added she thinks what they are doing is wonderful and important to have. Miranda reminded Henkels that whenever the club has events, the Port is happy to share it on Facebook.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION was made by Ruddiman, seconded by Dziak, to approve the consent calendar as presented. Sylvia, Retherford, Ruddiman, Dziak, and Osborne voted in favor.

STAFF REPORTS

Executive Director Report. Sylvia introduced the agenda item. Miranda presented her report included in the packet. She suggested naming an alternate representative to the Cascades West Area Commission on Transportation at the next meeting.

Sylvia asked what the cancellation policy at the RV Park and Marina is. Miranda replied it varies on why it was cancelled and how far in advance. Brown noted the policy is included with the rates list.

Sylvia asked if there is some kind of security device beyond what the Port has to help minimize damage to the restrooms. Bretz replied the Port can add more cameras, but everything can be defeated in some way.

Dziak asked what are some of the changes at Eugene airport. Miranda replied they are investing $400 million into the Eugene airport. She noted that would allow them to have more flights throughout the nation and international flights, which is better for Newport.

Retherford confirmed with staff the Commercial Fishing User Group will meet tomorrow. Brown noted DEQ fined Pacific Seafood $20 million. Miranda noted the fine was mainly for their operations at Brookings Harbor.

Sylvia asked Brown to comment on his financial analysis of ports in Astoria, Coos Bay, and Newport. Brown stated he thought it would be interesting to see how Newport compares with other ports. He noted Newport's reserves are significantly less than other ports. He indicated the Port is in decent shape, although loss of Rogue will hurt it. He added if the Port does it right, in the long run, [Rogue's loss] may help the Port diversify income streams, increase income streams, and give more stable funding. Miranda stated, hopefully, as the Port keeps NOAA, some of those funds will help build better reserves. Brown noted NOAA bonds will be paid off in 2031.

Retherford asked if the Port starts getting into the red, if staff will let them know. Brown replied the Port's reserves are too low, and the Port is not in great shape [in that regard]. He stated the Port needs to be very conservative and careful with cash. Retherford stated if something changes dramatically, to let Commission know. Sylvia confirmed with staff the Port can pay its bills.

Sylvia noted the Port has had to put off the Strategic Plan [because of Business Oregon funding]. He stated that means the Port is not thinking long term, and that weighs on them as Commissioners. He asked how much does the Port need in reserves for real contingencies; how does the Port build up reserves; and what does it mean in terms of budgeting and financing. He suggested in a work session or strategic planning, it would be good to get this figured out, not that there is an easy solution. Miranda suggested a work session. She stated that is part of the Port's fiscal manual. She noted the strategic plan should help with attraction of customers and retention of customers. Discussion ensued on strategic planning and finances. Miranda suggested doing a work session on different topics. Sylvia asked do Commissioners really know all the Port infrastructure and assets, and at what point do they need to worry about them. Retherford suggested a tour of each asset, maybe a report card. Miranda noted tours could be tied into WHA assessments of Port property for insurance. Sylvia summarized Commissioners want to better understand assets and then work on long term planning for the Port. Miranda stated she would come back with a work session plan.

Osborne asked for explanation of the aging report. He stated he knows in the scope of a $23 million budget, this is pocket change, but accounts with $1,000 or more [owed] add up to $203,000. He noted he knows a lot of this is going to be written off, this is talking about people's livelihoods, and it's better than it has been in the past. He indicated on previous months, two delinquent accounts, one $8,000 and one for almost $6,000, have been due over 90 days for some time but are not on the newest report. He asked have they been paid off or not. Brown explained the first is still on the list [under a different name] and discussions are ongoing.

Retherford noted she is on the aging report, but she doesn't owe anything. She stated there was a changeover in the accounting system and some things are left over. Osborne stated several of these accounts have been on here since February as over 90 days. He asked at what point does the Port seize boats. Miranda explained when the Port seizes a boat, the Port is stuck with it and has to pay to dispose of it. She noted sometimes Commission may not see payment for a while because [fishermen] are waiting for the next fishing opportunity. Brown explained that when accounts go to collections or when accounts are paid, they are dropped from the aging report. Osborne noted he is concerned because a lot of money is owed to the Port and has been on the books for a while. Discussion ensued on the policy for payment.

Sylvia asked is there a trend in this that suggests problems for the future, anything that is not the normal turn of a fishing industry. Brown replied he thinks this is less than normal, and the new system is helping staff take care of these issues. He explained in South Beach it is better, and in commercial it is the same as it's ever been. He added there are people who don't pay, and there will always be people who don't pay.

Bretz stated the trend he sees happening is more people walking away from boats in worse state of repair than in the past. He reported he has seen the material condition of boats going down, more people walking away, and more people coming in and taking possession of boats who aren't going to do anything with them. Sylvia confirmed with staff that is on both sides. Bretz noted there is a generation of boats that are dying, and that generation of boats was supported by a certain economic engine. He stated those industries have changed, and the boats replacing them are not the same type. He explained how recreational boats have changed from the past.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Retherford thanked Miranda for her leadership and representation of the Port during the PNWA conference.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

ATTESTED:

Gil Sylvia, President

Pat Ruddiman, Secretary/Treasurer