

April 28, 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, Ruddiman, Dziak, and Osborne. Commissioner Retherford was excused. Also in attendance were Executive Director Paula Miranda, Deputy Executive Director Aaron Bretz, Finance Director Mark Brown, and Administrative Assistant Gloria Tucker. Members of the audience included Laura Wilkeson and Newport Urban Renewal Project Manager Anna Iaukea. Heather Mann attended online.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Wilkeson, Hampton Lumber Representative, stated given the Budget Committee discussion that is going on and the proposed marketing strategy for the International Terminal, she wanted to offer a few comments. She noted it is encouraging the Port is considering all options for the International Terminal. She indicated she would be remiss if she didn't remind the Commission of the challenges facing log exports from the Northwest. She added while China remains the largest importer in the world, raw logs from the US have not rebounded since last year's ban.

Wilkeson stated the ban was lifted in November 2025, but those volumes have remained a fraction of historic levels. She noted this isn't a temporary dip. She explained log exports peaked about 12 years ago, with 861 million board feet from Portland and Seattle regions. She indicated by end of last year, it was 93 million board feet, presenting a steep and sustained decline. She added the takeaway is the export market has been shrinking for more than a decade.

Wilkeson stated recent events and trade wars have only accelerated that decline. She noted population trends are also declining in China, Japan, and South Korea, which will only exacerbate the decline in imports. She indicated basing a marketing strategy or public investment on a market that consistently moved in the wrong direction carries risk. She added public investment in equipment that appears to be sitting idle has not been a very effective use of public funds.

Wilkeson stated imports of raw logs into Oregon represent 2.4 percent of all the wood products manufactured in Oregon. She noted it is a very expensive option that only a few mills use. She indicated lumber markets have been struggling across the board for about a year and a half, particularly the hardwood and alder markets are really depressed. She added, in summary, Hampton hopes to see the Port make investments that strengthen the local economies and support value added manufacturing and not rely on raw material exports that would undercut manufacturers. She encouraged Commission to consider these realities when making decisions about marketing strategies, use of equipment, and the direction of the Terminal.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

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

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Executive Director Salary Discussion.** Sylvia introduced the agenda item. Miranda noted CPI was 2.9 this year, and staff would not be provided a more than 1 percent merit increase. She stated this year, she would not expect to get any more than other staff.

Sylvia stated one component to think about is to make sure Miranda is paid a competitive rate. He noted when she first came on board, Commission had to increase her salary a fair amount to make sure it was comparable with other port directors. He indicated other components are performance, bonuses, and a unique year with a lot of financial considerations. He added Miranda received a very strong endorsement and review. He explained she did a really good job this last year, but this is a uniquely tough year.

Osborne stated he appreciates what Miranda said. He noted he has been in that position, and it's always tough. He indicated he appreciates very much the job she has done. He added it's not been easy, and it is not going to get easier in the short term.

Dziak asked if her salary is competitive now. Sylvia replied he believes her salary is competitive now. Miranda stated OPPA was asking members to do a survey this year, but it didn't get done in time. She noted in the last one, two or three years ago, it was in the range. She explained there are 23 ports in Oregon, and she is not going to compare her salary with the Port of Portland. She added she mostly looks at where Astoria and Coos Bay, to an extent, are at.

Sylvia clarified with staff Miranda's current salary. He stated he thought fair would be 3 percent, consistent with cost of living. Dziak confirmed with staff there would be a 1 percent increase for staff based on merit. He suggested 4 percent to include merit. Brown suggested the motion include the effective date, the anniversary date.

MOTION was made by Dziak, seconded by Osborne, to approve a 4 percent salary increase for the Executive Director effective on March 1. Sylvia, Ruddiman, Dziak, and Osborne voted in favor.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Approval of Right of Entry and Easement for City Improvements Near RV Park Annex.** Sylvia introduced the agenda item. Bretz presented his report included in the packet. Iaukea stated the project extends beyond Port property. She noted there is two gateways in South Beach, and this would be essentially a beautification project. She explained the city is working with the Public Arts Advisory Committee. She indicated the city agreed with [every] property owner that any public art to be placed on Port or Aquarium property will be routed for their approval and input. She added they are also putting a garden in ODOT's right of way.

Iaukea stated the work includes landscaping, color concrete, pedestrian improvements, planted medians in the middle of the road for traffic calming, and improved pedestrian crossings from the Aquarium overflow parking lot to the Aquarium. She explained the project is one of a handful of projects selected during the refinement planning process several years ago as the city wraps up and closes the South Beach Urban Renewal District. She added it's been open since the '80s.

Dziak noted there is a placeholder until the Port puts in a parking lot. Bretz stated he wanted to make sure whatever the city builds there, the Port is able to tie into it easily when the Port develops that corner. He indicated the Port plans to change it from RV Park Annex to parking. He added it is his intent to work with city through the project, so it augments the Port's project.

MOTION was made by Ruddiman, seconded by Osborne, to authorize the Executive Director or her designee to approve the right of entry to make structural changes as shown in the attached drawing in accordance with the R.O.E. stipulations and negotiate an easement for the referenced property. Sylvia, Ruddiman, Dziak, and Osborne voted in favor.

**Approval of Resolution 2026-03 Setting Rates, Fees and Charges.** Sylvia introduced the agenda item. Brown presented his report included in the packet. Dziak asked if the 2 percent dredging fee is for all users. Brown replied it is, but the Port has not put that in place at the International Terminal. He noted Commission may consider that in the future. Sylvia asked if the Commercial Marina rates increased by 6.65 percent plus the 2 percent dredging. Brown replied it had not. He explained if staff did what the fiscal manual suggests, it would be 6.65 percent, but staff felt it was too high. He noted instead, staff looked at all the rates and made sure the Port was competitive with other rates across the board. He indicated the 2 percent dredging fee is a separate fee that will be shown on their invoice. He emphasized staff looked at each rate and made sure it was competitive. He added staff increased transient moorage more than 6 percent because it was so low below the market. Miranda noted there are a lot of things staff take into consideration, competitive market and methodology. She explained looking at replacement costs, staff want to make sure what the Port is paying for staff and equipment is covered.

Sylvia stated the key is not to get behind, so the Port has to charge actual costs. Dziak noted it was good the Port discovered its transient rates were so low and to have CFUG go over this as well. Ruddiman asked as far as equipment goes, are staff comparing to other ports and rental companies. Brown replied staff will be looking at that. Bretz explained he [takes into consideration] a quote for a new machine, a quote on maintenance tasks, future value of money, and the cost in the future and compares that to what is competitive and in the rental market. He noted the Port is behind on maintenance because the machines are way over when the Port usually replaces them. He explained in the past couple of years, staff have pulled out new forklift purchases to make the budget work. Ruddiman asked if there have been issues with the crane depth system. Bretz replied staff have had to do work on the machine because it got to the point it would shut itself off.

Sylvia noted moorage for commercial rates, under dredging surcharge, has \$.02, not percent. Brown replied he would modify that. Osborne stated the Port has to have incremental increases annually to try to keep up with inflation and avoid having to come back to a major hit every three or five years. He noted in the RV Park, he is concerned the Port is competitive with local RV Parks, rather than other ports like Astoria. He added the Port also doesn't want to be underpricing them so much it hurts them. Brown stated the Port RV Park is higher than all the other state government parks. Miranda stated it is location. She noted if staff feel it is hurting stays, the Port will obviously curtail that a bit. She added, at this point, the state park is always full.

Osborne noted the state is finding out they can't keep up and are raising their rates. He stated he is more concerned with private RV Parks. He suggested the Port should be charging equal to or, in some cases, maybe more. He indicated he is more concerned the Port stay competitive in the area. Miranda replied the area doesn't have many private RV Parks nearby. She noted there is a resort that charges way more but is not similar to what the Port has here.

Osborne asked why the Port lowered some of the rates at the RV Park, but on the peak season only raised one rate. Brown replied during the [last] off season, the Port had three or four campers. He noted the RV Park Supervisor thought it would be advantageous to lower rates to

attract more business. Miranda replied in the high season, it makes sense to increase because the Port can't keep up [with demand].

Osborne noted in the RV Park and Marina extra fees, the Port keeps the daily rate for pets the same, raised the fee for extra persons on monthly, and kept it the same for extra vehicles. He asked why. Brown replied he is going off recommendations of the Supervisor. He noted the Port doesn't charge many of those a year. Osborne asked if the Port is leaving money on the table some place, and why there was not an incremental increase across the board, maybe at 1 percent. Miranda replied she had a lot of conversations with the Supervisor, and she is very much on top of it and very smart when it comes to that. Miranda stated [the Supervisor] believes this works and that doesn't. She added she is taking her recommendations and will see how it works out.

Osborne asked why was the Port charging so cheaply for the work barge before. Brown replied the labor was not included in the price before. Osborne asked why moorage rates in South Beach Recreational Marina were not rising. Brown replied that comes back to what the market is up and down the West Coast. He stated the Port is the very top for recreational marina rates, the most expensive in Oregon and Washington. Sylvia asked is the Port more expensive because costs are higher or another reason. Miranda replied she doesn't think it is the cost, but that it worked out that way through the years. She explained the Port provides more services on the Commercial Marina side than the South Beach side. Discussion ensued on moorage rates and marina infrastructure.

Osborne asked about the Special Use Permit fee. He asked the reason why it was kept static. Tucker explained the Port has not gotten an increase in people trying to apply for permits, and usually when people see the application fee, they don't want to use the property. She noted it is not like the Port is having to do more [permits]. She stated for the use fee, most of the applicants apply for a waiver or a reduction already. She explained if they are one of the Port's stakeholders, the Port gives it to them, so the Port often does not collect the whole usage fee. Miranda replied this is a nominal fee for a permit. She explained it's a service the Port provides to the community and stakeholders, and 90 percent of the time, it's for the good of the community. She added if the Port increases that fee next year, it will be marginal, not large.

Sylvia asked which of these fees are the most important in terms of covering costs. Miranda replied they are all important. She stated the Port has to make sure it evaluates those on a regular basis. She noted some years, staff pay more attention to this or that. She added recreational funds are important because the Port uses those revenues for other areas of the Port. Bretz stated moorage in the marinas brings in the most beside the RV Park. He noted moorage is extremely important to the Port. He asked how much is the Port helping the customer by offering lower moorage rates versus how much does it hurt the Port. He noted Commission needs to make the choice consciencely. He indicated holding off on increasing moorage rates every year hurts the facility in a significant way.

Miranda reported staff are having serious discussions with other ports through OPPA, as to how little funds there are for ports in Oregon and how the transportation plan for the state of Oregon doesn't address maritime. She stated the state needs to come up with a better plan, and the Port doesn't want to keep passing it on to the users. She explained users are struggling too; every year the fishermen are struggling, getting paid less and less for their catch. She added either the state needs to help more, the ports keep going downhill in maintenance, or ports have to raise fees.

Sylvia stated on the new strategic plan, he would like the Port to more formally address real costs and the prices it can charge. He noted as a Commissioner, he wants a consistent strategic framework on how to price and look at costs. He noted the Port doesn't charge asset costs, because

it looks for grants like all the ports. He indicated other ports don't charge for operational costs, and that is not a model the Port can follow. He added it is irrational, and it will ultimately lead to the end of those ports. Miranda suggested having a presentation on the background research that goes into making the rates next year, maybe a work session.

Sylvia stated he is interested in looking at the issue from a strategic framework, based on operational costs for departments, variance to rates, and competitive marketplace. Bretz recommended looking at what the Port has not changed, looking at all facilities and considering how the Port got them, what that looked like when it was built, and what has changed between that time and now. He noted people are expecting things the same way, but construction doesn't work that way. He indicated Port Dock 7 can't be built how it was before. He added the constant pull of everyone saying don't create more costs, over time that tug of war was won by consumer, and it has held back all of the public ports. He suggested considering how much revenue needs to be dedicated to planning and how much for grants. Discussion ensued on how much environmental costs have increased and have never been taken into consideration.

Mann, Director of the Midwater Trawlers Cooperative, stated she resigned from chairing the Fishing User Group for a variety of reasons and was surprised they had no recommendation or comments. She noted everyone's costs are rising because of PERS and fishing industry [changes]. She indicated no other ports in Oregon or perhaps on the West Coast are self-sufficient in terms of funding. She added she doesn't see Newport or any ports ever being able to support replacement of the docks. She explained they are always going to need help from federal and state.

Mann stated she doesn't think [it is a problem to] raise recreational rates. She noted Newport is a pretty amazing destination. She indicated it seems like people are worried recreational fishermen won't come to Newport, but the Port continues to raise the rates on commercial. She explained a lot of those owners live here, and it seems like since they live here, they might never leave. She added she doesn't know if that is true.

Mann stated she is compelled to say it was a mistake to purchase the log loaders with no confirmed customers even with grant assistance. She noted those loaders are sitting outside, unprotected from the elements. She indicated all equipment should be stored inside to extend the life of the equipment. She added everyone is wondering why Rogue was in rears by half a million, and why it wasn't public until after the fact. She asked if people knew that, would the Port have purchased the log loaders with no customers.

Mann noted fishermen are bearing the brunt of [Port fees and expenses] as the current customers. She stated commercial fishermen bring a lot more to the Port and community than just moorage; they bring millions into the community in terms of boat work, maintenance, and hiring people. She indicated she doesn't want people to forget about that. She added she understands the costs are going up for all of us for everything.

Mann stated if the Port starts losing commercial boats to other places or make it so they can't participate period in fishing because they can't break even, it is not good for the community or Port. She noted she is not trying to be critical, and everyone is struggling. She added commercial boats, in particular, are helping to sustain the Port of Newport, and if it starts losing them, that is going to be problematic.

Miranda noted the only reason the recreational moorage is not increasing is because it is already at the top of its class. Brown stated he appreciated the comment. He noted commercial fishermen are important, and the Port recognizes that by giving them a lower rate than recreational.

Mann added being at the top, raising [recreational moorage] a little, doesn't mean people won't come here for vacation.

Miranda noted the Port did run this by the Commercial Fishing User Group, and they felt the rates were fair. Sylvia stated there was no major objection by the commercial industry in the room.

MOTION was made by Osborne, seconded by Ruddiman, to adopt Resolution 2026-03 Setting Rates, Fees, and Charges. Sylvia, Ruddiman, Dziak, and Osborne voted in favor.

**Approval of Sorren for Audit Services.** Sylvia introduced the agenda item. Brown presented his report included in the packet. Dziak confirmed with staff it was a competitive rate. He asked do they specialize in ports and special districts. Brown replied they do a lot of special districts. Sylvia noted the background of one of the auditors.

MOTION was made by Dziak, seconded by Osborne, to authorize the Executive Director, or designee, to execute an annual engagement letter with the selected auditor for a five-year period. The fee for the first year shall be \$34,500, with a contingency allowance of \$10,000. Fees for subsequent years shall be adjusted annually based on the December 31 Consumer Price Index (CPI). Sylvia, Ruddiman, Dziak, and Osborne voted in favor.

**Approval of Columbia River IT Solutions for Managed Services Provider.** Sylvia introduced the agenda item. Brown presented his report included in the packet. Dziak confirmed with staff they used internal staff to evaluate proposals. Dziak asked if there is offsite backup storage. Brown replied the third party provides that, and the Port is in the cloud. He added the Port doesn't have anything onsite but cameras.

MOTION was made by Osborne, seconded by Ruddiman, to authorize the Executive Director, or designee, to execute a 5-year agreement with Columbia River IT Solutions, LLC, with 2 possible extensions. The fee for the first year shall be \$52,200 with potential increases annually, with a contingency allowance of \$10,000. Sylvia, Ruddiman, Dziak, and Osborne voted in favor.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

**Executive Director Report.** Miranda overviewed her PNWA trip to Washington, D.C. She stated she had meetings throughout the first day on Monday. She noted she [and four other ports] met with lobbyists for Business Oregon in Washington, D.C., who are aware of major issues ports have. She explained they met with the Army Corps and found out there is a lot going on right now. She indicated they lost a lot of employees, there is a lot of confusion, and under the Department of War, they got direction not to share their funding capabilities. She added everyone is in the dark, and no one knows how much the Army Corps is able to do.

Miranda reported for the first time, the entire Oregon Coast has been zeroed out on the President's budget for the Army Corps. She noted every year, the Army Corps has received at least \$5 million designated for Yaquina Bay, which includes jetty repairs and channel maintenance. She indicated she hopes that gets corrected in Congress or there could be major issues with the jetty and safety for mariners coming through the channel.

Miranda reported she met with OMB, Office of Management and Budget, and the same topics came up. She explained part of the issue was the Army Corps was charging their rates to the projects, so projects were never finished. She noted by separating their salaries from the projects, they are hoping to [finish projects]. She stated they told OMB about the importance of ports in the area and economy. She explained to them Newport has fisheries here, NOAA, Hatfield, and trying to bring cargo. She indicated after that, she met with Wyden staff and Merkley staff,

highlighting a lot of issues, the difficulty of getting funds for infrastructure, and several projects in the capital list, policies that hurt ports. She noted she brought up no one in Oregon has put money into infrastructure for tourism. She added she did not meet with Val Hoyle because she visited here the week before, and she thanked Hoyle for adding dredging for South Beach into her list of projects for the earmarks at Congress.

Miranda reported there were sessions with a lot of federal agencies the next day, including the Army Corps, NMFS, EPA, US Fish and Wildlife, and MARAD. She stated the next day, she went to the House of Representatives. She noted they had the Taste of the Northwest, a big gathering PNWA puts together for Congress. She explained Pacific Seafood had shrimp and crab, and Bornstein had crab. She indicated the next day she met with all the Senators and gave Merkley the Legislator of the Year Award, which he won last year. She added she had lot of assignments because she is the PNWA President. She reported it was actually very productive with good meetings. She added there is a lot uncertainty in Washington, D.C.

Miranda reported she is still working with Rogue to get their things moved. She noted there is not a timeline yet [on the bankruptcy]. She stated the Port filed for \$1.2 million, which included rent, interest, security, and lot of costs. She indicated the Port may get a third of that. She added for Rogue, staff have always disclosed [information]. She explained Brown puts out a financial report every month that discloses who owes money, who and how much. She indicated during that period, she did have discussions with Commissioners, but staff didn't bring some of the details into Commission because it is not appropriate to talk about tenants' financial situation during the meeting.

Miranda reported it doesn't take that much for a tenant like [Rogue] to get to that point. She explained they are a big tenant and going three or four months without paying grows very quickly. She noted the Port did put storage for new [Terminal] equipment into the budget, but with everything that happened, staff pushed it into capital improvement. She indicated the timing is bad. She added there is a lot of interest in the distillery and sunset bar. She explained the Port should be able to lease those quickly.

Miranda reported for the brewery, the Port would like to do a feasibility study to figure out the best and highest use. She noted for the marketing study for NIT, the Port still has the intent of using the equipment and searching for users for that equipment. She indicated the study is to see what other opportunities are there. She explained the Port is in a tough region, and it is looking for niche [markets].

Miranda reported she has been talking to a company, World's Greatest, which selects different businesses to highlight. She noted the Port has been selected as the World's Greatest. She explained she is working with them how to move forward. She stated at the end this is going to be a great marketing, public affairs campaign for the Port and city. She explained it will highlight a lot of the good things in Newport. Sylvia stated he is not familiar with it. Miranda replied it is a mix of entertainment and education, [produced by] Bloomberg. Sylvia asked what they will do. Miranda replied they will come and film for a TV show and do some interviews. Sylvia asked when that will take place. Miranda replied the whole process takes 20 weeks. Sylvia clarified with staff it's not just for small ports.

Miranda reported Sylvia received a letter signed as various fishermen from Port Dock 7. She noted they were concerned about the enforcement of commercial fishermen parking permits, a chip truck and a vehicle without a permit. Bretz explained the chip truck by the Admin Building is included under the lease with Northwest Fishing Vessel Services. He stated they negotiated that parking space, and the Port didn't specify what kind of vehicles they can park in their space. He

noted previously, PUD had a contract with a tree service company, and the Port granted them passes that they paid for to park at Port Dock 7. Miranda noted those are special permits that the Port may allow once in a while.

Bretz reported the other vehicle they were concerned with was a black jeep. He explained the Port had it towed because [TCB] didn't see a pass on it. He noted the jeep sat out for seven months with no cover. He stated after the Port towed it, the owner came in, and explained he had bought a monthly pass, which is a hang tag. Bretz explained with the rain, it had obliterated the pass. He noted the Port had it towed back, and then the fisherman bought a commercial parking sticker. He added he is a Port Dock 5 commercial fishermen, so there was no violation. Miranda encouraged people who have concerns to come and talk to staff.

Bretz and Brown presented highlights from their reports included in the packet. Osborne asked on the aging report, what does reaching out and final notice sent mean. He asked are these all boats taking up space. Brown replied everything that is 60-90 days past due is here. He noted reaching out means staff are calling them. Miranda replied before that, staff send letters. Brown explained the letters. He stated final notice sent means he sent a certified letter stating the Port will seize the vessel unless they pay.

Miranda reported in the past, people would get a year or more behind. She explained the Port set up this process to get on track. She stated all staff ask is people communicate and start some process of payment. Osborne noted each one is an individual case, but looking at all of the ones who owe over \$1,000, it adds up to over \$130,000. Brown replied there are people who are consistently on this list, but staff have to be careful with how they collect. Miranda explained how the Port worked with Rogue before the bankruptcy. Discussion ensued on how the Port works with customers. Sylvia noted this list of over 100 boat owners who are behind in payment, is \$130,000. He asked is that a leading indicator of issues. Miranda replied it is better than before; it used to be much higher.

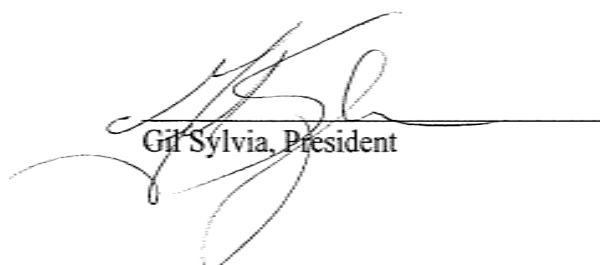
Bretz noted before the Port got Miranda and Brown, that level of management didn't exist for a year to two years, so accounting staff were just trying to make sure month to month bills are paid and processed. He indicated this was deprioritized. Sylvia asked is it the new financial system [that improved collections]. Brown replied the system helps staff know who owes and when, but it's the staff following up.

### **CALENDAR/FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS**

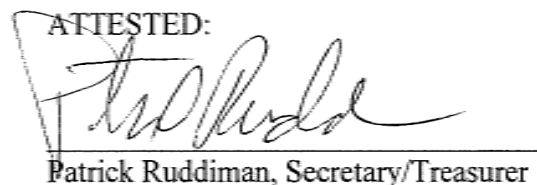
Ruddiman noted Loyalty Days is not on the calendar. Bretz replied the Port isn't participating this year but has had a crane in the parade in the past. Miranda suggested if the Commissioners are interested in participating to let her know.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.



Gil Sylvia, President

ATTESTED:  
  
Patrick Ruddiman, Secretary/Treasurer