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Port commission names new officers

Gil Sylvia was selected as president of the Port of Newport Commission at the body's organizational meeting in July. Two other officers were also selected, when Kelley Retherford was named vice president and Walter Chuck was chosen to continue in the role of secretary / treasurer. All officers were elected by unanimous vote of the commission.

Sylvia has served on the commission since August of 2019. Retired from Oregon State University, he still works on special projects related to fishery and aquaculture management and policy, seafood marketing, and bioeconomic modeling.

Retherford has served on the commission since July of 2020. She plays a management role within the family commercial fishing business and serves as vice president of two of their corporations.

Chuck has served on the commission since November of 2011. He works as a water plant operator for Hiland Water Services.

The meeting started with the oath of office for one new and two returning members of the commission. Patrick Ruddiman was sworn in as the newest member following the May election. Sylvia and Chuck also took their respective oaths as returning members.

"We all appreciate everyone's confidence," Sylvia said following the election of officers. "This is a good set of commissioners and I look forward to it," he said of his new role.

One of the first business items tackled by the group was the selection of Good Work Architects to complete a market analysis and conceptual redesign of the RV Park Annex in South Beach at a cost of \$72,600.

The annex, which is home to approximately 35 sites, was an old trailer park acquired by the Port over 30 years ago that has been in need of updating, according to Port officials. In bid documents, the Port explained that "the space in the Annex is under-utilized and the infrastructure is failing."

As part of the contract, Good Work will also complete a financial analysis, undergo a municipal code review, and address land use issues.

"We budgeted \$375,000 for planning this year, and the cost they forecast for us is \$72,600," said Director of Operations Aaron Bretz. "We have room in the budget for additional engineering work so that we can continue on with this project this year. That's all that much better for funding because we'll have a plan that is laid out when it comes time for an ask," he added.

General Manager Paula Miranda explained to the commission why now is the time to address Annex upgrades.

"We have been spending a lot of money to keep fixing things that keep breaking and at this point we need to move forward and get this updated so we aren't throwing good money after bad," she said.

Miranda also explained that the use and popularity of the RV park has been very high since the onset of the COVID pandemic and has not let up since that time.

The number of sites and the general layout and approach of the Annex will be determined by the recommendations of the contractor, who will look at market demands and financial considerations in order to capitalize on the future potential of the location.