

PORT OF NEWPORT
COMMERCIAL FISHING USERS GROUP COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 30, 2025

Port of Newport Admin Building, 600 SE Bay Blvd, Newport

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

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Vice Chair Bob Eder called the Commercial Fishing Users Group Committee Meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Committee Members Present: John Moody (Pos. #3); Bob Eder (Pos. #9); Gary Ripka (Pos. #6); Dean Fleck (Pos. #10); Cari Brandburg (Pos. #4); and Jim Seavers (Pos. #11).

Alternates Present: Bob Kemp (Alt. #8); John Holt (Alt. #7); and Mark Cooper (Alt. #5).

Committee Members Absent: Clint Funderburg (Pos. #1); Doug Ison (Alt. #11); John Wagner (Alt. #6); Mike Retherford Sr. (Alt. #2); Mike Pettis (Pos. #2); Roy Hale (Pos. #8); and Corey Rock (Pos. #7).

Port Commission Liaisons: Kelley Retherford and Jeff Lackey

Presenters and Staff: Paula Miranda, Executive Director; Aaron Bretz, Director of Operations/Deputy Executive Director; Don Moon, NIT Facility Manager; Kody Robinson, Harbormaster; and Nick Robertson, DOWL Senior Project Manager.

Members of the Public and Media: Mark Newell, Kevin Bennett, Hank Yolman, Heather Mann, Gil Sylvia, and Angela Nebel, Summit PR Representative.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Bretz announced that Chair Heather Mann stepped down from the committee. Miranda asked if anyone was interested in becoming chair. After no response, Eder suggested tabling the item to the next committee meeting.

MOTION was made by Ripka, seconded by Moody, to table the appointment of chair to the next committee meeting. The motion carried unanimously in a voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION was made by Fleck, seconded by Ripka, to approve the minutes of April 18, 2025. The motion carried unanimously in a voice vote.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Port Dock 7 Project Update. Eder introduced the agenda item. Bretz reported this is trying to set the Port up for the next 50 years, and it may even go longer than that. He explained this area has never been dredged, and the Corps will change the contour of the bottom to a depth that can actually accommodate modern fishing vessels and fishing vessels of the next generation.

Ripka asked what happens if it silts back in. Bretz replied the Port would put the marina on the schedule for maintenance dredging periodically, and re-dredge whenever it starts to silt in. He added the marina is on the northern side, so he's hopeful it won't silt in.

Holt asked if they dredge that area for Port Dock 7, what about the area further up river. Bretz replied that's the Embarcadero, and they have a dredging project planned over the next few years. He stated the Army Corps does not believe the dredging will push anything in that direction, and the main flow of water will stay toward the channel. He added worst case scenario would be dredging every 10 years.

Fleck asked how dredging would affect how he can get customers to his dock. Bretz replied that is a discussion for later down the road. Miranda added it is not typical for ports to dredge other properties that do not belong to the port.

Robertson overviewed the project and 30 percent design as included in the packet. Holt asked how the save the clam community agreed to dredging. Bretz replied the Army Corps will permit all of the dredging and take that into account. He added he is not sure if they will have to mitigate for clam impact. He explained it is more efficient for them to do all the dredge permitting.

Eder stated in the design, there is an iron fence and several vehicle and walk-in gates to establish security. He asked what the plan is for maintaining public access. Robertson replied that is Port policy, but there are a variety of controls in the fence for allowing access. He explained that would be a decision-making point further on in design. Miranda stated the Port will create a policy to make the access less painful for fishermen versus the general public. She explained the main reason for this is security and safety. She noted right now, vehicles, equipment, and all kinds of stuff are mixed together. She indicated, eventually, the plan is to keep equipment and vehicles separate and your equipment safe. Eder confirmed with staff the fence goes from the yacht club to the drive-in entrance. Bretz replied the fence concept can be changed, but the main idea is to get the facility under control, and from that the Port can grant access. Bretz explained right now, the Port has no control, and at 2 in the morning the Port has difficulty excluding people who are not supposed to be here.

Moody suggested fire department and ambulance entrance be taken into consideration. Ripka asked if the Port would use cards. Bretz replied it would be something like that. Brandburg noted Bretz has been talking with her on how they want it to work and still do dock sales. She added there are different ideas like double gates and hours of access.

Lackey asked for an example of design for long-term maintenance efficiency and lower lifecycle costs. Robertson replied concrete docks give a 40–50-year lifespan, and cathodic protection and additional thickness to pilings add savings. Eder asked if there is a plan for the possibility the Port may not be able to evict pinnipeds. Robertson replied

the Port is looking at an acoustic solution, but there are varying ranges of effectiveness. He added they will continue to research it.

Retherford asked if there is room for modification to the design for slips. She noted the Port has boats between 60-70 ft. Robertson replied there is still room for modifications. He explained the initial design is based on current inventory and a projection of the future. Discussion ensued on the size of slips. Ripka noted the trend is wider boats. Retherford added there is a trend for longer. Lackey pointed out some boats get switched, like Majesty for Northern Ram and Lisa Melinda for Mark I. Holt noted a lot of boats in this port are 73 to 77 ft long. Bretz stated he has noted the concern about 70-75 ft boats.

Kemp stated it is important to know ingress and egress, getting in and out of fingers. He asked what the length between one finger and another is. He noted he has a lot of experience at Dock 7, and there are tides and currents to consider. Robertson replied an engineering standard was used to make sure there is space.

Eder asked what is the trend looking backward in history for boat sizes. Bretz replied all of the Port's trends have been bigger boats, but the Port doesn't want to start to exclude people. He noted the Port wants to provide opportunities for smaller vessels, for example, if there ever came a commercial clam fishery here. He asked why the Port doesn't have it here. Brandburg replied that would be in the experimental fisheries department, and it's been dissolved right now due to funding. Miranda suggested talking to OSU see how they can be involved. Ripka noted there wouldn't be very many vessels for that fishery. Eder asked is South Beach a possibility for more small slips, would it be possible to accommodate them there. Miranda replied the Port tries to keep those separate, but there are possibilities.

Moody stated if the Port had bigger space for 73 ft boats, more boats would want to come in and maybe stay permanently. Eder suggested in the eastern slips with minimal turnaround, eliminate one side and make it a side-tie. He noted then the Port could get larger or smaller boats there. Bretz replied that's a good idea. Discussion ensued on trends, especially boats changing to match the fisheries.

Miranda cautioned against making too significant changes to the design [due to the grant application boundaries]. Bretz explained tweak is the operative word. He stated the Port can make tweaks but not wipe the whole thing clear. He added what the committee is talking about are things the Port can look at.

Holt asked what the projection of this being done is. Bretz replied 2027 is when this would start. He explained the longest time to finish is three years, and the shortest, one year. Holt confirmed with staff the longest timeframe would end in 2030. Ripka compared the docks to gear sheds. He indicated you can never build it too big it seems like. Retherford added there is still talk about bringing otters in, and if they do that, there won't be a clam fishery or crab. She suggested stuff like that has to be considered as well.

Moody asked if there is any talk about adding a slip for a fire boat. Bretz replied the Port made a space for that in South Beach. Lackey added he doesn't think any of the 90-100 ft vessels have 29 ft beams. Robertson replied the 39-foot beam is Miss Birdie. Bretz added they made sure vessels the size of Pegasus can fit, but they will double check those numbers.

Ripka asked how old is the hoist dock, or fishermen's wharf. Bretz replied the concrete sections were done in the early 90s. Seavers stated the wood section was done

in the late 60s. Retherford stated that shows the importance of this project. She noted the community is at a place where if it doesn't engage in a future for the marina, the Port will continue to lose what is here.

Miranda noted when this is all said and done, the Port will probably have to replace the other docks. She stated this is the most needed, but the other docks are not in the greatest shape either. She indicated staff would probably finish this and start moving to replace Port Dock 5 or 3.

Cooper asked will the replacement of the hoist dock be larger or the same size. Bretz replied it will be the same size. Eder noted the hoist dock would not have cranes there anymore but four swing hoists. Bretz replied the Port would have a carry deck crane that can pick up and carry livewells and poles. He added it would be much better at moving things to the yard and waterside. Eder noted that is a good idea since the cranes aren't used much. Moody noted the push-pulls max out when lifting a tote full of water and crab. He suggested making sure the lifting capacity is 2,500 lbs. Ripka asked how much lift the crane would have. Bretz replied 20,000 to 25,000 lbs.

Kemp asked how much input are staff getting from processors. Moody noted boats are getting bigger. Ripka stated Newport and Astoria have the most processing. Kemp indicated the delivery station is here for the foreseeable future.

Moody stated he is concerned when the dredging would take place and how long. He noted it could take place in front of their plant during whiting season, and there are concerns about the impact to that. Bretz replied the Port will be talking about mitigating those impacts. He explained the project's construction phasing and temporary placement of boats.

Eder stated he doesn't see a real reason to say that South Beach is only for recreation. He suggested if commercial needs the space temporarily or otherwise, he doesn't see a problem. Miranda replied temporarily is not a big deal, but the Port doesn't have the facility for long-term and the services are on this side. She noted it would have been nice to still have the service dock at Rogue, and staff will keep trying to get that. She emphasized the Port needs the cooperation of everyone. She explained the marina is not going to be what it is today, and there is going to be some headaches. Bretz stated the Port is going try to come up with solutions and try its best to project everything and get word out to everyone. He added it is important for people to understand the Port ordinance requires all vessels to be operational.

Kemp asked if the method of removal for the present docks is in here. Robertson replied that is not talked about. He explained a contractor would figure out the best way to do that.

Retherford noted there may be different people in the community who can come along side, be creative, and bring in some funds for this project. She suggested they could help write grants or see grants that might work and work together with the Port. Miranda added if you find something out there that might be useful, by any means, the Port will look into it.

Eder confirmed with staff the spoils from dredging would be placed at the Corps offshore management sites.

Discussion on delinquent moorage, uninsured vessels, and derelict vessels.

Eder introduced the agenda item. Bretz presented his report included in the packet.

Brandburg noted Western Hunter has sold. Ripka confirmed with staff the code applies to South Beach and Commercial. Brandburg explained how much it cost to have the Chelse Rose disposed. Kemp asked how can the Port put some teeth into its process for abandoned boats. Bretz replied the biggest thing is for the Port to be notified when a boat is sold. Eder asked does the Port require sellers of boats to notify the Port. Bretz replied the Port requires it, but it doesn't gain compliance. Brandburg asked if there is a contract they can sign. Miranda replied it's part of the MLA. She noted the committee is the Port's eyes and ears out there, so if they hear those types of things, staff appreciate being notified. She added if you think the vessel next to you is in real bad shape, let the Port know.

Bretz explained the Port currently requires moorage holders to notify the Port immediately upon sale, people just don't do it. Brandburg suggested pooling legal resources among ports to go after people who abandon vessels. Miranda stated the Oregon Public Ports Association is working with the state to change the laws to treat vessels more like cars with penalties and policies.

Eder stated since it costs so much to deal with one, the Port should consider an approach to getting rid of these boats with some economy of scale. Lackey asked if there is lag time from a vessel that stops being oceangoing and active and when it becomes a problem. Bretz replied that is primarily in South Beach and not as much on this side. Lackey summarized staff see it coming, but it's not easy to deal with. Bretz added the Port is talking about people's property and people have property rights.

Newell suggested offering refunds for moorage once there is a sale. Bretz replied the Port needs to get the word out on that better. Miranda stated staff plan to start yearly sending letter reminders with bullet points with important information to current owners.

Newell noted this problem isn't going to go away. He suggested it might be cost effective to have the state offer a grant program to the fishing industry that will give a grant for 50 percent of decommissioning of a vessel. He noted that might give people the means to do the right thing.

Brandburg noted she met with the state senator's staff on behalf of commercial fishing and brought up moorage issues, infrastructure, and the derelict vessel problem. She explained they were interested in the issues. She emphasized the importance of attending things like that and advocating to continue to support these efforts. She noted Port can't do this [project] through moorage alone. She added it is important to advocate for state funding for the Port. Miranda overviewed Port efforts to advocate at the state and federal level.

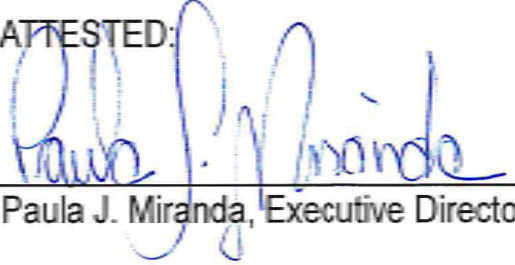
Brandburg stated the Port's wellbeing is also our wellbeing. She noted if they aren't doing well financially, then [fishermen] aren't doing well financially because they are going to expect them to pay more than they can afford. She indicated so many [fishermen] are constantly advocating for fisheries, but advocating for the Port in that mix is so important because without a home for our operations, it cuts us off at the knees. She added the Port is looking for more funding, and, eventually, they need more funding from [fishermen].

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.



Bob Eder, Vice Chair

ATTESTED:


Paula J. Miranda, Executive Director