

December 16, 2025
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, Lackey, Dziak, and Ruddiman. 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, Doug Cooper, Heather Mann, and Summit PR Representative Angela Nebel.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Wilkeson stated when she testified earlier this year she spoke about weak economic conditions, tariffs, and constrained log supplies, and how those factors make importing and exporting raw logs through the Port a risky endeavor. She noted, unfortunately, most of those challenges remain unsolved. She indicated the US economy continues to struggle, Asian economies are in worse shape, and escalating tariffs have fueled ongoing trade wars. She added closer to home, private companies are downsizing, investing in other states, or leaving Oregon altogether.

Wilkeson stated within the timber industry, lumber markets have trended downward for much of the year, leading to curtailments and additional sawmill closures. She noted the Port is currently awaiting delivery of log-handling equipment. She explained while she has heard the Port state it is not considering customers that export logs to foreign countries at this time, it is unclear whether there is a committed customer for this equipment. She indicated regardless, the export of raw logs from Newport no matter their destination would still negatively impact local manufacturing. She added even if the Port intends to move raw logs only between domestic ports, significant financial hurdles still remain.

Wilkeson stated barging logs is extremely expensive and not a common practice within the industry. She noted in 2022 only 2.4 percent of all the logs processed in Oregon were delivered from other states or countries. She indicated that figure has largely remained unchanged since 2017. She added the export market has declined dramatically since its peak in the early 2010s. She explained that decline has escalated this year due to increased tariffs.

Wilkeson stated opportunities for importing and exporting logs through domestic ports are limited. She noted with respect to foreign exports, she appreciates members of the federal delegation who oppose the use of federal grants for foreign exports as well as the Port's recent stance they would not be pursuing those markets. She indicated without some sort of prohibition in place, the risk for foreign log exports remains. She added investments made by the Port should strengthen the local economy and support value-added manufacturing, not create additional risk for industries that are already under pressure.

Wilkeson stated exporting raw logs regardless of the destination does not align with those goals and would negatively impact local processors and jobs. She urged the Port to focus on investments that support Oregon manufacturing and long-term economic sustainability.

Tucker read written public comment submitted by Joe Black regarding the Rogue closure and the Executive Director. Miranda stated she does not typically address public comments during the Commission meeting, but she would like to address this one. She noted she appreciates Mr. Black's comment. She explained there is a lot of things people on the outside don't understand as staff are trying to do their jobs. She indicated the Port is not a simple, private company that if people don't pay, the Port can just kick them out. She added as a public entity, the Port has some duties on trying to value economic impacts and job creation.

Miranda reported during this whole process, the Port has always provided information on outstanding debtors to the Port. She stated staff have never hidden the fact that Rogue had overdue payments to the Port, and not all the half million is money they didn't pay outright. She indicated some was partially interest, \$70,000 in fees for lack of payment. She added she brought some of this to the attention of the Commissioners, the Commission had meetings about it, and it was in the best interest of the Port to do the best it could to help Rogue.

Miranda reported, obviously, staff didn't know the deep debts they had with others. She explained staff had discussions with them, and they were going to provide the Port with information about their finances, but that didn't go through in time. She noted they were also working on a payment plan, but, unfortunately, their debt with others was greater than just their debt with the Port. She stated if she should go or not is up to the Commissioners, and if they think she is not doing her job, to let her know. She indicated through this whole process, she worked with the directors and Commissioners to do the best for the Port district and minimize economic impact. She added the Port subleased some areas that were not well-utilized by Rogue by bringing in two new tenants to minimize cost for them and help them.

Miranda reported if the Port had not tried to help, the Commission would have many people on the other side upset. She noted, no matter what, there will be criticism from both sides.

Sylvia stated a lot of the Commission have strong views about this, including supporting Miranda. He noted one comment, from one individual, who does not understand the Port's public responsibility as a public entity to try to support those in a tough time for economic development. He stated it's an important responsibility that a private company would not have. He asked if there are ways for those who ask for help financial help to find out from some source what their real financial situation is. He indicated what happened here is the Port was not aware of the actual, total financial situation of Rogue, and the desire to help a stakeholder out seems to suggest the Port is not doing its job. He added that is not the case. He explained if the Port had full information, the Port may have made very different decisions.

Lackey stated he had questions on protocol. He asked does the Commission accept emails as public comment that are anonymous or unvetted. He added he is a huge believer in free speech, but he knows there is protocol about not impugning character, and there is a point of order if someone has crossed a line. He asked how does Commission address that with public comment.

Sylvia confirmed with staff this was submitted as public comment. Sylvia asked is it policy to read a public comment when the person is not present. Tucker replied it can be read under the Commission's discretion. Sylvia asked does the Port have a policy directing Commission to always read them or not read them. Lackey stated it's a good idea to come up with a policy or standard. Miranda replied staff should talk to the attorney. She noted when there is some obligation to allow free speech, there can be serious issues if the Port doesn't allow it. She noted she would have further conversation with the attorney regarding when things cross the line or people don't identify themselves. She added she would let the Commission know what he recommends.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Lackey requested Item D. Approval of SLA 36 with NOAA be moved to Old Business. The Commission agreed to pull out the item.

MOTION was made by Lackey, seconded by Ruddiman, to approve the consent calendar with the first three items. Sylvia, Retherford, Lackey, Dziak, and Ruddiman voted in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

Approval of SLA 36 with NOAA. Sylvia introduced the agenda item. Lackey asked for background. Brown reported this is annual increase. He stated, historically, NOAA financial staff would have done this. He noted since they were gone on leave, he reached out. He explained they recommended the Port take on the task. He stated going forward, staff will do this and get it done as close to the [adjustment] date as possible. He indicated this is a standard increase based on cost of living. He added Commission will see another one coming for insurance for the same period of time. Lackey confirmed with staff, NOAA will catch up [on payment].

Miranda noted for the Port's purposes, this is not necessary. She explained it is something NOAA likes to do, and the lease already asks for the increase based on CPI. She stated this amendment is done every year, more for them than the Port. Lackey confirmed with staff this is necessary for the Port to be paid. He asked should it be an update in the fiscal manual. Brown replied it is more of a procedure than a policy. He added staff can put it in there, but in five years, it would have to be [revisited]. He explained staff send out a letter to every lessor when the COLA goes into effect with a new rate the month before it goes into effect. Miranda noted every lease is different. She added this would be too complicated to make a policy.

MOTION was made by Retherford, seconded by Lackey, to authorize the Executive Director or Designee to sign Amendment Number 36 to the lease agreement with NOAA. Sylvia, Retherford, Lackey, Dziak, and Ruddiman voted in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Resolution 2025-06 Regarding Budget Modifications. Sylvia introduced the agenda item. Brown presented his report included in the packet. Lackey thanked staff. He stated he wondered if at budgeting, things are going to be tighter and difficult. He noted he doesn't know if the Commission needs a running start to take a look at each thing, like debt service, labor, or contracting. Brown stated he has already started working on it.

Retherford stated with losing Rogue, seeing it come from maintenance from Port Dock 5 and 7 is hard to see. She noted there's always such need. She added she doesn't know where else the Port could get it, but it is hard to see it coming from the docks. Brown noted this is not the full maintenance budget for the docks; there is still some budget left to do maintenance on those docks.

MOTION was made by Ruddiman, seconded by Lackey, to adopt Resolution 2025-06 Regarding Budget Modifications. Sylvia, Retherford, Lackey, Dziak, and Ruddiman voted in favor.

STAFF REPORTS

Executive Director Report. Miranda thanked Bretz and Brown for helping through this process with Rogue's bankruptcy. She noted she had scheduled vacation a year ago that started the

day after they declared bankruptcy. She explained she has been in contact with Bretz and Brown during this process. She reported she knew there was a special meeting naming a bankruptcy attorney. She indicated staff have been working with Shannon Martinez trying to figure out the best way to address this. She added bankruptcy makes things complicated and doesn't allow the Port to immediately make those properties available for leases.

Miranda reported there are a lot of things in the air, many interested parties. She stated staff have been working with the attorney on trying to figure out security of the building. She explained the Port had to enter a contract with TCB for a month for \$30,000. She noted it's a lot of money to put out there, so the Port will either receive reimbursement, or they will figure out a way to make the building secure. She added the assets inside the building are their property.

Miranda reported a lot of people question how long this will be. She stated the message at this point is we don't know. She noted staff don't know when the property is available; it may be a few months, maybe much longer. She explained she is working with the bankruptcy attorney and court. She indicated Cambrian, who has a wastewater system there, shouldn't require Port staff or money. She added there is the question of property taxes because there is a lot of money they owe to the county.

Miranda reported there is the question if the Port is responsible for the taxes or not. She stated she is letting the attorneys talk to each other. She noted the Port may secure that payment through the bankruptcy court because it doesn't want to be responsible for that payment after the fact. She indicated she will keep Commission posted as she knows more things of interest.

Miranda reported she heard of the possibility of hearing very soon on the MARAD grant. She noted it may be before the end of the year. She noted ConnectOregon funds, \$75 million available this time, open in January, and are due at the end of February. She noted projects could be adding dolphin at NIT and the service dock at the recreational marina. She asked if there any other projects to add, to let her know. She added she doesn't want to put too many in. She indicated a potential shortage of \$2 million [for Port Dock 7] may be project. She explained how the funding may work.

Miranda reported the SDAO conference will be in Seaside, February 5-8. She encouraged Commission to sign up for that. She explained lot of Commissioners from special districts attend, and the conference is valuable for information. She noted she requested SDAO give a board training to match with the same day as the Commercial Fishing User Group meeting. Tucker explained the CFUG meeting would be January 22 at 9 a.m., and the Board Roles and Responsibilities training would be at 1 p.m. Miranda added staff will skip some conferences like the Association of Pacific Ports. She noted Mission to Washington changed the dates to April. She explained Sylvia would attend as the liaison. Tucker noted the dates are April 20-23. Sylvia stated he would get back to Miranda on his availability.

Ruddiman confirmed with staff Rogue's warehouse has inventory. He asked if there is a lot. He asked if the Port could make them transfer their inventory from the distillery building. Bretz replied when anyone stores large quantities of liquor, they are required to have certain fire suppression systems. He explained the distillery is set up for that, so that inventory can't be put in the brewery. He indicated there's too much in the brewery to move inventory over to the distillery. He added he recommended the trustee take possession of the pilferable stuff and then put a little money into cameras and lights in order to stand down live security.

Dziak asked for more detail on the daily issues at the physical plant at Rogue. Bretz replied Cambrian has a wastewater treatment facility in the process of decommissioning. He explained runoff from floor was going into a sump that trickled into their system. He noted they were

continually asking the Port to secure that flow, but there is no valve in the system. He explained it's not the Port's system so staff are not familiar with it. He indicated staff had to learn about it, figure out the actual risk, and then get permission with trustee. He added that has been worked out between trustee and Cambrian.

Bretz reported there are coolers over there, and the power is still on. He noted the trustee has been linked with PUD, and he believes the power will stay on. He indicated for physical security, a number of people have been trying to break in. He added, unfortunately, South Beach has some professional criminals that pass through.

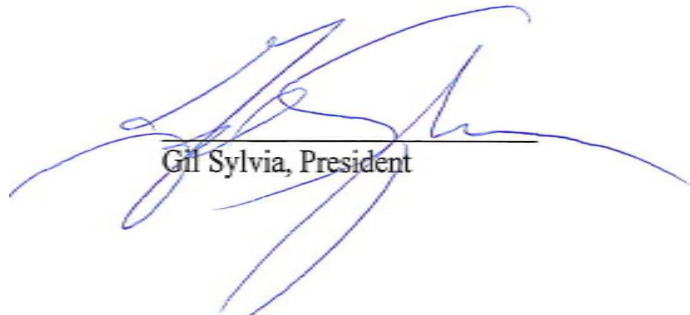
Retherford stated she is curious about the abandoned and derelict vessels project. Bretz replied he asked DSL what are the exact terms of the NOAA marine debris removal program. He explained the funding goes from NOAA to BoatUS to the Department of State Lands to the Port. He noted between those three organizations, the Port is trying understand what they want before doing anything. He added he doesn't know yet, but he is hopeful any day he will hear the status.

CALENDAR

Lackey stated January 22 he has an all-day meeting and will not be able to attend the work session. He noted he also has jury duty in January. Miranda requested Commission let her know if there are more conflicts.

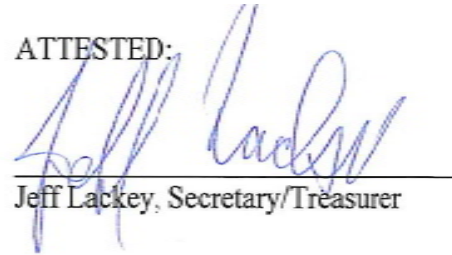
ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.



Gil Sylvia, President

ATTESTED:



Jeff Lackey, Secretary/Treasurer