

May 26, 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, and Administrative Assistant Gloria Tucker. Members of the audience included Lauren Craven and Summit PR Representative Angela Nebel. Dziak and Craven attended online.

CONSENT CALENDAR

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

OLD BUSINESS

Employee Anniversary Recognition – 10 Years – Mark Harris. Sylvia introduced the agenda item. Miranda and Commission thanked and praised Harris for his work.

Approval of Summit PR Contract. Sylvia introduced the agenda item. Miranda presented her report included in the packet. Nebel stated she appreciated the experience she has had with the Port. She noted organizations like the Port have good stories brewing, and she is happy to be here. Sylvia asked what is driving the increase in social media interest; does it go up and down; and is there a pattern or does it depend on big issues. Nebel replied in terms of following, the Port doesn't ever see it go down. She stated it usually goes up in a measured, slower pace. She noted this year had a big jump. She indicated she thinks some of the activity from ODFW and the crab rulemaking drew a lot of interest. She added people pay attention to Rogue as well.

Sylvia confirmed with Nebel once people sign up, they stay signed up. He joked the Port needs emergencies to gather a bigger following. Nebel replied the Port could also be more aggressive in posting. She stated for the size of the community, a good number of the Port district are following. She added people outside the area follow as well. Miranda noted the Port has users at the recreational marina from outside the community.

Nebel stated the RV Park is one area she is trying to work on more, either do more advertising through social media or digital outreach, and that's in the early stages. Retherford stated for commercial, it is good to have an open door with Facebook. She noted a lot of crewmen and skippers don't stay involved. She added it would be nice to put a link to ODFW for commercial [issues]. Miranda replied the Port does post that occasionally. Retherford noted more big stuff is coming down the line. Miranda asked Retherford as she knows those things to please let her know.

Osborne stated he thinks the communications that the Port has is great, particularly the newsletter. He noted he understands the Port can always put things out there, and someone will never read it. He explained he has lived in his park about four years, and the day after the last

newsletter hit the mail, he was walking his dog [in the neighborhood with] about 300 residents, and everyone knew him by name. Miranda added it is the same in her neighborhood.

Dziak stated something he learned at the SDAO conference was newsletters typically have more engagement than social media or phone calls. He asked is there a way to gage that. Nebel replied the only way to do that is to put something in that asks people to respond or engage. She noted some say the newsletter is an old media, but for those who are not [online], the newsletter is in their mailbox. She indicated she hopes they will take a moment and check it out. She explained [the newsletter] provides the Port with the ability to say it is communicating. She added the organization is very transparent. Miranda noted in SDAO, they suggest communication be very broad. She explained some people prefer newspapers, some newsletters, some social media, and some calls. She stated engagement is all over the place, so the Port can't use just one medium. She indicated between the website, Facebook, the newsletter, and the articles in the paper, she thinks the Port covers a good chunk. She added if people are not engaging, it is because they don't want to.

Dziak noted Newport is the largest city represented. He asked if Nebel compared likes to other Ports across the state. He asked is Newport the leading one. Nebel replied she doesn't have the ability to see their engagement, but Miranda may be able to ask and have that information shared. Miranda said she can ask. She noted she has seen other newsletters, which are very simple with only a few pages. She added some Ports are more into electronic, and some she doesn't see anything from them. She noted she can ask at OPPA to better understand what others do.

MOTION was made by Retherford, seconded by Osborne, to authorize the Executive Director to execute a contract with Summit Public Relations Strategies, LLC, and move forward with the proposal not to exceed \$30,500 plus another 10% contingency. Sylvia, Retherford, Ruddiman, Dziak, and Osborne voted in favor.

Approval of PIDP Grant Match Commitment Letter. Sylvia introduced the agenda item. Miranda presented her report included in the packet. Osborne stated he has heard PIDP funds will not be as available next year, and this year was the largest amount they awarded since the act went into place. He noted he is hearing the infrastructure act expires at the end of 2026 and if they don't extend it, or make appropriation into it, there will be a lot less funds available for these types of projects. Miranda replied every five years they go through a new cycle. She stated she hears it seems like it is going in the right direction. She noted they are looking into revamping the transportation package because it is literally one of the most bipartisan and most popular funds in DC. She indicated all of those folks hear from their constituents how important it is to get those transportation funds going for economic development. She added, generally, she thinks this administration is focused on ports. She explained what the Port needs is to have them push toward smaller ports. She stated [small ports] are still being left behind. She noted she wouldn't always count on these funds being available, but she has high hopes from what she hears.

Retherford asked how would the Port get the loan from Business Oregon. Miranda replied, typically, they look at [the Port's] financials and make sure the Port can afford it. She stated there are possibilities; they can do loans that are not payable until construction is completed. She noted unfortunately, Business Oregon has very small amounts of money for grants, but their loans are low interest. She indicated the Port wouldn't obtain \$10 million in loans, probably \$2 to \$4 million in loans. She added the big chunk, the Port would need to find from another source, hopefully grants.

Retherford asked if the Port wouldn't need to pay the loans back until the new docks were built, would [the new docks] really generate enough to pay the loan. She noted the Port is redistributing the same money it has now. She asked would the Port bring in more transient. Miranda replied the concept is to have more slips, and there are a lot of interested parties from other areas, and people who want to move here can't because there isn't space. Bretz noted this spring, several squid boats from out of state wanted to come here full time. He stated the Port had to turn them away. Miranda stated it will be a much better dock with more functionality and more services to provide. She noted she believes the Port may have a lot of folks who want to shuffle around. She asked Bretz if he knew the percentage using Port Dock 7 compared to 10 years ago. Bretz replied the Port has lost a lot of the dock, but the dock is about half full. He noted the Port has more than squid boats [asking for space]. He noted since the Port assigned slips, it lost some of the transient boats that would come here for several months. He indicated that could be fishing-oriented, but there will be room there to add them back.

Miranda stated she has no doubt the income will go up. Bretz stated the Port should look at what that [charge] needs to be. He noted it will be a better facility with more power capacity and more amenities. He indicated there is going to be a rush to be in there, and the Port will have to decide what boats can have those spots. He suggested price can be a way to do that. He added some people are not going to want to pay that, and that is fine, they can stay where they are. Miranda added some fishermen who are at Port Dock 5 have told her if it is improved, they will pay more. She noted they want a better facility, and a few folks will come and pay extra.

Miranda reported the least way staff want to go [to find funding] is to go out for bonds. She explained if the Port gets some funds, knowing if the Port doesn't get this fixed, that the Port may lose a lot of the commercial vessels in town, maybe the community will be willing to work with the Port to pass a bond to pay for the difference. She noted it would be a shame to get \$36 million and not move forward because the Port doesn't have the rest.

Retherford asked won't there be more than \$9 million. She noted there will be mitigation costs. Miranda replied the Port has five years after the project to do mitigation, and that would cost around \$4 million. She added some of that [mitigation] project can come from federal funds.

Retherford stated her concern is finding that kind of money and then maintaining the level of service. She noted staff still have to maintain the Port as is. She indicated in a perfect world, it will work out, but it's a little out of our control where the money comes from. Miranda replied it will be challenging. She stated she will work real hard to find money that doesn't need to be paid back. She noted she doesn't know what other choice the Port has, other than never build the docks and let go of portions of the fishery. She indicated less fisheries means it is harder to hold onto Pacific Seafoods. Retherford indicated it seems like the window is getting smaller and smaller. She added losing the funds this year set the Port back.

Sylvia stated this can't be the only community or municipality that has this match problem. Miranda replied it is all over the state. He noted the Port went to ConnectOregon a couple of times, and they worked to prioritize this grant, and the Port didn't get the other grant. He stated he worries they won't continue to support the Port's efforts. He explained if things don't align right, and the Port has to return funds, it upsets people. He asked is there a different way for the state, the legislature, to do this so [ports] are not caught up in a timing game. Miranda replied she talked to folks on the state level, and they understand the game. She stated she is working through OPPA with the legislature to be more inclusive of ports. She explained their transportation plan has no maritime piece. She noted they need to pay more attention to ports because they are falling behind. She indicated Newport is doing well compared to other Oregon ports. She emphasized Oregon

ports are all falling behind in dredging, falling behind in infrastructure, and it's bad. Sylvia suggested there be some kind of revolving fund, so that [organizations] didn't have to depend on the session.

Retherford asked if Sylvia signs the commitment letter, how does it lock the Port in. Miranda replied the letter tells them if they give the Port \$36.5 million, the Port will come up with the other \$9 million. Sylvia stated he considers it a contract. Miranda stated the worst that could happen, if they give the Port the award, is committing to find \$9 million. She added if there is no way to get \$9 million, the Port can give back the funds. Sylvia stated the worst case is a loan or bond. Miranda noted the Port could go for industrial bonds, where revenues pay for the bond.

Retherford asked if the Port is awarded this, would the Port have the funding in place ahead or will Commission have no time and have to get the loan immediately. Miranda replied she is working toward grants all the way, and that is the priority. She noted sometimes when there are big projects in Oregon, people have come to legislature and been able to get big monies. She indicated she would also work with Business Oregon to find out the max they would be willing to loan the Port. Sylvia stated this [letter] is our word, and he takes this deadly serious. He suggested if the Port got this money, the Port would look horrible giving it back because it was not willing to come up with \$9 million. He added the worst-case scenario is a loan. Miranda added it will take time before the Port needs to make payments. Retherford added as long as the Port can pay these loans and keep up what it is already doing, that's important.

Dziak asked what entities does the Port get loans from. Miranda replied there are a lot of sources. She explained the first source is Business Oregon, then there is the Council of Governments (COG), industrial bonds, and private financing.

MOTION was made by Ruddiman, seconded by Osborne, to authorize the Commission President to sign the PIDP grant match commitment letter as attached. Sylvia, Retherford, Ruddiman, Dziak, and Osborne voted in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of West Coast Contractors for NOAA Pier Fire Repairs. Sylvia introduced the agenda item. Bretz presented his report included in the packet. Ruddiman asked if this falls in the in-water work window. Bretz replied the work is not in the water, so it will start after July 1.

MOTION was made by Osborne, seconded by Retherford, to authorize the Executive Director or her representative to contract with West Coast Contractors in an amount not to exceed \$530,000 for repairs to the NOAA Pier. Sylvia, Retherford, Ruddiman, Dziak, and Osborne voted in favor.

STAFF REPORTS

Executive Director Report. Miranda presented her report included in the packet. Retherford asked on the [former] brewery will the Port do something with the public. Miranda replied her intent is to do the feasibility study, then come up with a plan, and then have a work session with Commission that gives the public opportunity to make comments. Sylvia asked if the feasibility study will meet with people in the community who are involved with economic development. He added he is worried people will be upset if the Commission makes up its mind before the public meeting. Miranda replied she is already talking to folks in charge of economic

development in this community. Sylvia asked if they will be part of the formal process. Miranda replied they will have input on the feasibility study.

Ruddiman noted there was quite a decline in occupancy at the RV Park in March. Miranda noted some customers cancel because of the price of gas.

Miranda asked for the World's Greatest show, is Retherford willing to be interviewed on July 15. She noted they would like to film her sons at work as well. Retherford replied she will check her calendar.

Retherford noted a correction in the director's report. Sylvia requested the financial analysis return to the next meeting.

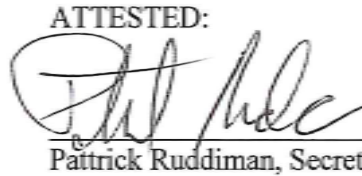
ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.



Gil Sylvia, President

ATTESTED:



Patrick Ruddiman, Secretary/Treasurer