

October, 2020



Keeping Posted:

Here's what on GM Paula Miranda's mind

As always, things are busy at the Port and, although we have many projects underway, we sometimes find that we must “hurry up and wait” for feedback from outside organizations before taking the next steps.

We have been working with a consultant to pursue grant opportunities to help with the funds needed for some of our projects. Our consultant met with EDA recently and talks are underway to see if there may be monies to help with the International Terminals marketing plan and the Dock 7 replacement plan. We await more information on this.

The US Army Corps of Engineers has completed an initial study with regard to dredging and we now await word to see if they will move forward into the feasibility study phase. This dredging is a critical first step to reconfiguring the north commercial marina to allow larger vessels and more capacity.

The Port Dock 5 pier project is moving along, as our engineers and project manager work feverishly to get out an RFP for project construction soon. The big question is whether we will be able to turn the project around fast enough to complete in-water work during the allowed window this winter. In the meantime, we have begun conversations with the US Army Corps to see if they will allow us to extend the work window in the spring.

As much as we await word on those projects, we have also undertaken other work and completed other projects in recent months. Read about those items in our project update.



Taking steps to secure the financial future



Over the past two years, the Port of Newport has implemented a number of efficiencies that have aided the Port's overall financial picture and helped insulate it against the negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. “Our goal is to make every area of the Port sustainable,” said General Manager Paula Miranda at the Port's goal-setting session in March. Miranda's administrative team, which includes Director of Operations Aaron Bretz and Director of Finance Mark Brown, have implemented several beneficial changes.

~ Added more shifts at the Commercial Marina and International Terminal, which brought more opportunities for fishing vessels and buyers. By expanding the use of shift workers, our users no longer have to wait until the following day or next week because our crew is available to perform work at different hours. Users pay a higher rate for work performed at later hours and the overall result has been higher revenues.

~ Updated the ticketing system we use to track vessels loaded and unloaded. By entering the data on a weekly basis, we reduced the chances of tickets being lost or errors being made.

~ Changed our accounts receivable system from one where statements were sent monthly to one where invoices are sent weekly.

~ Improved the purchasing system to make the turn-around time for purchases quicker while making the process more time efficient for staff.

~ Updated computer software, telephone systems, security cameras and other technology to realize greater benefits, often at a cost savings.

Port facilities are public assets. It is incumbent upon our entire team to find efficiencies where we can and make every effort to run our operation in a way that is sustainable and fiscally responsible.

Project Update:

Commercial Marina Electrical

We have an electrical engineer on board and the process of replacing electrical panels and pedestals for Port Dock 5 and Port Dock 3 has started.

South Beach Storm Sewer

A sinkhole related to a storm sewer failure on our South Beach campus has been replaced and the surface road and sidewalk repaired.

Bilge Waste Facility

The Port provides for the disposal of as much as 20,000 gallons annually of bilge waste for fishing vessels. Following a recent failure of one of the two tanks, the Port Commission is now evaluating options for a low risk, higher efficiency system. The failed tank has been removed and clean-up completed. For now, Port officials will have the remaining tank inspected and, if appropriate, continue to utilize that option until the next fiscal year.

Security Cameras

A plan to improve the security on our South Beach campus has led to the replacement of our security cameras and an increase in the number of units. We now have good audio and video surveillance of the area.



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Axle fees support future road and lot repair needs

Did you know the Port of Newport is responsible for maintaining an extensive network of roads and private lots within the parameters of its properties?

In July of 2019, the Port began charging an axle fee to heavy trucks and equipment traveling in our lots and on our roads. The dollars collected are set aside for future road and lot improvements. Previously, the Port did not have a revenue stream to support road maintenance, and does not receive tax revenue from the state to maintain roads, which means upkeep of asphalt and driving surfaces must be covered through fees.

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