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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Port Commission selects new officers

Lamerdin resigns to take job on East Coast

(NEWPORT, OR) - The Port of Newport Port Commission unanimously elected Sara Skamser as its new President at the Port's monthly meeting on Tuesday.

The selection of new officers, which is prescribed in Port bylaws to occur at the July meeting, began with some surprising news. Current President Stewart Lamerdin announced his resignation from the commission by indicating that a job change will take him out of the Port District in August.

Thanking his fellow commission members, staff and the public, Lamerdin said it was with "a heavy heart" that his departure from the body would occur effective July 26, 2019. Fellow commissioners offered thanks and well wishes to Lamerdin before the body began the process of selecting new leadership.

After Skamser was elected and the gavel handed over to her, the commission went on to elect Jim Burke as Vice President and Walter Chuck as Secretary/Treasurer.

"I am honored and surprised and hope to do a good job in keeping with the standards that Stewart set for transparency and communication with all of the Port's constituents," Skamser remarked after the meeting. She has served on the board since July 2017 and was previously Commission Vice President.

Lamerdin, who has served for four years on the Commission and was President for the past year, later elaborated that he had accepted a position on the East Coast, where he will serve as director of marine operations at a university in Virginia.

"With both the staff and the commission, the Port is on solid footing and positioned well for future growth," he said on Tuesday evening. "I am thankful for the opportunity to serve and I wish the best for the Port, the Port staff, and all of the stakeholders."

In light of Lamerdin's exit, the Commission will start the process of filling the vacancy by inviting letters of interest from applicants. General Manager Paula Miranda indicated that further information for interested parties will be found on the Port's website.

In other business, Port Commissioners were introduced to Mark Brown, the Port's new Director of Finance. Brown, who currently resides in Eugene, will leave his position at the Department of Environmental Quality before starting his new role at the Port on Aug. 5, 2019.

After a presentation by Director of Operations Aaron Bretz, Commissioners heard from fish cutters who offer their services at fish cleaning stations at the South Beach marina. Over the coming month, Bretz will be reviewing options and garnering feedback on the possibility of licensing the individuals who process fish on behalf of recreational anglers. Comments from both the Commission and fish cutters indicated a willingness to formalize the relationship in the future and all will await Bretz's report.

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