

July 22, 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, and Ruddiman. Also in attendance were Executive Director Paula Miranda, Deputy Executive Director Aaron Bretz, Finance Director Mark Brown, Summit PR Representative Angela Nebel, and Administrative Assistant Gloria Tucker. Members of the audience included Port employees Kody Robinson, David Little, Loren Newman, Mark Harris, Eileen Dawson, Shannon Smith, and Laura Sireci, and residents Walter Chuck, Rex Capri, Laura Wilkeson, Loren Craven, Bob Dziak, and Doug Cooper.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

MOTION was made by Ruddiman, seconded by Lackey, to approve the consent calendar as presented. The motion carried unanimously in a voice vote.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

**Employee Recognition – 5 Year Anniversary – David Little.** Sylvia introduced the agenda item. Miranda, Bretz, and Robinson thanked Little for his service.

**Employee Recognition – 5 Year Anniversary – Kody Robinson.** Sylvia introduced the agenda item. Miranda and Bretz thanked Robinson for his service.

**Assignment of Commission Liaisons.** Sylvia introduced the agenda item. Miranda overviewed the liaisons included in the report. She noted she would look into the Midcoast Watersheds Council. The Commission agreed to appoint the following to serve as liaisons for the Port of Newport:

<b><i>Organization</i></b>	<b><i>Liaison(s)</i></b>
AMERICAN ALBACORE FISHING ASSOCIATION	Aaron Bretz
ASSOCIATION OF PACIFIC PORTS (APP)	Paula Miranda; Kelley Retherford (alt)
BOEM OIRE Task Force	Jeff Lackey; Bob Dziak (alt)
CASCADES WEST AREA COMMISSION ON TRANSPORTATION	Gil Sylvia; Jeff Lackey (alt); must be elected
CASCADES WEST COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS	Gil Sylvia; Jeff Lackey (alt); must be elected

CASCADES WEST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT	Paula Miranda
COMMERCIAL FISHING USERS GROUP COMMITTEE	Kelley Retherford; Jeff Lackey (alt.)
DAS OPS ORCPP, Procurement Services	Aaron Bretz; Mark Brown (alt.)
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE OF LINCOLN COUNTY (EDALC)	Paula Miranda; Aaron Bretz (alt.)
GREATER NEWPORT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (NCOC)	Paula Miranda
MIDCOAST WATERSHEDS COUNCIL	_____ ; _____ (alt.)
NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL	Pat Ruddiman; Kelley Retherford (alt.)
OREGON COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (OCZMA)	Jeff Lackey; Aaron Bretz (alt.) alternate may be staff
OREGON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION	Paula Miranda, Mark Brown
OREGON PUBLIC PORTS ASSOCIATION (OPPA)	Paula Miranda; Kelley Retherford (alt.)
PACIFIC COAST CONGRESS OF HARBORMASTERS AND PORT MANAGERS (PCCHPM)	Kody Robinson; Aaron Bretz (alt.)
PACIFIC NORTHWEST WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION (PNWA)	Paula Miranda; Gil Sylvia (alt.)
SPECIAL DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION OF OREGON (SDAO)	Paula Miranda
WESTERN FISHBOAT OWNERS ASSOCIATION	Aaron Bretz
YAQUINA BAY ECONOMIC FOUNDATION (YBEF)	Paula Miranda; Jeff Lackey (alt.)

MOTION was made by Ruddiman, seconded by Retherford, to elect Gil Sylvia as representative and Jeff Lackey as alternate to the Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments and Oregon Cascades West Area Commission on Transportation. The motion carried unanimously in a voice vote.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Approval of PacSoft Switch.** Sylvia introduced the agenda item. Brown reported he is requesting sole source procurement. He stated he has yet to find another vendor that offers a marina reservation system and an RV Park reservation system. He noted staff want a system that integrates into Business Central, and no other reservation system is an integral part of Business Central (BC) [like Elite Dynamics]. He explained it uses the functions of Business Central to perform its

operations. He indicated Elite Dynamics is a Gold Certified Microsoft Partner, which means they have meet a certain set of standards with bugs, implementation, rollout, and software development in order to maintain that. He added the main reason he is coming forward with this proposal is the speed of PacSoft itself.

Brown reported the speed has been an issue since day one, and staff have lived with it and worked with the vendor for three and a half years to increase speed. He stated most of the time when they come out with a new version, the speed issue is not fixed. He noted the Port is the testing environment and has been given workarounds around the workarounds. He indicated over time the online bookings have dropped dramatically. He added people are calling the office instead.

Brown reported one of the big problems is pricing inflexibility. He stated the Port has had to have the vendor come in and change the price for products if staff want any changes during the year. He noted recently, there have been double bookings in the software, which is a core function of the software. He indicated he discovered credit cards, which are supposed to be stored on the credit card processor site, are stored in PacSoft unencrypted. He emphasized that is a major PCI violation.

Brown reported he is looking for a system where staff can cross-train people easily and staff can make a reservation within seconds rather than 10 minutes. Miranda pointed out the system is supposed to collect [transient room] taxes and was not collecting it. She noted the Port still has to pay that tax regardless.

Brown reported as an integral part of Business Central, every transaction is automatically posted to the BC general ledger. He stated he talked with Elite Dynamics on how the Port has to recognize revenue, and their system handles it properly. He noted he talked to them about long-term, short-term, marina operations, commercial operations, and ways to handle each of those functions. He indicated there is a Point of Sale system, but it's not as advanced [as he suggested]. He added Elite Dynamics is based in the UK, but the principal of the company is moving to Canada.

Brown reported part of the switchover is moving from KOPIS to Elite Dynamics. He noted KOPIS has a support fee that the Port pays, but the Port won't have that with Elite Dynamics. Miranda noted the current software is from Australia.

Dawson stated this would put everything within the same software. She explained all of the Port's licensing would be under one umbrella. She noted a Certified Microsoft partner means staff have the backing, the support, and the learning with Microsoft. She indicated if Elite Dynamics doesn't help staff, staff have the ability to go to Microsoft, file a complaint, get the help they need, and Elite Dynamics will lose their license. She added they are held to a higher accountability than what PacSoft is held to.

Dawson stated with staff all in the same system, there wouldn't be the frustrations, and the customers wouldn't be as frustrated. She added the customer service reps would be so much happier because they won't have to wait a minute before a person's account loads.

Brown reported when [a customer] goes online to reserve a spot in our software, they have to make an account and then it shows the spots [as a list]. He explained it doesn't show a picture or map of the spots, and in Elite Dynamics [customers] can see a picture of the spot they are reserving, where the hookups are. He added most software for RV Parks offer [site attributes] out of the box.

Sireci stated she fully supports the transition from PacSoft to Elite Dynamics. She noted before she took on her role in South Beach, she worked as a receptionist and Accounts Receivable.

She indicated across both positions, she spent the majority of the day working in PacSoft. She added while it offers some functionality, it is undeniably outdated.

Sireci stated working on software that is 24 years old, on Windows 7, is increasingly unreliable for her and every customer service rep in South Beach. She noted in her experience this has been one of the slowest systems she ever worked with. She explained it is exceptionally difficult to learn, hard to teach, and practically impossible to master. She indicated she has been working with the system over a year, and she still contacts support multiple times per week to help with the newest broken portion she has found. She added every time they do an update, it introduces more bugs than fixes.

Sireci stated customer service representatives spend hours on emails, phone calls, and voicemails that really should be resolved online. She noted people just can't make their reservations and they call. She indicated [PacSoft] grows slower by the day. She explained that invoicing a customer can take 10 minutes. She added this leads to frustration, especially during the summer. She emphasized the system was not built for RV Park operations. She explained it was designed for marinas, and that is very different.

Sireci stated Elite Dynamics has platforms tailored for both. She noted, realistically, change is always challenging, but she knows she speaks for the entire staff, everyone is willing to stand behind this transition. She indicated the current system is not efficient and costing the Port reservations and revenue.

Sireci stated PacSoft is very accounting heavy. She noted she can understand the principles behind it, but then CSRs have to jump into the field of accounting. She explained they can understand the basics, but the large majority of the problems, they have to bring to her because it is too complicated. She indicated customers also have no way to see what is available without making an account first.

Harris stated he fully supports Elite Dynamics. He explained he works with the general ledger that feeds into the financial statements. He noted with two systems that are not connected, some reservations are made, and at the end of the month when he wants to know balances, he can see some data from PacSoft. He explained there is not customer names, just a small description and invoice number. He noted if auditors are examining it or he needs to verify something, he has to go back into PacSoft, three or four layers down, to find an invoice to tie back to the accounting system. He indicated there can be hundreds or thousands of transactions a month, and trying to corral that from the accounting side is time consuming and difficult. He added he is excited to be able to look in the accounting system, see all the customers, see their balances, tie those balances to invoices, and tie those invoices to deposits at the bank.

Brown stated when customer pays in advance, called a deposit, staff can't record it as revenue until they stay at the park. He noted with Elite Dynamics the deposit is stored in a separate account, while in PacSoft staff have to hold it as a negative in accounts receivable.

Miranda reported the Port did not budget this for this year. She stated she made sure Brown could justify why the Port could move on to this system, the financial impact and how to mitigate that. She noted for three and a half years, she has been seeing the struggle the staff have been going through. She explained staff struggled to bring Commission good reports; they couldn't provide [financial] reports at the beginning. She indicated normally staff may change a system every four to five years, but there has been enough struggle. She added she thinks it is worthwhile to take away the frustration from staff and customers and save the Port money. Dawson added there are tech service invoices from PacSoft, which should have been included in the contract price.

Newman stated he spent the majority of his career in outdoor recreation and hospitality, and this is not the first park he has worked at. He noted PacSoft is costing money, losing customers and customer satisfaction. He explained he will have 75 voicemails that should have been able to be completed by a simple booking online. He indicated it's people who tried to book online and can't make the system work. He added its primary function is broken.

Newman stated as the clientele ages out, and the Port gets younger and younger clientele, his generation won't call, they will go to the competition. He noted the Port has opportunities to grow, and the RV Park is such an amazing revenue generator, and the Port is hamstringing one of the most vital parts of the organization by allowing this software that is broken. He added he is a beta tester that is not getting paid to be a beta tester. He indicated customer service reps are not number people, but people, people.

Smith stated she was previously a teacher, and she has Type A personality. She explained as a teacher, she went through learning new software every two weeks. She indicated this has raised her blood pressure to the point to be on medication. She added as a Type A, she is bothered by so many mistakes.

Smith stated customers come at staff already mad. She explained she is really good about deescalating situations, but that becomes her entire day. She noted it takes so much patience and effort to deal with the software, that when she gets to the customer, her patience is waning, not to mention coworkers. She added it's turning into a toxic office work environment, and it's amazing that this software takes so much out of staff that they can't talk to each other.

Brown reported the timeline for implementation would be December or January, and March would be a good time to switch from PacSoft.

Sylvia praised the business case, and discussion ensued on the slowness of the system. He asked is there any reason the Commission shouldn't do this. Brown replied any new software will have issues that are not disclosed, but he thinks they will be minimal and solvable.

Lackey asked if there is anyone in the US who is using it, and have staff talked to them. Brown replied no one in the US uses both systems, the majority of users are in the UK. Lackey summarized complaints fall into online reservations, slowness, and functionality. He asked do staff feel like those three problems are solved with the proposed software. Brown replied, absolutely. He noted he looked at 30 different packages, and most of them are faster than what staff are using, most of them have better functionality. Lackey noted there is an \$82,000 annual fee. He asked is that within range of normal for these software systems. Brown replied it is fairly typical to have this type of price range.

Lackey noted implementation is targeted for January. He asked as bad as PacSoft is, is there a reason not to get it started sooner. Brown replied the plan is to get the learning curve in before the [next] summer season, but he wants to make sure this is well planned, the data flows easily, and he mitigates any risks before going live. Miranda replied this is the busy season for South Beach, and to learn a new system in the middle of their busy season would be hard on staff and customers. Lackey recommended talking with US customers as much as possible. Brown replied even if the Commission passes this, he can hold off signing anything until he talks to customers.

Retherford stated she appreciates everyone who took time to come to the meeting to express concerns. Sylvia stated the agony has been so great over the past year, that staff are ecstatic over something that looks like an amazing improvement. He indicated he wonders if that is colored by how bad it has been. Newman replied anything would be better. Brown replied no doubt it is

colored, and the question he asks himself is, is this the best solution. Dawson emphasized it is built into Business Central.

Sylvia confirmed with staff the competitors do not meet these criteria. Brown replied if he used another software package, an application would have to be written to transfer the data from their software to Business Central. He noted he can't tell how many failures there have been with that in PacSoft. He explained every morning staff check to see if the transfer happened. He added this is the only software you don't have to worry about that.

Brown reported there has been 100 percent turnover in staff at the RV Park in the last two years, and this is part of the reason. Sylvia noted staff were excited about PacSoft when Commission purchased that, but it did not turn out well. He asked was Elite Dynamics out back then. Brown replied it has been out for 10 years.

MOTION was made by Lackey, seconded by Ruddiman, to authorize the Executive Director or designee to execute the attached agreement with Elite Dynamics and authorize the Port leadership team to replace the Ports reservation and billing system with Elite Dynamics' reservation and billing system using a Sole Source Procurement with a maximum implementation cost of £40,347 (estimated USD \$55,276) and an estimated annual cost of £59,848 (Estimated USD, \$81,992). The motion carried unanimously in a voice vote.

**Approval of FV Ashtella Rhelyn Removal.** Sylvia introduced the agenda item. Bretz reported this was initially approved at the special meeting with FDS. He explained at the time of that quote, there was an experienced salvager in the area ready to move forward within days. He noted then they tried to raise it to \$415,000, and he is not comfortable with that. He stated \$325K is a lot of money to salvage a 36-foot boat even with its issues. He indicated now that it is dragging out with time, staff can get it done cheaper. He added he has been in contact with four different companies, and he thinks they can get it done for less, using different methods.

Bretz reported he recommends a change to who the Port contracts with, rather than have another special meeting after he gathers the quotes. Ruddiman asked if no one considered using Bergerson's crane rather than transporting another crane in here. Bretz replied he contacted them, and they are creating a proposal. He noted another issue is disposal of the vessel after the fact. He explained disposal has changed this year. He stated DEQ wants people to get a solid waste disposal permit and do this in an enclosed facility.

Miranda stated the Port of Toledo has not shown interest in doing that kind of job. She noted it doesn't pencil out for them, so they are moving away from it. She added her priority is safety, compliance, and ways not to create more liability.

Lackey stated all he knows about raising a vessel is what he has seen on YouTube, and that ranges from professional to not professional. He noted the \$325K price tag amazed him. He suggested waiting until bids come in and doing special meeting or doing a blanket price at a lower number, maybe \$250K or \$200K. Bretz replied that is fine. He explained salvaging and disposal of vessels is not a lucrative business unless a lot of time is spent watching the market. He stated in Yaquina Bay there's not as many resources for this. He added the Port wants a solid, reputable salvager to take care of this.

Lackey asked since there is so much cost in disposal, can the Port raise it and give it back to the owner. Bretz replied he doesn't know where he will put it. He explained it is not seaworthy. He added he wants to avoid a situation where [the perception] is a problem winds up on Yaquina Bay that the Port perpetuated.

Retherford noted at the last meeting, there was urgency because of damage to the docks. She asked has staff figured out a way to stabilize it. Bretz replied the finger broke completely off, so as long as the wreck doesn't get pushed up underneath the main dock, the dock is OK. He added staff are keeping an eye on it, so that if it gets worse, they can immediately do something. Sylvia clarified with staff the original company raised the price due to the cost of mobilization of a crane.

MOTION was made by Lackey, seconded by Retherford, to maintain the Emergency Declaration for FV Ashtella Rhelyn and to authorize the Executive Director or her representative to contract with a competent contractor to salvage the vessel in an amount not to exceed \$250K. The motion carried unanimously in a voice vote.

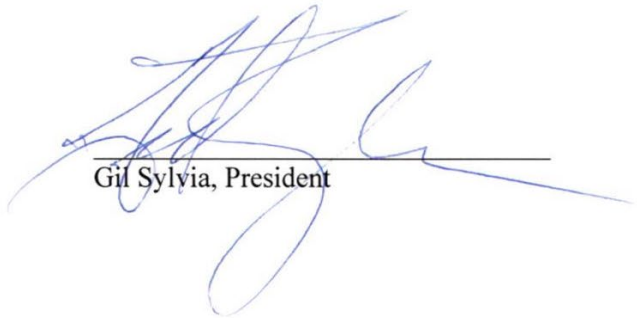
### **STAFF REPORTS**

**Executive Director's Report**. Miranda presented her report included in the packet. Sylvia asked how many spots the Port is thinking about closing in South Beach because of depth. Bretz replied he does not recommend closing any berths but communicating, "Use at your own risk." He noted there are about 8-10 spots affected. Sylvia asked at low tide, what is the lowest depth. Bretz replied there are many factors, but on minus tides it could get as shallow as 4 feet.

Miranda reported the eel grass survey is wrapping up, and discussion ensued on eel grass mitigation. Ruddiman asked with the drought, has the city said anything about water restrictions. Miranda replied she has not received a notification from the city, but as soon as that happens, staff will communicate that with customers.

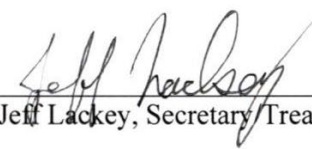
### **ADJOURNMENT**

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Gil Sylvia, President

ATTESTED:



\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeff Lackey, Secretary/Treasurer