

**MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 19, 2024**

PORT OF ASTORIA
WORKSHOP SESSION
COMMISSION CHAMBERS
422 GATEWAY AVE., SUITE 100
ASTORIA, OR 97103

Call to Order:

Chairman Stevens called the Workshop Session to order at 4:00 pm.

Roll Call:

Commissioners Present: Robert Stevens; Jim Campbell; Tim Hill; Dirk Rohne; and Frank Spence via Zoom.

Staff Present: Executive Director Will Isom; Deputy Director Matt McGrath; Finance & HR Director Melanie Howard; Office Manager Dianna Delgado.

Port Counsel: Eileen Eakins was not present.

Also Attending: Finance Advisory Committee Chairman David Oser; Mark Popkin of Popkin Real Estate; Mike Oien of Terry's Plumbing.

Pledge of Allegiance

Changes/Additions to the Agenda:

There were no changes to the agenda.

Public Comment:

No public comment was received.

Advisory Items:

6a. Discuss Finance Committee Role

Finance Advisory Committee Chairman David Oser provided an overview of the Finance Committee's role and purpose. Key points from the discussion included:

- The Finance Committee should have at least one member with expertise in finance and accounting.
- The Committee helps the Port Commission by reviewing financial statements, audits, cash flow, investments, and debt financing—areas that may require more time or expertise than the Commission can dedicate.
- While not a state requirement, the committee can help manage financial risks, especially as the Port takes on larger projects that require more oversight.
- The committee reviews both internally and externally prepared financial statements and makes recommendations to the Port Commission but does not have the authority to approve changes.
- Commissioner Frank Spence praised Oser and the Finance Committee for their work over the years.
- Commissioner Tim Hill highlighted the value of financial expertise, saying his own business

wouldn't have succeeded without a strong financial team.

- Commissioner Stevens noted that while no vote would be taken at this meeting, the Board of Commissioners sees the committee as an asset since not all commission members have financial backgrounds.

6b. Terry's Plumbing Lease

Mike Oien from Terry's Plumbing provided background on the company and its operations. Key points from his presentation included:

- The company currently employs 17 full-time staff with family-wage jobs and benefits. Additionally, it offers apprenticeships to high school students, with nine former apprentices becoming full-time plumbers.
- Terry's Plumbing was founded by Oien's father in 1992. Since his retirement nine years ago, the company has grown from four to 25 employees, with increased profitability.
- Along with JP Plumbing, Terry's Plumbing makes up nearly 90% of the plumbing revenue in Clatsop County.
- Over the past three years, the company has received buyout offers, but Oien intends to keep it a family business with no plans to sell or relocate.
- Since 2018, businesses leasing government-owned property have been subject to additional taxes, requiring Terry's Plumbing to pay taxes on a building it does not own.
- To ensure long-term stability and growth, Oien believes purchasing the building they currently lease would be the best path forward.
- The company significantly contributes to the local economy, spending on suppliers, insurance, IT services, employee wages, and vehicle purchases – all with businesses in Clatsop County.
- Oien clarified that he is not seeking a discounted price and is willing to pay market value for the property.
- Commissioner Stevens thanked Oien for his presentation and acknowledged that past sales of Port properties have sometimes been regrettable, as once sold, they are difficult to reacquire. He noted that the Board of Commissioners will carefully consider the request to make the best decision for the Port.

6c. City of Warrenton Mitigation Update

Executive Director Will Isom provided an update on the mitigation efforts related to the Pier 2 Rehabilitation project.

- As part of the project, the seawall will need to be replaced, which will create a new tidal estuary. After working with consultants to identify a suitable mitigation site, the Skipanon was determined to be the best option because of its location and it is already Port-owned.
- The Port submitted a mitigation application to the City of Warrenton, but it was denied. The Port chose to appeal the decision, but consultants advised that if the appeal is denied again, there would be a 12-month waiting period before another application could be submitted, causing further delays.
- The Pier 2 West Rehabilitation was originally projected to begin in November 2025, but this is dependent on obtaining the necessary permits. A recent meeting with the City of Warrenton did not go as expected, as City staff remained firm in requiring the Port to find a different mitigation site without providing a clear explanation.
- Isom noted that the City may not fully recognize the regional impact of the Pier 2 Rehabilitation. Officials referenced a 1981 agreement between the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce (CREST), the Port, and the City that designated the Skipanon for future industrial use. However, many parts of that agreement are no longer relevant, and upcoming

FEMA regulations (effective December 1) may further complicate the potential for development.

- Mitigation sites must be located in areas influenced by tidal waters and cannot impact existing wetlands. Finding an alternative site, or one owned by another entity that would be willing to sell would likely lead to additional delays.
- The Port is continuing to explore other options while also working to help the City understand why the Skipanon is the most suitable mitigation site.
- Commissioner Rohne suggested reaching out to former Senator Betsy Johnson for assistance in facilitating discussions between the involved parties.
- Isom noted that pushing political pressure could create resistance and believes that working directly with City staff may be more effective, as their recommendations will carry weight with the Planning Commission. He has also reached out to former Mayor Kujala for support.
- Commissioner Spence expressed disappointment in the City's decision, noting that the Port has historically had a strong working relationship with Warrenton and hopes that outreach efforts will lead to a positive resolution.
- Commissioner Stevens thanked Isom for his efforts and expressed surprise at the City's unanimous decision to deny the application.

For the full discussion, please refer to the meeting audio.

Action Items:

7a. City of Warrenton Letter of Support

Isom shared that the City of Warrenton requested a letter of support for an EPA Clean Water Act grant to help fund the replacement of the city's wastewater treatment plant. As this matter extends beyond the Port, Isom presented a draft of the letter for the Board of Commissioners to review.

- Commissioner Stevens asked whether the letter would be signed by the Executive Director or the Commission. Isom clarified that it would be signed by a Commissioner.
- Commissioner Rohne suggested that the letter should be signed by the Chairman, which was added to the motion.
- Commissioner Stevens agreed to sign the letter with edits.

Commissioner Rhone moved to Support the Project Warrenton Has Proposed and to Submit the Support Letter Signed by the Port Commission Chairman Immediately. Commissioner Hill seconded. The motion carried 5-0 amongst the Commissioners present.

7b. Personnel Policies Update

Finance and HR Director Melanie Howard presented the updated Personnel Policy for approval, noting that the last update was in 2020. Key updates include:

- New language adopted to align with the Oregon Paid Leave Program.
- Policy updates initially dated for adoption in November 2024 will be adjusted to December 2024.
- Anti-harassment and retaliation provisions under Employee Relations were revised to meet grant requirements.
- An Inclement Weather and Emergency Closure Policy and a Remote Work Policy were added under Payroll and Scheduling.
- The definition of relationships by "blood or affinity" was clarified for Sick Leave utilization criteria.
- A Social Media Policy was added.
- Two supplemental policies were included: Airport On-Call Policy and Security Gate Guard On-Call Policy.

Commissioner Campbell asked about the inclusion of Juneteenth as an observed holiday. Howard explained that the Port follows the Federal holiday schedule, and Juneteenth was recently added as a recognized Federal holiday.

Isom noted that as part of the approval process, the updated Personnel Policy is first presented to the Commission for approval. If approved, Union Representatives will have an additional 14 days to review it.

Commissioner Campbell moved to approve the Personnel Policy Update. Commissioner Hill. The motion carried 5-0 amongst the Commissioners present.

Commission Comments:

Commissioner Campbell commented on the following:

Asked about dredging at the Port. Isom responded that no dredging is planned for this winter as the focus will be on the East Basin Causeway removal instead. Isom explained that the Port is still seeking a long-term solution for dredging at the Central Waterfront. Current equipment is no longer safe or efficient to use. Moving forward, discussions will focus on whether to contract out, purchase new equipment, or explore a partnership with the private sector.

Commissioner Rohne commented on the following:

Was not able to attend the meeting in person, but glad to have joined by Zoom. The virtual format worked reasonably well.

Commissioner Spence commented on the following:

Shoutout to the Clatsop Cruise Hosts (CCH), who voluntarily assist cruise ship visitors by providing maps, coupons for local businesses, and shuttle bus tickets to tour downtown Astoria.

Commissioner Hill did not have any comments.

Commissioner Stevens commented on the following:

- Attended a meeting with the City of Warrenton alongside the Executive Director and others.
- As part of the Northwest Ports Association, received a survey from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration regarding National Marine Fisheries interactions with the Port. Worked with Commissioner Hill and others to complete the survey on behalf of the Port.

Executive Director Comments:

- Isom thanked David Oser for his work on the Finance Committee, emphasizing that it is difficult to find qualified volunteers for finance and budget-related committees. He noted that having a Finance Committee helps build public trust and has already received positive feedback from the audit team. The committee is now formally included in the Port's bylaws as a required body.
- The Port Holiday Party for Commissioners and staff will be held on December 7 at 5:30 PM.

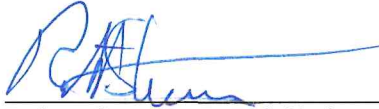
Upcoming Meeting Dates:

- Regular Meeting – December 3, 2024, at 4:00 PM
- Workshop Session – December 17, 2024, at 4:00 PM

Adjourned:

Chairman Stevens adjourned the meeting at 4:42 PM.

APPROVED:



Robert Stevens, Board Chairman
Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:



Tim Hill, Secretary
Board of Commissioners

Respectfully submitted by:
Dianna Delgado
Office Manager

January 7, 2025
Date Approved by Commission