



**MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 17, 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; Frank Spence; Jim Campbell; Tim Hill; and Dirk Rohne.

Staff Present: Executive Director Will Isom; Deputy Director Matt McGrath; Cruise Marketing Bruce Conner; Executive Assistant Dianna Delgado.

Port Counsel: Eileen Eakins was not present.

Also Attending: Alan Ismond and Abby Ismond of Aqua-Terra Consultants; Rebecca Norden-Bright of *The Astorian*.

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. CBP Update

- Commissioner Robert Stevens introduced the advisory item, noting that the Port hosted a Zoom meeting on September 12th, which ended prematurely due to technical issues. Following the meeting, a nearby group of members gathered to discuss updates and the impact of cruise ship cancellations on the Port and the local economy.
- Executive Director Will Isom apologized for his absence from the Ad Hoc Committee meeting, citing illness. He explained that the challenges posed by the new Customs and Border Protection (CBP) procedures are particularly significant for the Port of Astoria, given its volume of cruise ship traffic and specific labor requirements. Isom reported on his conversation with Espen Swanson from Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici's office, who confirmed that communication with CBP is ongoing, and a meeting is scheduled to address these concerns. After this meeting, Swanson will share the outcomes with Isom and Deputy Director Matt McGrath to strategize the next steps.
- Bruce Connor of Sundial remarked that the Port's efforts to secure community and political support are yielding attention to the issue. He has been researching other ports facing similar

challenges and confirmed that the Port of Astoria is uniquely affected due to its cruise traffic volume. As of now, nine cruise ships have canceled their 2025 stops in Astoria, opting to bypass the Port. Until a solution is found, communication remains open with agents, with an expectation of processing times between four to six hours for ships arriving from foreign ports or when passengers are not processed onboard.

- Commissioner Stevens inquired about the anticipated response timeframe from CBP. Isom indicated that he could not provide a specific timeline, as CBP operates independently. The local International Longshore and Warehouse Union, ILWU 50 requested that further information on the impact of cruise ship cancellations on Astoria and Warrenton be shared to present to their headquarters in San Francisco, aiming to advocate for additional support.

Action Items:

7a. Byproduct Recovery Center Treatability Study

- McGrath requested Commission approval to enter a contract with Aqua Terra Consultants (ATC) for a treatability study for the Byproduct Recovery Center (BRC). This study is as essential as the feasibility study, focusing on the treatability of wastewater. It will involve detailed analysis, sample collection, and the development of optimal treatment methods for wastewater byproducts from Da Yang and Bornstein Seafoods. Da Yang Seafoods has invested over one million dollars in research and development for wastewater treatability and byproduct recovery, while ATC has spent approximately \$500,000 on studies aimed at finding a sustainable, DEQ-compliant solution.
- The BRC will enable the Port to operate under a single water processing permit, allowing Da Yang and Bornstein Seafoods to send wastewater to the facility, where it can be processed and potentially transformed into a reusable byproduct.
- Commissioner Frank Spence inquired whether Scoular is involved in wastewater processing. McGrath clarified that Scoular manages fish processing waste, not wastewater treatment.
- Alan Ismond from Aqua Terra Consultants (ATC) explained that the process could recover thousands of pounds of byproducts from wastewater that would otherwise discharge into the Columbia River. These byproducts can be repurposed as fertilizer. The technology has been piloted at Da Yang for three years, demonstrating effectiveness at a smaller scale. The treatability study will allow ATC to expand this solution to handle the volume from both plants, making wastewater processing more cost-effective.

Commissioner Rhone moved to approve the Contract with Aqua Terra Consultants for the Byproduct Recovery Center Treatability Study to Begin Work Immediately. Commissioner Spence seconded. The motion carried 5-0 amongst the Commissioners present.

7b. Byproduct Recovery Center Feasibility Study – Business Oregon Contract

- Isom introduced the contract, noting that while the acceptance of the Public Works Planning Fund award was presented to the Commission for approval in August, the contract itself was still being drafted. He is now seeking Commission approval for the finalized contract.
- The \$60,000 grant will cover 75% of the study costs, with the Port responsible for the remaining 25%, or \$20,000. Isom highlighted that consolidating water processing under a single permit would streamline operations and be more cost-effective compared to each seafood plant managing its own wastewater and permit. Commissioner Dirk Rhone remarked that the BRC exemplifies the Port's role in supporting local economic development.

Commissioner Rohne moved to approve the Contract from Business Oregon for the Byproduct Recovery Center Feasibility Study. Commissioner Spence seconded. The motion carried 5-0 amongst the Commissioners present.

Commission Comments:

Commissioner Campbell commented on the following:

Noted an accumulation of trash at the Airport and inquired about its removal. McGrath explained that the debris originated from the Recology project for the gravel pad extension.

Commissioner Rohne commented on the following:

Commended the City of Astoria for utilizing taxpayer dollars effectively to build a meeting room within their facility. Upon joining the Commission, it was suggested that the Port consider using available financial resources to create community-use spaces. After attending the recent Ad Hoc Committee meeting and observing challenges with virtual communication, he emphasized the need to upgrade the Port's technology for hybrid meetings. Isom responded, noting that bids for an A/V system for the Commission Chambers are in process, and a long-term solution is being pursued.

Commissioner Spence did not have any comments.

Commissioner Hill did not have any comments.

Commissioner Stevens commented on the following:

The Port will host State Representative Cyrus Javadi on September 27th and provide a tour of the Port and Airport.

Executive Director Comments:

- The Port is currently in the pre-construction phase of the Pier 2 West project, which includes obtaining permits for mitigation. A conditional use application was submitted to the City of Warrenton for approval to use a portion of the Port's property along the Skipanon River for mitigation purposes. However, the Warrenton Planning Commission denied the application. The Port is now working on an appeal process with consultant Will Caplinger. Although disappointed with the decision, there is confidence that approval will eventually be secured. Commissioner Spence inquired about the reasons for the denial, but Isom was unable to provide a specific explanation.
- During routine inspections, the maintenance crew observed accelerated degradation at the west end of Pier 2. PND Engineering has been contacted to inspect the structure for safety concerns. Both Da Yang and Bornstein have been informed, though no action is required from them at this time.
- Rivian will begin work to install charging stations in the Journey's End parking area.
- The final audit was completed last week, slightly ahead of the usual schedule. The audit proceeded smoothly, with no unexpected issues. Auditors will present their findings and the year-end report in October. The typical deadline is December 31st, so the process is well ahead of schedule.
- A solicitation for bids has been issued for the demolition of the remaining structure on the causeway. A pre-bid meeting is scheduled for September 24th.
- Work is underway on the Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) for the redevelopment of the Riverwalk Inn Hotel, with plans to invite interested parties to tour the Waterfront in October. The final draft of the RFEI is nearing completion.
- Commissioner Stevens inquired if a boat inspection of Pier 2 had been conducted. Will confirmed that the maintenance team conducted a water-based inspection on Monday morning, and the PND engineer was on-site today, taking photos from beneath the pier.

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

- Regular Meeting – October 1, 2024, at 4:00 PM
- Workshop Session – October 15, 2024, at 4:00 PM

Adjourned:

Chairman Stevens adjourned the meeting at 4:47 PM.

APPROVED:

Robert Stevens, Board Chairman
Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Tim Hill, Secretary
Board of Commissioners

Respectfully submitted by:
Dianna Delgado
Executive Assistant

November 5, 2024

Date Approved by Commission