



MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 06, 2024

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

Call to Order

Chairman Stevens called the Regular 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; Finance & HR Director Melanie Howard; Cruise Marketing Bruce Conner; Executive Assistant Dianna Delgado.

Port Counsel: Eileen Eakins was not present at this session.

Also Attending: Rebecca Norden-Bright of *The Astorian*.

Pledge of Allegiance

Commission Reports

Commissioner Campbell did not have anything to report.

Commissioner Rhone reported on the following:

Attended the 2024 Clatsop County Fair. It was a great event.

Commissioner Spence reported on the following:

Due to the new passenger processing procedures implemented by Customs and Border Protection, and resulting delays in processing times, Princess cruise ships have canceled their fall visits. Additionally, three more cancellations have been received for 2025.

Commissioner Hill did not have anything to report.

Commissioner Stevens reported on the following:

- Attended a meeting with Representative Suzanne Bonamici hosted by the Port of Astoria on July 18. Representative Bonamici was attentive and took notes regarding the Port's concerns and comments. Bonamici also expressed interest in the issues the Port is facing with Customs and Border Protection (CBP).
- Also attended Representative Javadi's Town Hall on August 1. The primary concerns raised by the public centered on environmental issues. The Port was mentioned during the Town Hall, and the comments made were favorable.
- An invitation has been extended to Representative Javadi to visit the Port on the tentative date of September 27. This visit will provide an opportunity to highlight the Port's properties and will allow the Port's Leadership Team and Commission to ask questions and share concerns.

Changes/Additions to the Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

Public Comment for items on the agenda:

No public comment was received.

Consent Calendar

The Consent Calendar consisted of the following:

- Financials – June 2024 Estimated
- Event Calendar – August 2024

Commissioner Spence commented on the Port's financials. The financial projections were optimistic and the gain in revenues, dockage, and rental revenues, as well as rebilled expenses, were favorable. The Port showed a gain of \$2 million dollars which includes the \$250,000 settlement with Astoria Forest Products. Commissioner Spence congratulated the Port leadership team on their accomplishments in the last fiscal year.

Commissioner Hill pointed out an error in the June financials. Finance and HR Director Melanie Howard explained that the error resulted from the profit and loss statement being updated for estimates, but the batch document failed to reflect these updates.

Commissioner Campbell moved to approve the consent calendar as presented. Commissioner Spence seconded. The motion carried 5-0 amongst the Commissioners present.

Action Items:**9a. US Customs and Border Protection Letter**

- Deputy Director Matt McGrath prefaced the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) letter by explaining the new CBP passenger processing procedures and the Reimbursable Services Program (RSP). Under this program, the Port would be required to purchase over \$100,000 worth of equipment and services. The letter drafted for CBP outlines the Port's concerns and provides an explanation of what enrollment in the RSP entails. It will be sent to local and federal government bodies to request support in initiating a conversation with CBP to develop a feasible and affordable solution for the Port.
- Bruce Conner, cruise ship representative, spoke about the clearance process for cruise ship passengers. During a visit to Miami, Conner had the opportunity to speak with a representative of Princess Cruise Lines regarding the ships arriving from Victoria. Normally, the process takes two hours, but with the new procedures, the Port is experiencing extended passenger processing times. These delays are not unique to the Port, as many ports along the coast are facing similar issues due to the new procedures. Conner noted that the Port of Los Angeles can clear ships more efficiently because they have 15 agents. As a potential solution, the Port could request that CBP send a team to assist in processing passengers when larger cruise ships visit; however, this process could take months to implement. Conner also emphasized that the local CBP department has been understanding and apologetic about the inconvenience these new procedures have caused for the Port.
- Executive Director, Will Isom emphasized that the cost of the Reimbursable Services Program is not financially feasible, given that the Port operates on a smaller scale. Additionally, the meeting that was arranged with Senator Jeff Merkley has been cancelled and has not yet been rescheduled. It is Isom and McGrath's plan to address this issue during the meeting.
- Commissioner Tim Hill inquired about the meaning of "Reimbursable." McGrath explained that despite the program's name, there is no part of the program that is reimbursable. All expenses and equipment purchased would belong to CBP, and the

\$100,000 expenditure would not be credited back to the Port.

- Commissioner Frank Spence suggested that the Port's leadership team contact Oregon State Representatives and Senators to request assistance, either in the form of support or the allocation of funds, to help the Port purchase the necessary equipment.
- Commissioner Stevens suggested that the Port seek support from the community, local businesses, and local politicians to include with the letter before it is sent to CBP.

Commissioner Rhone moved to approve the Sending of the Letter on Behalf of the Port of Astoria to the Relevant Parties and Other Elected Officials That Will Be Sent to U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Commissioner Campbell seconded. The motion carried 5-0 amongst the Commissioners present.

Public Comment for items not on the agenda:

There were no public comments.

Executive Director Comments:

- Traveled with McGrath to Portland to meet with DEQ regarding the enforcement letter related to Pier 2's structural issues and waste/stormwater handling violations by Da Yang and Bornstein. The meeting focused on necessary improvements and ways to prevent future penalties for unresolved issues. DEQ indicated that if the Port can demonstrate that repairs and maintenance have been undertaken to address the violations, along with documentation of the financial expenditures, the fine may be reduced based on the remediation efforts. Environmental Compliance and Permits Manager Stacy Bandy continues to communicate with DEQ and oversee the violation corrections.
- The Port was able to be a part of Congresswoman Bonamici's visit and to meet with the Port of Columbia County to discuss the recent challenges from the ports and how to overcome them. Bonamici was interested in the recent CBP procedure changes and asked for more information to offer support in this matter.
- The Port will be issuing a Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI) for the Riverwalk Hotel, allowing interested parties to express their interest and intention to bid on the project. Following the RFEI, a pre-bid meeting will be held, including a walkthrough of the property before design submissions. The RFEI will serve as a condensed version of a full design proposal, where the Port will seek information from potential developers or investors based on their portfolios, qualifications, and financial backing. Once the number of interested companies is known, the Port can proceed with fully developing the Request for Proposal (RFP). It is hoped that this process will encourage interested parties to participate without the need to submit full design proposals initially, reducing the burden of preparing extensive designs that may not be selected.
- An impromptu meeting was held on August 5th when representatives from the Port of San Francisco and the West Oakland Job Resource Center visited Tongue Point Job Corps to gain a better understanding of their operations. This visit provided a great opportunity to engage with representatives from other ports and learn about the challenges they are currently facing.
- A tort claim notice from Astoria City Attorney Blair Henningsgaard was issued to the Port regarding a pile of wood sold in July 2023 to Gary Engman. The buyer completed a partial pickup but failed to make further contact. Despite multiple notices and phone calls, by December 2023, the remaining items had not been retrieved. Consequently, the wood was placed for bid again and sold in January 2024. Henningsgaard's notice states that the buyer has now valued the items at over 500 times the original purchase price. In response, a letter was



sent to Henningsgaard outlining the timeline of communication and attempts to resolve the matter. The Port is hopeful that this letter will help bring a resolution to the issue.

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

- Finance Committee Meeting – August 14, 2024 at 12:00 PM
- Workshop Session – August 20, 2024 at 4:00 PM
- Regular Session – September 3, 2024 at 4:00 PM

Adjourned:

Chairman Stevens adjourned the meeting at 4:50 PM.

APPROVED:

A blue ink signature of Robert Stevens, written in a cursive style, positioned above a horizontal line.

Robert Stevens, Board Chairman
Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

A blue ink signature of Tim Hill, written in a cursive style, positioned above a horizontal line.

Tim Hill, Secretary
Board of Commissioners

Respectfully submitted by:
Dianna Delgado
Executive Assistant

October 1, 2024
Date Approved by Commission