

**OREGON INTERNATIONAL PORT OF COOS BAY
CHARLESTON MARINA ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
10:00 a.m., Wednesday, January 28, 2026
Charleston Marina RV Park, Recreation Room**

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Advisory Members:

Nick Nylander, Chair; John Blanchard; Knute Nemeth; Kathleen Hornstuen; Rex Leach; Aaron Simons; Lou Leberti; and Katherine McUne.

Port Staff:

Lanelle Comstock, Chief Executive Officer; Ray Dwire, Charleston Marina Manager; Heather Watson, Charleston Office Assistant; Danny Jaszay, Charleston Office Assistant; Mickey Pulse, Maintenance Foreman; Krystal Karcher, Administrative Services Manager; Matt Friesen, Director of External Affairs; and Christina Sanders, Administrative Assistant.

Guests:

Melissa Clemens, Charleston Fishing Families; Jeri Watson, Charleston Fishing Families; Jen Shafer, OIMB; Connie Douglas, Charleston Fishing Families; and Drew Farmer, Coos County.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Nick Nylander called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Chair Nylander welcomed new Advisory Members Rex Leach, Aaron Simons, and Katherine McUne. Lou Leberti congratulated John Blanchard for being nominated for Citizen of the Year. Mr. Blanchard stated it was the work with Fisherman's Wharf. He stated it is important to recognize the community and the value they are placing on having the small fishermen being able to bring fish to the local market. He stated that some of the benefits to that is being able to donate to the food donors.

3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A. Approval of October 22, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Knute Nemeth (Second by Lou Leberti), the Charleston Advisory Committee Members voted to approve the October 22, 2025 Meeting Minutes. **Motion Passed Unanimously.** (Ayes: Blanchard, Hornstuen, Leach, Leberti, Nemeth, Nylander, and Simons. Nays: None. Absent: McUne.)

4. FINANCIAL DATA REVIEW

Ray Dwire reviewed the financial data for Charleston Operations. Charleston Marina's Operating Result is a net gain of \$244,000. Charleston's total Net Result is a \$33,000 net gain. Year-to-date revenues are greater than projected due to an increase in moorage, higher occupancy in the RV Park, and greater ice sales. Year-

to-date expenses are underspent by approximately 16%. Operating expenses exceed the prior year expenses by \$215,000. This increase is for dredging completed in the Charleston Marina. Other Revenues include small grants, loan proceeds, the administration fee for lodging tax, credit card surcharge fees, and insurance claim reimbursement for damage done to Charleston property. The increase seen this quarter is from the loan proceeds received for dredging completed in the Charleston Marina. Other Expenses include merchant fees, property taxes assessed on the storage units building, insurance claim repairs, and debt service payments for vehicles.

Based on current information, if Charleston would perform to budget for the remaining fiscal year, the projected Operating Result would end the year with a net gain of \$156,000. Total Charleston Net Result is projected to be a net gain of \$359,000.

Committee members commented that the numbers look encouraging. Mr. Dwire stated the Port created a very lean budget, expanding services as best as possible, recouping all the dollars that can be. There was not a lot of money designated for capital repairs. Mr. Dwire stated although the numbers look really good, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done in Charleston. Lanelle Comstock stated that Charleston's expenses have been "uncomfortably lean" but thinks circumstances are starting to turn around, giving more flexibility to make some much-needed repairs.

5. CURRENT PROJECTS UPDATE

Mr. Dwire asked for a moment of silence for Ed Fleming, who frequently attended these meetings and passed away October 23, 2025, and for local Commercial Fisherman Jeff Fletcher's passing.

Mr. Dwire congratulated Mr. Blanchard of Sharky's Charters, on his nomination for Citizen of the Year, stating it was a huge accomplishment for Mr. Blanchard personally, and a good representation of the Charleston Marina. Mr. Blanchard thanked the Committee and stated that he is appreciative of the support.

Mr. Dwire stated there were some staff changes in the Charleston Marina. Mickey Pulse has returned to working in the Maintenance department on a part-time basis after a 3-year retirement. Mr. Dwire stated Danny Jaszay was promoted to Marina Office Assistant.

Mr. Dwire discussed the Marina's Operating Revenue for the first half of FY 2025/26. He stated several key areas are performing strongly including Annual Moorage which is at 159% of budgeted levels so far, while the Semi-Annual Moorage is significantly higher at 247% of budget. Work Docks are over budget due to very busy activity at the Shipyard, Short-Term Boat Storage is also over budget, and these overruns represent good indicators of strong demand. Mr. Dwire stated the RV Park is currently 130% over budget and attributed much of that success to Heather Watson's efforts in the RV Park and expressed confidence that the RV Park will continue to see strong performance going forward. Ms. Comstock noted that the budgeted amounts had been set realistically based on prior years' revenue.

Mr. Dwire discussed historical trends for the first half of each fiscal year since 2016/17, describing a pattern of gradual annual increases prior to COVID, followed by a decline during the pandemic, a strong recovery and upswing afterward, then another downswing in 2023/24. Mr. Dwire stated the Marina is in a good pattern and wants to keep moving forward.

Mr. Dwire stated the Port is trying to be more active in the Charleston community by putting up Christmas lights this year, and successfully bringing back the crab pot Christmas tree, with assistance from the Charleston Fishing Families. Mr. Dwire described how he worked with Charleston Fishing Families a couple of times during the Holiday Lights. Melissa Clemens stated that 1,100 visitors came through the Charleston Fishing

Families office, and those who were returning visitors commented positively on the Christmas lights around the Marina. She stated it was a palpable feeling of change, and that people felt more comfortable in the parking lot because it was lit up. Ms. Clemens stated more work with the Downtown Association is needed, for signage and directing people around the Marina during events, as the signs on the ground are hard to see.

Mr. Dwire stated that on December 1, 2025, the Marina office was reopened to the public by opening its doors fully. The office doors had been closed since COVID times, during which walk up windows were installed at the front, so customers could conduct business from outside. New windows were installed, so guests have to go inside for assistance. The change has been positively received by customers.

Mr. Dwire stated there are many projects around the Marina that have been 90% completed but that last 10% hasn't been finished. He stated staff are working on not only starting new projects, but getting projects completed as well.

Mr. Dwire discussed dock work and completed repairs including new pile hoops and quarter brackets. He stated the Marina Maintenance staff has the ability to tailor-make the quarter brackets. Mr. Dwire stated the Port is in a better position to complete some necessary repairs. He stated there is still a lot of work to do on the docks, and the list is ever growing.

In addition to the dock work, Mr. Dwire discussed repairs needed in the RV Park, stating that Yurt A's deck needs replacing, and the Park's north chain link fence needs fixed after the recent windstorm. Mr. Dwire stated that Troller Road will need the asphalt patched in some areas even though the gravel area has been well maintained and graded on a regular basis.

Committee members asked about the electricity on the docks. Mr. Dwire stated progress is being made and that Maintenance is taking care of bad outlets. Mr. Dwire stated electricians have been out to work on the end of D Dock, and he feels that some of the issue is due to larger boats drawing too much power. Mr. Dwire states that currently there is only 30 amp service available, and the bigger boats are using 50 amp's. Mr. Dwire stated that switching to 50 amp service is certainly a topic for discussion at a later date.

Committee members asked about adding an additional garbage dumpster. Katherine McUne stated that a nice change was having taken a dumpster to the fish cleaning station, cutting down on the number of flies that were around. Ms. McUne stated that the dumpster is being overwhelmed. Mr. Dwire stated that the dumpster is being dumped twice a week. He stated that the Marina is working on getting the trash compactor working to help with some of the overflow garbage. Mr. Blanchard asked why the other dumpsters were removed. Mr. Dwire stated they were removed to save on costs, but also because it was taking a lot of staff time to empty them.

The Committee asked more about Troller Road, and if the Port was still working with the Coos County for its upkeep, and that potholes are forming. Mr. Dwire stated the County had confirmed that Troller Rd. is the Port's responsibility. He stated that a few years ago a cold patch was laid to fill in the potholes, and the Port is looking into different solutions.

6. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON FACILITIES MAINTENANCE NEEDS

Mr. Dwire announced a new tenant at the Charleston Marina. Breakers, Billiards and Brew, owned by Eric Quella, will be coming to where the Sea Basket was. Mr. Dwire stated he looks forward to seeing new business and new entertainment activity coming to Charleston. Mr. Dwire stated he has been approached by a couple of food trucks saying they would like to set up in the Marina, and he will be working with them to get something set up for maybe spring or summer. The Committee asked additional questions about electricity and lighting

in the area for food trucks. Mr. Dwire stated there is no electricity currently available, so the trucks would have to be self-contained. During discussion of lighting improvements and potential grant opportunities, Aaron Simons requested that the Port consider including the fish cleaning station. Mr. Dwire responded that lighting the fish cleaning station is a possibility but would require additional infrastructure, and noted that the request could be considered as part of future grant-funded lighting improvements.

Mr. Dwire discussed the Charleston Shipyard Connect Oregon project. He stated Connect Oregon is a program that was established in 2005, and as of 2024 had awarded \$512 million to 240 projects across the state, and anticipating approximately \$75 million will be available for projects. Mr. Dwire stated the grant would be for the marine ways.

Mr. Dwire discussed another grant opportunity for the abandoned derelict vessel program. He stated that the Port has been working with the State and with the ADV program. Mr. Dwire stated the Port currently has about 40 vessels that need to be destroyed and stated an estimate of \$150.00/ft. or approximately \$300,000, noting that steel vessels cost more to destroy.

Mr. Dwire stated the Port recently applied for a grant with the Oregon State Marine Board to get the inner basin restrooms cleaned up and fixed up. This includes resealing the roof, painting inside and out, new doors with card lock access, new lights and ventilation fans, as well as new hot water heaters, hand dryers, and mirrors. Mr. Dwire stated it will be approximately \$50,000 for the project, and the State Marine Board will match \$.75 on the dollar up to \$30,000. Port staff will be doing the work, thus saving on labor costs. If the grant gets awarded, Mr. Dwire stated to hopefully have the repairs done right before the busy season.

Mr. Dwire discussed the current issues happening with the Ice Plant. While going through the fire inspections, it was discovered that the bin that holds the ice needs to have new freezing units. There are two units and one is completely inoperable. Currently, there is no cost estimate yet for replacement. Mr. Dwire discussed preventative measures and maintenance that are taking place to make sure the Ice Plant has minimal to no delays during the busy fishing season.

Mr. Dwire discussed Point Adams and what to do with the building. He provided several different options including restoration, leasing it out, or using it for cold storage. He also mentioned possible demolition of the building and just keeping it as a dock, or possible new development opportunities. Mr. Dwire stated he is looking to the Charleston Advisory Committee for some input on what the Committee thinks about the future of Pt. Adams stating that the building is in very bad repair. He stated that in 2015 an engineering estimate to do repairs on the building was \$1.5 million at the time, and that the electrical repair alone was estimated to cost over \$500,000.

Mr. Blanchard suggested the Charleston Advisory Committee create a subcommittee that would discuss and make recommendations on what to do with Point Adams and potentially other buildings and property in the Charleston Marina Complex, like the Power Squadron building. The subcommittee would discuss which buildings or properties to repair, to divest, or to lease out.

The Committee discussed Urban Renewal Agencies not being available to the Charleston area. Drew Farmer stated that in order to form a Charleston Urban Renewal Agency, Coos County would have to vote for the initiative and approve it. Mr. Farmer stated it would take a while to generate revenue, but it is debt-driven so you could prove that before the revenue comes in. Funding mechanisms increment based on the current amount, and however much increased value the area generates. The increment in taxes between those two would fund the debt payment.

Ms. McUne inquired about a flyer posted at Monkey Business. Ms. Comstock explained that it advertised the Strategic Business Plan Open House. She noted the Port completed its previous Strategic Business Plan in

2015, and the plan establishes objectives for the next ten years, focusing on property, management, external affairs, and comprehensive Port operations. Ms. Comstock clarified the flyer was not about revitalization.

Mr. Dwire explained that certain grant funds can only be used for the specific development projects for which they are awarded. He noted that this creates challenges, as many people assume the Port has large amounts of unrestricted funding, when in reality much of it is earmarked exclusively for terminal development or rail line improvements associated with the terminal. He also discussed the ongoing effort to pursue additional grants for the Marina, including the shipyard improvement grant referenced earlier, which requires highly specific applications. Mr. Dwire stated that securing new funding is becoming increasingly difficult, but staff continue to seek out every opportunity. Ms. Comstock stated that an intern from OIMB will be starting the following day and will assist one day per week for the next six weeks. Beginning in March, the intern will focus on identifying grant opportunities and developing a spreadsheet tracking potential grants, application timelines, and relevance to both the Port and the Charleston Marina.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Clemens presented a 36-page petition filed by several environmental groups against the commercial crab industry. She explained that current regulations already require fishermen, beginning May 1, to remove 20% of their crab pots from the water and comply with depth-related limitations. After fishermen have already purchased permits, tagged gear, and prepared for the season, the petition seeks to move the 20% removal date up to April 1. It further proposes that within approximately four years, the entire fleet must transition to popup gear; an upgrade that would cost her vessel, equipped with 300 pots, about \$125,000. She asked Rex Leach to describe the popup system; he explained that the rope and buoys remain contained on the pot on the seafloor and surface electronically only when triggered.

Ms. Clemens noted that popup gear has been tested only under limited conditions in California, with smaller boats and minimal current, and has not been evaluated for large-scale fleet deployment, raising significant safety and operational concerns.

Ms. Clemens also referenced past industry attempts to prevent similar rules, including testimony in 2023 when commercial fishermen were given only two minutes to speak late in the evening. She stated that ODFW has until mid-March to respond to the current petition but is responding earlier, in mid-February, and is now accepting public comments. While environmental groups pay individuals to submit support letters, she urged attendees to help “flood” ODFW with opposition letters. The Crab Commission is drafting a letter, and Fishing Families staff are preparing iPads, QR codes, and other tools to collect as many signatures as possible in the coming weeks.

She stressed that fishermen cannot absorb the proposed costs or the projected 20% loss of income, with smaller fleets facing particularly severe impacts. She stated there is no justification for the proposal, noting that whale populations, including humpbacks, are increasing by roughly 8% annually and that she believes the industry is not harming whales. She added the issue originally began on the East Coast concerning lost gear and has since spread, even as environmental groups support offshore wind projects that affect marine life.

Ms. Clemens also discussed newly required line-marking rules that will force fishermen to replace all pot lines with state-specific colored rope by 2026, so entanglements can be traced to the state of origin. She stressed the urgency of gathering public comments and offered to provide email links and contact information, noting that Jeri Watson will be available in the Fishing Families office to assist.

She further reported that ODFW has enacted a temporary rule for the current year, moving the 20% pot-removal deadline from May 1 to April 1, although no additional 20% reduction is required this season. If

the petition succeeds, however, the extra 20% removal will take effect next year. Fishermen will also be required to re-permit every pot redeployed after removal, meaning that as much as one-quarter to one-half of the fleet could be out of the water at a time, significantly affecting moorage.

Ms. Clemens added that additional letters opposing the petition are being drafted to simplify public participation, with plans to distribute QR codes for digital signatures. Outreach to legislators and NOAA is underway to raise awareness, as many outside the fishing community are unaware of the petition. She expressed concern that, based on recent meetings, ODFW appears likely to adopt a majority of the environmental groups' recommendations, increasing the urgency for public comment.

Kathy Hornsteun mentioned the applications for the Fishermen's Memorial are due by March 31, 2026.

Ms. Clemens stated the Easter Extravaganza for 2026 will be held on April 4, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There will be a scavenger hunt with participating businesses around Charleston. She stated that Charleston Fishing Families will even supply stuffed eggs if a business wants. This event is an opportunity to bring in business during the slow part of the year, giving them an opportunity to interact with more people. Ms. Clemens stated she is trying to secure three to five food trucks for the event and ODFW for the frog pond.

8. COMMITTEE COMMENT

Mr. Blanchard discussed ongoing concerns about traffic flow, signage, and parking throughout the Charleston Marina area. He described an incident in which he unintentionally drove into an active offloading zone, creating safety concerns due to forklifts and heavy equipment moving nearby. Mr. Blanchard stated he found the sign intended to guide visitors safely along the scenic route and away from work areas was damaged and barely noticeable.

Committee Members agreed that updated, more visible signage, potentially sponsored by local businesses such as Monkey Business and others, would help direct visitors safely around the corner and toward available parking areas rather than into congested work zones. They noted that customers often drive the wrong way or become confused about where to park, especially during the busy crab season when the front area is full. Suggestions included adding signs for additional parking, improving directional markings, and painting arrows on the pavement to prevent the head on encounters that are occurring now.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 22, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

10. ADJOURN

Chair Nick Nylander adjourned the meeting at 11:54 a.m.