

**OREGON INTERNATIONAL PORT OF COOS BAY  
CHARLESTON MARINA ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING  
12:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 15, 2025  
Charleston Marina RV Park, Recreation Room**

**MINUTES**

**ATTENDANCE**

**Advisory Members:**

Nick Nylander, Chair; Lou Leberti; Kathleen Hornstuen; Knute Nemeth; and John Blanchard. Kyle Cox; and Tyler Long were absent.

**Port Staff:**

Lanelle Comstock, Chief Executive Officer; Mike Dunning, Chief Port Operations Officer; Ray Dwire, Charleston Marina Manager; Cheryl Charitar, Charleston Office Administrator; Julie Williams, Charleston Office Assistant; Krystal Karcher, Administrative Services Manager; and Jennifer Sierra, Administrative Assistant.

**Guests:**

Port of Coos Bay Commissioner Kyle Stevens; Ed Fleming; Jen Anderson; Lance Porteur; and Melissa Clemens, Charleston Fishing Families.

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair Nick Nylander called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

**2. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

**3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

**A. Approval of October 16, 2024 Meeting Minutes.**

Upon a motion by Knute Nemeth (Second by Lou Leberti), the Charleston Advisory Committee Members voted to approve the October 16, 2024 Meeting Minutes. **Motion Passed Unanimously.**

**4. FINANCIAL DATA REVIEW**

Ray Dwire reviewed the financial data for Charleston Operations. For the first half of the year the operating income was budgeted at \$1.5M, and the actual income ended up at \$1.4M. Total expenses for Charleston were \$1M, compared to a budget of \$1.4M, which is \$389K less than budgeted. Actuals for other expenses were \$605K, compared to a budget of \$576K. Charleston net result is a loss of \$160K compared to a budgeted loss of \$466K. Lou Leberti asked for

clarification about why the budget was underutilized—whether it’s due to not completing all planned projects. Mr. Dwire pointed out the importance of planned spending on the Charleston Marina budget, prioritizing efficient fund allocation to ensure all projects are completed economically.

## **5. CURRENT PROJECTS UPDATE**

Mr. Dwire reported that the Shipyard's biggest project involves addressing two failed pilings. The floating dock is currently being secured by a chain, and there is a limited window for in-water work before February 1 to replace the pilings. These unexpected expenses will have an impact on the next fiscal year's budget. Meanwhile, half the staff is focused on the Garibaldi project, while the other half handles in-house maintenance, including upkeep of the Shipyard.

Lance Porteur raised several concerns regarding the financial support he believed the Port received from the State for the ongoing challenges. He inquired about a \$40M allocation from the State, which Mr. Porteur claimed was intended for all ports to address the issue of crushing boats. He also mentioned concerns about the Port's infrastructure, specifically hazardous docks, unresolved infrastructure issues, and communication gaps regarding bathroom usage after hours. Additionally, Mr. Porteur raised security concerns about Seaport RV Park and expressed concerns about the future direction of Charleston’s port operations.

Mike Dunning responded to Mr. Porteur inquiry regarding the State funding. Mr. Dunning clarified that the State received \$18M and revealed the Port has not received any funding from the State for the destruction of the vessels.

## **6. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON FACILITIES MAINTENANCE NEEDS**

In response to Mr. Porteur's questions about the Shipyard's infrastructure, John Blanchard discussed the committee's ongoing focus on maintenance and communication with the public. He highlighted key areas of concern, including dock maintenance, boaters’ insurance, lighting, and security issues. Mr. Blanchard also noted that it is unfortunate that the public are unable to attend most meetings. He suggested that the Port could share positive project updates with the public to improve awareness and engagement.

Kathleen Hornstuen raised concerns with Mr. Dwire regarding the use of the bathroom and shower facilities after hours. Mr. Dwire clarified that some individuals had shared access codes with others, prompting the Port to adopt additional security measures. These measures ensure that access codes and cards are issued to those who pay for moorage and customers may receive access by calling security. To address any confusion about accessing the facilities, Mr. Dunning suggested placing a sign on the door with instructions on how to obtain a code or access card for the bathroom, showers, and laundry room.

Mr. Dwire, Julie Williams, and Mr. Dunning conducted a walkthrough of the RV Park, taking photos to document areas requiring attention, repairs, and/or replacements. A total of 150 photos

were taken, highlighting items that need to be addressed. Mr. Dwire will compile his findings and present them to Lanelle Comstock to help prioritize the budget, ensuring that as many items as possible can be resolved. A similar process will be conducted for the docks, marina, and Shipyard.

Ed Fleming raised the issue of derelict vehicles abandoned in the parking lot, noting that a tree had fallen on one of them. Mr. Dunning confirmed that the vehicles will be towed. Mr. Dwire added that the cost to tow each vehicle would be \$150, which would be charged to the Port.

Mr. Dunning outlined the difficulties in securing funding and grants for coastal ports, emphasizing limited opportunities. While the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) has started supporting seafood industry projects, grant applications from Newport and Astoria were unsuccessful. To address these issues, he engaged with the Oregon Transportation Committee and the Oregon Public Ports Association. Mr. Dunning added that all coastal ports share challenges such as aging infrastructure, inadequate funding, and rising maintenance costs. He stressed the importance of state and federal support, noting that increasing fees, like moorage fees, is not a viable solution.

Mr. Blanchard suggested applying for a position grant to hire someone for advertising or marketing and proposed generating revenue by renting space for food trucks. Mr. Dunning mentioned the potential for a tourism grant to fund an advertising consultant. Ms. Hornstuen recommended collaborating with nonprofits, such as the Merchants Association, to secure additional grant opportunities. The group also discussed the marina's history, highlighting that the inner basin was constructed by the Corps of Engineers. They noted certain challenges related to grant restrictions, which prohibit commercial use on specific docks. Knute Nemeth inquired about transportation funding. In response, Mr. Dunning confirmed receiving financial support from the Oregon State Marine Board for dock and ramp maintenance. This included a recent \$30K grant for restriping and resealing the trailer parking areas, with the work scheduled for April.

Mr. Dunning reported that the Port did not receive the Connect Oregon grant. Newport and Astoria were the top two to receive the grant funds, but if they cannot secure alternative funding within six months for their projects, the grant funds could be returned to the general fund. Other projects discussed include Shipyard improvements, marina dredging, and work at Site G, where the state dredge is available but limited to 5,000 cubic yards, significantly less than 12,000 cubic yards dredged at Point Adams in previous years. The Army Corps of Engineers prefers reducing dredged material quantities. In the past, \$80K was spent on consultants to locate nearby sites for material disposal via hydraulic methods, which was inconclusive. Mr. Dunning emphasized the importance of having clear priorities for grant funding and aligning projects accordingly.

Ms. Hornstuen emphasized the need to clear Point Adams fuel dock. Mr. Dunning mentioned that efforts are being made with the Army Corps of Engineers, whose work plan is expected by May or June. However, it may take several months for a contract to be finalized.

Mr. Blanchard proposed selling sand to contractors, which Ms. Comstock agreed to explore. He also suggested selling Port-owned property, which Ms. Comstock noted could align with the strategic business plan involving the Port and Charleston. The Port intends to solicit proposals for the plan next week, with community and Commissioner input to follow. Additionally, Mr.

Dunning and Ms. Comstock discussed addressing dilapidated buildings, recognizing costs could reach \$50K.

There are ongoing security concerns at the Seaport RV Park. In the past, efforts to purchase the area were unsuccessful. Mr. Dunning suggested addressing the County Commissioners about safety and health issues at Seaport RV Park. Ms. Comstock plans to meet with Commissioner Farmer to discuss these concerns, along with issues related to Troller Road. She will also consult with Paul Slater, the Road Master.

Mr. Nemeth highlighted the organization's focus on benefiting Charleston, its fishermen, and the surrounding community. He discussed a business model emphasizing social responsibility. He recommended that the Charleston committee involve an external expert to analyze the budget from a broader perspective, aiming to maximize the economic impact on the community.

Mr. Dwire discussed improvements in the Shipyard, including investments in the gravel area with short-term utilities, which has increased its utilization. This has led to a significant rise in Shipyard activity, providing more opportunities for vessel repairs. He also mentioned the challenge of managing 30 abandoned boats and noted that the State is exploring grant options to address this issue.

The group focused on the management and future of the Charleston Marina and its facilities, exploring options such as privatization and public-private partnerships. The consensus highlighted the importance of sustainable management strategies, whether through privatization, partnerships, or innovative funding solutions.

Mr. Fleming inquired about a waiting list for slips, which Mr. Dunning clarified did not exist, as annual moorage is available for purchase. Mr. Fleming noted an increase in rates and proposed a revenue-generating idea. He referenced an advisory committee meeting where the RV Park rate increase was discussed, expressing the possibility of raising rates during the summer. He suggested gathering feedback from facility users about rate changes and observed that other RV parks have lower rates in winter to attract more visitors.

Mr. Dunning stated that an upcoming analysis will focus primarily on the RV Park, examining trends, occupancy rates, demographics, and feedback gathered through surveys and tenant calls. The park is currently experiencing a decline in visitors, prompting a reassessment of its identity and goals while exploring strategies to attract a newer demographic. During discussions, concerns were raised about the potential risks of lowering prices, which could inadvertently lead to tenant-related challenges. Comparisons were made with other RV parks that have daily and weekly rentals to avoid complications associated with long-term dynamics. An analysis will later be extended to the Marina, with efforts aimed at improving the utilization of the underused inner basin and attracting more visitors.

Mr. Fleming and Mr. Nemeth acknowledged the hard work carried out by the Port and recognized the challenges posed by the ever-increasing costs of maintaining the marina.

## **7. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Melissa Clemens, Board President of the Charleston Fishing Families, shared that the board is currently undergoing a period of restructuring. Ms. Clemens provided an update on the Holiday Lights event and shuttle service held in December 2024. Over 19 nights, the event attracted 1,000 attendees from nine different states. Local businesses were invited to sponsor the event to help cover the costs of electricity, beverages, and light snacks, which were donated by Fred Meyers. An upcoming event is the Easter Extravaganza in April. Ms. Clemens inquired whether the marina could assist by providing roadblocks to ensure pedestrian safety during the event.

Ms. Clemens mentioned that the building has electrical and plumbing issues, and a professional will be coming in to assess the situation.

In November, the Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board (SOWIB) awarded three grants aimed at enhancing commercial fishing safety and equipment. The first grant, totaling \$18K, funded 134 commercial fishing licenses (\$102 each), provided strobes for applicants, and purchased 113 life vests for commercial fishermen. The second grant of \$25K, \$9K was allocated for essential gear such as boots, rain gear, and jackets. An additional \$10K was contributed by SOWIB to assist boat owners in addressing critical need. Ms. Clemens identified two needs, which are repacking life rafts (which can cost up to \$1,200) and replacing survival suits. Ms. Clemens and Ms. Hornstuen emphasized the program's focus on improving maritime safety, with additional grants that are expected from the legislature. Ms. Comstock noted the Port's plan to investigate these grant opportunities and explore collaborating with nonprofits.

Ms. Clemens added that they are working on creating a training program to support future fishermen and offset the \$1,000 startup costs. The program would pay new fishermen to work with crab gear during the crab gear season, covering the 2-3 months they typically go unpaid before the fishing season begins. This initiative aims to provide a steady income and encourage retention in the fishing industry.

## **8. COMMITTEE COMMENT**

Mr. Dwire informed three committee members that their terms were set to expire at the end of January. Kathleen Hornstuen, Lou Leberti, and Knute Nemeth agreed to extend their terms.

## **9. NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 16, 2025 at 12:00 p.m.

## **10. ADJOURN**

Chair Nick Nylander adjourned the meeting at 1:35 p.m.