

MINUTES

PORT OF SIUSLAW COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, 18 March 2015, 7:00pm

Port Office, 100 Harbor St, Florence OR 97439

ATTENDANCE:

Commission: Commissioner Ron Caputo (Caputo), Commissioner Nancy Rickard (Rickard), Commissioner Jay Cable (Cable), Commissioner Terry Duman (Duman), Commissioner Bill Fleenor (Fleenor);

Staff: Port Manager Robert Forsythe (Forsythe); Recording Secretary Dina McClure (McClure);

Media: Alan Campbell/Campbell Productions, Jack Davis/Siuslaw News

Commission President Caputo called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: There were no changes to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: On the Motion, made by Cable, and seconded by Duman, four board members voted to approve the Minutes from the Regular Meeting on 18 February 2015. Commissioner Fleenor did not vote since he didn't attend the meeting.

REMARKS:

- Anne Caples spoke in favor of protecting the cormorants. Caples said local colonies of cormorants are being monitored by ODFW and some of the 1200 mentioned in the Siuslaw News actually roost on ocean cliffs, not the river. Caples said many birds including loons, eagles, and osprey feed on fish and the cormorants should not be singled out as a threat.
- Joe Holsonback spoke in opposition of increasing rates and in favor of the December Members. Holsonback compared the Port of Siuslaw prices to other campground/marina prices and asked how rate increases were justified when no improvements have been made. Holsonback said the December Members add to the local economy and the increase in campground occupancy is due to great weather.
- Janine Strain also spoke in opposition of increasing rates and in favor of the December Members. Strain was upset that a \$132 moorage rate is increasing to \$337. Strain asked why unused docks have not been set up for additional moorage as promised a few years ago. Strain said December Members are getting older and the members of this group need to be rewarded for their years of loyalty.
- Diane Petty spoke in favor of protecting the cormorants. Petty said she has led numerous birdwatching tours to the Florence area. Petty said these birdwatchers come from around the world to see all of the birds. They spend money in our community and spread the word to their friends. Petty encouraged the Commissioners to leave the cormorants alone.

REMONSTRANCE

Fleenor, who was not present at the last commission meeting, asked what the cormorant issue was about and how the Port is involved. Caples said the Siuslaw News reported a discussion

from the last Port meeting where 1200 cormorants across from Cushman, were blamed for eating one pound of salmon smolt each per day and killing trees. Caputo said the cormorants are a federally protected bird, the Port of Siuslaw has no jurisdiction over them, and as far as he is concerned the cormorants are welcome to stay.

FINANCIALS: On the Motion, made by Cable, and seconded by Rickard, the board voted unanimously to ratify bills paid in the amount of \$60,801.59.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Resolution 03-18-15A to Amend Resolution 05-21-14B to Include Sections in the Rate and Fee Schedule: McClure said this resolution was only a housekeeping issue to create sections in the Rate and Fee Schedule. **On the Motion made by Fleenor, and seconded by Cable, the board voted unanimously to adopt Resolution 03-18-15A.**

President Caputo Opened the Public Hearing

- Joe Holsonback asked who came up with the proposed rate increases. Caputo said staff makes recommendations to the board. Holsonback said at the price of the new moorage rates, he wants an assigned spot to park his boat trailer included. Holsonback asked the board to address value compared to price.

President Caputo Closed the Public Hearing

1. Resolution 03-18-15B to Revise Structure and Rates to the Rate and Fee Schedule: McClure said the board was given the proposed rate increases at prior board meetings to review. McClure said one of the changes proposed is to have the 24' and 40' G Dock rate be the same price and Strain's earlier reference to \$132 increasing to \$337 is actually \$176 increasing to \$337. Strain confirmed the correction. McClure said staff worked with the port manager to get the philosophy of the moorage rate structure consistent with the campground rate structure. There was discussion between members in the audience and staff regarding rate comparisons with other marinas. Staff did not have rate comparison paperwork present. Caputo proposed tabling the Resolution to the April meeting. Fleenor requested staff to come back with comparisons and justification of how the new rates were created. **On the Motion made by Fleenor, and seconded by Cable, the board voted to postpone Resolution 03-18-15A.**

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discuss Campground Reservation Policy Proposed Changes: McClure said there were three issues to discuss:
 - McClure said staff discovered that the current reservation policy and the reservation software have conflicting parameters. McClure explained that policy allows a customer to reserve up to the last day of the following calendar year (12-31-16) but the software is currently programmed for 730 days (2 years). McClure said someone can go online and book up to March 17, 2017 when we are telling them on the phone they can't book after December 31, 2016. McClure said other government run campgrounds only allow reservations to be made for the current season or calendar year. McClure proposed the

reservation policy be changed to six or nine months ahead which would solve the software issue and compel people to make their reservations in the off season when the office is less busy. Fleenor said the campground should be run like a private entity instead of a government entity since the Port only receives \$260K of tax revenue out of a \$1.4M budget. Fleenor said the Port needs to make a profit in order to pay for increasing expenses and find ways to develop a capital reserve for the \$22M existing assets. Duman said the issue is reservations and his suggestion is to get rid of Hercules (reservation software) and pay staff to do the work. McClure said the software is a good system and it keeps track of a large customer data base. McClure said staff is proposing a change to the policy so it can coincide with the software parameters. The discussion changed to December Members. Caputo said he wanted them to have first choice. Fleenor said the software program should be programmed to allow customers with certain criteria an advantage. McClure said the discussion was getting off track and if they re-read the email she sent had sent them prior to the meeting the policy/programming issue might make more sense.

Holsonback said the original idea, proposed by Ron DeGroot in September 2013, was for this particular group, known as the "December Members", to have permission to reserve their favorite RV site or moorage slip before reservations open to the general public. He said the December Members received the ability to make advance reservations and should be able to get their requested site/slip as well.

- McClure said the unearned revenue account (prepaid deposits) is up to \$115K. Fleenor said if it's not operational money, it should be put into a separate bank account where it can earn interest and be transferred when needed. Fleenor requested a policy proposal for the next meeting.
- McClure said staff have been getting complaints from the public that campground waterfront (B Row) sites are never available for fishing season and they are upset when told long term guests have a jump on reserving those sites. McClure explained the criteria to become a December Member is based on staying a month or more for a minimum of three consecutive years. Forsythe said the group will grow in members each year. McClure said it is taking staff time to manage the group and suggested the board consider changing criteria to limit the members. Fleenor re-emphasized the importance of creating a capital reserve to manage the port assets and said the board needs to find ways to make ends meet. Fleenor said if the campground is run by supply and demand, the rates for the popular waterfront sites should be higher. Rickard said that would help with the increasing expense of maintaining the campground. Strain, from the audience, said the December Members don't mind paying extra but the increase being proposed for moorage is too much. There was more discussion regarding the rates. Fleenor said previous boards have struggled with this issue and at some point this board needs to step up and decide between making a profit versus giving services away at cost. If the decision is at cost, the board will not be able to fund maintenance for the wharf and boardwalk, or repair the bulkhead. Caputo said these people want to enjoy our campground and he understands the scheduling issue. Caputo suggested the board consider a plan to revise the December Member group to Gold Members and charge a membership fee. Duman said if the Port didn't receive \$260K a year in tax revenue, the Port would be broke. Duman said the board would be wrong to "drive away" the December Members. McClure said staff does not want to

“drive away” the December Members either. McClure said staff appreciates their business, has communicated with them regarding the operational concerns, and this discussion will resume next month.

Fleenor said the board needs to address a full cost recovery plan. There was a short discussion and it was decided to talk more about this at a future meeting.

REPORTS

- Forsythe reported on his trip to the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA) conference in Washington DC. Forsythe said PNWA represents 99 ports and they lobby to get federal money to the Corps for waterway projects. In addition to the attendees meeting with all of the Representative’s, Forsythe personally met with Congressman DeFazio and Senator Wyden’s staff regarding dredging money and jetty repairs. Forsythe said attending this conference is expensive, however, it has resulted in getting money allocated to Siuslaw River dredging.
- Rickard attended the Siuslaw Watershed Council meeting and said the next meeting is about the Watershed camps for the children.
- Jay Nefcy, from the audience, asked Forsythe or Caputo to give an update on HB 3104.
- Forsythe said a letter was drafted to Representative McKeown addressing language in ORS 777. Forsythe said if the port wants to do a project and legal says ORS 777 doesn’t say they can, his argument is that ORS 777 doesn’t say they can’t. Forsythe requested McKeown to introduce legislation, using the PVIP 40 acre property as an example to land tele-communication cable. HB3104 will be introduced in Salem on March 25 and he plans to attend in support.
- Caputo said the STEP fish cleaning station, funded by an ODFW Restoration and Enhancement Grant, has passed final inspection and the keys have been turned over to the Port. Caputo said it would be open daily during fishing season.

Commission President Caputo adjourned the regular meeting at 8:06pm to enter into Executive Session per ORS 192.220(2)(i).

President