

**PORT & HARBOR COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
Saturday October 15, 2011 11:00 am
P-12 City Council Chambers**

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Marilyn Heddell called the meeting to order at 11:03 AM with Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Dave Goldstein	Seat A	P	
Marilynn Heddell	Seat B	P	
Brad Von Wichman	Seat C	P	
Jerry Protzman	Seat D	P	
RC Collin	Seat E	P	
Larry Bussman	Seat F		A
Charlie Eldridge	Seat G	P	

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

Harbormaster – Sue Miller
Scott Korbe – Director of Public Works
Teresa Wilson – Commission Clerk

PUBLIC CITIZENS PRESENT

Cam Bender
Kent Wohl
Pete Heddell

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Gerald Protzman made a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Agenda of October 15, 2011 as written.

SECOND: Charlie Eldridge seconded the motion.

VOTE: The vote passed by unanimous decision.

Dave Goldstein_Y_ Marilyn Heddell_Y_ Brad VonWichman_Y_Gerald Proztman_Y__ RC Collin_Y__ Larry Bussman_O__ Charlie Eldridge_Y__

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Gerald Protzman made the motion to approve the Port & Harbor Regular Meeting Minutes of August 20, 2011 as written.

SECOND: Charlie Eldridge seconded the motion.

VOTE: The vote passed by unanimous decision.

Dave Goldstien _Y_ Marilynn Heddell_Y_ Brad VonWichman_Y_Gerald Proztman_Y__ RC Collin_Y__ Larry Bussman_O_ Charlie Eldridge_Y__

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

a. City Manager Report

No report included in packet. City Manager, Robert Prunella is ill and unavailable to attend this meeting.

b. Harbormaster Report

Sue reported that all temporary, seasonal Parking Attendants have been laid off for the winter season; the last day was October 2, 2011. The Harbor also had a Harbor Assistant that resigned and the position is posted as a temporary position through the winter. Sue has four applicants that she will interview this week.

The Harbor had extensive work done on both generators. They had not had regular maintenance in many years. Public Works staff assisted with the maintenance and also training Harbor staff on routine use of the equipment. They now have written procedures on startup and use of the generators.

Sue reported that the portable holding tanks have been emptied, and the pump has been pulled out and stored for the winter.

Timbers under the shop of the Harbor building have been replaced. Now that the plumbing project is complete, the flashing can be installed.

Harbor staffs are working on catching up on processing payments from May through October. Sue is in the process of completing the application for installing the check scanning machine at the Harbor. Once the system is in place, payments by check or credit card will be deposited to the bank within 48 hours.

Sue spent time this past month revising the procedures of how credit card/bank card information is handled at the Harbor. Personal information such as credit card numbers will now be kept in a locked fire safe cabinet dedicated for that use.

Sue responded to a list of questions submitted by the Whittier Boat Owners Association. She explained that requests are handled by making an appointment with the Harbor Master; all requests are prioritized and then discussed with the City Manager/Council to be budgeted for. This process is just now starting.

David Goldstein spoke regarding the Harbor Savings account and the Parking Enterprise Savings account. He asked Sue to explain how the excess money in the Parking Enterprise Fund has or will be spent. Sue stated that the Harbor cannot make a profit, so to speak, since federal funds were used for the parking area. She added that the money will be spent on improvements including the striping this past year in conjunction with Public Works. Sue will look into where the money can be spent on parking lot improvement and report back to the Commission.

Sue attended the Harbor Masters Conference in Homer. It was an excellent time of networking, sharing. There are other harbors that experience the same kinds of problems that Whittier has, such as derelict vessels. She was able to network with DOT on how to approach funding, along with other agencies with round table discussions. She appreciated the opportunity to improve her public speaking skills. Sue came back with ideas to improve the Whittier Harbor. Wrangell Harbor Master shared a source of dock carts that will be useful in our harbor.

Derelict vessels seem to be a common problem in all harbors. Homer has a policy where-by if a boat owner does not move their boats the required number of times per year, the moorage fee is increased by 50%.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

OLD BUSINESS

a. Future Harbor & HOPC Renovation

Marilynn stated that per the City Manager, these projects are on hold until the next fiscal year.

b. Condition of Lu Young Park

Marilynn asked Cam Bender if he knows of any plans that the City has to improve the Lu Young Park area. Cam Bender stated that he knows nothing about the plans that the City has, but has his own ideas of what can be done to improve the area that could be done at little cost. Cam would like to see the area enhanced for families to enjoy, such as have a spot to build a fire as well as a handicap accessible platform. Marilynn asked Cam to put his ideas in writing and present them to the Planning and Zoning Commission or to the City Council.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Cam Bender asked Sue Miller if snow removal by Public Works is paid for out of the Parking Enterprise Fund. Sue Miller could not answer the question, but will find out and report back at the next meeting. She did say that a discussion took place during the last budget preparation that the Harbor would back bill the Public Works Department for snow removal, she is not sure what category it fell into.

Dave Goldstein referred to Whittier Small Boat Harbor Budget line item 15-500-9900 – Inter-Departmental support. Sue stated that this is the fee that goes to the City Office for Admin Support; it is not used for other departments.

Kent Wohl asked Sue to explanation depreciation on the Harbor Status Report. He sees that it shows up on the City Council Budget for the Harbor but not on the Monthly Status Report for the Harbor and would like to understand why they do not match. Kent asked Sue if the Harbor is operating in the Red as the report reflects. Sue stated that the Harbor is actually operating in the black, also stating that she has confirmed that depreciation is a non-cash item and shows up as an expense on the monthly finance reports.

Kent Wohl stated that that the City Council Budget clearly states that the 9.75% increase in moorage paid for the bond for phase II of the harbor rebuild. As a result, Kent is suggesting that the approximately \$78,000.00 plus dollars be placed in a separate line item and be labeled “Harbor Rebuild Bond Repayment”. Sue wasn’t sure how it is treated in the budget and will clarify with the City Manager and the Accountants to ease everyone’s mind. Kent Wohl asked if this topic is worthy of a Commission’s Resolution to the City Council to accomplish this?

David Goldstein reaffirmed Mr. Wohls' concern of whether or not Phase II of the Harbor is a priority for these funds. David outlined two options for the Commission: Phase II Harbor Rebuild or Renovation- separate line item, or two, vote on a resolution that would establish this as a number one priority for the savings account. Dave stated that” it would be nice to track it so it doesn’t disappear”.

Marilynn Heddell stated, “We need to ask; at times it is a software issue”.

MOTION: Gerald Proztman made the motion that the Commission writes a letter to the City Manager to create a separate line item in the budget to track the Parking Enterprise Fund.

SECOND: Charlie Eldridge seconded the motion.

VOTE: The Vote passed by unanimous decision.

Dave Goldstein _Y_ Marilynn Heddell_Y_ Brad VonWichman_Y_Gerald Proztman_Y__ RC Collin_Y__ Larry Bussman _O_ Charlie Eldridge_Y_

Kent Wohl, stating that he represented the entire Whittier Boat Owners Association asked for definition on what the Harbor Savings Account is to be used for and if excess funds are deposited at the end of the year. David Goldstein explained that “many years ago the City Council set up two savings accounts; the Harbor and the Water/Sewer savings accounts. They were set up to collect excess funds for the purpose of rebuilding or essentially making new the facilities. This is a perfect account to use for matching funds in a harbor rebuild project. At one point, the information was passed on to the State of Alaska who builds harbors now, that in the event of a catastrophic event, they would help to rebuild the harbor.”

Kent spoke again for the Whittier Boat Owners Association and asked Sue to provide the quantity of delinquent accounts at the harbor as well as the gross total of the delinquency in a dollar figure as well as an outline of her plan to collect on these accounts. Sue explained that she could not give true numbers, but realizes that it is money that belongs to the City that needs to be collected. The cause of the delinquency is from too few staff and the busy summer seasons. She is in the process of putting an aggressive plan in place. Now that SERVS is being handled by one member of the staff, the “bean counting” that Sue used to do is being handled by another staff member; there will be more time to devote to this important project. Kent asked if the answers to his questions could be added to the next agenda. Sue couldn’t promise that it would be a specific agenda item, but will try to get more details to answer the questions at the next meeting.

Pete Heddell stressed the importance of the upcoming election and the increase in the mil rate, to assist the City in supporting itself. The other issue of importance that Pete spoke of is the Fire Island power plant. If it is approved, the bulk of the materials and logistical support to make that project happen will come through Whittier’s deep water, ice free port, which will produce a lot of revenue.

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Brad VonWichman asked if Sue could comment on the Ushagat; the vessel is slowly falling apart. He specifically wanted to know if the slip was owned by someone. Sue confirmed that it is and declined to give any details, but acknowledged that the vessels state needs to be addressed before it sinks.

David Goldstein asked if anyone could comment on the black Bow Picker that has been anchored at HOPC for a length of time. Sue said she knows who the owner is, but does not know how long it has been there. Harbor staff should be contacting the owner to have it moved before the winter storms hit.

David Goldstein is concerned about continuity with a transition between interim City Manager and a permanent City Manager and would like to see a permanent City Manager seated soon after the first of the New Year. The pattern in the past has been that projects are started and with a change in City Managers, projects often lose forward momentum or get dropped all together. With discussion, there was a general consensus of the Commission to stress the importance continuity between City Managers.

Charlie Eldridge asked if plans are still in place to develop the Head of Passage Canal Tractor Launch. Marilyn Heddell stated that the City Manager would have to speak on that subject.

Gerald Protzman expressed discontent with the condition of the cities' buildings; specifically the P-12 and Harbor Master buildings. He stated that "back in the day, if something needed to be fixed, we made it happen, even if we had to build a part to do it". He stated that owners of the fish plant took out time and money this past summer to make improvements to their roof and paint the outside of the building, including adding unique hand painted art around the top edge of the building. He would like to see the City put some time and money into the upkeep and maintenance of its buildings.

NEXT MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

No new business.

NEXT MEETING ATTENDANCE PLANS

The next regular meeting would fall on November 19, 2011 at 11:00 AM. A majority of the Commission members stated that they would be attending the Marine Expo and not available on that date. It was decided that the next regular meeting would be December 17, 2011 at 11:00 AM.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Gerald Protzman made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

SECOND: Charlie Eldridge seconded the motion.

VOTE: The vote passed unanimously

Dave Goldstein_Y_ Marilyn Heddell_Y_ Brad VonWichman_Y_Gerald Proztman_Y__ RC Collin_Y_ Larry Bussman_O_ Charlie Eldridge_Y_

Meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

Attest:

Teresa Wilson
Commission Clerk

Marilyn Heddell
Port & Harbor Commission Chairperson