

## Port of Umpqua

Regular Meeting Minutes  
March 18, 2026, at 7 p.m.  
Port of Umpqua Annex  
1841 Winchester Ave  
Reedsport, OR

*THESE MINUTES ARE FINAL and APPROVED.*

### **Commissioners Present:**

Vice President Joe Mulkey  
Secretary Rhonda Black  
Treasurer Donna Train  
Assistant Secretary Tom Black  
Vacant

### **Port Staff Present:**

Port Manager Scott Kent  
Senior Administrative Assistant Karen Halstead

**Public Present:** Cindy Simmons, Kathi Wall-Meyer, Allen Teitzel, Rick Goche & Deb Yates

**Online Attendees:** Randy DuVal

*NOTE: All items handed out at the meeting are available for view by public request.*

### **Proceedings:**

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by Vice-President Joe Mulkey.

**It is noted that a quorum of Commissioners was present for this meeting.**

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **CONSENT AGENDA – All items listed are considered routine and will be enacted by one motion.**

- **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Before the meeting Scott had moved Item #4 – Rick Goche presentation to be Item #1 and moved the previous Item #1 - New Commissioner Appointment to item #4. Rhonda requested to add an item before Item #4 – Candidate Review Committee Policy and move the New Commissioner Appointment to business Item #5.
- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** February 18, 2026, as presented.
- **APPROVAL OF BILLS:** In the amount of \$5,123.04 to be paid from the General Fund.

**Commissioner Rhonda Black made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as amended, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Tom Black. The motion was passed by a majority vote. (Commissioners Rhonda & Tom Black voted Yay, Commissioner Train voted Nay)**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was none.

**REGULAR BUSINESS:**

**1. Presentation by Rick Goche – Presentation for Potential partnership to establish a small-scale live seafood and/or edible seaweed holding system at the port.**

**Rick:** He gave some background on himself. He's been dealing with live crab since 1983, and a couple of years ago the Oregon Coast Visitor's Association did a survey of tourists and found that the main thing tourists complained about was that they couldn't get local seafood. That is what they come to the coast for, and they just cannot find it. The Oregon Coast Visitor's Association sought grants and one of the things they decided to do making keeping live crab available. The main seafood that tourists wanted to get here was Dungeness Crab. The Oregon Coast Visitor's Association then sought Rick and requested that he write a curriculum for young people that would teach them how to design, build, maintain and manage live seafood systems.

Rich got assistance from a teacher and writer, Maggie Michaels, and with her assistance he was able to write a curriculum that was originally going to for community colleges. They then realized that high school and Jr. high school kids should have the opportunity to become a part of a seafood industry that isn't on the water or in a fish plant.

What Rick does with live crab can be done anywhere. It doesn't have to be on or by the water. He's developed a way to keep live crabs anywhere.

Rick had provided the board with handouts that showed how to build a live demonstration system. It is a kit that has a live tank. The students build a live system in that tank. They build the biological filter; they hook up the pumps and get it all running. There are currently 6 of these kits at high schools on the coast. Rick's goal is to have one of these kits for every high school associated with every port on the coast. There are at least 13 systems needed. His group is currently applying for a grant to expand past the original 6 systems, which have been well received.

Rick's purpose of coming to The Port was to inform them about what he is doing and to encourage The Port to come up with ideas of what the Reedsport school may want to do.

Rick stated that if The Port would be interested in funding a kit for the Reedsport school, they cost about \$700.

They are hoping that eventually every port will have a demonstration system that will be a working commercial system. A demonstration system would consist of one bio filter tank and one holding tank. All the components are sized so that they could be expanded up to 3 times their size with each tank being capable of holding up to 300 to 400 pounds of live crab.

**Donna:** What age group at the school is this for?

**Rick:** We intended it to be just for Juniors and Seniors at the high schools but there has been interest from the younger kids so it could include students from 8<sup>th</sup> grade through Seniors. The curriculum written for the college students differs from that for the high school students.

**Joe:** Do we have someone who has a connection to the school to present this to them?  
Joe would agree to buy the school a kit if they are interested.

**Rhonda:** The science teacher might be interested, Mr. Wright.

**Joe:** He will go over and talk to Mr. Wright and next month he will bring back what he finds out at the next port meeting. If they would like a kit Joe would like to talk about purchasing one for the school.

**Rick:** Asked Joe to send Rick a name and email address for Mr. Wright and then he could send him the video and the teacher's guide he's created so teachers that don't know about these systems will know completely what the goal is after reading the guide. Joe said once he talked to Mr. Wright he would give Rick a call.

**Rhonda:** It would really work in with the natural resources education that she does for the younger kids.

## **2. Reedsport wharf electrical (Commissioner Train declared a conflict of interest)**

**Scott:** This is about the electrical improvements at the Umpqua River Wharf downtown. The project has been scaled back to meet the goal of getting all the lights functioning with photosensors, changing out all the bulbs to LED, running the power wires and setup for shore power but won't install the shore power yet.

Under those limitations there was a bid that came from Reese Electric for \$14,942 and a bid from Elkhorn Electric for \$25,675. Reese has been the traditional low bidder during the iterations that we have gone through on this project. Scott encouraged the board to retain Reese to run these lines and get it set up so The Port can eventually have shore-power out there.

**Joe:** This would also put us in steps toward installing a crane.

**Scott:** Yes, that would be the next step, to run 3-phase. This step does not run 3-phase.

**Rhonda:** She would like to see the whole thing be done. This gets us about halfway there.

**Scott:** This is a good first step and when we do take the next step we can just add to this.

**Joe:** This step takes care of any liability The Port may have if a boat were moored there this will provide them with good lighting. His feeling is that The Port needs to have some real interest in someone buying over that dock before we put a crane in there. There have been people mentioning they would be interested in buying but they haven't followed through and

showed up. There needs to be real commitment before The Port spends a lot of money putting in a crane.

**Rhonda:** It seems like this is a project that has been picked apart, maybe we can call this “step 1” and maybe it could be lined out so that it can become a process. Maybe write it up in that way so that we can follow through.

**Scott:** It started out that way as full service and then the bids came in and one of them was for around \$100,000 and that is why The Port decided to section it out, but he could see Rhonda’s point, and he could write it up that way.

**Rhonda:** Would like this written up as a plan. Make this a step to go forward and then it could turn into something over time.

**Tom:** Is the crane The Port owns a good one?

**Joe:** It needs a little work, but it is something that is worth putting money in. We had a bid from the machine shop to do a rebuild on it. The Port decided not to spend the money on it at that time. When we get closer to it being needed, then we can have the work done to it.

- **Commissioner Mulkey made a motion to retain Reese Electric for the amount of \$14,942, to make the electrical upgrades at the Reedsport Wharf site, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Rhonda Black. Motion was passed by a majority vote. (Commissioner Train abstained due to a conflict of interest, Commissioners Mulkey, Rhonda & Tom Black voted Yay)**

### **3. Reedsport wharf gate**

**Scott:** Contacted Jake Hinshaw who is a fencing contractor that we have used in the past. The gate that separates the right-of-way from our Wharf needs severe repair. Scott asked Jake for a bid to replace the existing gate with a double-swing gate. The estimate was \$3,095. Scott will give Fred Wahl a heads up that The Port is doing this.

**Joe:** Are we just getting the gate or is he replacing any of the fencing or putting in new posts?

**Scott:** There will be at least one new post, but this is just for a gate.

- **Commissioner Train made a motion to retain Jake Hinshaw Construction for the amount of \$3,095 to install a new double swing gate described as follows: Replace two chain-link gates approximately 42 feet wide. New gates will be double swing with center drop rod and gate keepers when open, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Tom Black. Motion was passed by unanimous vote.**

### **4. Candidate Interview Committee Policy**

**Rhonda:** It’s her opinion that it would be a good idea to create a candidate Interview Committee policy and bring it back to the board to review and approve it. Then the committee would interview all the candidates. The committee would bring their information back to the board and present it. The candidates would be ranked, and the Commissioners could decide based on the interviews.

**Joe:** What does Rhonda envision when she says a committee.

**Rhonda:** 2 Commissioners and 2 employees.

**Joe:** If The Port were to do interviews, he would like to see it done similar to the way the new Port Manager was chosen. It included interviews with all the commissioners in a special meeting.

**Rhonda:** What kind of meeting was that? A special meeting with 24-hour notice? Was it a public meeting or an executive session?

**Cindy Simmons (citizen):** With an employee it can be done in an executive session but for a commissioner position she feels they should be willing to be interviewed in a public meeting. It could be done as a committee, but the problem will be like the problem she noticed at the last Port meeting. This board is not working together; there is a little bit of schism. The more she looks into this she realizes that there have been a lot of changeovers in the members of the board which haven't given this board the opportunity to form a strong working board.

**Rhonda:** What happened is the board couldn't agree and every vote was tied, so the information went to the County Commissioners, and they looked lost at their meeting. They didn't understand there was a statue involved and they didn't have enough information and they felt uncomfortable. She didn't blame them because she would have felt uncomfortable being a County Commissioner being handed applications for the people who were applying to be appointed to The Port. The County Commissioners didn't have enough information. Creating a committee, making a policy and having the questions that each candidate would be asked and then the committee would bring their information back. The bonus is that there will be a policy for the future if The Port needs to appoint someone to the board. Part of our jobs here being elected officials on a Commission is to create policy.

Say, even with the policy The Port still can't agree, then when it does go to the County Commissioners, they will have something to work with. They can see The Port has done their due diligence. They have a process in place; they have followed it and now they would have information.

The County Commissioners had nothing, they had the applications and that was it.

**Scott:** No, we provided them with the applications and the law.

**Rhonda:** She downloaded their commissioner's packet and didn't see that in there. There were our minutes but that was it.

**Karen:** Then something dropped on their end because we provided them with all the information. Apparently, they didn't get the ORS information that we sent. There was a lot of confusion between their assistant and getting it on the agenda.

**Rhonda:** It seemed like they didn't understand.

**Karen:** To answer the question of how the interviews were held for the new Port Manager, that was all done in a Special Meeting.

**Joe:** He can see where the board comes up with a list of questions that the board uses to interview each candidate in a regular meeting.

**Rhonda:** Sometimes people are uncomfortable.

**Joe:** That is part of being a commissioner. Sometimes you must be uncomfortable and be willing to speak out.

**Donna:** Feels like the application has the questions on it, they've answered them by filling out the applications.

**Allen Teitzel (citizen):** Explained how the City Counsel handles appointments. There are questions and the applicants are asked questions in an open meeting and then the Counsel votes on the applicants.

**Rhonda:** Working for a Special District she has experience with this kind of stuff. Special Districts have made it clear to her that they could set up a committee for our own interview process even if there was only one applicant.

Special Districts got back to Scott and said yes, we could do this, so it's not like its unheard of. It just isn't common.

**Joe:** He doesn't like the fact that all the commissioners will not have the opportunity to witness the interview. For every commissioner to make their own decisions it would be easier and more realistic if each can watch how the candidate handles the questions. See how seriously they take the questions.

**Rhonda:** So, if we were going to ask questions of the candidates tonight, one of the candidates isn't here. Will we be interviewing them tonight?

**Joe:** No

**Donna:** There are 4 questions on the application.

**Rhonda:** Was going beyond the application questions, was hoping to ask more. The application is just personal information such as where you graduated. She was hoping to add to it to make the selection process cleaner.

**Joe:** Do you have specific questions you want to add?

**Rhonda:** No, she was hoping to select a committee and then they would go through the process.

**Joe:** We can do the same thing, just include the entire Commission.

**Joe:** Would like to meet Rhonda in the middle. He'd like to come up with some questions, and he'd like to hear what questions Rhonda has in mind that are beyond the questions on the application.

**Rhonda:** She isn't prepared for that because she hasn't sat down to figure out a list of questions because she was thinking the committee would be doing that. She wanted to create a policy, come up with a list of questions and then bring it back and to the commission and then go through the process.

**Joe:** He's ok with interviewing, he just wants it to be done by all the Commissioners.

**Rhonda:** Then it would be a committee that includes the full board. It will still be in an open meeting because the full board will be present. It would be an agenda item.

**Rhonda:** Asked Scott to get a sample policy from SDAO. She said she would reach out to other Soil & Water Districts to see if they have a candidate review process.

**Joe:** Still wants to move forward with Business Item #5, he has some thoughts he wants to share, and it may or may not make a difference.

#### **5. New commissioner appointment**

**Joe:** His thoughts on what happened last month. His hope is that be the end of what he has to say the board can come to a decision.

Joe felt that neither Rhonda nor Tom are comfortable electing Deb Yates because of uneasiness and/or some frustration over them taking her position in the election. It may make them feel like they wouldn't count in a vote, because it would be 3 to 2 on anything and the board would never get anywhere.

Joe also said, speaking for himself, he had some of that same feeling knowing that Elza was brought to the board by Rhonda and Tom. His reasoning for not picking her as a candidate is the fact he doesn't think she's been here long enough. Joe wants someone who has been invested in the community long term, that knows the community's history, and he feels that The Port needs someone who has historical knowledge, especially with some of the potential topics, which are important. Elza does not bring that to the table.

Joe continued that with that said, that was why he liked Cindy as a candidate. She knows the history of the community, is very much invested in our community and in the outcomes decided by The Port.

Joe said he spoke with Cindy, and he truly feels she has no ties to anybody on the board, and she will vote on her opinion and her opinion alone. In Joe's opinion, those are the characteristics that will make the board stronger. On the board there should be many different opinions, otherwise there is nobody there to ask the question if "this is the right thing to do".

Joe pointed out that with the fact Rhonda and Tom are married that has taken some of the differing of opinions away from the board. He doesn't see them voting against each other.

**Donna:** So far Rhonda and Tom have always voted the same way since they have been on the board.

**Rhonda:** That has been the same with Joe and Donna. The only "nay" they have ever voted has been on the topic of a new commissioner appointment.

**Joe:** Those are his reasonings and he then made a motion.

- Commissioner Mulkey made a motion for Cindy Simmons to be the next Commissioner, because he believes out of the 3 candidates, barring the concerns from both sides that he believes are there, he feels Cindy would be the best fit for the position.

**Rhonda:** She likes Cindy and Elza, and Cindy brings the fact she's been a community member for a long time, she has ties to Winchester Bay, totally agree with that. She has some background from the past. She also wanted to point out that you bring in new people from different areas you may get new ideas that you wouldn't normally think about.

**Joe>Rhonda:** Can you tell me why Elza is a good applicant for the board, besides just being a new person in town?

**Rhonda:** She has a different background. She was an engineer for light and sound in Hollywood. It is a whole different perspective and sometimes a different perspective might bring ideas for different ways to make money, different ways to improve the economy, different ways to improve the area, different opportunities, different ways to outreach. We can stick with the same. She wanted to be on the commission because she wanted to start investing in the community, she wanted to become a part of the community, and she wanted to start taking part in the government process which is a form of government right here. Rhonda stated that was where she stood.

**Joe:** I'm personally not swayed yet. He hears the idea of getting new ideas, he doesn't disagree with that. He personally feels Cindy having her business where it is at, he likes her as the best candidate.

**Rhonda:** This was why she wanted a committee so we could sit down, hash it out and bring back recommendations and then vote on that. By having 2 Board Members and the 2 employees it wouldn't just be her opinion.

**Joe:** He was not insinuating that at all. He thought it would probably be he and Rhonda on the committee. He would like everyone to hear everything. In this situation it's just best to discuss it now and here. He is willing to put this on hold and do the interview process and hear from the candidates and why they want to be on the board.

Joe said what he wanted to say, he guessed the board could put together some questions. Rhonda felt they should put together some questions.

**Joe:** Get the information from SDAO and then he, Rhonda and Scott could sit down and talk about some questions and then come back to the next meeting with those questions and do actual interviews.

**Rhonda:** Yes, that would work.

**Scott:** This is going to leave us a person short on our Budget Committee, that was his concern. It's okay though, we can be a person short and still get the budget approved.

**Joe:** Retracted his previously made motion.

## **REPORTS:**

### **SALMON HARBOR MANAGER (via email from Jim Zimmer, Harbor Master):**

We have begun evaluating the replacement of the gangway serving the Breakwater commercial dock. The existing ramp is narrow and can become steep depending on tide conditions, which creates challenges for both commercial access and public use. This is the same dock used by the public to access the commercial fleet for direct seafood sales. We are looking at a 6-foot-wide by ~80-foot-long aluminum gangway and an improved upland approach to better serve working waterfront needs and public access. At this stage, the project is preliminary, but a rough order-of-magnitude cost appears to be around \$120,000. Because of its direct connection to the commercial access and waterfront use, this may be a project with potential for future partnership discussions as scope and costs become clearer.

We have also started early review of a possible Beach Blvd promenade concept. At a high level, this would involve improving the existing sidewalk corridor into more of a waterfront promenade with railing, seating areas, and interpretive signage. Depending on cost and feasibility, we may also evaluate whether a similar treatment could extend around Coho Point. At this point, the work remains conceptual and is focused on determining whether this would be a relatively straightforward public access improvement or part of a larger shoreline and engineering effort.

On the outreach side, we have continued promoting Winchester Bay and the surrounding area at outdoor recreation shows. Most recently, we participated in shows in Redmond and Klamath Falls to help market the harbor, RV resort, fishing opportunities, dunes, and related visitor amenities. These events continue to be a useful way to showcase the area and support tourism activity.

We have also been working on seasonal cleanup and appearance improvements as we head into the summer season. This includes cleanup of the gear storage area, removal of gear adrift from the docks, and general efforts to spruce up the harbor and resort to get ready for the summer season

## **STAFF REPORT:**

### **Scott:**

The Port received \$2,113 in poundage this month from PDS.

He stated he had done a lot of research for the board on the East Basin, but if there is anything else that he hasn't looked at yet, email him and he will pursue it.

**Joe:** We are waiting for elections was his understanding of why the discussion stopped.

### **S.T.E.P. Deb Yates:**

**Deb:** S.T.E.P. has 5,000 fingerling Salmon in the raceway here and she didn't get a biologist report so she's not sure how many there are in Elkton. They don't have a lot of fish this year. They will be fin clipping their 5,000 in May and then releasing them in Mid-June. They are

working on a new location to release the baby fish up Winchester Creek which will let them acclimate on their own time schedule.

S.T.E.P. also plans to redesign the rocks in Winchester Creek in front of the trap so the fish can funnel in. They will be putting in some eco-blocks to help build a channel. They are working with members from other S.T.E.P. programs who have redesigned their traps with great success in hopes of having better success in capturing more adults this fall.

**COMMISSIONERS:**

**Donna:** Donna, Scott, Rhonda and Tom all attended the Wind Energy Conference in Reedsport. It was too bad, it was on March 9<sup>th</sup> and it had been advertised as being on March 10<sup>th</sup>. There was hardly anyone there. Donna and Scott both testified that The Port does not support it. All public comments will close on April 1, 2026, so if anyone wants to contact them and give your opinion. They call it the Coos Bay Wind Energy, but it is actually going to be out of Winchester Bay in their favorite crabbing area.

Tomorrow there will be the Urban Renewal Advisory Board meeting at The City.

**Rhonda:** Soil & Water will be having a local workgroup meeting at The Port's Annex in May. It will include the Natural Resource Conservation Service. That will be an opportunity for anyone in the community that is interested in anything going on with Natural Resources, farming and ranching, anything like that. There will be the opportunity to find out what programs and grants are available.

**Joe:** On April 7, 8 & 9<sup>th</sup> he will be in Portland participating in the Coast Pelagic Species Advisory Sub-panel for NOAA Fisheries. They will be discussing changes to the way that the sardines in Oregon are surveyed in hopes that eventually we can actually have a fishery again.

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.**

The next Port of Umpqua Regular Meeting will be held April 15, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. at the Port of Umpqua Annex building, 1841 Winchester Ave., Reedsport, Oregon 97467.

**\*\*Note: THESE ARE QUESTIONS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS WHILE SIGNING CHECKS, BOTH AT THE END OF THE MONTH, AND DURING THE CHECK SIGNING AT THE MEETING:**

**2/27/26:**

**Commissioner questions from check signing at end of the month to be included in the March 18, 2026, minutes:**

**Donna:** Does Joseph's Janitorial also do carpet cleaning?

**A:** Yes, he just recently cleaned them. Donna said they looked very nice.

Checks were signed by Commissioners Train and Rhonda Black.

**Questions about checks signed at the March 18, 2026, meeting:**

There were no questions.

Checks were signed by Commissioners Train and Mulkey.

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Joe Mulkey – Vice President

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Karen Halstead, Senior Admin. Assistant