

# Sitka Port and Harbors Commission Minutes

Wednesday December 9, 2020 6:00PM  
Harrigan Centennial Hall

## **Port and Harbors Commission Members:**

Dave Gordon, Chris Ystad, Shauna Thornton,  
Tyler Green, Michael Nurco, Tamy Stevenson  
Kevin Knox (Assembly Liaison)

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Gordon called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00pm

### **II. ROLL CALL**

**Commissioners Present:** Tyler Green, Dave Gordon, Mike Nurco, Chris Ystad.  
Tamy Stevenson participated by videoconference.  
(Stevenson left the meeting at approximately 7:15pm)

**Assembly Liaison:** Kevin Knox participated by videoconference.

**Staff:** Harbormaster Stan Eliason, Deputy Harbormaster Jeremiah Johnson.  
Harbor Office Manager Alicia Soto participated by videoconference.

### **III. CORRESPONDENCE**

None

### **IV. AGENDA CHANGES**

None

### **V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD**

None

### **VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. Approval of the September 9, 2020 meeting minutes**  
Seeing no objection, Chairman Gordon motioned to approve the September 9, 2020 meeting minutes. Motion passed 5/0.
- B. Approval of the October 14, 2020 meeting minutes**  
Seeing no objection, Chairman Gordon motioned to approve the October 14, 2020 meeting minutes. Motion passed 5/0.
- C. Approval of the November 23, 2020 special meeting minutes**  
Seeing no objection, Chairman Gordon motioned to approve the November 23, 2020 special meeting minutes. Motion passed 5/0.

### **VII. REPORTS**

**Harbormaster** – Harbormaster Eliason informed the commission that the State of Alaska had released the 2019 raw fish tax revenue numbers, \$621,000 was to be provided to the Harbor Fund,

which was nearly half of last year's total., Eliason noted that the City budgets \$900,000 from raw fish tax each year, the lack of revenue from the raw fish tax was very concerning news. Four derelict vessels had been disposed of in the past few weeks, the next round of vessel impoundment letters would be mailed out next week. Harbor staff were working on identifying vessels with expired registration and or documentation. Over 157 vessels had been found to have expired registration or documentation, letters would be mailed out to vessel owners in January 2021. The new Crescent Harbor sewage pump had arrived and would be installed soon.

**City Staff** – None

**Chair** – None

**Assembly Liaison** – Kevin Knox reported that budget sessions would begin next month. Knox echoed Eliason's concerns regarding the decline in revenue from the raw fish tax.

**Other (s)** – None

## **VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

A. None

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

### **B. Discussion of persons loitering at the Crescent Harbor net shed.**

Eliason explained that a group of homeless persons had been congregating and sleeping at the net shed facility. Due to the feeding of birds, the facility had become a roosting place for birds resulting in the facility being an undesirable rental space, and workplace for fishermen to mend nets because of the bird feces. Bird deterrents were now needed at the net shed at the expense of the harbor fund. In addition to the bird feces, bodily waste and garbage have had to be cleaned up by harbor staff, Harrigan Centennial Hall staff had also spent time cleaning the facility. In preparation for a reservation in October of 2020, Harbor staff notified the persons congregating at the net shed that they would need to vacate the facility. Deputy Harbormaster Johnson noted that there had been no issues with loitering at the net shed facility since October of 2020. Knox spoke on the lack of homeless assistance available in Sitka. Dorothy Orbison, a volunteer for the Sitka Homeless Coalition, echoed Knox's comments on the lack of services available for the homeless in Sitka.

### **C. Discussion to change 25% annual discount from up to 20' to 29'.**

Eliason and Johnson explained that the City currently offered a 25% annual discount on moorage for vessels up to 20' in length. The purpose of the discount was to encourage smaller vessels to moor within the harbor system year-round vs. trailering of the vessels. The Sitka harbor system currently had 282 20' stalls, capable of mooring a vessel up to 23', with 101 stalls currently unassigned. Eliason noted that nine stall holders currently utilize the 25% discount.

Eliason explained that the Sitka harbor system had 299 24' stalls, capable of mooring up to a 29' vessel, with 28 stalls currently unassigned. The 28 24' stalls currently unassigned were assigned in the summer months. If every 24' stall holder had a 29' vessel and were to be given a 25% annual discount, the harbor fund could lose nearly \$100,000 in annual revenue which would be counter-productive. After further discussion, the commission suggested increasing the length of vessel eligible for the 25% discount to 23' to include more 20' stall holders. Eliason stated he would calculate some numbers and report back to the commission at a later date.

**D. Discussion of cruise ships at GPIIP.**

Commission members discussed a letter written by Jorgen Eliason, which voiced concerns from the fishing community regarding allowing small cruise ships to use the dock located at the Gary Paxton Industrial Park (GPIP). One of the largest concerns voiced in the letter being that the dock would likely not be usable by others while a cruise ship was in port, taking away from its intended use on those days. Currently the small cruise ship wanting to use the GPIIP dock had a small number of use days, however the concern was that the number of use days would increase resulting in less availability of the dock for the fishermen and other user groups of the facility. Chris Ystad, who serves on both the Port and Harbor Commission, and GPIIP Commission, spoke that the GPIIP commission had discussed implementing limitations on use of the GPIIP dock by small cruise ships, as well as large private vessels. It was decided by the Port and Harbor commission to give the GPIIP commission time to further discuss the issue before making any recommendations.

**E. Ticket violations.**

Commission member Tyler Green proposed increasing the fine for parking a vehicle on the Eliason Harbor loading dock, not engaged in loading or unloading, from \$25 to \$50 per offense. Green felt increasing the fine would help detour people from misusing the loading dock. Harbormasters Eliason and Johnson explained the citation structure written in the City General Code, and how it applied to the Eliason Harbor loading dock. Harbormaster Eliason stated that he would consult with the Police Department, and the City's Legal Department, on the matter and report back to the commission.

**X. SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND AGENDA ITEMS**

1. The next regular scheduled meeting would take place on January 13, 2021.
2. Harbor Fund Financial presentation
3. Discussion of new boat yard proposal at GPIIP.
4. 25% annual discount on moorage for vessels up to 23' vs 20' (unfinished business)

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

**M - Nurco /S - Ystad motioned to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:26pm.  
Motion passed unanimously.**

Attest: Jeremiah Johnson, Deputy Harbormaster