



Provincetown Public Pier Corporation

Minutes

The Provincetown Public Pier Corporation Public Meeting of Thursday, January 14, 2021, at 3:00pm via Teleconference.

Members Present: Regina (Ginny) Binder (RB), Chair; Scott Fraser (SF); Herbie Hintze (HH); Jamie Staniscia (JS); Carlos Verde (CV).

Absent: None.

Other Attendees: Donald (Don) German (DG), Harbormaster; Doug Boulanger (DB), Facilities Manager; Jamie Demetriou (JD), Office Manager.

Members from the Public: Rich Wood, Noah Santos, Steve Milliken, Josh Rowan

RB gaveled the session in at 3:07pm.

DB read the policy for Virtual Meetings in Provincetown Under the Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, signed March 12, 2020 by the Governor.

Agenda (Discussion may ensue, votes may be taken)

Review of Minutes

RB motion to approve the minutes of 17 Dec 2020; were not seconded. Meetings set aside for future discussion; concerns around lack of detail from this working session meeting.

Public Statements

Rich Wood: Following on the discussion about the minutes. These minutes don't get posted to the website for a long time. The last minutes on the website are from October. I hope that the public could go on the website to review the minutes in a timelier fashion. JD noted that a large chunk of Minutes has been given to Anna in Town Hall to upload. Regarding the proposed Harbor Regs changes, Mr. Wood noted that the PPPC is proposing to charge contractors a daily parking rate for the pier. Reached out to several harbors in the Outer Cape, and none of them charge this fee. Charging the contractor means that they are going to be passing along that fee to the Pier tenants. Will fees like this be a good use of PPPC staff's time in having to manage them?

Noah Santos: There seems to be a lot of things going on at the PPPC. A lot of the price increases are very expensive and judging by the fact that we're in a pandemic and running at reduced capacity. I wish all the float owners had gotten an email earlier about all the pricing changes. Additionally, really wish we could get the Carvalho off the pier and the gangway picked up off of the Courtesy Float. DB noted these requests.

Steve Milliken: First time seeing the harbor regs document is this morning. Very shocked that the PPPC is considering increasing rates right now. The Certificate of Inspection, Passenger Fee, Dockage Fees, etc. – huge increases – and we are in the middle of a pandemic. Feels like the PPPC is blind to what's going on. There is no workforce here in Provincetown. I've been at half capacity when I could get workers; running only two boats. Was very upset over prior conversations at the suggestion of going to find additional financial assistance. Don't even know if we are going to run this coming year, and if I did I would have all of these fees to pay. I am on the brink here – just trying to get to April. Finding the workforce alone to run the businesses (roughly 50 people) is extremely difficult. As Noah Santos said, there's nothing posted about what's going on with the PPPC. The dust hasn't even settled with the pandemic, even with a vaccine – the whole world is in a catastrophic breakdown. Feels like the Pier is being poorly managed.

RB noted that the Pier Corp has, for years, been looking into making these changes.

Milliken noted that he didn't start until June and ended in September. In July and August, ran two boats at half-capacity, while trying to maintain and pay for four boats.

Josh Rowan: I found out about the increase in rates through Noah and Steve. We operate on a very slim margin, and these increases could drive us out of business, or at the least out of Provincetown. Wish there was more conversation between the tenants and the PPPC before this comes to a vote.

RB noted that the people we have heard from, aside from Rich Wood, are all Float Owners. As a group, we had been discussing the whole Float Owner concept, and we have been discussing how to better communicate with the Float Owners.

Noah Santos noted that it's not just us who are going to be upset with this, and as it's distributed within Town, you are going to have a lot of angry fisherman.

RB noted that, from the side of the PPPC Board, we have spent a year going through every word, making sure that there is clarity and objectivity.

DB wanted to add that, although people are surprised at this, the public hearing was supposed to have happened almost one year ago, but with everything that happened in 2020, the hearing is just now being held. Rates cannot be discussed unless they are in a public hearing format; they can't be discussed or shared earlier with the public.

Harbormaster Report

DG thanks Noah for mentioning the gangway on the courtesy float, which has been intentionally left down for anticipated upcoming use in repairs. The Clean Vessel Act (CVA) grant reimbursement should be complete by early next week. Working with DB on preparing the Town Annual Report.

Pier Manager Report

DB re: Carvalho situation, is working on the situation. Listed with a broker and hopefully being closed this winter. Board did vote to put it up for sale; and its location is probably best where it is right now in case it needs to be put back in the water. Re: Courtesy Float gangway: it would have been lifted by now, but we are in the process of hopefully getting some pilings replaced which would require its use.

DB presented quick overview: Limited staff at the office (including patrolling the pier). Public Hearing notice was posted (and will be posted in the newspaper on 21st and 28th). Public Hearing scheduled for 4 February 2021. Dredging is complete and the equipment has been removed. Letter to the HC was sent re: the Courtesy Float; HC plan's to discuss at their 20 January meeting. Winkler gearing up to mobilize installation at 7W for the Dolphin Fleet; would like him to take care of emergency repairs to the Transportation Floats and plan on 10W and the Courtesy Float before he de-mobilizes.

SF noted that people have commented that the tracked-changes version of the Harbor Regs are difficult to read; and that maybe we attach the clean copy for comparison. DB will look into doing this (in terms of legality) – not sure it can be posted publicly; is happy to share the clean copy with anybody that wants it.

Office Manager Report

JD presented her report. Continues to keep costs down; issues payroll, turnovers, and warrants through scans to TH. All payments have been received (excursions, trap sheds, ferry, and fleet fees) except for one outstanding tenant which she is working with. SF asked if the outstanding payment tenant was informed of the implications of not paying and that they could become illegible for dock space next year (2021). DB has mentioned this briefly with the tenant. RB grateful that we have payments under control. RB also sorry that we've had difficulty handling accounting in the past, but it appears to now be very under control.

Directors' Statements

CV: Hopefully we can present a case to the HC for the Courtesy Float situation. I feel like the Pier has been managed very well, particularly considering some of the chaos that has happened in past years. Someone from the public in tonight's meeting mentioned that we have three people managing the Harbormaster's job, and that is an unfair comment. There are people down there doing different jobs and we had to make those changes due to management problems.

HH: Noticed someone dumping personal trash into the Pier bins and made them stop.

SF: Regarding the "three person" comment that CV also mentioned, it's factually wrong and inappropriate. Regarding Accounting and Training, feel that JD would like and/or need additional training; has drafted a Request for Quotes for obtaining additional training. I would like us to very seriously consider not spending the Board's money without prior Board approval. We could, perhaps, allot a set amount per Board member. Reviewing the PR situation from Spring 2020, we spent about twice the \$5,000 allotted amount for PR costs.

Re: the public statements: I appreciate the costs that Milliken made about maintenance costs, but needs to realize that we have to also maintain the Pier. Reminded the Board that, several months ago, suggested to the Pier that we begin sharing with the public what was being proposed. If anyone wants to criticize the actions that the PPPC is taking, to note that there are only two ways for PPPC funding – revenue from tenants and tax dollars from the Town. The choices being made are, in many ways, related to what has become deferred maintenance on the pier. Have already spent about \$800,000 replacing pilings. In total, the Town will have contributed more than \$1 Million to the Pier. Net net, the taxpayers and Town will have contributed \$2+ Million for Pier costs by the end of 2021. I had wanted to explain this in an Op-Ed several months ago, but instead we are going to have a screaming crowd on February 4th, at which nobody will be listening.

RB: Would prefer to spend funds on training JD directly; and against doing a Request for Quotes. Regarding the Public Hearing, we are doing "Yeoman's Work" and can't thank the Board enough for the diligence and attention to details. While there may be disagreements on things we have done, but we have done everything we can to make this fair, transparent, and to make it clear. I don't expect people to be angry at the Public Hearing, because what we have done has been well-considered. What we have wanted to do all along is level the playing field. This is not out of any concern for pier revenue: it's about making rules that were created 20 years ago and making them clear and objective and easy to understand.

HH made motion to adjourn at 4:35pm; JS seconded. Passed 4-0.

Respectfully Yours,
T. Jason Brown