PORTLAND FISH PIER AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
July 10, 2025, 3:30 PM
Portland Fish Exchange Subcommittee Meeting
Remote Via Zoom

Please use meeting information provided below to join the meeting.

https://portlandmaine-gov.zoom.us/j/89455927881?pwd=GRhhGua1capBCGke7sTciiggzMcoVK.1
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1. **Committee Chair Comments**

2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

    a. May 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes

    b. June 12, 2025 Meeting Minutes

3. **Old Business**

    a. Public Relations of PPE (food truck day, updates to website, other)

    b. Line of Credit
    Action Item - Public Comment

    c. Lobster Landings

    d. Other

4. **Portland Fish Exchange Manager's Report**

    a. Fish Exchange Manager's Report

    b. Upcoming changes to regulations impacting Herring and Groundfish (NMFS) or Lobster and Pogies (DMR).

    c. Expense/revenue items deviating from budget.

    d. Available space in coolers.

5. **Discuss changes in existing buyers and sellers.**

6. **Next Meeting: August 14, 2025**

7. **Adjournment**

Draft Meeting Minutes

Portland Fish Pier Authority - Portland Fish Exchange Subcommittee
May 8, 2025
3:30 PM

Subcommittee Member Attendees: Chair Tracy Pearce, Nick Alfiero, John Arnold, Matthew Moretti

Staff present: Kaela Gonzalez, Robert Vanmeter

Approximately one member of the public attended.

1. Committee Chair Comments: Chair Tracy Pearce opened the meeting at approximately 3:32 p.m. with a roll call.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes: April 10, 2025 PFEX Subcommittee Meeting.
Not discussed due to lack of quorum.

3. Old Business:
Walk the Working Waterfront. Fish pier will be on the map and on the website. The event takes place on Saturday May 31,2025 from 10:00am to 3:00pm.

4. Review requested Portland Fish Exchange meeting materials:
Vanmeter verbally presented the Management and Financial report provided in the agenda materials. This report now includes numbers from 2024 and 2025 for comparison. Vanmeter is currently using the available line of credit. Since last month, the Fish Exchange (PFEX) has experienced several failures, including issues with the compressor, entry door, server for the auction system, and the security camera system. PFEX has secured an independent contractor to take over the accounting at just over half the rate of Robert Half, with an estimated $25,000 in savings.

Pearce would like more information on the receivables to get better insight into what is coming in and when.

5. Discuss changes in existing buyers and sellers:
No changes to report.

9. Next Meeting: June 12, 2025

10. Adjournment:
Motion by Arnold and 2nd by Alfiero
Approved by unanimous consent at approximately 4:14 pm

Draft Meeting Minutes
Portland Fish Pier Authority - Portland Fish Exchange Subcommittee
June 12, 2025
3:30 PM

Subcommittee Member Attendees: Chair Tracy Pearce, John Arnold, Mary Hudson, Meredith Mendelson, Rob Odlin.

Staff present: Kaela Gonzalez, Robert Vanmeter

Approximately two members of the public attended.

1. Committee Chair Comments: Chair Tracy Pearce opened the meeting at approximately 3:31 p.m. with a roll call.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Motion to approve Meeting Minutes from April 10, 2025.
Arnold, 2nd by Hudson
Approved 5-0

Note: The meeting minutes from May 8, 2025, were not voted on.

3. Old Business:

Vanmeter noted a fantastic turnout with 200-300 people, mostly locals, despite the rain earlier in the day. Mary Hudson also found that the turnout was great considering the weather.

Odlin suggested a campaign to promote the Portland Fish Exchange (PFE) brand and local seafood, including working with restaurants and exploring a higher social media presence. Hudson proposed a food truck event at the PFE with information on local seafood and where to buy it. Also, discussion around branding vs public relations to sell the PFE story. Mendelson expressed caution about a complex branding program due to tracking difficulties, suggesting lower-hanging fruit ideas like the food truck.

4. Portland Fish Exchange Manager's Report:

Vanmeter reports that May saw dismal landings (10,500 lbs vs. 50,000 budgeted) and a net income deficit of $76,000. Current receivables are $138,000, and the line of credit is at $230,000 out of $250,000.

The new ice machine is working well, producing 5 tons every 24 hours. A new revenue stream with Look Lobster is expected to generate $30,000 annually by allowing them to unload, store, and ship lobsters through the PFE. Sea Fresh has also returned as a tenant.

Compressor issues are resolved after a $15,000 investment. A new lobby door was installed. Security camera system repairs are ongoing, with $10,000 more work needed for the Pier cameras. Cleaning is now done in-house to reduce costs. New label printers have been integrated, resolving past issues. Gonzalez will inquire who is responsible for the security cameras outside the Exchange. Diane is working well with Jackie, and Robert Half is expected to be released next week. Vanmeter also noted that several fishing vessels are returning to the Exchange this year.

There was discussion about lowering the $15,000 cash deposit/line of credit requirement for buyers to attract more business. Mendelson supported revisiting this limit, suggesting a tiered structure or lowering it to $10,000 and requested a list of companies concerned about the current limit. Odlin and Hudson expressed support but would like to use caution that the limit is not lowered enough to attract retail buyers. Hudson advocated for some research into appropriate lower amounts and exploring non-groundfish buyers. The decision was made to discuss this further at a future subcommittee meeting before bringing it to the full board. Discussed utilizing staff effectively: co-employment with other shoreside businesses, while keeping in mind that staff need 30 hours to keep benefit-eligible status.

Mendelson noted a slight increase in herring quota for 2025-2026. Hudson mentioned Gulf of Maine haddock will get a boost once the new framework passes in early to mid-fall. The multi-subspecies of pollock stay of execution for a year means similar lease prices and availability to last year. USDA funding for observers was secured through September.

The Board discussed the hurdles involved with trying to gain approval for non-trap lobsters to be landed at the PFE, due to the historical opposition from the lobster industry. The Board will start an initial conversations to see if any gains can be made.

5. Discuss changes in existing buyers and sellers:

No changes to report.

9. Next Meeting: July 10, 2025

10. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn
Mendelson, 2nd Arnold
Approved 5-0

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:57 p.m.

PORTLAND FISH EXCHANGE

Management/Financial Report for July, 2025

GF Landings – Auction		Actual	Budgeted	Variance
April	2025 - 7	31K	225K	(-194K)
May	2025 - 6	10.5K	50K	(-35K)
June	2025- 12	112K	125K	(-13K)

GF Landings – Auction		Actual	Budgeted	Variance
April	2024 - 6	93K	70K	23K
May	2024 - 5	56K	17.5K	38.5K
June	2024- 12	151K	35K	116K

Contract Unloads - GF	Actual	Budgeted	Variance
June 2025	7700	25K	(-17.3K)

Total GF Land/Unloads	Actual	Budgeted	Variance
April	31K	225K	(-194K)
May	11K	53K	(-42K)
June	86K	225K	(-139K)

Pumping	Actual	Budgeted	Variance
2025 YTD	0	300K	(-300K)

Financial Report	Net Income	Budgeted	Variance
April	(-$62K)	(-$7500)	(-$54.5K)
May	(-$76.7K)	(-$5800)	(-$70.9K)
June	(-$K)	(-$13K)	(-K)

Financial Notes

- $100K of $250K LOC in use / $20.83 daily interest
- Current receivables are $148K consisting of buyer fees, berthing, net yard use, & warehousing
- Checkbook is at $26,165

Monthly Payments of Note

- CMP - $12,919
- Trident / Totes - $7843
- Seacoast / Cameras - $6920
- Label Machine / Auction integration - $7500

Operations Notes

- The cooler is now full with 200 pallets/800 barrels of lobster bait and should remain so through the summer with multiple rotations of old and new product. These are billed at the monthly rate $25 a pallet with a one-time $20 in/out fee.
- Over the past several months, I have worked with our staff & customers to enhance our reporting and tracking system to better regulate the flow of totes & pallets in an effort to achieve a more accurate accounting process. Following some adjustments to existing balances, we will start the new 2026 fiscal year with all customers' tote and pallet balances at collectively satisfactory levels. While cautiously optimistic about the efficacy of these changes, my 23 years in the industry have shown these will always present their challenges.
- We have purchased 792 totes to establish a good inventory base for the new fishing season. I had the crew create a stencil for the painting of PFE in bright yellow on both sides for better tracking of our totes.

Facility Report

- Ice machine has been running well and we have acclimated to full time use. Currently using nothing from Vessel Services. With this transition we are now paying $60 per ton versus the $120 from VS. Average annual usage is 315-320 tons.
- Compressors continue to be problematic. Discussing a new operation system as an alternative to a full replacement of compressors.

Staff Report

- Diane Albert has officially taken over all accounting duties from Robert Half.

Landings Notes

- June 1st openings have seen fish returning to the Exchange with 12 auctions for the month.

New/Returning Vessels

- The F/V Jenny Cal, captained by Nick Nieuwkerk, is a new 43' dragger that started landing at the Exchange mid-June. Majority dabs – consistent quality.
- The F/V Captain Lee will begin landing fish for auction starting next week.
- F/V Atlantic Pearl will be doing monk contract unloads / cross-docking at the Exchange starting next week.

New Buyers

- Nothing to report at this time.