

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

PORTLAND FISH PIER AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SPECIAL MEETING
September 8, 2025, 4:00 PM

Remote Meeting Format on the Zoom Platform

PFPA Board Members Present

Class A Directors: Groundfish Harvester or Representative

Mary Hudson

Tracy Pearce

Class B Directors: Groundfish Buyers

Nick Alfiero, Harbor Fish Market

Class C Directors: Representing the seafood industry of the State of Maine

Rob Odlin, Representing the Lobster Industry

Class D Director: Representing the Public at Large

John Arnold

Class E Director: Representing the City Council

Wesley Pelletier, District 2

Ex-Officio Members of the Board of Directors:

Representing the Commissioner of the Maine DOT

Chris Mayo

Representing the Commissioner of Maine DMR

Meredith Mendelson, Department of Marine Resources

Representing the Portland City Manager

Brendan O'Connell, Finance Director

PFPA Board Members Unable to Attend

Class B Directors: Representing the Groundfish Buyers

Tim Merrill, Merrill's Seafood

Class C Director: Representing the Aquaculture Industry

Matthew Moretti, Bang's Island Mussels

Staff Present

Kaela Gonzalez, Program Coordinator

Robert Vanmeter, PFEX Manager

Greg Watson, Housing & Economic Development Director

Public

Approximately two members of the public were in attendance.

1. Discussion and possible vote on Portland Fish Exchange Refrigeration System.

Robert Vanmeter, Portland Fish Exchange (PFEX) Manager provided an update on the status and condition of the compressors, which have been problematic for months and one (Compressor B) is currently shut down due to a coolant leak in the condenser. The PFEX is currently operating on a single compressor, which is insufficient for the 22,000 square foot cooler.

Key issues and proposed solutions discussed include:

- Condenser Replacement: A new condenser is needed. If ordered by September 10th, it can be shipped by October 17th, arrive within a week, and be installed within a day. The cost is approximately \$113,000, which includes installation. The current condenser is 7-8 years old and failed due to a lack of a proper water treatment system, which has since been implemented.
- Operating System: The current operating system (control panel) is custom-made and geared towards industrial use, causing issues with compressor regulation. A new commercial-grade operating system would have a 5-month lead time and cost around \$175,000. Miller, the current service provider, believes a new condenser and operating system will allow the existing compressors to work properly.

Vanmeter has investigated the possibility of renting 53-foot reefer trailers, which cost approximately \$570/week plus an hourly rate, and would run on diesel. These are readily available within a day or two from Ryder. Chris Mayo suggests exploring the Marine Terminal's reefer rack capacities or other cold storage facilities as alternatives to reefer trucks. Attempts to seek service and quotes from other companies have been unsuccessful.

There is a discussion about delegating the final decision on the condenser and operating system to the Finance Subcommittee, as proposed by Meredith Mendelson, to facilitate further discussion. John Arnold suggests proceeding with the condenser immediately due to the emergency, and bringing the operating system to the Finance Committee.

Motion to authorize the PFEX to procure the condenser for \$113,000.

Mendelson, 2nd Arnold

Discussion: Vanmeter believes that with a new control system, the PFEX will get a longer shelf life from the compressors.

No Public Comment

Approved 9-0

Motion to delegate the authority to make the final decision on the operating system to the finance subcommittee at their Wednesday, September 10, 2025 meeting.

Mendelson, 2nd Arnold

Disussion: Some Board members raised concerns regarding a few members voting on the approval or rejection of the PFEX operating system procurement. Mendelson clarified that the intent of this motion is to allow for time to take a deeper dive into the broader financial picture of the PFEX and PFPA.

No Public Comment

Approved 6-3

2. Motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 5:02 p.m.

Arnold, 2nd Alfiero

Approved 8-0 (O'Connell left meeting at approximately 5:00 p.m.)