

Draft Meeting Minutes
Portland Fish Pier Authority - Portland Fish Exchange Subcommittee
August 14, 2025
3:30 PM

Subcommittee Member Attendees: Chair Tracy Pearce, Nick Alfiero, John Arnold (joined at approximately 4:18 p.m.), Mike Foster, Mary Hudson, Matthew Moretti.

Staff present: Diane Albert, Kaela Gonzalez, Robert Vanmeter

Approximately three members of the public attended.

1. Committee Chair Comments: Chair Tracy Pearce opened the meeting at approximately 3:30 p.m.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Motion to approve Meeting Minutes from July 10, 2025.

Hudson, 2nd by Alfiero

Approved by consensus.

3. Old Business:

Regarding public relations, Mary Hudson expects to hear back on a grant for community outreach in September. Mike Foster noted an increase in foot traffic on the fish pier and a need for public-facing information. There was a discussion on whether to keep Lobster Landings as an agenda item due to the repetitive nature of the conversations and lack of new information. There was a question about whether the PFEX Manager's review falls under the subcommittee or the full board, with Kaela Gonzalez agreeing to investigate the bylaws for clarification. Vanmeter will be working with iBec to update the website and fix broken links. Vanmeter also updated the subcommittee on Cozy Harbor, and that a new buyer will assume the lease as written.

4. Portland Fish Exchange Manager's Report:

Mr. Vanmeter presented the manager's report verbally. Highlights are as follows:

- 11 Auctions in July
- \$184,000 landed (budgeted \$250,000)
- \$21,000 contract unloads (budgeted \$50,000)
- 700,000 lbs for pumping (budgeted 300,000)
- Current receivables are \$238,000
- Checkbook balance of \$31,000 (does not include the reserve of \$50,000)

Vanmeter provided a quote from Miller Refrigeration Company. The current operating system is malfunctioning, resulting in frequent shutdowns and temperature regulation issues.

The quote for a new operating system is \$175,000 (plus an optional \$13,000). A full replacement of the compressors would be an additional \$345,000. Hudson offered to explore USDA grants as a potential funding source.

Diane Albert presented information regarding PFEX financials, noting difficulties in historical comparisons due to a change in the PFE's fiscal year (from April-April to July-June). Albert highlighted adjustments made when the city took over, such as expensing equipment previously capitalized, which impacted the bottom line. Nick Alfiero expressed concern over the high payroll (71% of sales) and legal/accounting expenses (\$107,000). Diane is working on compiling historical financial data in Excel for better comparison.

5. Discuss changes in existing buyers and sellers:

Vanmeter has been in contact with two buyers: East Coast and Scott Bode with Pier Fish.

There was a strong consensus on the urgent need to increase fees due to the significant deficit. Hudson explained that fees were reduced after COVID-19 relief funding ran out to ease the burden on boats. Vanmeter calculated that a 5-cent increase per pound would only generate \$100,000 annually, which is insufficient to cover the current deficit of \$572,000.

Alfiero proposed increasing both seller and buyer fees by 4 cents each, bringing the total fee to 32 cents per pound. He argued that the cost of doing business has increased across the board.

Motion to recommend to the Portland Fish Pier Authority Board to increase buyers' and sellers' fees by four (4) cents each, effective September 1, 2025.

Hudson, 2nd Alfiero

Approved by consensus.

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

Corrin Flora expressed concern that Addendum 69 has not been published, which contain the specifications for all other species besides cod. If the addendum passes, the limits for Gulf of Maine haddock would increase.

7. Next Meeting: September 11, 2025

8. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn

Arnold, 2nd Alfiero

Approved by consensus

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:56 p.m.

