

CALL TO ORDER

The May 5, 2025, regular meeting of the Whittier Port and Harbor Advisory Commission was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Chair Olzenak.

OPENING CEREMONY

Chair Olzenak led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

ROLL CALL

There were present:

Nick Olzenak, presiding, and
Trey Hill (virtual), Ross Carlson, Jamie Loan, David Goldstein, and Dori Yelverton,
Comprising a quorum of the Board.

Also present:

David Borg, Harbormaster
Shelby Carlson, City Clerk
Jackie C. Wilde, City Manager

CITIZENS' COMMENTS – None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Motion (Loan/Carlson)

Approve Agenda and Consent Agenda.

Motion Passed

Unanimous

Consent Agenda

*Approval of the April 3, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes

PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS

Chair Report – None

Vice Chair Report – None

Harbormaster's Report – **Borg** welcomed Regina “Aniva” Turituri as the new harbor finance staff member, citing her strong financial background and familiarity with local boating operations.

The Waterfront Economic Development Plan will open for a 45-day public comment period soon; Borg asked for help spreading the word.

A deadhead log damaged Whiskey Float after lodging under a hinge plate and lifting the float 15 feet. Repairs are pending, but the log was removed and the area stabilized.

The fish cleaning float project remains active. **Borg** is seeking input from Valdez but noted State funding may not be available until 2027. Local funding options are under review.

Digital power meters and payment kiosks were installed. The launch ramp kiosk is fully operational; the office kiosk will be online once a replacement wire arrives.

The harbor released 125,000 coho in early May and expects chinook mid-June.

Signage updates are shifting from “Permit Parking” to “Paid Parking” for clarity. Public Works was praised for repairs to storm-damaged areas near the pavilion and breakwater.

A consultant review revealed issues with the harbor’s billing software. The department is transitioning to cloud-based Marina Go and QuickBooks Online after audit findings showed billing errors due to proration and syncing issues. Fee schedule inconsistencies have complicated the situation.

Other updates included chairing a citywide safety committee, representing the city in a Barry Arm monitoring meeting, and attending a tsunami inundation workshop.

Loan asked about takeaways from the tsunami workshop. **Borg** said it underscored the city’s vulnerability and the need for preparedness, though large-scale infrastructure solutions may be out of reach. He noted that concrete structures previously helped reduce wave impact—but those no longer exist.

Goldstein added that updated inundation maps suggest water could reach Kenai Street. He urged exploring FEMA mitigation funds and proposed an elevated parking structure near the waterfront to serve as vertical evacuation.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS – None

OTHER NEW BUSINESS

Request for Waiver of Fees

The Commission discussed a public request for waiver of the second half of 2025 moorage fees due to ongoing medical hardship. The individual has held a slip since 1997 but has not had a vessel in the harbor for several years. **Borg** explained that current code provides no mechanism to waive fees in such cases and brought the matter forward for Commission input. General discussion given.

Motion (Olzenak/Yelverton)

Deny the request.

Motion Passed

AYES: Loan, Goldstein, Yelverton, Olzenak

NOES: Carlson

ABSENT: Hill

Commercial Dumpster

Borg reported that the newly deployed 8-yard dumpsters are working well aside from ongoing issues with lids being left open. He is exploring the addition of a 20-yard locked dumpster dedicated to commercial leaseholders along the waterfront. This would help separate visitor trash from business-generated waste and free up existing dumpsters for harbor users.

Update on Harbor Rebuild Phase III

Borg reported steady progress on Phase III of the Harbor Rebuild. Materials are in process: pile has been ordered, floats are in production, electrical pedestals ordered, and wire is available. A payment from the State grant was received last week. The only remaining regulatory step is the IHA permit for incidental marine mammal take, which is currently out for public comment through July 5. The dock shack is already in Valdez. The project remains on schedule for a late August start, with laydown space identified as the primary logistical challenge.

Update on Clean Harbors

Borg reported that the Clean Harbors certification effort is approximately 75% complete. Progress slowed due to staff reassignment, particularly Deputy Harbormaster Kyle Loan's temporary takeover of Harbor Finance duties. With City Council support secured, remaining work is largely administrative checklist completion and submittal. August is the target for hanging the Clean Harbors flag. **Borg** praised Kyle and the entire crew for maintaining momentum despite weather and workload challenges.

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Loan reminded the group that the Whittier Wishwash event is scheduled for June 21.

Olzenak noted a clear uptick in harbor activity and visitor traffic from multiple cruise terminals, even in poor weather. He acknowledged mixed feedback from local businesses but emphasized that from his perspective, the harbor feels busier and headed in a positive direction. He thanked **Borg**, **Loan**, and others for their efforts.

CITIZEN COMMENTS – None

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE TO CITIZEN COMMENTS

Borg reported that actress Dakota Fanning was in town that day, but the more significant visit came from EPA Administrator Michael Regan, who toured several locations in Whittier impacted by environmental issues. The visit included stops at the Buckner Building, Shotgun Cove Road, and DeLong Dock. **Borg** noted the importance of this visit, which was part of a broader statewide tour by the EPA. In addition, representatives from MARAD (U.S. Maritime Administration)—including directors from both the Washington D.C. office and the regional district—visited Whittier to discuss the potential DeLong Dock rebuild, currently estimated at \$30–40 million. **Borg** confirmed this visit was a direct result of recent advocacy efforts in Washington D.C., and emphasized that Whittier is “on the map” and gaining important visibility. He stressed the importance of continuing to bring high-level stakeholders to town to highlight local projects and maintain momentum.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Shelby Carlson
City Clerk

Nick Olzenak
Chair

(City Seal)