

Directors Report



9.17.21

Jeremy Talbott



Schedule Announcements

Alaska Travel Industry Association	Canceled for COVID
Army 833 rd Command Staff Meeting	September 16 th 2021 (Airport)
Fall Load Out	September 16 th -22 nd 2021 (VCT)
Pacific Coast Congress of Harbormasters	October 21 st (Virtual)
Pacific Ports Association	October 22 nd -26 th (San Diego)
Facility Security Officers Training	October 22 nd -25 th (Anchorage)
Alaska Harbormasters Association	October 25 th -29 th (Anchorage)
2022 Council Budget Meeting	November 4 th
Alaska Mariculture Association (1 st Meeting)	TBA

August and September have been flown-by in a blur. We are still considerably short staffed and experiencing the best salmon season for Valdez ever. The last time I spoke with the Silver Bay Plant Manager Richard Franks he was reminding me that I would owe him 1 bottle of “Top Shelf Beverage” of his choice for setting a plant record of over 62 million pounds of salmon through his plant.

2021 Commercial Fishing Season

Richard thanked the staff and the City for assisting them through the ongoing COVID19DXXXX Crisis. You are probably aware that they were running closed campuses again this year and had our assistance with loaning out a check-in office for this purpose. During the season there were some as needed “COVID” related meetings but most of our cooperation was focused on a very busy salmon season.

Richard spoke highly of the relationship with the New Plant Manger for Peter Pan Gayle Janzlow. They started the season mitigating COVID together and transitioned into some teamwork operationally with Peter Pan doing some canning work for Silver Bay, and Silver Bay supplying Peter Pan with some extra fish to purchase and process.



There was some scuttlebutt on the Container Terminal that we were down to our last 4 empty refrigerated containers available on the West Coast. During the season it was common to have over 400 Refers on our expanded system daily. We will not have Port season statistics until all of the Seafood is off of the Terminal. (Sometime in September or October.)

As you can tell we had one heck of a commercial salmon season, and as the Ports & Harbors Department would like to thank everyone involved from the people at the Hatcheries who keep our stocks healthy and abundant year after year. We know you must be miserable wearing wet face masks during egg takes standing shoulder to shoulder the past two years. Your work does not go unnoticed and during a time when our some of our economic sectors are struggling the most, you are keeping many small businesses alive and allowing some of them to prosper.



The Commercial seine fleet and Tenders have been easy to deal with, and have been partnering up with us environmentally to ensure we keep the contaminants out of our waters.

Our Commercial Fish processors have been a well-oiled machine under very abnormal work conditions. As the Port Director I have had the opportunity to personally thank many of you as you leave town this fall at the airport and if you were missed thank you for going above and well beyond expectations.

Military Partnerships

August involved a lot of coordination between the Port and the DOD for the Fall Load Out currently ongoing. Senior Port staff met with Colonel William C. Arnold and Lt. Colonel Eloy Martinez of the 833rd Transportation Battalion. Topics of discussions revolved around future Load Outs, Waterfront Master Plans, and updating the Ports explosive plans. We may pick up a 3rd ammunition move in 2022 to accommodate logistics. Colonel William Arnold thought we would score high for a future grant opportunity on the water system replacement for the Valdez Container Terminal as well.



There will also be some additional staff time as we work through the details with our military partners on the three highlighted topics above.



Grants

We have closed out two grants recently, the Pink Salmon Disaster Grant and the Valdez Container Terminal Camera Grant. Harbormaster Sarah Von Barga is working with the State to Close out the Pump-out Vessel Grant.

We have also received two resolutions of support from the City Council to apply for two additional State Grants the Harbor Match Grant, managed through the Alaska State Department of Transportation and the Water Access Grant through the State Fish and Game Department. Both of these grant applications have been completed and submitted.

Those Grants will go along ways into making up the funding gap on the H-K Project. We have a little over \$6,000,000 in the Harbor Reserve Fund and early project estimates are above 14 million. Both the City Council and the Port and Harbor Commission will be involved as we move forward, and request support from City Council to move into the construction phase of the project.



The Army Corp. of Engineers will be in town on Thursday September 23rd to go over the waterfront master plan and do a site walk on the Sea Otter Property. We will be discussing future grant opportunities and project partnerships.

2022 Budget

The Ports & Harbors Department has submitted their 2022 budget requests to the City Manager for review. We will have a meeting with the finance team and City Manager to finalize the Ports & Harbors three portions of the budget on Tuesday September 21st.

The council has made it clear they would like the departments to do everything possible to keep cost down to a minimum. Our Ports & Harbors Team has done well, to accomplish the City Councils objectives.

So far, I do not anticipate a reduction in the service standards our customers are used too and expect.

Business Development

As you know the City Manager Mark Detter, Port Director Jeremy Talbott, and Economic Development Director Martha Barberio have been working to increase the Cities footprint in Alaska's Mariculture Industry.

On the Schedule above the Alaska Mariculture Association (AMA) is in the process of setting its first official meeting. The Governor's Mariculture Taskforce has now come to the end of their life cycle and met their objectives. Going forward most of those members and numerous additional new members, (Valdez) will become the Alaska Mariculture Association. *(Thank you, Governor Walker and Dunlevy for your continued support of the Maritime Industry)*

Airport

We still have 100% occupancy and lots of activity with RAVNs scheduled flight services and Midnight Air doing numerous charter flights often multiple times a day.



The addition of aviation fueling stations at Vertical Solutions has been a welcome change and we anticipate more flights in and out of Valdez once the aviation community learns we now have aviation fuel pumps.

RAVN Air plans to continue to operate 2 flights daily on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. They will be offering 1 flight daily on Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday through the fall and possibly the winter.

RAVN Valdez Terminal Manager Sally Philips will be retiring this month and if you see her please thank her for all the years of service here in Valdez. We wish her well in her next chapter.

Green/Environmental Front

The FV Sluice Box (The Harbors New Pump-out vessel) Is out making the rounds and available for Customers to request pump-out of their vessel. Harbor staff will come by an eliminate all of the risk and excuses for customer to not pump-out into our Alaska State Certified Clean Harbors.

Commercial Vessels are being asked to visit the Bilge Pump-out prior to being hauled out for the season to eliminate additional risks of over the side discharge while they are being stored in the yard over the winter. The Marine Equipment Operators will also be working vessel crews to place some additional spill protection under the vessel keels in an attempt to further eliminate accidental spills into the environment.



Operations

Director Talbott has been conducting training with staff on water rescue and Port Security over the past two months.

The Office team has also been participating in those training and the Port administrative team is planning to attend the upcoming Facility Security officers Training next month in Anchorage.



Port Operations

The Container Terminal is stuffed full and North Star Stevedores is trying to keep up with numerous barge landings often times managing two barges at a time and staying till the job gets done to make way for the next barge. Last week they finished one barge at 1am and were there to greet the next one at 7am and start the unloading and loading process over again.



Harbor Operations



Harbor Staff has jumped from the commercial Salmon season into the recreational salmon season with a strong COHO Salmon season. There have been a couple of late season fuel spills that have stretched the maintenance team into their evening and weekends but they never stopped to complain.

In fact they went well beyond just cleaning up the spills, they removed the vessels from the water helped identify the issues and assisted one senior couple get their simple repair done and back out on the water for the Women's Derby.

The teams are getting tired, and a few of our seasonal staff have started to leave as we begin the long process of preparing for winter. Despite being 4 positions short the

team this year got a lot of work done and as their Port Director I can't thank them enough.

Maintenance & Project Updates

The VCT Causeway Project has reached substantial completion and we will be mobilizing the 1st week of October to begin the repairs to the transfer spans to the Floating Dock.

Lots of painting and repairs going on out at the Valdez Container Terminal Buildings inside and out. The maintenance team worked hard on the buildings to get them ready for the Fall Ammo load out and the military was very happy to have the extra space and upgrades.

Most of the staff has been involved in the ongoing H-K Reconstruction project. We have submitted the two grants mentioned above and are working with the design team to make sure we get materials and designs that will hold against the Valdez Winters.

Looking Forward

The Ports and Harbors Commission will be working in September and October to make rate recommendations to the City Council for the Airport, Harbor, and Port before the end of the year. We will also be working on some airport lease updated and requests for additional space.

The City Council will be working on the 2022 budget, a recommendation of support to the Port of Alaska for Federal funding, Airport leases, and the rate recommendations that come from the Ports and Harbors Commission.

Ports & Harbor Staff will be working to wrap up the budget, attend trainings and conferences during October and November.



The summer of 2021 will be remembered as one heck of a salmon year.

Jeremy Talbott
Ports & Harbors Director