

Harbor dredging faces daunting deadline

July 27, 2023



Only three Harbor Commissioners were present and met last Tuesday to update the public on status of future dredging permits in the inner harbor. Also reported were a grants application schedule and an update from the CCHD comptroller on current finances.

There was no agenda item on how or when the Harbor will address the \$1.9 million arbitration decision in favor of tenant Fashion Blacksmith. Immediately following the October 18th meeting, commissioners retired to Closed Session, with no report delivered after the closed session.

Absent from the meeting were Commissioners Harry Adams and Brian Stone.

“Difficult but possible,” was the response from Harbormaster Tim Petrick when The Triplicate asked him what is the road map to dredge the inner harbor, allowing larger vessels to access the Fashion Blacksmith syncrolift. Petrick continued to report soil samples are being tested and submitted to the State Water Quality Board. Permits must also be secured from the Army Corps of Engineers, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and the California Environmental Protection Agency. The arbitration panel has set an October 31 deadline to complete the dredging work. The Harbormaster did not report on needed repairs to the tenant-occupied Fashion building but The Triplicate has learned an initial inspection was conducted by Harbor-hired

contractors the day of the July 18th meeting. Repairs on the Fashion building must be completed by September 30. A seven percent penalty will accrue upon exceeding both deadlines.

The grants update involves eight separate applications. One such grant application from the Boating Safety and Enforcement Equipment program totals \$1.25 million with a \$250,000 cost sharing match. In an effort to develop a law enforcement department in the harbor, CCHD is seeking to acquire a patrol vessel. The vessel request would cost between \$200,000- \$500,000. Sheriff Garrett Scott offered his commendations to the harbor district for seeking to expand into a Police Officer Standards Testing (POST)-certified agency. He posed the question, “Where’s the feasibility study required before proceeding into developing a law enforcement agency. The Harbormaster has met once with the sheriff, who currently is experiencing significant recruitment challenges, certainly not unique to Del Norte county. DNSD has two marine vessels, one for river use, the other for ocean operations. Both vessels are coming off of major renovations. The sheriff also reported the jet skies are in excellent working order. Scott seemed very keen on providing enhanced security and search / rescue operations for the harbor through an agreed upon Memorandum of understanding. Commissioner Rick Shepherd shared his opinion the current sheriff's marine vessels are not suitable to fit the Harbor vision for enhanced security and vessel towing. The grant application will be submitted in early 2024 with an announcement by Spring 2024

Harbor comptroller Thomas Zickgraf reported the combined balances of available funds, exclusive of successful grant funding, is approximately \$662,000. Zickgraf reports \$150,000 from property tax revenue will arrive in the next few weeks and will be deposited into the harbor account, accordingly.

The next scheduled harbor meeting is Tuesday, August 1 at 2pm.