

## Harbor officials address COVID-19 concerns

March 20, 2020



Crescent City Harbor District officials are taking measures to help prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus. This includes changing office hours, doing more business online or over the phone and holding commission meetings remotely.

Harbormaster Charlie Helms told the commissioners at their meeting on March 17 hourly employees will not experience any changes, including RV park managers and maintenance and security personnel.

“Maintenance staff are critical. They’ll still abide by social distancing guidelines of 6 feet. They pull the gear off boats. They need to be going full bore. We’ll also count on staff being able to resolve issues and pay bills like normal,” Helms said.

Facility Manager Mike Baker informed the commissioners that one of his staff is over 65 years old and, as part of the at-risk population, will be staying home to ensure he remains healthy.

The commissioners voted to cancel the first Tuesday meeting next month to give Helms more time to set up a remote system, such as through Zoom, Slack or Go-to Meeting, for hosting their meetings.

Helms explained the requirement that commissioners physically meet in person had been waved by Governor Gavin Newsom. Rather, he will set up a physical meeting for visitors to follow any online teleconference.

Helms reported to the commissioners he has also received guidance on how to monitor harbor traffic for coronavirus. Essentially, it's an honor system where the vessel's crew is required to self-report their port of origin and if anyone onboard is infected or come into contact with anyone infected with COVID-19. If this becomes the case, Helms would contact the port in McKinleyville who would send someone here to determine any need for quarantine.

"We have the Coast Guard Cutter Dorado, but they're not equipped to do this. We would not be responsible for having a vessel that self-reports they're affected by the coronavirus," Helms said.

He added Crescent City is not an official port of entry and that staff redirects overseas vessels to Humboldt Bay which has proper U.S. Customs and Border Patrol.

In the last part of his report, Helms told the commissioners he doesn't expect a decline in revenue due to COVID-19 social distancing measures, as the port will still receive income through leases and tenants.

However, he anticipates a struggle for restaurants like The Chartroom, Fisherman's and Crescent Seafood which can only offer take-out and no dining in.

"It crushes me because I had a restaurant. I know what you need and to see how businesses are being hurt," Helms said. "If you're Taco Bell or McDonalds that has a drive-through you're going to get hurt, but not like our folks here. Fisherman's or Good Harvest Cafe, none of them are set up for that."