

Draft Meeting Minutes
Portland Fish Pier Authority - Portland Fish Exchange Subcommittee
May 14, 2026
3:30 PM

Subcommittee Member Attendees: John Arnold, Mike Foster, Mary Hudson, Meredith Mendelson, Matt Moretti, Rob Odlin.

Staff present: Kaela Gonzalez, Heather Moretti, Robert Vanmeter, Avery Novak

Approximately three (3) members of the public attended.

1. Committee Chair Comments: Heather Moretti chaired in the absence of Tracy Pearce.

2. Approval of April 9, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve Meeting Minutes for April 9, 2026.

Arnold, 2nd Hudson

Approved by consensus (Mendelson abstained)

3. Portland Fish Exchange Manager's Report

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

- 7 Auctions in April
- 104K landed (budgeted 125,000)
- 135K Contract unloads (budgeted 125K)
- 650K in pumping YTD (budgeted 1.2M)
- Current receivables are \$125,000
- Checkbooks are at \$28,000
- Checkbook average \$75,00 (Low of \$28,00; High \$125,00)
- Currently using \$70,000 from LOC
- \$50k from cash reserve is in use

Seafresh has discontinued its contract with the Exchange due to outside forces. The University of Maine has decided to utilize space at the Exchange from May to the conclusion of the tuna season. The new office administrative assistant is doing well.

Discussion was held regarding the \$500 seller representative annual fee. Vanmeter stated that the current fee does not fully cover the Exchange's administrative costs.

Motion to recommend to the Portland Fish Pier Authority Board lowering the annual fee to \$250 for vessel owners/captains selling their own fish.

Odlin, 2nd Arnold

This was not brought to a vote.

Motion to table until the next subcommittee meeting.

Mendelson, 2nd M. Moretti

No Public Comment

Approved by consensus

4. Discussion and vote to recommend to the Portland Fish Pier Authority to apply for a SEA Maine Grant.

Heather Moretti reviewed the smaller and maximized solar panel installation options for the Exchange. The SEA Maine Grant application is due in June, and staff are seeking guidance on it. The smaller system would be covered by the grant; the larger system would require a loan. Key concerns included the need for independent financial analysis and the impact of seagull droppings. Vanmeter was able to confirm that insurance would cover the panels, but there would be an increase in the premium.

Motion to recommend to the Portland Fish Pier Authority Board to proceed with the grant application, with the final level of coverage to be determined pending more information.

Arnold, 2nd Mendelson

No Public Comment

Approved by consensus (Odlin abstained)

5. Old Business

The new summer intern starts on Monday. Heather Moretti will be working with PFEX staff to create a work plan.

6. Other Items not on the agenda

Heather Moretti asked the subcommittee if there were any other ideas for the SEA Maine Grant, since you can submit more than one application. One proposal mentioned was a shared filleting/packing space. The lease with Cozy Harbor would have to be reviewed before moving forward, however.

Heather Moretti also discussed with the subcommittee their interest in salmon from Nordic countries being sold on the auction at the Exchange, to add revenue and volume without competing with local groundfish. Heather will continue investigating this idea and potentially bring Eimskip to a meeting.

7. Next Regular Meeting: June 11, 2026

8. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn

Hudson, 2nd Arnold

Approved by consensus

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:03 p.m.