

Deal: Changes to lease must also be signed off by Business Oregon

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amendment.

“I think it’s fair to say the Port of Astoria has done everything it can to retain Lektro and their manufacturing in Clatsop County,” said Dirk Rohne, the commission’s chairman.

Chuck Durst, general manager of JBT AeroTech, said in a news release that the lease reaffirms the company’s commitment locally.

“Lektro’s record of quality products and outstanding service leads the industry,” he said. “We look to grow sales of the product around the world and to a mutually beneficial relationship with the Port of Astoria.”

The Port and JBT Lektro began negotiations on a reworked lease late last year. They signed an extension of negotiations in December, just in time to avoid an opt-out clause through which JBT could have abandoned the lease entirely.

The last new lease with Lektro, signed in 2000, has gone through four prior amendments. In the fifth, JBT Lektro will pay the Port \$205,000, guarantee its lease for three years, cap its rent at up to \$21,600 a month and receive an escalating amount of monthly credits. After two years, the company would be able to terminate its lease with one year’s notice.

Will Isom, the Port’s executive director, said the upfront \$205,000 payment offsets the rent credits from the Port and provides some security if JBT Lektro does decide to terminate its lease.

“We would not only have the one year notice, but we would have additional monies from that (\$205,000) that, in essence, would really cover us for another eight to 10 months,” Isom said. “From a revenue standpoint, once we receive notice from Lektro, we would have around 20 months of revenue still available to us.”

In 2023, JBT can exercise another three-year guarantee of its lease through March 2026, locking in the existing rent and

receiving an escalating amount of rent credits each month, ending in March 2025. The rent would also lock in through 2030, and the company could cancel its lease after March 2026 with one year’s notice.

JBT Lektro stands to ultimately save \$108,000 through frozen rent and credits by making guarantees to stay through August 2030. Port staff estimates that with the prepayment of \$205,000, the agency will gain nearly \$97,000 compared to the full term of the previous lease.

Lektro and the Port had also been at odds over who’s responsible for repairs to a sinking floor slab in the hangar that has caused cracks and damaged Lektro’s equipment. Lektro has blamed the underlying soil, while the Port has blamed heavy loads taken over the floor by the company.

The new lease amendment specifies that the Port isn’t responsible for repairs during the lease. But JBT Lektro wouldn’t be responsible for repairs either, if the problems are proven by a geotechnical engineer to be soil-based.

Changes to the lease must also be signed off by Business Oregon. The Port took out \$2.6 million in loans through the state agency in the early 2000s to facilitate improvements at the hangar — loans the Port is still paying off. Lektro had also received a \$440,000 job-creation grant from the state for the improvements.

Megan Rattigan, vice president of investor relations at JBT, said there wasn’t a serious consideration of leaving Warrenton considering how established the operation is at the airport. Renegotiating a lease to get a more market-based rent and flexibility is not uncommon when JBT acquires an operation, she said.

JBT has similar tug plants around the world, but Lektro’s electric vehicles offer entry into newer markets demanding the technology, she said. Lektro also held the patents on towbarless technology for hooking its tugs up to airplanes.

Ecola: ‘Absolutely no entry. Active landslide’

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closure extends into the summer tourism season.

The chamber published a new page on its website that lists alternative places to visit, both to get the word out about Ecola and to show visitors there are still other options. Listed are sites primarily south of Ecola, including Falcon Cove and Short Sand Beach in Oswald West.

The state has prepared a request for bids to repair the damaged section of Ecola Park Road and is waiting on contractors. An update to park staff stated it was “still too early to even guess about a completion date.”

Once the road is made safe, work can begin to repair water and communication lines also damaged in the slide. Repairs to the trail below the road that was washed out by the slide are expected to take even longer.

Work to reroute a trail between Ecola Point and Indian Beach that was cut in half by a slide in 2016 has been on hold because of winter weather. Depending on how long the road repairs take, the reroute may also be delayed.

Sections of Ecola Park Road need to be repaired to some extent nearly every winter as landslides are exacerbated by heavy rainfall and storms. Access to Indian Beach has occasionally been shut down. Still, there have not been lengthy closures at the park in years.

In 1961, a landslide at Ecola Point damaged 125 acres and the park was closed for 10 months. It was closed again for four months in 1975 because of a slide that affected the entrance road.

Following repairs this time, the state plans to revisit a broader repair strategy.

“We may still come to the same conclusion — that continuing repairs to the current road is the way to go — but we will also consider the benefits and costs of finding a different route for cars into the park,” Chris Havel, associate director at the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation, wrote in an email.

“That’s a much longer-term, more expensive option,” he continued, “and we would need a more detailed geotechnical report to guide that discussion.”

Park officials are referencing a geotechnical report and list of recommendations from 2016 and 2017



Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

ABOVE: An uprooted tree hangs over Crescent Beach at Ecola State Park. The tree was swept up in the landslide in February. BELOW: A sign blocks off the hiking route to Ecola Point. The landslide took out a large portion of the trail.

that looked at four different landslides affecting roads in the Oregon State Parks system. Two of the landslides were in Ecola State Park; the other two were also in coastal parks.

“The landslide moves periodically when precipitation is the highest and can be expected to continue to do so,” the memo stated about Ecola State Park and a slide that affects the same section of road in need of repair this year.

Engineers recommended long-term maintenance, and said slide movement should be expected to continue indefinitely, requiring ongoing maintenance.

“Without mitigation, the slide may grow or accelerate,” the study noted in a table outlining the risks and limitations of mitigation options.

“Landslides of this size are often relatively expensive to mitigate compared to the maintenance costs,” the study continued. “Therefore continued maintenance is common for large landslides.”

For now, cables and signs block trail routes through the park and the gates are closed on Ecola Park Road.

When the landslide tore apart the trail from Ecola Point to Indian Beach, rangers put out signs, but people tracked their own paths through the landslide area anyway.

This time, Ben Cox, the park manager, opted for stronger wording. The sturdy signs erected depict a small figure stumbling down a hillside amid falling debris.

“Absolutely no entry,” the sign states. “Active landslide.”



Claim: Sims was put on leave in May 2018

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“I am happy with the result,” Johnston said in an email. “We have maintained from the beginning that there was no retaliation involved in the decisions made regarding Ms. Sims. The jury agreed and now we wish to put this behind us and move forward. We wish Ms. Sims success in her future endeavors.”

During the trial, Sims was described as being Johnston’s right-hand deputy. She had served as the agency’s deputy director since 2011 and supervised the federal housing choice voucher program staff and oversaw most of human resources.

Sims was put on leave in May 2018 while the housing authority conducted an investigation into whether she falsified records to secure affordable housing for her son, who was also a housing authority employee. Sims claims that John-

‘MS. SIMS IS SADDENED TO SEE THE AGENCY SHE LOVED MISDIRECT ITS ENERGY AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO BENEFIT MR. JOHNSTON RATHER THAN THE AGENCY’S PURPOSE.’

Krista Le Roux | Teresa Sims’ attorney

ston began an investigation into her conduct and placed her on administrative leave after she reported his mismanagement to a board member.

However, the housing authority’s attorney, Andrea Coit, said Sims was placed on leave after Johnston suspected and began investigating whether Sims engaged in misconduct.

Sims was fired last June after being on leave for over a year.

Additional claims of misconduct and misman-

agement within the agency were brought up during the trial through testimony and evidence.

“Ms. Sims is disappointed in the jury verdict but respects the jury’s decision,” Krista Le Roux, Sims’ attorney, said in an email. “She has no regrets about exposing Mr. Johnston’s mismanagement of NOHA. Although Ms. Sims did not prevail on her claims, the jury verdict does not substantiate any of Mr. Johnston’s allegations (that) Ms. Sims misused her position

to benefit herself or family members. In fact, the investigation into Mr. Johnston’s claims that Ms. Sims abused her position was suspended by NOHA.

“Ms. Sims is saddened to see the agency she loved misdirect its energy and financial resources to benefit Mr. Johnston rather than the agency’s purpose. The agency is now rated by HUD as ‘troubled’ under Mr. Johnston’s watch. For the sake of the agency and the clients it serves, Ms. Sims hopes that the Board of Commissioners reconsider the faith it has placed in Mr. Johnston.”

Johnston, in an email, challenged Le Roux’s characterizations. “The evidence presented to the jury showed that the investigation into Ms. Sims was, in fact, completed and that it concluded that Ms. Sims had engaged in serious misconduct as was suspected at the time she was placed on leave,” he wrote.

Fee: Arguments hinge on competing Supreme Court cases

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Lawyers for the Port argued in their answer to the lawsuit that the fee “is a reasonable fee, imposed proportionately on large commercial vessels, for the service of maintaining a deep-water emergency

berth at Pier 1. The absence of this critical service would jeopardize vessel safety and imperil maritime commerce on the Columbia River, and the Port is entitled to reasonable compensation for providing it.”

The arguments of both sides hinge largely on com-

peting U.S. Supreme Court cases related to harbor fees. The shipping association cited a ruling that shot down a property tax imposed on oil tankers by Valdez, Alaska, because the Constitution bars states from enacting tonnage fees without an act of Congress. The

Port cited a case in which the Alabama State Docks Commission was allowed to charge passing ships near Mobile a fee for policing.

Discovery in the case is expected to be complete in June, with a decision later in the summer on whether to hold a trial.

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Q: Occasionally my “computer name” shows up and it is a strange combination of letters and numbers. How can I rename it?

A: Click the Start button (little white rectangle, bottom left) Click Settings (gear-like icon) Click “System” Click “About” Click “Rename this PC”.

- Notes:
1. Your computer name will not change until you restart your computer.
 2. You can only use Letters, Numbers and the hyphen symbol. No Spaces, Periods, any other punctuation marks nor spaces.



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Q: My child’s baby teeth have cavities. Why should they be filled if they are just going to fall out in a few years?

A: Children’s teeth are very important to the health of the child and the development of the dental jaw, and forming permanent teeth. Baby teeth not only give the child chewing function and cute esthetics, but also serve an important role in the formation of the jaw. Premature loss of primary teeth can adversely affect the jaw growth, position and timing of the eruption of permanent teeth, and if badly decayed or infected, be a source of pain, sickness, and risk to other teeth. Please have your dentist evaluate your child’s “baby teeth.”



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Q: Is it okay to pop my own joints?

A: Some yes! Others, absolutely not! It is fine to pop your fingers and wrists, toes and ankles. Hearing your knees pop when you stand isn’t always a bad thing either. However, your spinal cord, vasculature and very important nerves are within your neck and back, so it is not a good idea to be moving those joints on your own. When you pop your neck or back, you are moving the hypermobile joints as opposed to the ones that are not moving. That is best left to a professional that can move the specific stuck joint.



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