

Port: Difficult decision looms

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time tenant Bergerson Construction and the loss of state grant money for repair work because of a failure to follow through on requirements of the grant.

"There's been one unacceptable shortcoming after another," Rohne said. "In order to move the port forward, it is imperative we have a good relationship with granting authorities... It seems Jim Knight has neither local nor state support to manage the Port of Astoria."

Commissioner Bill Hunsinger criticized Knight's unwillingness to hold a boat company financially responsible after a ship damaged a dock.

His list of 16 failures included botched contracts, the state's closure of Pier 2 because of infrastructure problems, lack of maintenance and loss of East End Mooring Basin use, the unadvertised decision to sell Tongue Point and loss of tenants like Bergerson, Oregon State Police, and McAmis Construction.

"Jim Knight doesn't follow

Port commissioners prepare to make their case against or in support of Executive Director Jim Knight.

Cindy Yingst
The Columbia Press



the commission's advice," Hunsinger said.

Chairman Frank Spence said the turning point for him was the advice of an ad-hoc finance committee, made up of bankers and independent financial experts.

"The port's current financial condition is the result of many years of mismanagement and neglect," Spence said.

Two commissioners, Robert Stevens and Jim Campbell, expressed support for Knight. "Not everything Mr. Knight

undertook came to fruition, but he just keeps trying," Stevens said. "One of the questions I have is, what is the rush? We clearly have a panic move to remove the director before a new commissioner" replaces Hunsinger.

Stevens called the panel's actions a vendetta that should only be done for serious crimes and omissions.

"If we go about this half-baked and rush through it, ... we're going to see an inevitable lawsuit."

Knight, whose salary is \$168,375, was hired on a three-year contract in October 2014 and is in the second year of a five-year contract extension. He chose to have his employment review held in public, but didn't respond to the accusations at Tuesday's meeting.

He will likely respond during the port's next meeting at 6 p.m. June 18, when a decision on his employment is expected to be made.

Dinner to benefit child with leukemia

A dinner and silent auction to benefit Jackson Humpal, 7, the son of a local Coast Guard couple, is set for 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 19, at Camp Rilea.

It's hosted by Fort Stevens VFW 10580 post and auxiliary.

Admission is \$12, which includes spaghetti, bread, salad, dessert and beverage.

For tickets, contact the post at its website, vfwfortstevens10580.com/contact or call Debbie Little at 503-739-0661.

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