

NEWPORT BEACH HARBOR COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
City Council Chambers – 100 Civic Center Drive, Newport Beach  
Wednesday, June 10, 2026  
5 p.m.

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

PRESENT:               Ira Beer, Chair  
                              Steve Scully, Secretary  
                              Bob Miller, Commissioner  
                              Rudy Svrcek, Commissioner  
                              Don Yahn, Commissioner

ABSENT:                Marie Marston, Vice Chair  
                              Gary Williams, Commissioner

Staff Members:       Paul Blank, Harbormaster  
                              Chris Miller, Public Works Administration Manager  
                              Cynthia Shintiku, Management Analyst  
                              Jeffrey Goldfarb, Code Enforcement Officer

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Chair Beer**

**4. PUBLIC COMMENTS (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)**

Chair Beer opened public comments.

Jim Mosher stated that the City Council had received and filed the Harbor Commission's objectives for the upcoming fiscal year at its meeting the previous evening. He noted that, while receive and filing did not constitute formal approval, the Council was now aware of the objectives because they had been included on the consent calendar. He further noted that the Council approved the budget for the coming fiscal year during the same meeting.

Mr. Mosher advised that the budget document contains a section devoted to the harbor, including departmental goals and objectives for the coming year, as well as performance measures by which departmental performance will be evaluated. He commented that one performance measure projects a significant reduction in the amount of trash collected from the harbor, decreasing from approximately four tons annually to less than one-half ton as a result of the San Diego Creek trash interceptor. He stated that he would be interested to see whether that performance metric is achieved.

Mr. Mosher also referenced a statement contained in the budget document's overview of Newport Beach describing Newport Harbor as the "greatest recreational harbor in the world," accommodating approximately 4,300 recreational and sport charter boats within a 21-square-mile harbor. He expressed doubt regarding both figures, stating that he believed the harbor area was substantially smaller than 21 square miles and that the estimate of 4,300 boats appeared too low. He noted that the total number of piers, commercial slips, and moorings suggested a larger number of vessels and stated that any meaningful count would require defining a minimum vessel size. He concluded by observing that vessel counts can vary significantly depending on how boats of different sizes are classified.

Coeli Hylkema, a mooring permit holder and Newport Beach resident, stated that she had provided public comment earlier that day before the California Coastal Commission. She explained that she requested

the Commission advocate on behalf of recreational tidelands permit holders and encourage the City of Newport Beach to adopt the State Lands Commission Category 1 benchmark rate for recreational docks, piers, and mooring buoys in Newport Harbor.

Ms. Hylkema asserted that the City's management of public tidelands has resulted in inequitable treatment of mooring permit holders, who she stated are subject to higher fees, greater regulation, and less favorable treatment than holders of residential pier permits. She noted that she resides near the harbor and described similarities between the use of private docks and moorings for vessel storage. She stated that permit holders typically acquire permits from private parties and pay fees to the City for private use of public tidelands.

Ms. Hylkema contended that mooring permit holders have been disproportionately affected by proposed fee increases and the potential elimination of permit transferability. She stated that the proposed changes could adversely affect boaters of moderate means and restrict their access to the harbor. She further expressed concern that the City may seek to increase revenues through short-term mooring licenses and referenced prior proposals involving substantial increases in shore mooring fees.

Ms. Hylkema cautioned that residential pier permit holders should be aware of the City's actions regarding mooring permit holders, noting that some harbor front property owners may not possess littoral rights because their properties do not directly abut tidelands. She further stated that private docks and yacht club moorings provide more convenient access than offshore moorings, yet mooring permit holders pay higher tidelands fees. She concluded by stating that mooring permit holders do not believe residential pier fees are too low, but rather that mooring fees are disproportionately high by comparison.

Chair Beer closed public comments.

## **5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

### **1. Draft Minutes of the May 13, 2026, Harbor Commission Regular Meeting**

Chair Beer opened public comments. Seeing none, Chair Beer closed public comments.

Secretary Scully moved to approve the May 13, 2026 Harbor Commission Regular Meeting minutes, as amended. Seconded by Commissioner Yahn. The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

**Ayes:** Miller, Svrcek, Yahn, Scully, Beer  
**Nays:** None  
**Abstain:** None  
**Absent:** Marston, Williams

## **6. CURRENT BUSINESS**

### **6.1 Vessels in Newport Harbor Subject to Removal and Sale or Destruction**

#### **Recommendation:**

1. Determine this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act(CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this action will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
2. Receive and file.

Chair Beer introduced the item and noted that the agenda report provided an overview of the City's procedures for removing, selling, or destroying vessels that are derelict, sunken, abandoned, subject to impound, or determined to be marine debris under Title 17 of the Newport Beach Municipal Code.

Harbormaster Paul Blank introduced Code Enforcement Officer Jeffrey Goldfarb, recipient of the 2025 Code Enforcement Officer of the Year award, to provide the presentation.

Code Enforcement Officer Goldfarb explained that State law provides three primary mechanisms for addressing derelict and abandoned vessels in Newport Harbor. He emphasized that these authorities are used sparingly and only as a last resort, noting that the City's objective is not to separate individuals from their vessels, but rather to ensure that vessels remain seaworthy, operable, and safe. He stated that action becomes necessary when vessels become inoperable, derelict, environmentally hazardous, or otherwise pose risks to public safety.

Code Enforcement Officer Goldfarb reviewed the provisions of Harbors and Navigation Code Section 522, which governs sunken and abandoned vessels. He explained that submerged vessels may be impounded and disposed of after providing the required notice to the owner. He noted that if ownership cannot be established, the vessel must be posted for thirty days before disposal. He cited the former vessel Bellyboa, which sank at its owner's dock in the Back Bay, as an example of a vessel removed and disposed of under this authority.

Code Enforcement Officer Goldfarb next discussed Harbors and Navigation Code Section 523, which authorizes the impoundment of floating vessels under specified circumstances, including when a vessel obstructs navigation, creates a hazard to public safety or property, interferes with navigation, or poses an environmental threat. He explained that the City typically impounds such vessels on a mooring rather than immediately removing them from the harbor. He described a case involving an inoperable vessel that had remained out of registration for four years. He explained that after more than a year of unsuccessful efforts to secure compliance from the owner, the City obtained an abatement warrant, removed the vessel from its dock, impounded it on a mooring, and ultimately disposed of it. He outlined the required notice procedures and appraisal requirements associated with vessel disposal under Section 523.

Code Enforcement Officer Goldfarb then reviewed Harbors and Navigation Code Section 550, commonly referred to as the Marine Debris Program. He explained that marine debris is defined as an unseaworthy vessel or vessel part that is not reasonably fit, or reasonably capable of being made fit, for marine transportation, and whose value is less than the combined cost of removal and disposal. He noted that marine debris may consist of either floating or submerged vessels. He explained that depending on the circumstances, the City may be required to provide notice and allow a waiting period before removal. He noted that if the vessel presents an immediate threat to public health, safety, welfare, or the environment, it may be removed immediately. As an example, he referenced a vessel that broke apart near the piers and washed onto the beach on April 18, allowing the City to immediately collect and dispose of the debris. Lastly he further explained that the City's ability to remove and dispose of vessels is dependent upon available funding. He noted that the State's vessel disposition grant funding had been significantly reduced due to statewide budget constraints.

Chair Beer asked whether State grant funding could be used for vessels voluntarily surrendered by their owners or only for vessels impounded by the City.

Harbormaster Blank explained that the Surrendered and Abandoned Vessel Exchange (SAVE) Grant, which supports the removal of surrendered or abandoned vessels, may be used in both circumstances. He noted that vessel owners who no longer wish to maintain their vessels may voluntarily surrender them to the City for destruction, and that abandoned vessels may also qualify after reasonable efforts have been made to locate and work with the owner. He added that vessels removed under the SAVE Grant must be permanently destroyed and cannot be auctioned, transferred, or returned to service. He further explained that the hull identification number must also be destroyed and documented.

Chair Beer asked how frequently abandoned vessels requiring disposal are encountered.

Harbormaster Blank estimated that approximately five such vessels are addressed each year.

Commissioner Rudy Svrcek asked how staff determines when a vessel has deteriorated to the point that intervention is warranted.

Code Enforcement Officer Goldfarb explained that he regularly inspects vessels in the field for seaworthiness and evaluates numerous factors, including visible signs of neglect or structural deterioration, whether the vessel is floating properly on its waterline, and whether components such as rigging appear unsafe. He also noted that Harbor Department staff monitor mooring occupancy daily and track vessel movement. He explained that a vessel that has not left its mooring for an extended period may be subject to an operability review.

Secretary ~~Steve~~ Scully asked about the annual cost of vessel abatement and the extent to which those costs are covered by grants.

Harbormaster Blank reported that approximately \$612,000 had been spent on vessel abatement during the previous six calendar years. He stated that roughly ten percent of those costs are borne by the City as the required local match for State grant funding, with total City expenditures estimated at approximately \$100,000 during that period. He further reported that the City Council approved an additional \$150,000 in Harbor Department funding for vessel abatement in the upcoming fiscal year after State grant funding was reduced from the requested \$250,000 to \$100,000. He indicated that the Department expects to fully utilize the additional funding.

~~Commissioner~~ Secretary Scully commented that the Harbor Department appeared to be taking a more proactive approach to vessel abatement than other Southern California harbors.

Harbormaster Blank agreed, stating that few agencies possess the same level of expertise, resources, and operational experience. He noted that Code Enforcement Officer Goldfarb recently presented the City's vessel abatement program at the California Boating Safety Officers Association annual meeting in Lake Tahoe and described Newport Beach as the regional leader in the field.

~~Commissioner~~ Secretary Scully asked whether the City engages in legislative advocacy to pursue additional funding or greater attention to vessel abatement issues.

Harbormaster Blank responded that while the City maintains lobbying efforts in Sacramento and Washington, D.C., vessel abatement does not currently rank among the highest legislative priorities. He stated that the Harbor Department has been successful in obtaining grant funding independently, largely through the efforts of Administrative Assistant Cynthia Shintiku, and that requests for lobbying support have been assigned lower priority relative to other City initiatives.

Chair Beer thanked Code Enforcement Officer Goldfarb for the presentation, congratulated him on receiving the Code Enforcement Officer of the Year award, and expressed appreciation for his service and contributions to the Harbor Department. He commented that Code Enforcement Officer Goldfarb's dedication, expertise, and field work were evident in the quality of information regularly provided to the Commission.

Officer Goldfarb thanked the Commission for its recognition and support.

Chair Beer opened public comments.

Bud Cummins, a mooring permit holder, commented that many vessels removed through the City's abatement and disposal programs may contain usable equipment, such as anchors and other marine hardware. He asked what becomes of that equipment and whether there is an opportunity for it to be made available to other boaters at a reduced cost prior to vessel destruction.

Harbormaster Paul Blank reminded Mr. Cummins to direct his comments to the Commission.

Chair Beer indicated that he would allow staff to respond to the inquiry.

Harbormaster Blank explained that the disposition of salvageable equipment varies by circumstance. He stated that once a vessel comes into the City's possession, usable equipment may be retained and repurposed for Harbor Department operations. He noted that some anchors currently used on Harbor Department patrol vessels were acquired through this process. He further explained that, in most cases, contractors bid on vessel removal and destruction projects with consideration given to the value of any salvageable equipment aboard the vessel. As a result, remaining equipment is typically retained by the contractor as part of the removal and disposal process.

Chair Beer closed public comments.

There was no further action taken on this item, and it was received and filed unanimously.

## **6.2 Ad Hoc Committee Updates**

### **Recommendation:**

1. Find this action exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
2. Receive and file.

Chair Beer invited an update from the committee members and noted that only one objective remained.

### **Balboa Ferry Ad Hoc – Commissioners Scully, Svrcek and Yahn (05-10-2023)**

Secretary Scully reported that activity had been relatively quiet since the previous meeting. He stated that he had contacted Joe Beek several days earlier seeking an update but had not yet received a response. He expressed hope that additional information would be available at the Commission's next meeting.

Commissioner Yahn added that, based on his recent discussions with Seymour Beek, the project remains in its early stages. He reported that the project team had submitted its first reimbursement request associated with grant-funded design and preliminary engineering expenses. He noted that although reimbursement had not yet been received, the project sponsors anticipated receipt in the near future. He stated that the project would then move fully into the design and specification phase, after which naval architects and vessel manufacturers would be selected. He noted that the project continues to move forward.

Chair Beer commented that the effort appeared to be a lengthy process and asked whether there was an estimated timeline.

Commissioner Yahn responded that the project sponsors hoped to have materials prepared for submission to vessel builders by the end of the year.

Chair Beer thanked staff and the committee members for the update.

Chair Beer opened public comments. Seeing none, Chair Beer closed public comments.

There was no further action taken on this item, and it was received and filed unanimously.

### **6.3 Review and Approve Recommended Harbor Commission Objectives for 2026**

#### **Recommendation:**

1. Find this action exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
2. Receive and file.

Chair Beer introduced a discussion regarding the Harbor Commission's 2026 objectives and work plan. He noted that the Commission periodically establishes objectives and develops work plans to guide its priorities and initiatives. He reported that the Commission adopted new objectives at its May meeting and that the City Council subsequently accepted those objectives, placing them into effect. He explained that the revised framework organizes the Commission's work into five primary functional areas, each containing specific objectives. He further noted that a commissioner had been designated to serve as chair, liaison, and lead representative for each functional area.

Chair Beer stated that the purpose of the discussion was to review any final updates associated with prior objectives and to solicit feedback regarding the newly adopted framework. He encouraged commissioners to continue reviewing the objectives and advised that formal assignments and responsibilities associated with the updated work plans would be considered at the next Harbor Commission meeting.

Commissioner Svrcek provided an update regarding a recent water quality meeting. He reported that the featured speaker was Tracy Ingebritsen of the County of Orange, who presented an overview of the Santa Ana River and ongoing efforts to address trash accumulation within the watershed. He stated that the presentation highlighted the use of trash collection booms, the Adopt-a-Channel program, trash quantification tools, and graffiti removal efforts. He noted that the Orange County chapter of the Surfrider Foundation had adopted Channel C01 and had removed approximately 11,000 pounds of trash from the Santa Ana River over the previous three years.

Commissioner Svrcek reported that much of the discussion focused on homeless encampments as a significant source of trash entering the watershed. He stated that participants discussed the importance of addressing encampments as a means of reducing debris before it enters the river system. He indicated that outreach to Orange County supervisors may occur and suggested that the Newport Beach Police Department's experience in addressing homelessness issues could provide valuable guidance to upstream jurisdictions. He concluded that the meeting successfully increased awareness of the connection between encampments and watershed trash accumulation.

Secretary Scully reported progress on the Commission's rental safety objective. He stated that substantial work had been completed and expressed appreciation to Harbormaster Blank and Administrative Assistant Shintiku for their assistance in reviewing, and refining the materials. He advised that a draft proposal would likely be available for Commission review at the next meeting. He further reported that feedback was being solicited from rental operators to better understand how a potential program might be received and implemented within the rental community. He stated that he viewed the initiative positively and looked forward to further discussion.

Chair Beer expressed support for the initiative and described it as a worthwhile effort.

Commissioner Miller thanked Chair Beer for his leadership and efforts in organizing the Harbor Commission's updated objectives and work plan. He stated that a significant amount of work had gone into the process and expressed appreciation on behalf of himself and Secretary Steve Scully for Chair Beer's leadership and guidance.

Commissioner Miller reported that, within his assigned objective area, discussions had taken place with Deputy Harbormaster Cosyion, Harbormaster Blank, and private-sector stakeholders regarding opportunities to incorporate additional technology into harbor operations. He stated that the goal of these efforts is to identify innovative tools and technologies that could assist staff in monitoring and managing harbor activities more effectively.

Chair Ira Beer expressed enthusiasm regarding the initiative and stated that he looked forward to future developments within that objective area.

Chair Beer opened the public comment.

Adam Leverenz commented on the Harbor Commission's newly adopted objectives document and expressed appreciation for its format, organization, and readability. He stated that the document was visually appealing, easy to follow, and informative.

Mr. Leverenz referenced Functional Area 1, Harbor Regulations and Operational Readiness, specifically Objective 1.2, which calls for evaluating Harbor Department operational readiness, including service delivery, staffing, and emergency response capabilities. He suggested that a fiscal component be incorporated into that objective, stating that opportunities often exist to improve operations or provide services more cost effectively. While acknowledging that Functional Area 3 addresses fiscal sustainability, he expressed the view that financial considerations should also be included when evaluating Harbor Department operations and performance.

Mr. Leverenz further stated that he would like to see public restroom facilities reinstated as a Commission objective. He noted that he had raised the issue previously and emphasized the importance of restroom availability in supporting water quality goals. He specifically referenced the area near 10th Street Beach, where restroom facilities are not readily available. While acknowledging the challenges associated with the issue, he expressed concern that restroom facilities were no longer included among the Commission's objectives and encouraged continued discussion and exploration of potential solutions. He noted that restroom facilities may eventually be incorporated into the Lower Castaways project and suggested that additional options could be considered.

Chair Beer closed public comments.

Chair Beer commented that, for the benefit of those in attendance, the issue of public restroom facilities had previously been included among the Harbor Commission's objectives. He stated that the subcommittee devoted significant effort to the matter over the course of more than a year, including researching and evaluating various alternatives. He reported that, following that review, the subcommittee determined not to recommend any action. He explained that the objective was subsequently removed from the Commission's work plan as a result of that determination.

There was no further action taken on this item, and it was received and filed unanimously.

#### **6.4 Harbormaster Update – May 2026 Activities**

##### **Recommendation:**

- 1) Determine this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this action will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
- 2) Receive and file.

Public Works Administration Manager Chris Miller provided an update on the Lower Bay Dredging Project. He reported that dredging operations were currently focused on the Newport Harbor Yacht Club mooring field, which represents one of the largest concentrations of material remaining within the project area. He stated that dredging activities had been underway in that location for more than three weeks and were expected to continue for approximately another week and a half. He explained that upon completion

of dredging in the mooring field, survey work will be conducted to verify dredged quantities and determine contractor compensation. He stated that the City's goal is to begin reinstalling moorings around July 1.

Public Works Manager Miller explained that while survey verification is underway, the contractor will resume dredging the access channel leading to Marina Park. He noted that work in that channel began several months earlier but was temporarily suspended so equipment could be repositioned to focus on areas west of Marina Park. He reported that those western project areas have now been completed. He noted that following completion of the Marina Park access channel, dredging will continue in the northern portion of the anchorage area, followed by the primary twenty-foot-deep navigation channel leading to the Balboa Island Ferry. He stated that completion of those areas would conclude the project.

Public Works Manager Miller reported that, according to the project schedule, completion remains anticipated around the end of September; however, various delays may extend the project beyond that date. He noted that dredging operations were suspended on the day of the meeting due to ocean swell conditions, explaining that wave activity, rather than weather conditions onshore, is the primary factor affecting the safe movement of dredging equipment and disposal scows.

Commissioner Svrcek asked whether all project areas were being dredged to a uniform depth of twenty feet.

Public Works Manager Miller explained that dredging depths vary depending on the location. He stated that the main federal navigation channel is maintained at twenty feet, while many secondary channels are dredged to approximately fifteen feet. He noted that mooring fields generally have authorized depths of approximately ten feet.

Secretary Scully observed that dredging operations appeared to be progressing rapidly, noting the frequent movement of disposal scows through the harbor.

Public Works Manager Miller agreed and reported that approximately twenty-five scow loads of material had been removed during the previous six-day period, averaging roughly three loads per day. He explained that production rates have been particularly efficient because the contractor is currently working in a large, open dredging area and transporting material to the LA-3 ocean disposal site located approximately 6.5 miles offshore. He noted that operations are structured so that one scow can be loaded while another is en route to or returning from the disposal site.

Commissioner Miller asked about the Rhine Channel and whether it was included in the current dredging program.

Public Works Manager Miller explained that the Rhine Channel was last dredged in 2011 as a City-led remediation project rather than a federal navigation project. He stated that the purpose of that effort was sediment remediation rather than maintaining a specific navigational depth. He noted that as a result, depths within the Rhine Channel vary depending on the extent of remediation required in different locations. He estimated that depths generally range from approximately eight to fifteen feet, depending on the specific area.

Chair Beer also noted that the City recently hosted the California Marine Affairs and Navigation Conference. He stated that the conference brought together representatives from port authorities, dredging organizations, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, including its Chief of Operations. He reported that he had the opportunity to address attendees and praised the City's efforts in coordinating the dredging project. He specifically commended Public Works Manager Miller and City staff for their work and noted that project maps and public information resources have been valuable tools for communicating project progress to the public.

Harbormaster Blank reported that the Harbor Department's most recently published bathymetric chart is available on the Harbor Department website under the Resources section. He noted that the chart

provides detailed depth contours throughout Newport Harbor, including the Rhine Channel and Balboa Coves areas, and is frequently used by harbor users and staff.

Harbormaster Blank reported that a six-pound sand bass was caught from the Park Avenue public dock, describing it as a positive indicator of the harbor's environmental health and fishery conditions. He noted that Harbor Department staff also responded to an upland construction discharge into Promontory Bay, which was addressed promptly in coordination with the responsible parties. He reported that a Good Samaritan recovered and delivered a sunken vessel found near Lower Castaways in the Upper Bay. He noted that Harbor staff also increased enforcement and public education efforts regarding fishing regulations at public docks and other restricted locations throughout the harbor.

Harbormaster Blank reported that Harbor Department staff supported a County contractor conducting dive operations at the wastewater treatment plant ocean outfall by providing berthing, logistical support, and equipment staging at Marina Park. He also reported that staff identified and terminated an illegal Mother's Day charter operation through proactive enforcement efforts and information received from the public.

Harbormaster Blank noted that Harbor Department personnel provided numerous mooring assistance services to both visiting and local boaters during the Memorial Day weekend. He further reported that Harbor Department staff witnessed a hit-and-run incident involving a vessel, leading to intervention by the United States Coast Guard, which terminated the vessel's voyage. He advised that a swim ladder had been installed at the Central Avenue public dock following a suggestion from Vice Chair Marie Marston. He also reported that Harbor Department staff successfully resolved radio communication interference affecting one of the Department's electric patrol vessels with assistance from a local communications specialist. He further reported that Harbor Safety Officers Rudmann and Timmerman safely towed a disabled vessel from the ferry channel during Memorial Day weekend, preventing a navigation hazard through what Harbormaster Blank described as skilled seamanship.

Harbormaster Blank reported that staff utilized new noise-monitoring equipment to evaluate compliance with conditions associated with the Drenched Yoga event. He stated that monitoring generally demonstrated compliance with permit requirements, although exceptions were observed during the final day of the event and were being addressed.

Harbormaster Blank also reported that an unpermitted wedding occurred on the Marina Park long dock. He stated that the Dockmaster exercised discretion by allowing the ceremony to conclude before directing participants to vacate the area so that scheduled events could proceed. He noted that additionally, Harbor Safety Officers Boyles and Gauci rescued a dog that had escaped from a nearby short-term rental property and entered the harbor. He noted that the animal was recovered safely, identified through its microchip, and reunited with its owners.

Harbormaster Blank reported that the Harbor Department's entry in the Balboa Island Parade received the award for Best VIP-Themed Vehicle. He credited Harbor Department staff, including Scott Mabury, Boyles, and Timmerman, for designing and preparing the float.

Harbormaster Blank further reported that an arrest warrant had been issued for a repeat unpermitted charter operator after multiple citations and enforcement actions failed to secure compliance. He explained that the individual failed to appear in court following the filing of a criminal complaint and now faces an outstanding warrant.

Harbormaster Blank also noted that a statement recently issued by the Mayor of Huntington Beach describing efforts to keep waterways "clean, safe, and enjoyable" closely mirrored the Harbor Department's mission statement. He remarked that imitation is often regarded as the sincerest form of flattery and indicated that the Department was evaluating whether its mission statement could be trademarked.

Harbormaster Blank advised that recruitment efforts for new Harbor Department personnel were nearing completion. He reported that selected candidates had successfully completed swim testing and would soon receive employment offers, with the goal of having them available for duty around the July 4 holiday period.

Harbormaster Blank reported that the Harbor Commission's recommended revisions to the Newport Beach Municipal Code, previously approved by the Commission in February, had been scheduled for consideration by the City Council on June 23. He explained that the item had experienced delays while the necessary ordinance and resolution documents were prepared by the City Attorney's Office. He encouraged interested parties to attend the meeting, although he did not anticipate extensive discussion.

Harbormaster Blank reported that Harbor Department personnel responded to 2,281 calls for service during the month of May, of which 2,045 were mapped within the Department's public-facing reporting system. He also reported a substantial increase in public contacts, including requests for information, harbor assistance, presentations, and outreach activities. He ~~presented reported that~~ Harbor map utilization, permitting activity, and anchorage occupancy remained strong, with particularly high anchorage utilization during the Memorial Day weekend. He noted that the East Anchorage remains unavailable due to dredging operations but is expected to return to service following project completion later in the year.

Harbormaster Blank also addressed comments made earlier during public comment regarding State Lands Commission benchmark tidelands rates. He stated that State Lands Commission staff have repeatedly clarified that benchmark rates apply only to ungranted tidelands. He emphasized that Newport Harbor consists of granted tidelands and therefore those benchmark rates do not apply.

Commissioner Miller asked whether Harbor Department operations during the July 4 holiday weekend would differ from normal operations and inquired about coordination with Police and Fire Department planning efforts.

Harbormaster Blank responded that July 4 operations would not be business as usual. He stated that Harbor Department staffing levels would be increased, with personnel deployed earlier and remaining on duty later than normal throughout the holiday weekend. He advised that all available Harbor Department staff, including himself, would be assigned to operational shifts.

Harbormaster Blank further reported that the Harbor Department had not initially been included in the City's formal July 4 planning process. He stated that both the Police Chief and Fire Chief expressed surprise upon learning of the omission and have since committed to coordinating resources and support as necessary. He added that Harbor Department personnel would remain on duty until all fireworks displays concluded and harbor users had safely departed the area.

Commissioner Miller thanked Harbormaster Blank and Harbor Department staff for their efforts to keep the harbor safe, clean, and well enjoyed during the holiday period and offered the Commission's support in ensuring future inclusion in City planning efforts.

Secretary Scully asked whether any permits had been issued for large vessels to utilize the large vessel anchorage during the summer season.

Harbormaster Blank reported that one permit had been issued for a vessel approximately 100 to 110 feet in length owned by local residents. He stated that the vessel was expected to occupy the large vessel anchorage during the July 4 weekend. He noted that he had advised the vessel's representatives that leaving the anchorage during the holiday period could jeopardize their ability to reclaim the space due to anticipated demand.

Chair Beer commented on the Harbor Department's operational workload, noting that annual service calls exceed 25,000. He stated that the volume of activity equates to several service calls per hour throughout

the year and highlighted the Department's consistent responsiveness and professionalism. He commended Harbormaster Blank and Harbor Department staff for their efforts and service to the community.

Chair Beer opened public comments.

Adam Leverenz commented on Harbormaster Blank's remarks regarding State Lands Commission benchmark tidelands rates and expressed a differing viewpoint. He stated that he had attended the State Lands Commission stakeholder meeting on May 27 and had directly asked a State Lands Commission representative whether it would be acceptable for the City to adopt the Category 1 Southern California benchmark rate for piers, docks, and mooring buoys. According to Mr. Leverenz's recollection, the State Lands representative responded that it would be inappropriate to provide a definitive answer due to legal considerations.

Mr. Leverenz noted that the benchmark methodology incorporates marina data from Newport Beach and stated that the State Lands Commission utilizes the same benchmark to manage tidelands in Huntington Harbor. He argued that use of a benchmark-based approach could help maintain fair and reasonable rates for all harbor users. He further suggested that the City Council should carefully consider the issue when evaluating future tidelands rate structures.

Mr. Leverenz referenced prior discussions regarding residential pier permit rates and asserted that future rate increases could affect residential dock permit holders as well as other harbor users. He expressed concern regarding appraisal methodologies and stated that a residential pier appraisal conducted during the previous year had not been publicly released. He further stated that additional appraisal work may currently be underway, although he was unaware of any public record documenting those efforts.

Mr. Leverenz encouraged consideration of alternative approaches to rate-setting and stated that, if questions arise regarding the accuracy of his comments, he welcomes the opportunity to provide supporting information. He concluded by stating that the issues warrant discussion and consideration even where differing viewpoints exist.

Chair Beer closed public comments.

There was no further action taken on this item, and it was received and filed unanimously.

## **7. PRESENTATION FOR CHAIR BEER AND COMMISSIONER YAHN**

Harbormaster Blank noted that the meeting marked the final Harbor Commission meeting for Chair Beer and Commissioner Yahn. He expressed appreciation on behalf of the City of Newport Beach, the Harbor Department, and the public for their years of service to the Harbor Commission and the community. As a traditional token of appreciation, Harbormaster Blank presented each commissioner with commemorative harbor chocks in recognition of their service.

Secretary Scully then presented a commemorative plaque on behalf of the Harbor Commission. He stated that it had been a privilege to serve alongside Chair Beer and Commissioner Yahn and expressed appreciation for their leadership, mentorship, and support of fellow commissioners. Secretary Scully noted that both commissioners had been instrumental in helping newer members become effective contributors to the Commission's work and thanked them for their dedication and service.

Chair Beer thanked the Commission, staff, and members of the public for their support during his nine years of service on the Harbor Commission. He stated that the meeting marked his final meeting as Chair and reflected on the privilege of serving the City of Newport Beach and helping to protect and preserve Newport Harbor. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work alongside fellow commissioners, dedicated City staff, the Harbor Department, Harbormaster Blank, Public Works Manager Miller, former and current members of the City Council, and community members who care deeply about Newport

Harbor. He noted that the Commission had addressed a wide range of important issues during his tenure, including water quality, navigation, dredging, harbor safety, moorings, environmental stewardship, and long-range planning. He stated that public service is a collective effort and thanked all those who contributed to the Commission's accomplishments. He described Newport Harbor as a special place and expressed pride in the work completed during his tenure.

Chair Beer concluded by stating that he was confident the Harbor Commission and City leadership would continue protecting and improving the harbor for future generations. He thanked his fellow commissioners and stated that his service on the Commission had been a deeply valued and meaningful experience.

Commissioner Yahn stated that he had not prepared formal remarks but wished to express his appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the Harbor Commission for the past eight years. He described the Commission as an exceptional group comprised of dedicated individuals who brought expertise, commitment, and a strong sense of camaraderie to the City's harbor-related efforts. He reflected on the significant evolution of both the Harbor Commission and Harbor Department during his tenure and noted that the organization had improved substantially over that period.

Commissioner Yahn commented on the leadership of Harbormaster Paul Blank, noting that Harbormaster Blank's prior experience as a Harbor Commissioner provided valuable perspective when he assumed responsibility for leading the Harbor Department. He stated that it had been rewarding to observe the Department's continued growth and success under his leadership.

Commissioner Yahn noted that, as a lifelong Newport Beach resident, harbor user, and boater, he initially became involved with the Harbor Commission because of his desire to preserve and improve Newport Harbor. He stated that he had personally witnessed meaningful progress through the collective efforts of commissioners, staff, and community stakeholders. He specifically recognized Chair Ira Beer for his dedication and significant contributions to improving the harbor, noting that many volunteer hours and considerable effort had been devoted to the Commission's work.

Commissioner Yahn thanked his fellow commissioners and City staff for the opportunity to serve alongside them. He expressed his belief that the Commission was in a stronger position than when he first joined and voiced confidence that future commissioners would continue building upon that progress. He acknowledged prospective future commissioner Thom McElroy, who was present in the audience, and stated that he looked forward to observing and supporting the Commission's continued work in the years ahead. He concluded by thanking everyone for the opportunity to serve.

#### **8. MOTION FOR RECONSIDERATION**

None.

#### **9. COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS (NON-DISCUSSION ITEM)**

Commissioner Miller announced several upcoming community and harbor-related events. He encouraged the public to attend the upcoming Wooden Boat Festival at the Balboa Yacht Club, describing it as a worthwhile event showcasing a variety of historic and wooden vessels. He also noted that the Spirit of Dana, formerly known as the Pilgrim, would be touring Newport Harbor on the Friday evening of the event and described its presence as a valuable addition to the harbor community.

Commissioner Miller further highlighted upcoming fundraising events benefiting the Ben Carlson Memorial & Scholarship Foundation. He noted that the Adult Pier Jump fundraiser would take place on July 18 and provides participants the opportunity to experience the traditional pier jump activity while supporting the Foundation's mission. He also announced that the Foundation's prone paddle event would occur on September 19, involving a paddle crossing from Santa Catalina Island to Newport Beach. He stated that proceeds from these events support lifeguard programs and water safety initiatives in Newport Beach and throughout the western United States.

Chair Beer commented that the prone paddle event is an extraordinary accomplishment and noted that former Newport Beach Mayor Will O'Neill had previously completed the crossing along with incoming Harbor Commissioner Tom McElroy.

**10. MATTERS WHICH COMMISSIONERS WOULD LIKE PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, OR REPORT (NON-DISCUSSION ITEM)**

Secretary Scully requested that discussion of the Harbor rental safety program be included on the agenda for the Commission's next meeting. He noted that work on the initiative is ongoing and indicated that additional information would be presented for Commission review and discussion.

Chair Beer requested that the Commission place on a future agenda a review of the recently adopted Harbor Commission objectives. He stated that the purpose of the item would be to assign responsibility for objectives within each functional area to individual Harbor Commissioners.

**11. DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, July 8, 2026 at 5 p.m.**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for July 8, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business coming before the Harbor Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:18 p.m.