

Port Staff Skips Transfer Based On City Charter

■ By **SEAN BELK**, Staff Writer

The reason port staff included no tidelands transfer in the its Fiscal Year 2012 budget was primarily due to an interpretation of the city charter, said port financial staff during the June 13 Long Beach Harbor Commission meeting.

Sam Joumblat, the port's chief financial officer, said port staff assumed the city wouldn't be asking for its annual transfer next fiscal year due to the city charter stating that the transfer request be made only as "required to meet the lawful obligations of the Tidelands Operating Fund."

"Our assumption that we based on not including the tidelands transfer in the budget was the interpretation of the city charter that the tidelands fund needs to show that it needs the money in order to meet its 'lawful obligations' to quote the charter," Joumblat said during the meeting.

Joumblat went on to say that by the end of Fiscal Year 2012, the tidelands fund would be already receiving a "massive capital infusion" of more than \$100 million, including the earlier double transfer of \$24.4 million, an estimated \$40 million in oil revenue this fiscal year and \$37 in oil revenue next fiscal year.

Additionally, Michelle Grubbs, vice president of the Pacific Merchant Shipping Association, said she agreed

with the port's decision to include no transfer at a time when the port is going into more debt to pay for capital projects. "This doesn't seem to be the right fiscal way to be doing this, to be borrowing money so that the city can take the revenues at a time when you really need to have this money for capital improvement."

City Manager Pat West told the Business Journal that not receiving the additional \$17.4 million transfer for Fiscal Year 2012 would, "affect our ability to take care of our tidelands areas and our beaches. We have about \$300 million in capital projects that are needed in the tidelands area, and that would definitely impact our ability to keep the city looking good, especially in our beaches."

West added that through approving Measure D last year, "the voters spoke and are expecting more tidelands resources to take care of our beaches."

In response to port staff saying there was a lack of a request by the city council, West said the city makes the tidelands request every year and this year should be no different. "We make a request every single year, I don't understand that," he said.

City staff is expected to give presentations on the city's Fiscal Year 2012 budget, the harbor transfer and the tidelands fund during the Long Beach City Council Budget Oversight Committee meeting on July 6 at 4 p.m. at City Hall. ■