



Board of Harbor Commissioners (BHC) Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 7, 2025 – 8:00am
In-Person Meeting
Port Milwaukee – 2323 S. Lincoln Memorial Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53207

BOARD COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE:

President (Pres.) Tim Hoelter, Vice President (VP) Diane Diel, Commrs. Claude Krawczyk, Kathy Smith, Craig Mastantuono, Sally Peltz, Alderwoman Andrea Pratt

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Alex Carson
Angelique Pettigrew

Gregory Bird
Jeremy Jannene

PORT MILWAUKEE STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Maria Cartier – Market Development Manager
Korey Garceau – Trade Development Representative
Madison Goldbeck – Marketing & Communications Officer
Matt Gwiazdowski – Engineering Technician IV
Peter Daniels – Civil Engineer III
Eric Polzin – Port Operations Manager
John Dermeyer Jr. – Port Facilities Supervisor
Brian Kasprzyk – Chief Engineer
Sean Hendley – Port Operations Technician
Alicia Harwell – Finance Specialist
Selena Cole – Business Operations Manager
Jackie Q. Carter – Port Director/Secretary

I. BHC Meeting Called To Order

Pres. Tim Hoelter called the August 7, 2025 meeting to order at 8:02 am.

II. ACTION ITEMS

a) **Approve Thursday, June 12, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

Presented by Pres. Tim Hoelter

Following consideration and discussion by the Commissioners, Commr. Smith's motion to approve the June 12, 2025 minutes was seconded by VP Diel and carried by the following vote:

AYES: Commrs. Pratt, Peltz, Krawczyk, Mastantuono

NAYS: None

b) **Special Harbor Commission Meeting (Virtual)**

Presented by Pres. Tim Hoelter

Due to the pending leadership transition, and following a polling of all Commissioners, Port staff requests that a Special Harbor Commission meeting be scheduled for Tuesday, September 16, 2025 at 8:00 a.m.

Following consideration and discussion by the Commissioners, Commr. Smith's motion to approve the meeting was seconded by Commr. Krawczyk and carried by the following vote:

AYES: Commrs. Pratt, Peltz, VP Diel, Mastantuono

NAYS: None

c) **Approve Harbor Assistance Program Resolution**

Presented by Brian Kasprzyk

Mr. Kasprzyk provided background on the program, which is managed by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and provides funding to ports in the State of Wisconsin. A three-year statement of intent to apply was approved in February. An application was submitted this year to remediate, rehabilitate, and upgrade roofs on outer terminals 2,3, and 4, with minor repairs on terminal 5. Currently, patching repairs are being made for upkeep, but the long-term goal is major roof reconstruction designed to last 30-40 years. The total request is \$4.5 million, 80% grant, 20% local match. If full funding is not awarded, the backup plan is to proceed one roof at a time.

Following consideration and discussion by the Commissioners, Commr. Krawczyk's motion to approve the Harbor Assistant Program Resolution was seconded by Commr. Smith and carried by the following vote:

AYES: Commrs. Pratt, Diel, Peltz, Mastantuono

NAYS: None

III. PUBLIC RELATIONS REPORT – Madison Goldbeck

Ms. Goldbeck highlighted the press conference on June 16, 2025 to recognize the economic value of the Great Lakes following the major decision of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to exempt Great Lakes vessels from the \$1.5 million port fees associated with Chinese-built ships. Speakers included Congresswoman Gwen Moore, County Executive David Crowley, and Major Johnson. Congresswoman Moore spoke on fair trade policy and her overall support for the Port's growth and overall benefit to the region.

Local media reported on shifts in international trade and economic uncertainty. Jackie participated as a panelist with the Wisconsin Policy Forum, discussing tariffs and trade policy. She highlighted the value of Foreign Trade Zones (FTZs) in the Milwaukee area as a potential solution. Maria was interviewed by the American Journal of Transportation along with other port leaders. She noted a spike in inquiries related to FTZ opportunities.

Ms. Goldbeck provided an update on recent media engagement. continued with additional media coverage. On Milwaukee (July) published an article on the Federal Katsura, noting the length of time spent in Milwaukee for unloading, anchoring, reloading, and departure. Shepherd Express featured coverage highlighting global trade and the Port's contributions to the economy, helping residents better understand the Port's role. News also broke about Jackie's promotion to the City's Department of Employee Relations Director, which was released by Mayor Johnson and picked up by Urban Milwaukee. Additional coverage included about the start of construction of Milwaukee's largest Riverwalk expansion located near the Port.

Ms. Goldbeck continued by highlighting social media activity, which includes coverage of the many vessel visits during the summer. Social media analytics show an increase in views, reach, and engagement across all platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and X (Twitter).

IV. PORT MILWAUKEE TRADE DEVELOPMENT REPORT – Maria Cartier

Ms. Cartier provided an update on tonnage, which is down 24% compared to last year likely due to dry bulk and salt. However, shipments are starting to pick up. Steel shipments are up 40% compared to last year. Some customers tried to load up ahead of tariff implementation, which is reflected in the tonnage. DeLong has had a strong start, with 5 shipments so far in comparison to 1 last year. DeLong is the largest US exporter of agricultural products in containers. Bulk product shipments began in Summer 2023, with commodities arriving by rail and truck and departing by vessel. Expansion funded in part by PIDP and HAP grants will include two additional silos to handle multiple commodities and increase potential opportunities.

Ms. Cartier went on to provide an overview of Port's outreach and engagement including a Port Talks Webinar (June) where Maria, Jackie, and Korey presented to the Logistec sales team covering the Port's roles, services, and business development opportunities. Camp Rise visited the Port with 100 middle school students and participated in Port 101 and tours. Additionally, Alderwoman Sharlen Moore and her interns took a Port boat tour to learn about career opportunities and gain a unique perspective of operations.

Mr. Garceau provided a cruise update, stating that we are halfway through the 2025 season, with over 6,500 passengers, on pace to meet 11,000 projected goal. Ten visits remain this season, bringing the cruise season to a close. Over 50 visits are scheduled for 2026, doubling the visits for 2025. Visits are typically scheduled 1-1/2 years in advance.

Foreign Trade Zone activity has slowed down from the initial Spring influx following tariff news, but there have been 2 new applications.

V. PORT MILWAUKEE OPERATIONS REPORT – Eric Polzin

Mr. Polzin provided a ship breakdown since the previous meeting, noting that steel, cement, and grain have been the top performing commodities compared to last year. Mr. Polzin provided an overview of Operations activities, including the re-approval of Freight Facility Security Plan and an amendment to the current freight plan, allowing the acceptance of vessels for winter lay-up, following recent changes with US Coast Guard (USCG) regulations.

As the cruise season winds down, Operations reviewed the dock screening process with the Port's security services provider through a tabletop exercise to discuss protocols.

The Port worked with the USCG, Wisconsin DNR, and MPD Harbor Patrol to address special restrictions, noting that additional "Slow, No Wake" signs were placed in the outer harbor. The Operations team assisted with the Kaszube's Picnic by trimming trees, providing trash receptacles and ensuring electricity was available for the event. MARSEC Facility Security Officer (FSO) Training was provided to many Port employees by the University of Findlay, including training exercises such as baggage and automobile screening.

Mr. Polzin finished with the quarterly security report, noting no unusual issues, highlighting that the Port's security contractor provides exceptional services.

VI. PORT MILWAUKEE FINANCIAL REPORT – Selena Cole

Ms. Cole provided a financial update. Revenues and expenditures are tracking just below for this time of year, though both have increased since the last report. Salaries reflect current vacancies. Overall, expenditures are on track, but there appears to be an imbalance between operating expenditures and special funds. Further review and adjustments may be necessary going forward. Collection efforts continue to show progress with delinquent accounts declining. Overall, revenue is higher than last year, primarily due to vessel activity. There are no major concerns with the current budget or spending levels, but revenues, timing, and collections will continue to be monitored.

VII. PORT MILWAUKEE ENGINEERING REPORT – Brian Kasprzyk

Mr. Kasprzyk discussed the water levels, which are 4 inches below average. He explained that water levels are monitored as they impact vessel loading capacity and overall shipping.

Mr. Kasprzyk offered an update on the railroad system, noting that the City of Milwaukee, managed and owned by the Port has 14 miles of railroad track, served by two Class 1 Railroads – Union Pacific (UP) and Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC). The Port has agreements with the railroads and they have accounts with the tenants. The Port performs routine track inspections and has a maintenance contract for work that cannot be addressed by Port staff. The most recent expansion was last year (2 new miles) with the DeLong development. Along with routine maintenance are required upgrades. A recent major project completed was the railroad crossing replacement on Carferry drive, north of Bay street, a vital crossing used by both UP and CPKC serving Cargill, DeLong, Amrize (formerly Holcim), Compass, and Kinder along the inner mooring basin. The Port has partnered successfully with WisDOT on freight and railroad preservation grants.

Mr. Kasprzyk then discussed the Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern (AOC) and the Dredged Material Management Facility (DMMF), which is currently being constructed on Lake Michigan. The AOC has been an ongoing project to clean legacy contaminants out of the three Milwaukee rivers, as well as the inner and outer harbors. Many partners have been working with the EPA to complete this work by building a large facility for this sediment, a 42-acre DMMF to contain under 2 million cubic yards. MMSD is constructing the facility to be owned by the City. Project completion is anticipated in late 2026, with EPA planning to begin filling the facility in 2027.

VIII. PORT MILWAUKEE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Jackie Q. Carter

The Port Director highlighted recent activities and connections with the business community, including the Women of Influence – networking event and awards luncheon as well as the Juneteenth/ Summerfest opening ceremony. Jackie participated in the the Wisconsin Policy Forum Friday, which led to a follow-up session scheduled for September at the Lubar Center. The Milwaukee Business Journal is expected to extend a formal invitation on similar issues related to Foreign Trade Zones (FTZ), with Korey Garceau likely to participate.

Industry events in Milwaukee included the US Coast Guard change in command, welcoming new Captain Rhianna Macon, who visited Milwaukee. South Shore Yacht Club hosted their Annual Review of the Fleet. The American Association of Port Authorities continued their monthly policy briefings. Port 101 and Tours have continued, with the Port hosting the

Midwest Urban Strategies in June as well as the Common Council Summer Interns with Alderwoman Sharlen Moore, continuing efforts to highlight maritime industry career option opportunities, and support citywide partnership efforts.

Ms. Carter provided an update on the leadership transition. The Municipal Port Director position has been posted through all port industry networks, with an application deadline of August 22nd. We are optimistic that there will be a strong list of candidates to consider. Following the Common Council's recess, the anticipated timeline is that the candidate will go before the Public Works Committee on September 10th and be confirmed by the full Common Council on September 23rd, with a Port start date of September 29th. Ms. Carter's last day at Port is September 26th. If this timeline is not feasible, there will be some adjustments. Ms. Carter emphasized that she will be a resource to the new director and staff as needed.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Commr. Smith's motion for adjournment was seconded by VP Diel and carried by the following vote:

AYES: Commrs. Pratt, Krawczyk, Peltz, and Mastantuono

NAYS: None

Pres. Hoelter adjourned the August 7, 2025 Board of Harbor Commissioner's meeting at 9:24 a.m.