



Board of Harbor Commissioners Regular Meeting
December 11, 2025
MINUTES

Foreign Trade Zone No. 41

The Board of Harbor Commissioners held a regular meeting at the Port Milwaukee Administration Building, 2323 S. Lincoln Memorial Drive, Milwaukee, WI 53207. The meeting took place in-person and commenced at 8:00am and concluded at 9:15am. Official transcripts and recordings are kept on file at Port Milwaukee and available upon request. The following document includes summaries and highlights related to matters covered during the meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioner Tim Hoelter, President
Commissioner Diane Diel, Vice President
Commissioner Claude Krawczyk
Commissioner Craig Mastantuono
Commissioner Kathleen Smith
Commissioner Andrea Pratt
Commissioner Sally Peltz

MEMBERS EXCUSED: 0

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Benji Timm, Secretary, Port Milwaukee
Korey Garceau, Port Milwaukee
Brian Kasprzyk, Port Milwaukee
Selena Cole, Port Milwaukee
Eric Polzin, Port Milwaukee
Maria Cartier, Port Milwaukee
Madison Goldbeck, Port Milwaukee

I. **BHC Meeting Called To Order**President Tim Hoelter

Tim Hoelter called the meeting to order at 8:00am.

II. **ACTION ITEMS**

a. Approve Thursday, October 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes..... Tim Hoelter

President Hoelter asked for a motion to approve the October 16, 2025 meeting minutes. Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Krawczyk seconded the motion. Hearing no corrections or objections, the minutes were adopted by consensus.

Board members discussed getting an abbreviated version of the meeting minutes moving forward.

- b. Approve the 2026 Meeting Schedule.....Tim Hoelter
- c. Approve 2026 Meeting start time of 9:00 A.M.Tim Hoelter

The President Hoelter introduced Items B & C at the same time. A discussion was initiated in relation to the 9:00 A.M. start time by Commissioner Mastantuono. Commissioner Mastantuono indicated he would object to a 9:00 A.M. start time because of the impact on the work day. Commissioner Diel proposed a compromise start time of 8:30 A.M. as an amendment.

For Item B, there was further discussion about dates that certain Commissioners would be out of town and miss meetings. Commissioner Mastantuono asked if there would be a remote option and the answer was yes. Director Timm will follow up with Commissioners to find out what dates they will be out of town. Commissioner Diel moved to approve the item and Commissioner Peltz seconded the motion and it was approved by consensus.

For Item C, Amendment No. 1, Commissioner Smith moved to approve the amendment for an 8:30 A.M. meeting start time and Commissioner Pratt seconded the motion and it carried by consensus.

The Board Committee structure and schedule will be reviewed by President Hoelter, Commissioner Diel, and Director Timm in late December 2025. If any bylaws changes are recommended, they will have to come before the Board for final approval. President Hoelter appointed Commissioner Peltz to the Finance Committee.

An Economic Development & Marketing Committee meeting was scheduled for October 2025 but was cancelled due to the leadership change. It will be rescheduled for early 2026.

- d. Approve 2026 Port Tariff..... Korey Garceau

Korey Garceau presented the 2026 Port Tariff. He stated there are rate changes in most categories. Items 109-114 were re-ordered for fluency. Specific changes were also made the Section 1 Descriptions. The changes to Section 1 included eliminating descriptions for locations that fall under individual tenant leaseholds.

**Item 114 was renamed from Calling Crane Operators to Port Labor Services to be more all-encompassing, and updated the working hours from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., which is the schedule on our operations team follow-up.*

**Item 210 is Dockage and the proposed rate increase of 2 percent.*

**Item 235 is Equipment and a 5 percent rate increase proposed.*

**Item 240 is Labor and has 2 percent increase.*

**Item 245 is for crane rentals and we propose flat rate increases of \$15 to \$20 per Crane. This comes out between 4 and 5 percent. This is \$500/hour for the stiff leg crane and \$305/hour for the other cranes.*



The labor rates that Port Milwaukee charges for services cover the cost of staff. We do not know what other ports charge for 2026 because they have not been published yet. Staff believes the tariff rates are competitive with other ports around the Great Lakes. The updated tariffs go into effect on April 1st of each year.

Commissioner Mastantuono moved to approve the item and Commissioner Diel seconded the motion and it was approved by consensus.

- e. Approve Harbor Assistance Program Grant Amendment..... Brian Kasprzyk

Brian Kasprzyk presented an amendment to a Harbor Assistance Program grant for a cost increase. The original award was brought before the Board in 2024 and approved for dock wall repairs. The extreme storm event on August 9, 2025 damaged the dock wall along the east side of the mooring basin. The State was able to pull together some emergency funding to assist Port Milwaukee. The emergency allocation requires a \$50,000 local match and the State will contribute an additional \$200,000. A resolution that was sponsored by Alderwoman Pratt went before the Common Council Public Works Committee prior to the Harbor Commission meeting. The Public Works Committee and full Common Council approved the item unanimously. The City Comptroller approved the use of reimbursable funds.

Commissioner Krawczyk made a motion to approve the item and Commissioner Smith seconded the motion and it was approved by consensus.

III. PORT MILWAUKEE FINANCIAL REPORT Selena Cole

Selena Cole presented the financial report. The slide on the screen showed activity through pay period 24 or November 30, 2025, which is approximately 92% of the year. Both revenue and expenditures were slightly down but this is a result of the timing and the budgeted is expected to be on track by the end of the year. There are no points of concern. Spending is in line with staffs expectations.

IV. PORT MILWAUKEE OPERATIONS REPORT Eric Polzin

Eric Polzin presented the Operations Report. As of the date of this meeting, there were 245 vessel visits. This is compared to 256 at this time last year. The Port will host a number of ships for Winter layup this year, including the Stewart J. Cort.

The Port Operations team completed a number of activities that included, assisting MMSD with pulling the river skimmer from the water for the season, Winterizing Pier Wisconsin, assisting We Energies with removing logs from the power plant intake using the Joey D, and clearing snow from the railroad switches.

Eric Polzin, Peter Daniels, and John Dermeyer attended the Milwaukee Harbor Safety Committee Meeting where they discussed waterway safety.



The M/V Federal Frazier delivered project cargo (curved steel plates) to the Port in October. This call was labor intensive and provided an opportunity for Operations staff to do cross-training with the crane.

The security report documented the usual security items.

John Dermeyer completed the first step in the Certified Public Manager program. The Board congratulated him.

V. PORT MILWAUKEE TRADE DEV. REPORT Maria Cartier

Maria Cartier and Korey Garceau presented the Trade Development Report. The cargo tonnage numbers are on par with the previous year, as of October 2025. Dry bulk is generally on par with the previous year. Salt is down 38% to date, but is likely to increase before the end of the year. The Port will likely see an increase in salt delivery in early 2026. Steel is ahead of the previous year by 13%, as of this date.

Maria attended the Highway H2O Conference in Toronto in November. Maria and Director Timm attended Grunt Club in Montreal in December. These are both binational meetings that discuss industry trends and involve meetings with government officials and private partners. Maria and Director met with Logistec leadership at their headquarters and Fed Nav representatives to discuss shipping accounts and trends for the upcoming season.

Staff took part in the following events:

- Korey and Maria attended the WisPolitics Talking Trade podcast in October.
- Maria and Korey both attended the BizTimes Destination MKE event. Korey was a panelist with General Mitchell International Airport and Sun Country Airlines.
- Maria and Korey attended the BizTimes Growth Summit for Kenosha and Racine counties.

Korey reported on Foreign Trade Zone #41. The Port has two FTZ applications pending and is still waiting on decisions from the FTZ board. The government shutdown and Federal staffing shortages are affecting the review time. The government shut down has delayed the reviews by 68 days.

Korey reported the Port had an unexpected visit from the Victory I cruise ship as a weather diversion. This increased our cruise ship visits to 23 and 11,255 passengers.

VI. PUBLIC RELATIONS REPORT..... Madison Goldbeck

Madison Goldbeck presented the Public Relations Report. She reported that Director Timm was sworn in on November 6th and the event was picked up by various publications including Waterways Journal and Marquette Today. The Port was featured in Cruise and Ferry and notes Milwaukee as a primary cruise destination.

In the last 90 days LinkedIn saw a 43% increase in impressions and 41% increase in reactions. Facebook jumped 126% in 90 days, interactions increased 60% and the platform gained 85 new followers. X (Twitter) impressions were up 56% and Instagram saw an 218% increase in the



account with an 8% increase in followers. The Port will broaden its social media presence in 2026 with a bigger emphasis on Port operations and will incorporate more videos.

VII. PORT MILWAUKEE ENGINEERING REPORTBrian Kasprzyk

Brian Kasprzyk presented the Engineer’s Report. He provided the water level trends and data. The water level is about 12” below average, but heavy snow coverage this Winter could bring the lake levels up.

An update of the cruise ship dock was provided with an explanation of force main sewer and lift station. The cruise ship dock will be a 50,000-sq. ft. platform that will enable the loading and unloading of passengers and supplies. It is expected to be complete by mid-Summer 2026.

Drone photos of the terminals were shared and an explanation of current activities taking place on the island.

VIII. PORT MILWAUKEE DIRECTOR’S REPORT Benji Timm

Director Timm presented his first Director’s Report. He has been meeting with the tenants, Commissioners and elected official in an effort to introduce himself as well as reconnect with community partners. This includes meeting the other members of the Wisconsin Commercial Association of Ports in Green Bay and getting to know US, Canadian, and European partners at the annual Grunt Club meeting in Montreal.

He is working with his former colleagues at the Department of City Development to ensure a smooth transition between the departments.

A brief overview of the City’s budget was provided to the Board, as well as the footnotes from the budget process that directly affect the Port. The footnotes are recommendations and need to be formerly approved by the Common Council through the legislative process. The footnotes include the following: working with the Milwaukee Cruise Collaborative to ensure visitors can find their way into neighborhoods and various parts of the city, the Port Director needs to report to the Common Council once a year, Departments need to notify the Common Council if they have a deficit of \$100,000 or more, Departments should explore hosting events to highlight their roles (e.g., DPW’s Big Truck Day), and the Port will work collaboratively with other departments (e.g., DCD and DOA).

The Port anticipates hiring for two new positions in 2026 – Port Operations Maintenance Tech II and an administrative position. Another maintenance tech position was turned into two limited term employee (LTE) positions. The full-time Maintenance Tech II position was approved by the Common Council on December 10, 2025 and will be advertised in early 2026.

IX. ADJOURNMENT Tim Hoelter

President Hoelter introduced adjournment. Commissioner Smith made a motion and Commissioner Mastantuono seconded it. All Commissioners voted Aye and the proceedings concluded at 9:15am.