



**Board of Harbor Commissioners Regular Meeting
Thursday, August 13, 2026 – 8:30am
In-Person Meeting
Port Milwaukee – 2323 S. Lincoln Memorial Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53207**

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 8:30 a.m. and concluded at 9:30 a.m. 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 Diane Diel, President
- Commissioner Craig Mastantuono, Vice President
- Commissioner Sally Peltz
- Commissioner Kathleen Smith
- Commissioner Claude Krawczyk (virtual)
- Commissioner Rebecca Gries

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

- Alderwoman Andrea Pratt

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

- Benji Timm, Director, Port Milwaukee
- Selena Cole, Port Milwaukee
- Maria Cartier, Port Milwaukee
- Korey Garceau, Port Milwaukee
- Madison Goldbeck, Port Milwaukee
- Eric Polzin, Port Milwaukee
- Steve Paczesny, Port Milwaukee
- Peter Daniels, Port Milwaukee
- Sean Hendley, Port Milwaukee (spoke)
- Eddie Carter, Port Milwaukee (spoke)
- Matthew Gwiazdowski, Port Milwaukee
- Elizabeth Miles, City Attorney's Office (virtual)
- Karen Renee, Court Reporter
- Jeremy Janene, Urban Milwaukee

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

- Elizabeth Miles

I. **BHC Meeting Called To Order** President Diane Diel

President Diane Diel called the August 13, 2026 meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The Board welcomes new Harbor Commissioner Rebecca GRIES and each Commissioner provides a brief introduction to her.

II. **ACTION ITEMS**

a.) Approve Thursday, June 11, 2026 Meeting Minutes Diane Diel

President Diel asked for a motion to approve the June 11, 2026 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.

b.) Approve 2026 Harbor Assistance Program Resolution Steve Paczesny

Mr. Paczesny is requesting that the Board approve submission of the 2026 Harbor Assistance Program Grant application to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for the Municipal Mooring Basin Dock Wall Improvement Project. The project targets 1,000 feet of dock wall on the east face of the basin, adjacent to the DeLong Agricultural Maritime Export Facility along with associated dredging. The wall dates back to 1932 and despite reinforcements added over the years, engineering analysis has found that it is currently overstressed. Failure of the dock wall would result in inability of vessels to dock and major loss of cargo throughput at the Port. It cannot support further dredging in its current condition and is already dredged lower than design height. As a result, the Port is unable to maintain depth needed for Seaway Max vessels. Ships must then carry less cargo, resulting in costs of hundreds of thousands of dollars. The total project cost is \$4.5 million dollars; the Port is requesting \$3.6 million dollars (80%) from the Harbor Assistance Program and 20% local match.

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

III. **PUBLIC RELATIONS REPORT** Madison Goldbeck

Ms. Goldbeck provides an overview of her role as Marketing and Communication Officer. She goes on to highlight the press conference at Pier Wisconsin on June 24, 2026 with Mayor Cavalier Johnson to welcome American Cruise Lines to Milwaukee for the first time. Mayor Johnson presented Captain Jerry Smith with a plaque, followed by a private tour of the ship. FOX6 did a feature story on Viking Cruises, noting popularity of cruising on the Great Lakes, highlighting Milwaukee's record for visitors. Director Timm did an interview for the piece, providing an update and insight into new cruise dock.

Urban Milwaukee wrote a story on the retirement of Tim Hoelter.

Director Timm joined Mayor Johnson in early July at a press conference where the Mayor announced his recommendations for the future of I-794. Mayor Johnson mentioned activity at Port Milwaukee, such as the Port handling around 1,000 trucks per day, noting that without

the existing highway, many trucks would be routed across the city through Milwaukee neighborhoods.

Nationally, Port Milwaukee was mentioned in Buffalo, NY news regarding their new cruise dock. Local Reporters mentioned that a market study highlighted that Port Milwaukee's new cruise dock will help Milwaukee stand out from competition and (Buffalo) noted that in their decision-making for their cruise dock. Internationally, a reporter from The Telegraph took a Great Lakes cruise & wrote an article stating that Milwaukee is one of America's most underrated cities.

Ms. Goldbeck finished her report by indicating that social media channels have been utilized to promote BHC updates, including the appointment of Commissioner Rebecca Gries, encouraging the public to sign up for e-notify and listing opportunities like RFP (Request for Proposal) for creative services, sharing notices to mariners re: special events on the lake, sharing photos from press events, including the cruise ship line, the FOX6 video tour of the Viking, drone photography of current vessel activity and cross-promotion with Milwaukee Department of City Development including a ribbon-cutting at the new Riverwalk.

IV. PORT MILWAUKEE TRADE DEVELOPMENT REPORT Maria Cartier and Korey Garceau

Presented by Ms. Cartier

Ms. Cartier gives an overview of the Market Development and Trade Development Division. She provides an update of tonnage, noting the Port is 47% ahead of last year at this time. Dry Bulk is up 55% compared to last year. Liquid Cargo is up 195%, noting strong growth but with the reminder that during winter months of 2025, the Port did not receive liquid cargo due to equipment failures at the refinery, so the number looks high compared to last year. Steel is down 37% - we are told that steel overall in the Great Lakes will be down that much and will likely remain the trend of the year. She highlights seaway tonnage which is at strong start, up 13%.

Ms. Cartier goes on to note that Port Milwaukee was awarded 2025 Pace Setter Award from the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation at the American Great Lakes Ports Association, noting that Port Milwaukee's seaway tonnage grew 78% over last year. Last year's exports - now including the export of ethanol to Montreal, Canada - exceeded imports, which has not occurred since 2018.

Ms. Cartier provides an overview of the Port's outreach and engagement, including attendance by Maria and the Director at Breakbulk Europe June, which included meetings with current tenants, international ports, current & potential shipping lines and working the Highway H2O booth.

The Director attended the American Great Lakes Ports Association annual conference and participated in a panel with other great lakes ports.

Mike McCoshen, the Administrator (of Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation) visited the Port, hosted by the Mayor and the Director.

US Soy Export Council hosted group in the agriculture industry from southern Europe to tour the DeLong facility and we gave them a Port 101 & seaway presentation.

Camp Rise visited the Port with 75 middle school students who participated in Port 101 and tours. Additionally, Maria and the Director attended a Department of City Development media event, highlighting investments and expansion of Maxim Industries. Maria also presented a virtual presentation at the Wisconsin Agricultural Export Advisory Council Meeting.

Presented by Mr. Garceau

Mr. Garceau provided a cruise update, noting that we are halfway through the 2026 season, welcoming over 12,300 passengers, exceeding the total amount of passengers last year with 28 calls remaining before the final call of the season on October 30-31, 2026. American Cruise Lines made their first call to Milwaukee on June 24, 2026, will have 8 visits this year and have already booked out schedules for the next few years. A triple call of 3 cruise vessels were in Port at the same time on August 2, 2026, noting another triple call will occur in September.

V. PORT MILWAUKEE FINANCIAL REPORT Selena Cole

Ms. Cole gives an overview of duties of the Financial Division. She provides a financial update, noting that revenues and expenditures are tracking with no areas of concern. A detailed receivables report is not included, as the financial system transition to Workday program is occurring and will be implemented by the beginning of next year. She further indicates the Port is somewhat below budget but is overall in good shape. Spending remains in line with expectations with no areas of concern.

VI. PORT MILWAUKEE OPERATIONS REPORT Eric Polzin

Mr. Polzin gives an overview of the Port Operations team. He goes on to provide a ship update noting that bulk commodities, dry bulk, liquid commodities and cruise vessels are the highlights so far this year. The security plan for the new cruise dock under construction has been submitted to and approved by the US Coast Guard. Although the team assisted with setup for the Kaszube's Park picnic, it was cancelled due to rain this year. The Port's X-Ray trailer had a software issue and went down, but the manufacturer Astrophysics flew a technician out from California to repair the trailer within a few days. The repair was covered under the extended warranty which is good for 5 more years. However, he has been informed that the extended warranty would be cost-prohibitive to extend again. The Director indicates that the Port is looking into purchasing a new trailer and will reassess in 5 years.

The Operations Team assisted Mainstay Maritime who owns the G.L. Ostrander and the barge Integrity, which sustained damage to a gangway during a storm. The team assisted in removal of the damaged gangway, installation of a new one and worked with them to replace a generator set on the boat.

The Operations Team has had a lot of coordination this year with US Coast Guard, Wisconsin DNR, Milwaukee Police Department Harbor Patrol with making sure that the boating

community is up-to-date with the festivals, restricted areas, 'Slow, No-Wake' zones and believes that they have hit a larger target of boating community. He indicates MPD Harbor Patrol has reported no negative feedback regarding people following regulations and will continue to expand the outreach. The Director notes that the Port is posing on all social media platforms to help get the messages out. The team's assistance with large waterway debris cleanup continues.

Mr. Polzin finishes with the quarterly security report, noting that after hours trespassing continues to be the highlight and quarter 3 may appear skewed, but this quarter is inclusive of July 4th, fireworks and the drone show.

VII. PORT MILWAUKEE ENGINEERING REPORT Steve Paczesny and Peter Daniels

Mr. Paczesny discussed August water levels, which are 24 inches above Low Water Datum. He reminds of the impact that low water levels have on vessel passage and light-loading loading of cargo and that high lake levels result in greater risk of overtopping and flooding. He explains that US Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for dredging of the Federal Navigation Channel and the Port is responsible for dredging of municipal docks and approaches. He then explains the responsibilities of the Port's Engineering Division.

Mr. Daniels provides update on construction progress of the cruise dock, advising that the catwalks, bollards and light pole bases have been installed, with asphalt paving, sewer and water to come thereafter, with hopes of completion for use in this and/or next season.

VIII. PORT MILWAUKEE DIRECTOR'S REPORT Benjamin Timm

The Port intends to hire an Administrative Services Coordinator, with Selena and the Director interviewing the top 5 candidates beginning on Monday. They will help support the Board, including note taking and assisting with tenants and leases and hope to introduce them at the next Board meeting.

Budget season has commenced and the date for the Port to appear before the Common Council for budget presentation is October 6, 2026.

IX. ADJOURNMENT Diane Diel

President Diel introduced adjournment. Commissioner Mastantuono made a motion and Commissioner Smith seconded it. All Commissioners voted Aye and the proceedings concluded at 9:30 a.m.