



Commission Meeting Minutes Monday, February 9, 2026

Call to Order

Commission President Jasmine Vasavada called a regular meeting of the Port of Olympia Board of Commissioners to order and open to the public at 4:02 p.m., Monday, February 9, 2026, at the Percival Plaza at 626 Columbia Street NW, Suite 1B, Olympics Room, in Olympia, Washington 98501.

Present

Commissioners: Jasmine Vasavada – President, Sarah Montano – Vice President, Joel Hansen – Secretary, Jerry Toompas and Krag Unsoeld.

Staff: Alex Smith, Executive Director, Chris Pierce-Wright, General Counsel; Warren Hendrickson, Director of Operations; Shawn Gilbertson, Director of Environmental Planning and Programs; Mike Reid, Director of Community and Economic Development; Chris Paolini, Airport Senior Manager; Afsin Yilmas, Marine Terminal Senior Manager; Taber Lee, Marketing and Outreach Senior Manager; and Missy Goodell, Commission Coordinator.

Guest: Patty Belmonte, CEO, Hands On Children's Museum.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Hansen moved to approve the agenda, Commissioner Montano seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director Report

Alex Smith, Executive Director, reported on recent Port activities. She announced that the Seattle Boat Show concluded last weekend after a 10-day running. Staff who worked the Port's booth were thanked. The Pacific Mountain Workforce Development board was given a tour of the Port's Marine Terminal to learn more about industry sectors and workforce needs in our community. Commissioners and staff attend the 2026 Legislative Port Day hosted by the Washington Public Ports Association at the Capitol Campus; this was an opportunity to meet with state legislators to discuss key issues affecting our industry. The arrival of the Global Symphony, a log export vessel is expected tomorrow.

Two follow-up items were reported on: 1) Marine Terminal Warehouse payback projection was shared; and 2) potential hotel development financial concerns were addressed regarding site planning.

In addition, Alex reminded everyone of the ways they can communicate with the Commission. She stated there is a great deal of information available on the Port's website and encouraged everyone to check it out.

Public Comment

Two individuals provided public comment regarding the ferry study.

Commission Response to Public Comment / Follow-Up to Public Comment

Each commissioner provided input to public comments.

Partner Spotlight

Hands On Children's Museum. Patty Belmonte, CEO of the Hands On Children's Museum (HOCM), gave a presentation on the expansion planning that is taking place at the HOCM. Visitor and attendance statistics, along with program and scholarship information was shared. The HOCM's work to be a sustainable community partner was showcased as well as their national recognition as a case study for green buildings. Photos were shared illustrating children connecting with nature, interactions with water exhibits, a culinary studio, a clay/creative studio and an area for older kids to learn through 'tinkering.' Information regarding what has been learned through the years, funding source information and proposed expansion floor plans were shared. Expansion opening is anticipated in early 2028.

Consent Calendar

Commissioner Montano moved to approve the consent agenda as presented; Commissioner Hansen seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Action Calendar

None.

Action/Other Calendar

None.

Advisory Calendar

Passenger Ferry Service – Demand Study. Mike Reid, Director of Community and Economic Development presented information on work that had been done to explore the possibility of the Port serving as a cruise ship destination and regional commuter node. The results of communications with other community entities were shared, as were next steps to understand the feasibility of a passenger ferry service. Conducting a demand study and the costs associated with a study was discussed along with environmental concerns.

Commissioner Reports/Discussion

Commissioner Montano attended a Lacey Chamber Forum, the Kalyan Hospitality Management meeting, and Port Day at the Capitol, meeting with several representatives. She thanked Kelsey Hulse for planning the legislative schedule and setting up meetings.

Commissioner Unsoeld attended a Solid Waste Advisory Council meeting. He attended the Ports and Maritime Reception. He will be meeting with TRPC representatives to discuss community priorities and he attended the Thurston Lewis Mason Central Labor Council meeting.

Commissioner Toompas reported that he also attended the Ports and Maritime Reception where he spoke with four of our state representatives, lobbyists, and port commissioners from across Washington state.

Commissioner Vasavada attended a portion of the Ports Day at the Capitol, listening to budget writers share their perspective on the proposed budget. She reported that she will be serving as Secretary to the TRPC (Thurston Regional Planning Council), as part of her Commission Committee assignments.

Commissioner Hansen attended the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development tour, the Ground Mound Rochester Chamber of Commerce lunch forum, the Ports and Maritime Reception, and Port Day at the Capitol, attending several meetings with legislators and also heard from the budget writers. He attended a fundraiser for Family Education Support Services.

Additional Public Comment

None.

Other Business

Delegation of Authority. Alex Smith, Executive Director, provided background and current information on the Port's Delegation of Authority, a document by which the Commission grants specific powers and responsibilities to an executive director to manage the Port's operations. Currently there are five active Resolutions for the current Delegation of Authority to the Executive Director. Examples of other ports Delegation of Authority were shared and discussed (examples were from the Port of Tacoma and the Port of Seattle).

It was decided to form a subcommittee comprised of Port Commissioners to help shape what is brought to the Commission for consideration and assist Executive Director Alex Smith in the effort to create one delegation of authority for the Port of Olympia.

Motion: Commissioner Montano moved to create a subcommittee for delegation of authority, consisting of Commissioner Vasavada and Commissioner Unsoeld to help craft the new delegation of authority based on current discussions. Commissioner Hansen seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Announcements

A list of upcoming events was displayed on the screen for viewers to see upcoming Commission and POCAC meetings. Executive Director Smith stated the next Commission meeting, a Work Session, will be held on Tuesday, February 17, at 4:00 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Port of Olympia Board of Commissioners, the Monday, February 9, 2026, regular meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

PORT OF OLYMPIA COMMISSION

Jasmine Vasavada, President

Joel Hansen, Secretary