



## Commission Meeting Minutes Monday, February 23, 2026

### Call to Order

Commission Vice President Sarah Montano called a regular meeting of the Port of Olympia Board of Commissioners to order and open to the public at 4:00 p.m., Monday, February 23, 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.

Guests: Michael Cade, Executive Director and Aslan Meade, Director of Strategic Alliances with the Thurston County Economic Development Council; George Sharpe, Rural Program Manager, South Thurston Economic Development Initiative (STEDI); David Schaffert, President/CEO, Thurston County Chamber of Commerce; and Jennie Folia-Jones, JFJ Strategies.

### Approval of Agenda

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

### Executive Director Report

Alex Smith, Executive Director, reported on recent Port activities. She announced that the Port Commissioners would be conducting a Commission Retreat on Saturday, February 21 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. to gain an understanding of each other's strategic priorities; Commissioner Montano and port staff attended the Thurston Chamber February forum on how artificial intelligence is transforming business. Mike Reid, Director of Community and Economic Development and Alex Smith talked to members of the South Sound Sailing Society and boaters from Swantown Marina about the proposal to build at Swantown Marina. Engagement will continue with this group as the project moves forward. Marina Manager Dylan Dixon, was congratulated for earning his Certified Marina Operator (CMO) certification.

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 prioritizing restoration when the Port constructs a project.

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

Each commissioner provided input to public comments.

## **Partner Spotlight**

### Tenino Agriculture Innovation Park.

Michael Cade, Executive Director of the Thurston County Economic Development Council, opened the presentation with conversations he has had about a more fluid and impactful food system in our community. He spoke of growing the economy and supporting that sector, while looking to community partners to do that appropriately, proactively and strategically. He thanked the Port for their support and strategic input towards how to move the economy forward in a sustainable, inclusive environment.

Aslan Meade, Director of Strategic Alliances, provided background information as to how the Tenino Agricultural Innovation Park was first envisioned and the master planning efforts to bring it to fruition. The Agricultural Park is a public/private/nonprofit partnership, which allowed them to find different funding and partnership opportunities. Aslan shared the work that has been done and future plans for the Agricultural Park. Partnerships with counties, school districts, colleges and associations have led to the start of curriculum design with Centralia College to create an agricultural program, with the Thurston County EDC assisting and advising them. The Port was thanked for their support in the 'early days' to make this happen.

Alsan introduced George Sharpe, the Rural Program Manager for South Thurston Economic Development Initiative (STEDI), who is also involved with the Tenino Agriculture Innovation Park.

## **Consent Calendar**

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

## **Action Calendar**

None.

## **Action/Other Calendar**

None.

## **Advisory Calendar**

FIFA Fan Zone Briefing and Memorandum of Understanding. Mike Reid, Director of Community and Economic Development introduced David Schaffert, President/CEO of the Thurston County Chamber of Commerce, who gave background information on how the Olympia/Lacey Fan Zone was created, what community partners were engaged, what partners needed to be brought in and what it will bring to the community. Determining needed infrastructure in order to create synergy around the World Cup, which is occurring June 11 through July 19, was important.

Jennie Folia-Jones with JFJ Strategies, provided an overview of what the World Cup is, that it occurs every four years, the dates that games would be played, the countries involved, the cities that would be hosting matches, and estimated viewing attendance. Number of expected visitors to Washington state was shared. Details regarding the main viewing area, event stage, food and beverage zone, interactive fan engagement activities that are planned, sponsor and partner booths and a VIP or hospitality area were shared.

The Port of Olympia's NorthPoint area is planned to be the Olympia/Lacey Fan Zone with an estimated 2,500 to 5,000 people per match in attendance. The organizing entity is the Thurston County Chamber of Commerce on behalf of the cities of Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater, Thurston County and the Port of Olympia. Parking, logistics, this will be a fully-fenced, ADA compliant, controlled event.

Information regarding parking, traffic, hotel usage, app-assisted walking tours with games and quizzes was provided. Planning for the incoming tourism is being done with toolkits available to help drive business into their establishments.

Memorandum of Understanding. Mike Reid, Director of Community and Economic Development, provided an overview of a proposed Interlocal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Olympia/Lacey Fan Zone, which would establish a regional partnership between:

- Port of Olympia
- Thurston County
- Cities of Olympia, Lacey, and Tumwater

The Thurston County Chamber of Commerce will serve as the lead planning and implementation entity responsible for event coordination, vendor procurement, sponsorship strategy, and compliance with FIFA and SeattleFWC26 Fan Zone requirements.

Supporting partner organizations include: Intercity Transit, Experience Olympia & Beyond, Olympia Downtown Alliance, and the Thurston Economic Development Council.

#### MOU Framework

- The Thurston County Chamber of Commerce will serve as fiscal agent and project manager for Fan Zone planning and implementation.
- Participating jurisdictions will provide financial contributions and/or in-kind operational support.
- The Port of Olympia will serve as the contracting entity for approximately \$175,500 in Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) funding contributed by the City of Lacey, City of Tumwater, and Thurston County.
- The Port will enter into a Professional Services Agreement with the Chamber to support event planning and delivery using approved LTAC funds.
- Participating jurisdictions will reimburse the Port for eligible expenses following completion of the event.

Port Role in the MOU was described including site and facilities, operational support, committee participation, and financial coordination.

The MOU approval process was described, with an anticipated Consent Agenda item on the Port's March 9, 2026 agenda.

### **Commissioner Reports/Discussion**

Commissioner Toompas reported that he had an interview with Thurston Regional Planning Council, gaining information from the long-term planning and economic development. He also attended a Commission Retreat, discussing priorities, and he will attend a Sea Level Rise Collaborative meeting next week.

Commissioner Hansen attended a few meetings with the City of Tumwater, and had a meeting with Michael Cade and the Thurston County Economic Council discussing Economic Development 101, leading into his role on the EDC board. He was interviewed by Berk Consulting and the TRPC, he attended the recent Commission Retreat, he met with the Tumwater Chamber, and he attended a meeting with the executive director of the Hands On Children's Museum.

Commissioner Unsoeld attended a meeting with the City of Tumwater, and he attended the Commission Retreat.

Commissioner Montano attended the Thurston County Chamber Forum regarding AI, she had an orientation at Experience Olympia & Beyond with the interim director, Shauna Stewart, and she attended the Commission Retreat. She had an interview with Berk Consulting and will have her TRPC interview tomorrow.

Commissioner Vasavada met with Commissioner Montano and Jim Lazar to understand budget concerns. Improving transparency and providing coherent pictures of each business line at the Port is the goal. She attended the Commission Retreat as well.

### **Additional Public Comment**

None.

### **Other Business**

Commissioner Vasavada brought up the issue of how the Port might operate if ICE were to show up. Staff brought the Commission the City of Olympia's policy on this issue. Executive orders that were produced by the Seattle City Mayor and the King County Executive, and a draft of the Olympia policy on preventing ICE from accessing city-owned properties was shared. The City of Olympia Commission will be considering that policy in March. Executive Director Alex Smith is drafting a policy for the Commission to consider after the policy is reviewed by the Port's general counsel.

Commissioner Hansen mentioned that Commissioner Jay Grant from the Port of Edmonds is a global expert on the topic of AI and is working with the WPPA on that topic.

### **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 will be held on Monday, March 9, at 4:00 p.m.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Port of Olympia Board of Commissioners, the Monday, February 23, 2026, regular meeting was adjourned at 5:36 p.m.

PORT OF OLYMPIA COMMISSION

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Jasmine Vasavada, President

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Joel Hansen, Secretary

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