

Minutes of Port Commission Meeting
February 26, 2026
In Person & Videoconference

A Regular Meeting of the Port Commission of Port Freeport was held February 26, 2026, beginning at 1:00 PM at the Administration Building, 1100 Cherry Street, Freeport, Texas.

Commissioners present in person:

Mr. Rob Giesecke, Chairman
Mr. Rudy Santos, Vice Chairman
Mr. Kim Kincannon, Secretary
Mr. Dan Croft, Asst. Secretary
Ms. Barbara Fratila, Commissioner
Mr. Ravi Singhania, Commissioner

Staff Members Present:

Mr. Grady Randle, Randle Law Firm
Ms. Phyllis Saathoff, Executive Director/CEO
Mr. Rob Lowe, Director of Administration/CFO
Mr. Jason Hull, Director of Engineering
Mr. Chris Hogan, Director of Protective Services
Mr. Jason Miura, Director of Business & Economic Development
Mr. Brandon Robertson, Director of IT
Mr. Jesse Hibbetts, Director of Operations
Ms. Missy Bevers, Executive Assistant
Ms. Amy O'Brien, Controller
Ms. Christine Lewis, Safety Coordinator
Ms. Danielle Allen, Procurement Manager
Ms. Amanda Veliz, Public Affairs Manager
Ms. Vicki Smith, Accounting Manager
Mr. Chas Gryseels, Project Engineer
Mr. Clinton Woodson, Sales Manager
Ms. Danielle Simonds, Accounting Specialist (virtual)
Ms. Emily Henderson, Sales and Marketing Specialist (virtual)
Ms. Ruby Dunn, Receptionist (virtual)
Ms. Tricia Vela, Public Affairs Assistant (virtual)

Also, present:

Mr. Chris Moore, Texas Port Ministry
Mr. Kevin Cadenhead, KM&L
Mr. Alex Coleman, KM&L
Mr. Stephen Whalley, Arthur J. Gallagher
Ms. Melanie Oldham

1. CONVENE OPEN SESSION in accordance with Texas Government Code Section 551.001, et. seq., to review and consider the following:
2. Invocation – Mr. Chris Moore – Texas Port Ministry.
3. Pledge of Allegiance – U.S. Flag and Texas Flag

4. Roll Call – Commissioner Giesecke noted that Commissioners were present in the Board Room.
5. Safety Briefing – Ms. Christine Lewis recognized February as American Heart month and provided heart health safety actions.
6. Call to identify and discuss any conflicts of interest that may lead to a Commissioner abstaining from voting on any posted agenda item.

Commissioner Croft noted that he would be abstaining from discussion and voting on agenda item #6 due to family conflict.

7. Public Comment – Ms. Melanie Oldham addressed the Commission regarding growth.
8. Public Testimony – There was no public testimony.
9. Receive reports from Executive Staff on activities and matters related to administrative affairs, financial results, facility engineering matters, operations and vessel activity, safety matters, security matters, tenant updates, USCOE, and other related port affairs.

A. Executive Director/CEO

Ms. Saathoff first noted that that Texas Port Ministry will host its banquet this evening and thanked Mr. Moore for all the support the ministry provides for the seafarers, truckers and workers at Port Freeport. She reported that the port hosted a ribbon cutting event earlier in the day for projects that were partnered with the State of Texas through the Texas Department of Transportation Maritime Division; the Area 5 storage area (15 acres) project and two roadway access projects that were funded through the Rider 37 program and the Seaport Connectivity. The funds helped build a new access from 2nd Street back to FM 1495, reconstructed East 5th Street, widened and reconstructed 8th Street to Poplar and Poplar back over to 5th Street and finally from the Cross Dock warehousing storage area (Terminal Street) back to Gate 12. She added that the investments will facilitate the efficient movement of commerce in and out of Velasco Terminal and mitigate any congestion that might have occurred otherwise on the state highways or roadways. She also noted that one of the projects also included the truck parking/staging area. Ms. Saathoff stated that the cost of the \$30 million projects was offset by just over \$20 million in funding through the state adding that if you combine that with the investments made through the partnership with the federal government for the Freeport Harbor Channel Improvement Project, added birth capacity, new cranes and other areas built inside the port, it's well over \$500 million in investment. Ms. Saathoff also reported that the Supreme Court ruled on the legality of some of the tariffs that were implemented by the administration and found them to not be legal but didn't indicate how or if previously paid tariffs could be refunded. She noted that the port paid tariffs on the new cranes and a portion could possibly be eligible for refund adding that if opportunity presents itself, staff will pursue that. She also reported that currently, there is a partial government shutdown with the Department of Homeland Security being impacted. Mr. Hogan spoke on how it is impacting the operations of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in Port Freeport adding that the people the port deals with on a daily basis, CBP, CBP Intelligence, U.S. Coast Guard, their intelligence groups and other teams similar are not affected. They are going into work without pay but answering calls and are available to give support when needed.

FBI is also not affected. The only impact the port is seeing from the shutdown is the grant system which is completely inaccessible right now. Ms. Saathoff stated the administration released its Maritime Action Plan and she has provided an analysis prepared by an area law firm. Staff will continue monitoring this matter. Announcements for the 2025 PIDP grant program have been delayed with a mid-March announcement now expected. Additionally, a new deadline for filing grant applications for the PIDP 2026 grant opportunity has not been announced. Lastly, Ms. Veliz gave an update on the Take-a-Child Fishing Tournament stating that voting for the logo contest is currently underway with the top 15 logo entries on display in the lobby. She encouraged everyone to cast a vote, adding that it closes at 1:00 PM Friday.

B. Director of Engineering

In addition to his written report, Mr. Hull shared a current photo of the Gate 4 access project and reported that the Ellis Island dredge is enroute to Freeport from Tampa expected to arrive tonight, go to work and stay until completion which is anticipated in May. Mr. Hull also spoke about the container ship the pilots want to use in the simulator that is approximately 1138 feet. The simulation will be scheduled once classes have ended at San Jacinto sometime at the end of May.

C. Director of Operations

Mr. Hibbetts reported on statistics for January stating that vessel calls have been solid across October, November, December and January with 53 vessels and 105 total vessel calls port wide. Tonnage is up about 8% from this time last year with containers, LNG, steel and Ro/Ro up a little bit while bulk is slightly down. Total vehicles handled is 63,577 and total containers handled is 29,363. He reported the rail car count is doing very well but may see a bit of a downturn in the next couple of months as the port's newest OEM will see retooling overseas that may affect the overseas cargo coming in. February forecast anticipates 51 vessels with 18 LNG, 1 bulk, 15 Ro/Ro, 2 steel, 12 container ships, 2 lay berths and 1 project cargo load out via a barge.

D. Director of Business & Economic Development

Mr. Miura reported that his department is gearing up for the Trans-Pacific Maritime Conference in Long Beach to be held next week noting it's one of the largest gatherings in industry for ocean carriers and beneficial cargo owners. He and Mr. Woodson have a strong schedule lined up and look forward to tackling some new business.

E. Chief Financial Officer

Mr. Lowe presented the January financial results.

10. Receive reports from Commissioners on matters related to Port Commission-related meetings or conferences, Port presentations and other Port-related matters.

February 17 Finance Committee Meeting – Commissioner Croft reported the committee reviewed the investments portfolio and the audit which is on the agenda for discussion in addition to the liability and property insurance renewal. He also stated that an item related to gantry crane rates was tabled for further discussion to take place during the general rate adjustment process to Port Freeport Tariff No 005.

February 17 OSS Committee Meeting – Commissioner Santos reported the committee discussed two items on the agenda for consideration deferring his comments until then.

Commissioner Singhania reported attending the Brazosport Chamber Awards Luncheon where Ms. Saathoff was named Outstanding Woman of the Year. He also attended an Alliance Luncheon, Angleton Chamber Gala, CAP meeting, port workshop continuation, ABC Luncheon, FMC meeting, Hispanic Chamber Gala, Angleton Chamber Luncheon and the Angleton Rotary 75th Gala.

Commissioner Kincannon reported attending the port workshop as well as Highway 36A meeting, the Quarterly Traffic and Safety Coordination meeting, OSS committee meeting, BCCA, Riviana Tour and Rotary Fundraiser.

Commissioner Santos reported attending the Angleton Chamber Gala and Hispanic Chamber Gala as well as the ABC Luncheon.

Commissioner Fratila stated that she attended some of the same events previously mentioned.

In addition to attending some of the previously mentioned events, Commissioner Croft also attended an EDA meeting and Friends of River Breakfast.

Commissioner Giesecke reported attending a State of the River meeting, gave a brief port presentation to Alvin Rotary Club, spoke at the West Columbia Chamber and attended the LULAC Annual Scholarship Banquet.

11. Consent Agenda.

- A. Approval of Minutes from the Regular Meeting held January 22, 2026, and the Special Meeting held February 4, 2026.
- B. Approval of financial reports for the period ending January 31, 2026.
- C. Approval of a Foreign-Trade Zone Operator Agreement between Port Freeport and Animal Nutrition & Health, LLC (ANH), formerly known as DSM Nutritional Products, Inc.
- D. Resolution Urging TxDOT and HGAC to Accelerate 36A in the RTP Planning Process and Ultimate Inclusion in the UTP.

A motion was made by Commissioner Croft to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fratila with all Commissioners present voting in favor of the motion.

12. Approval of the FY 2025 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

Mr. Lowe welcomed Kevin Cadenhead and Alex Coleman with KM&L who provided the audit report. Mr. Cadenhead stated that he and Mr. Coleman previously met with the Finance Committee to discuss the audit findings in more detail, adding that the team did complete the audit and has included their auditor's reports in the annual report and that the audit is clean. He further stated they have no audit findings and that the control structure is better than adequate and is functioning properly. He commented that this was the first full year of a new financial control management with staff inside the port as well as with a new audit manager with KM&L, both providing fresh viewpoints from both sides of the audit, with the end result being no audit findings, and everything still in very good position from an audit control standpoint. Mr. Cadenhead stated that part of the audit this year included just over \$14 million of grant funds received from TxDOT in prior fiscal year and that under audit, it requires

compliance control auditing. He explained the team goes into the programs and determines that the port met all the requirements of the grants, not just the financial portions, but anything else involved with it. He also noted that the audit for the coming year will involve more compliance auditing, primarily from continuance of the grants but from a significant amount of federal grant funds that have come in as well. Lastly, Mr. Cadenhead understands the port will be going out for proposals for new auditors, which is a recurring process the port has done for many years and is expected. KM&L appreciates the process and is happy to submit their credentials against any other proposers. Mr. Lowe then presented the 2025 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report but first offered his sincerest gratitude to all who contributed to pulling the report together, especially Amy O'Brien, who put in extraordinary time and effort in bringing the publication to this point. Mr. Lowe stated the report begins with the State of the Port from Ms. Saathoff followed by the auditor's report that Mr. Cadenhead spoke to earlier and then the management discussion and analysis that begins on Page 20 of the report, which is typically a three-year narrative of the important aspects of the financials. The financial statements begin on Page 35 followed by informative notes to the financial statements. Page 66 begins with the statistical section that includes a variety of tables and information on the port's operating cargo, historical financials (a 10 year financial look), debt tables and concludes with significant historical milestones of the port. The final section includes more audit information regarding the port's grant compliance. Finally, Mr. Lowe stated that when all combined, the report offers a tremendous amount of high quality information that describes the Port's fiscal year 2025 results to interested parties and users who might want to know more about the port, which is the end goal of the report. Mr. Lowe recommends approval. Commissioner Giesecke commented that he feels this report is one of the best ones he's seen because it offers a good overview and sense of what the port does. Ms. Saathoff highlighted the record level of operating revenues in the report with almost \$61.7 million while controlling operating expenses at a slight increase, bringing a healthy operating income of \$32.6 million, which was \$10 million more than the prior year.

A motion was made by Commissioner Croft to approve the Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Comprehensive Financial report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fratila with all Commissioners present voting in favor of the motion.

13. Approval of liability and property insurance through broker Arthur J. Gallagher & Co.

Mr. Lowe noted that Stephen Whalley from Arthur J. Gallagher was available for questions and likewise, this item was previously discussed with the Finance Committee. He also noted this process is typically done twice a year however staff is trying to streamline it to be done once a year by aligning policy renewal dates and possibly every other year with a potential two year renewal. Mr. Lowe walked through the property and liability renewals and associated coverages in the executive summary starting with the named storm deductible which has historically been 1.5% and equates to \$6,931,000 (excluding business interruption). Business Interruption has a 21 day waiting period which multiplied by the daily indemnity, comes to an additional \$3.57 million. He stated that if there was a named windstorm event and the port had both property damage and business interruption, the combined deductible would be \$10.5 million. He explained that the way the port is currently structured, the board has not been willing to raise or lower the percentage but remain steadfast on staying with 1.5%. Gallagher's quote caps the deductible at \$5 million (property) versus \$6.9 million. If it involves business interruption, the same \$5 million covers it as well versus (what could be) \$10 million plus which is a huge improvement to the program for the upcoming renewal. Mr. Lowe also shared a graph that shows how Port Freeport rates compare favorably to other ports

in the Arthur J. Gallagher portfolio along the Gulf Coast. He then shared a spreadsheet that shows the premiums for the one year option and the two year option. He stated that if the port renews (as is) with a one year renewal with complete coverage for property, liability and associated coverages, the premium would be \$2,375,321 which is a \$5,000 increase. For a two year renewal on property only, the premium would be \$2,261,276. Directors and officers, automobile insurance, etc. are not allowed on a two year so that coverage would be for one year. If the port commits to a two year property renewal as discussed with the Finance Committee, year one would see a \$108,000 premium benefit while year two would see a combined \$269,000 premium benefit. Mr. Lowe stated that he would ask the Port Commission to approve the 2026 premium and approve a not to exceed amount for the 2027 premium. Looking at the numbers for the current premium, the two year premium and the savings, Mr. Lowe explained that when adding the newest assets on the books (the port currently insures about \$495 million), staff anticipates the statement of values would increase 5-10% between now and one year from today. He noted that Cross Dock 2 will not be completed at that point so staff feels it will be closer to 5%. Up to 5%, the rate will be 2.5% more favorable. If the port exceeds 5% on the statement of values, it will be 5% favorable. Mr. Lowe will ask the board to approve a not to exceed amount (assuming the port adds \$50 million in value) as staff feels it will probably be 6 or 7%. Mr. Lowe further explained that the premium will ultimately be determined by how much valuation is added to the books over the next year with staff anticipating adding about \$25-\$50 million of valuation. Gallagher is offering a more favorable rate if a two year period is locked in and with the uncertainty of the upcoming storm season and how any storm could potentially impact the rates, staff feels it's a smart move to lock in the two year premium on property and approve the entire package with that basis. Commissioner Croft commented that given the scenario Mr. Lowe presented in not knowing what the future is going to bring as it relates to storms, he feels it's good to lock the rate for a couple of years.

A motion was made by Commissioner Croft to approve the port's 2026 property and business interruption, liability, bumbershoot and other coverages as presented by staff in the amount of \$2,409,070, and to approve staff's recommendation of the 2027 renewal of property and business interruption in an amount not to exceed 2,319,904 dollars. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fratila with all Commissioners present voting in favor of the motion.

14. Approval of a Construction Contract with Taylor Marine Construction Inc. for the New Fenders Dock 1, 2 and 3 project, for an amount not to exceed \$3,328,000.00.

Mr. Hull stated that five bids were opened on February 10th with four of the five bids submitted coming within the budget of \$5,000,000. Taylor Marine Construction submitted the lowest bid and met all the requirements of the project with a bid of \$3,328,000. Mr. Hull recommends approval.

A motion was made by Commissioner Santos to approve the Construction Contract to Taylor Marine Construction for the new fenders at Docks 1, 2 and 3, for an amount not to exceed \$3,328,000. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kincannon with all Commissioners present voting in favor of the motion.

15. Approval of Professional Services Agreement with IAD Architects for Cross Dock 2 – Code Review project, for an amount not to exceed \$43,600.00.

Mr. Hull stated that IAD Architects worked for the developer of Cross Dock 1 as their owner's representative on the project. He explained that the port hired another third party code reviewer for Cross Dock 1 which was \$50,000. Mr. Hull reached out to IAD Architects asking them to perform the same scope of work for Cross Dock 2, that was previously done directly for the developer of Cross Dock 1. They agreed for an amount not to exceed \$43,600. Mr. Hull recommends approval.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kincannon to approve the Professional Services Agreement with IAD Architects for Cross Dock 2 Code Review project for an amount not to exceed \$43,600. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Singhanian with all Commissioners present voting in favor of the motion.

16. Approval of Professional Services Agreement with LJA Engineering, Inc. for Velasco Terminal, Container Yard 6 project, for an amount not to exceed \$669,000.00.

Mr. Hull stated that staff is ready to move forward with the design for Area 6 and has selected LJA as the most qualified engineer for the project and has done work for other container yards. Staff feels having this project ready to bid will make the port competitive for grant funding. Mr. Hull does not have an estimate on how long the project will take because it includes railroad relocation which requires approval through Union Pacific Railroad noting that the Texas Department of Transportation and the Pine Street Bridge project has been ongoing for 10 years, and they're still working with Union Pacific Railroad to get their railroad approval. He also pointed out that this agreement does not include the materials testing or the construction oversight in it. This is to obtain an approved set of drawings through Union Pacific Railroad so the port can apply for grant funds. Once staff decides to move forward with the project, Mr. Hull will request an additional fee to do the materials testing as well as the construction oversight. This agreement will include geotechnical work, topographic surveying, alignment of the rail and recommendations on the filling of the site to bring it up to grade. Mr. Hull recommends approval.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kincannon to approve the Professional Services Agreement with LJA Engineering for Velasco Terminal Container Yard 6 project, for an amount not to exceed \$669,000. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Singhanian with all Commissioners present voting in favor of the motion and Commissioner Croft abstaining.

17. Approval of a license renewal with CDW-G for VMWare Software, for an amount not to exceed \$71,331.20.

Mr. Robertson explained that CDWG is a vendor that sells hardware and software. The G is their government division, so the port gets customized government pricing for anything purchased. He stated that this is the 5th renewal for the contract for the port's data center and is the software that runs the virtualization for all the servers and VDI. He noted that the renewal came in over budget and that the vendor greatly increased prices globally so it's not just affecting the port. Mr. Robertson recommends approval of the expenditure for \$71,331.20 to renew the VMWare license through CDWG, utilizing the Texas DIR quote. He also explained that all the quotes were very similar, adding that VMWare gives the vendors the pricing and depending on the margin they want to mark up or down is the quote you get. Additionally, the renewal pricing is good for three years which aligns with the life cycle of system.

A motion was made by Commissioner Santos to approve the license renewal with CDWG for the VMWare software for an amount not to exceed \$71,331.20. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Croft with all Commissioners present voting in favor of the motion.

18. Approval to purchase a new fire pump for Summit Fire for the Diesel Fire Protection System, for an amount not to exceed \$42,930.00.

Mr. Hibbetts stated that staff discussed this with the OSS Committee on February 17th. He explained that after having the fire pump inspected, it was determined that the sleeves, rings, bearings and shaft all needed to be replaced, and after looking into it, refurbishing the pump would be just as much as replacing it with a new pump. He also noted the current pump is the original pump that was installed in 1985. Staff obtained multiple bids with Summit Fire coming in at \$42,930 (installed) but has a four week delivery time. He stated that in the interim, a generator is in place to serve as the backup for the diesel pump. The diesel fire pump serves as the backup to the electric fire pump. If the port were to lose power, the generator would serve as the backup to the electric pump. Mr. Hibbetts recommends approval to purchase the new pump.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kincannon to approve the purchase of a new fire pump from Summit Fire for the diesel fire protection system for an amount not to exceed 42,930. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Singhanian with all Commissioners present voting in favor of the motion.

19. Approval of Purchase Order for backup generator rental, for an amount not to exceed \$40,000.00.

Mr. Hibbetts explained that since the diesel fire pump has to be replaced and serves as the backup to the electric pump, staff needed to get a generator installed to serve as the backup for the pump. Staff obtained multiple bids with United Rentals providing the generator that is currently in place at a monthly rate of \$12,715. The lead time for the new fire pump is expected to be four weeks. Mr. Hibbetts is requesting approval of a purchase order for three months' rental of the generator, Staff does not anticipate needing the generator that long but wants the approval in place in the event something happens and the rental rolls into a third month.

A motion was made by Commissioner Santos to approve the purchase order for backup generator rental for an amount not to exceed \$40,000. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fratila with all Commissioners present voting in favor of the motion.

20. Approval of an extension to the Government Liaison Services Agreement between Port Freeport and Van Scoyoc Associates.

Ms. Saathoff stated that a contract was previously approved with Van Scoyoc and Associates for representing the port and providing consulting services on federal matters. The contract included two one-year renewals and staff recommends exercising the next renewal which will stay at the same monthly retainer rate of \$8,500 with annual expenses not to exceed \$2,000. She also noted that either party has the option to terminate with or without cause with 30 days' written notice. Ms. Saathoff stated that with everything that's happening in Washington, the port needs the support and recommends approval.

A motion was made by Commissioner Singhanian to approve the extension with Van Scoyoc. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Santos with all Commissioners present voting in favor of the motion.

21. Continuation of November 17, 2025 Planning Workshop for Port Freeport regarding the following:

A. Community Engagement

B. Compliance Update on Accessibility & Public Information Act

Community Engagement

Ms. Veliz gave an update on the port's community engagement and public affairs activities by highlighting the impact it's had on the past fiscal year and presented the 2026 priorities moving forward. She began with an overview of the impact from an organizational perspective which focused on strengthening community relationships through constant engagement and ensuring communication supported the port's key infrastructure milestones and operational priorities. She explained that a significant portion of the past year was spent executing the Centennial Celebration. Public Affairs expanded accessibility through the redevelopment of the port's website, working closely with business development and leading the community aspect of the website making sure it improved how the public accesses information and engages the port's programs and events while navigating the community section of the website. In addition, the port's digital engagement continued to grow with increased audience reach and strengthened communication. Ms. Veliz stated that the Centennial was carried out as a yearlong event to enhance the port's visibility and strengthen its connection with the community. A key aspect of the initiative was development of the Centennial logo that was utilized across all communications and engagement activities. Additionally, the port received recognition at the county, state and federal levels with resolutions presented at the Texas State Capitol House and Senate floor and a proclamation presented at Brazoria County Commissioners Court as well as flying of commemorative flags at government capitals to honor the milestone. She stated that overall, the Centennial increased the port's regional and industry awareness while reinforcing the port's legacy and ongoing growth. Centennial activities also helped maintain community engagement throughout the year with events like Brazoria County Day, the Annual Take-a-Child Fishing Tournament, Centennial Celebration Luncheon and Community Port Tours. She explained that public visibility was enhanced through social media campaigns and press releases that supported key events, along with messaging in all of the port communications. Coverage was also expanded across multiple publications, with special Centennial editions in the Giants magazine, The Bulletin and the Ports Bureau News newsletter. Visual communications also played a role with the development of the Centennial documentary as well as a dedicated webpage with expanding historical timeline that increased the use of visual narratives to improve public's understanding. Ms. Veliz stated that in addition to the Centennial focus, public affairs also supported key milestones across the organization by issuing 15 press releases to ensure constant messaging and awareness. They also enhanced the port's visual narrative by increasing the use of videos and other visual content to enable audiences to better understand the port's projects and operational progress which led to greater visibility and overall public awareness. Ms. Veliz also shared some visual examples of engagement and communication efforts made throughout the year. Visual illustrations showed the range of outreach and diverse methods used to share information with the port's audiences while the videos feature community focused efforts/events, the cranes' arrival and finally Centennial related productions that included the Centennial Documentary (long and short format), the

Centennial Celebration Luncheon recap and the Centennial Community Port Tour day recap. She noted that the visual resources were created to enhance the community's understanding of the port by allowing them to witness progress and engage in the activity more directly which also increased the audience growth across platforms with higher engagement and interaction. She stated that data focused content planning allowed the team to refine messaging based on audience responses while the current trends indicated continued growth in digital reach and engagement. Ensuring accessibility and inclusion participation was key during planning of programs and events by ensuring that ADA accommodations were implemented and venues selected met ADA compliance standards. Staff arranged accessible transportation for the Community Port Tours to support participants' needs and conducted direct outreach to confirm accessibility in advance to provide tailored accommodations that supported inclusive participation. Additionally, staff also improved digital accessibility by enhancing the port's website and integrating accessibility request options with online forms. Ms. Veliz stated that the 2026 priorities will focus on strengthening digital engagement, supporting key milestone events and continuing structured community engagement initiatives. From a digital perspective, staff will continue enhancing the website to improve accessibility and expand public engagement opportunities that includes adopting a data informed approach to communicate and consistently monitor digital platforms to support growth in audience reach and interactions. The team will also support upcoming port milestones, including ribbon cuttings and groundbreakings aligned with major infrastructure initiatives. Annual sponsored events like the Take-a-Child Fishing Tournament, Golf Tournament and quarterly CAP meetings will continue to be an important role in community engagement. Additionally, staff is planning the port's second Community Port Tour Day and with its own dedicated webpage, similar to Take-a-Child Fishing and the Golf Tournament. Other community initiatives will focus on an educational pathway plan and community tribute. The educational pathway plan is a structured initiative designed to enhance community education with the initial phase involving the creation of downloadable curriculum resources that focus on elementary education for regional school districts and home school communities. The initiative will be approached in four phases with each phase building upon the previous one that allows staff to research, develop, implement and refine the program in a structured and sustainable way. A dedicated page will also be created on the website to provide centralized access and resources. Lastly, the Community Tribute initiative will recognize the history of Freeport's East End and will be located within the buffer zone along East Second Street. Current efforts include coordination and planning alignment with external infrastructure timelines and environmental partnerships while the next step will include engaging the advisory committee for development of the concepts with the final direction remaining with the Commission. Ms. Saathoff added that staff anticipates the sewer relocation project will be completed by the end of April or sometime in the second quarter and that Houston Wilderness is scheduled to install the vegetation required in the buffer zone later this fall.

Compliance Update on Accessibility & Public Information Act

Mr. Lowe stated that he includes any public information request, American with Disabilities Act requests and/or language assistance request in his monthly report to the Commission but wanted to recap the success of it and noted that the redevelopment of the port website has also given easy access to the information and forms related to the various public requests. Additionally, staff also made an extraordinary effort with events over recent months to make sure anyone who had special requests understood how to have them fulfilled. He then gave a breakdown of the requests received by stating that in 2025, the port received 17 public information requests that include RFPs and port statistics like headcount, employee roster and financials. For 2026, there have been 6 requests with more RFPs than prior. He stated that

staff does occasionally receive requests that are not specifically owned by the port, adding that if anyone thinks it's something related to Port Freeport, they submit a request. Staff tries to respond neutrally but will point them towards someone else if possible. For the ADA and language assistance, Mr. Lowe stated there were 5 requests in 2025 with all requests fully accommodated noting that four were in regard to physical accessibility and one for hearing support. There have been no requests for 2026. Mr. Lowe again stated the public request information is prominently displayed on the website and port staff is committed to fulfilling any and all requirements of the.

22. EXECUTIVE SESSION in accordance with Subchapter D of the Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code Section 551.001, et. seq., to review and consider the following:

A. Under authority of Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney) for discussion regarding:

1. Consultation with attorney under Government Code Section 551.071(1) (to seek or receive attorney's advice on pending or contemplated litigation).
2. Consultation with attorney under Government Code Section 551.071(2) (to seek or receive attorney's advice on legal matters that are not related to litigation).

B. Under authority of Section 551.076 (Deliberation of Security Matters):

1. Discussion regarding issues related to the deployment, or specific occasions for implementation of security personnel or devices or security audit and services.

C. Under authority of Section 551.087 (Economic Development Negotiations or Incentives):

1. To discuss or deliberate regarding commercial or financial information that the governmental body has received from a business prospect that the governmental body seeks to have locate, stay, or expand in or near the territory of the governmental body and with which the governmental body is conducting economic development negotiations.
 - i. Business and Economic Development Report including potential offers of financial or other incentives to the business prospect.
2. To deliberate the offer of a financial or other incentive to a business prospect described by Subdivision (1).

D. Under authority of Section 551.072 (Deliberation Concerning Real Property Matters) for discussion regarding:

1. The potential purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property located at Port Freeport, including but not limited to the real property located at and contiguous to Berths 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8.
2. The potential lease or value of real property located at Port Freeport or adjacent to Port Freeport, including but not limited to Parcel 1.
3. The potential exchange, lease, or value of real property located at Port Freeport, including but not limited to Parcels 14, 19, 27, 31, 34 and property on Quintana Island.

E. Under authority of Section 551.074 (Deliberation of Personnel Matters) for discussion regarding:

1. Deliberation regarding the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties of a public officer or employee, including but not limited to: Executive Director/CEO.

23. RECONVENED OPEN SESSION:

24. Discuss and consider action resulting from Executive Session for Executive Director/CEO.

Commissioner Kincannon stated that Port Freeport had a sensational and very busy 2025. Many capital and maintenance projects were accomplished along with the Port Centennial Celebration and recognition by the State, House and Senate, reflect on the excellent performance of our port employees, staff and the diligent vision, commitment and oversight of the Executive Director and CEO.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kincannon that in recognition of Ms. Saathoff's exceptional performance, as noted by the Port Freeport Commission, that the Commission we increase Phyllis Saathoff's salary by 4.60% retroactive to October 1, 2025, and continue all of her current benefits. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Singhania with all Commissioners present voting in favor of the motion.

25. Adjourn.

With no further business before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 5:09 PM.