

Minutes of Port Commission Meeting
May 28, 2026
In Person & Videoconference

A Regular Meeting of the Port Commission of Port Freeport was held May 28, 2026, beginning at 1:02 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. 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
Mr. Clinton Woodson, Sales Manager
Ms. Amanda Veliz, Public Affairs Manager
Ms. Danielle Allen, Procurement Manager
Ms. Vicki Smith, Accounting Manager
Mr. Chas Gryseels, Project Engineer
Mr. James Rodriguez, Ops Intern
Ms. Ruby Dunn, Receptionist (virtual)
Ms. Emily Henderson, Sales and Marketing Specialist (virtual)

Absent:

Mr. Chris Hogan, Director of Protective Services

Also, present:

Mr. Chris Moore, Texas Port Ministry
Ms. Danielle Kelly, City of Freeport
Mr. Will Bohlen, GHD
Mr. Warren Thomas, Bay-Houston Towing
Mr. Mike Dodson, HDR
Ms. Gwendolyn Jones
Mr. Manning Rollerson
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 all Commissioners were present in the board room.
5. Safety Briefing – Ms. Christine Lewis provided safety tips for summer heat & hydration, mosquitoes and lightning.
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 he had a conflict related to agenda item #12 and will abstain from discussion and voting on the matter.

7. Public Comment.

Ms. Danielle Kelly, new city manager for the City of Freeport introduced herself to the Commission. Ms. Melanie Oldham addressed the Commission regarding Freeport LNG. Mr. Manning Rollerson also addressed the Commission about Freeport LNG as well as East End property.

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 shared a video recap from the Take-a-Child Fishing Tournament. She thanked the public affairs staff, volunteers and sponsors for their efforts in making the event successful noting it had one of the largest turnouts with 395 anglers registered. Ms. Veliz added that 685 fish were weighed at the event and with the 69 sponsors, 80 volunteers and other activities like face painting and tattoos; the day was very successful. Next year's event is scheduled for May 8. Ms. Veliz also noted that the next CAP meeting will be held June 9 with Blair Brownlow from Chiquita scheduled to speak. Ms. Saathoff reported that financially, the port is doing well with revenues and operating income trending slightly ahead of budget. Vessels and tonnage are up this year when compared to the same period last year. She noted that container volumes around the United States tend to be down right now with boxes shifting from the East and the Gulf Coast to the West Coast a bit, but things remain steady at Port Freeport. Ms. Saathoff reported that staff submitted a request for refund on the tariff paid on the cranes which has been accepted in the system. She noted there is no timeline as to when the refund will be issued but staff will continue to monitor and update. The Freeport Harbor Channel Improvement Project is wrapping up with the ribbon cutting to celebrate the accomplishment scheduled for July 28. Ms. Saathoff stated that the project could not have been achieved without the support of the community and the bond issuance in 2018 which was significant in getting the new start designation. She also noted that the port is repaying the general obligation bonds from the port's operating revenues, not the taxpayers adding that the project will continue to support the community, industry and businesses that rely on it to move goods to and

from our region and generate economic activity. The port has also received another port infrastructure development grant which is on the agenda and will be applying for another grant in the next round. She noted that Congressman Weber had submitted a project for the port for community project funding for the fiscal year 2027 federal budget, but it did not make it through the Appropriations Committee. Staff will continue to pursue the project through the PIDP (Port Infrastructure Development Grant Program). A ribbon cutting for Mitsubishi, the port's newest customer in the automotive sector, is tentatively scheduled for June 8 with details still being finalized. June 1, the new executive director for the Texas Ports Association, Jade Gillespie, will be visiting the port for a tour. Ms. Gillespie is visiting all the ports in the association before the legislative session. She has put out a call for any legislative items that may need to be carried forward on behalf of Texas ports in the next legislative session. Prefiling begins in November. Lastly, Ms. Saathoff noted that the next Community Port Tour day will be held October 3. Information can be found on the port's website.

B. Director of Engineering

In addition to his written report, Mr. Hull shared a graphic that shows the depth of the Freeport Harbor, which is now the deepest ship channel east of the Rocky Mountains. He noted that the only other channel that has the port beat is LA at 78 feet. The graphic shows the depths throughout the channel starting at the end of the jetties moving in as you scroll through the slides. It also depicts the existing bottom and the new bottom. He noted the final survey should be processed at the end of next week with a letter following to confirm completion.

C. Director of Operations

Mr. Hibbetts reported on statistics for April stating it was another solid month with 50 vessels noting there was a good increase in lay days due to rice barge activity that increased for the month of April. As previously reported, tonnage is slightly up across all categories, trending about 5% over prior year, handling 110,552 automobiles, 55,862 containers, which equates to a little over 111,000 TEUs. Rail continues to do well and will see more during the months of June and July as the port's newest OEM customer will be increasing volumes. A brief look into May sees total expected vessels back into the 50s continuing to do well across all sectors. Mr. Hibbetts also introduced James Rodriguez, who is the summer intern for operations. Lastly, Ms. Lewis gave a recap of the Ro/Ro Rodeo that was held on May 5 stating it was a great success with 84 total participants. 11 pieces of equipment were available for training purposes including fire buggies, motor grader, a roller, wheeled loaders, excavators and dozers. WGMA also brought in their manual simulator for practicing as well. A lashing experiment was held to show participants how to properly lash vessels as well as unlash equipment coming on and off. A standard car was also available for participants to practice being able to clutch and break since the port has standard vehicles coming in. Suppliers for the Rodeo were John Deere, Cat, APS and Ports America. Ms. Lewis noted that all participants received training pay for the day and were given gift bags with safety items needed for the summer.

D. Director of Business & Economic Development

In addition to his report, Mr. Miura noted some upcoming events. As previously mentioned, a ribbon cutting for Mitsubishi is tentatively scheduled for June 8 for their first Gulf port of call for the arrival of the Hoegh Sunrise. Details and schedules will follow. The Houston Port Bureau Maritime Dinner will be held August 22 in Houston and the Breakbulk America's Conference is scheduled for September 22-23. Mr. Miura noted the schedule for breakbulk will be different than previous years with exhibition being held all

day Tuesday and Wednesday with a welcome reception held Tuesday evening. There will be no exhibition on Thursday. The Port Freeport Customer Reception will still be held on Wednesday. Mr. Miura also reported that guests from various economic development agencies across Fort Bend County visited the port for a tour and were excited to see the tremendous growth and activity going on at Port Freeport. Ms. Saathoff offered congratulations to Mr. Miura who took the lead on the Port Infrastructure Development Grant Program application, in which the port was just awarded \$11 million for concreting Area 4 (adjacent to Berth 8).

E. Chief Financial Officer

Mr. Lowe presented the financial results for the month of April.

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

A. May 26 Business Development Committee Meeting – Commissioner Giesecke stated the committee reviewed the RFP for the Owner’s Cold Storage Industry Representative which is on the agenda for consideration.

B. May 26 Finance Committee Meeting – Commissioner Croft stated the committee reviewed several items which will be addressed in detail later in the meeting under agenda items 16, 17 and 18.

Commissioner Croft reported attending the Lower Brazos River Coalition meeting and the Take-a-Child Fishing Tournament.

Commissioner Fratila reported attending the Friends of the River Breakfast, Lower Brazos River Coalition meeting, the Take-a-Child Fishing Tournament and the Chiquita 30th Anniversary Dinner.

Commissioner Santos also reported attending Captain’s Dinner, Chiquita Dinner and the subsequent port tour the following day as well as the Angleton Chamber Luncheon.

Commissioner Kincannon reported attending an exhibition at the West Columbia Historical Museum, the Captain’s Dinner, Senior Awards Presentation at Columbia High School and BCCA meeting.

Commissioner Singhania reported also attending several of the meetings previously mentioned in addition to the Highway 36 Coalition quarterly luncheon and was a guest of Mr. Durga for Dr. Khatoon’s presentation last week.

11. Consent Agenda.

A. Approval of Minutes from the Regular Meeting held April 23, 2026 and the Special Meeting held May 7, 2026.

B. Approval of financial reports for the period ending April 30, 2026.

C. Adoption of a Resolution Approving Emergency Purchases and Contract Authority to the Executive Director/CEO and Chief Financial Officer.

D. Adoption of a Resolution approving the acceptance of the Port’s portion of proceeds received from high bidders on delinquent tax property held in trust by Brazoria County, Texas and authorizing the Chairman to join in conveyance to high bidders.

E. Approval of American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) Annual Membership Dues.

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

12. Approval of a Professional Services Agreement with LJA Engineering, Inc. for the Velasco Terminal Area 4 Container Yard project, for an amount not to exceed \$1,286,700.

Commissioner Giesecke noted that Commissioner Croft would be abstaining from discussion on this item. Mr. Hull stated the professional services agreement with LJA includes surveying, geotechnical, final design of the drainage, utilities, lighting, photometrics, electrical design, construction oversight and materials testing. He stated the grant award for this project is \$11 million and the fee is \$1,286,700. Mr. Hull estimates the project to be \$14 million. The original cost estimate when the grant application was filed was for \$22 million and is a 50% match. Mr. Hull recommends approval.

A motion was made by Commissioner Santos to approve the agreement as recommended by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Singhanian with all Commissioners present voting in favor of the motion and Commissioner Croft abstaining.

13. Approval to purchase Cameras for the Video Enhancements project, for an amount not to exceed \$32,850.00, to be cost-shared through the 2023 Port Security Grant.

Mr. Robertson explained that there are three parts to the grant which includes body cameras AI analytics and now video enhancements. The other two pieces have been completed. He stated that due to the expiration date and the bids that came back, staff was worried the job might not be completed before the grant expires. With this in mind, staff wants to order the cameras and all the equipment (in house) to ensure it's received in time. He also noted that an extension has been filed but with the government shutdown, staff hasn't received an answer yet adding that there's no reason the extension won't be approved. Staff is requesting approval to order 17 cameras which will go up at multiple points throughout the port. The associated network equipment for the project is the next agenda item. The grant is a 75/25 split with the port paying 25% of the total cost.

A motion was made by Commissioner Singhanian to approve the purchase of cameras for video enhancement project for an amount not to exceed \$32,850 to be cost-shared through the 2023 Post Security Grant. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kincannon with all Commissioners present voting in favor of the motion.

14. Approval to purchase Network Equipment for the Video Enhancements project, for an amount not to exceed \$25,800.00, to be cost-shared through the 2023 Port Security Grant.

Mr. Robertson stated that this is the other component of the video enhancements project, which is the networking and enclosure pieces and was discussed on the previous agenda item. Staff requests approval to purchase equipment in the amount of \$25,800.

A motion was made by Commissioner Singhanian to approve the purchase of network equipment for the video enhancements project, for an amount not to exceed \$25,800 to be

cost-shared through the 2023 Port Security Grant. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kincannon with all Commissioners present voting in favor of the motion.

15. Approval of an RFP for Owner’s Cold Storage Industry Representative.

Mr. Miura stated that staff reviewed an RFP (Request for Proposals) for Owner’s Cold Storage Representative with the Business Development Committee earlier this week and after further review, staff recommends a modification to the timeline where staff would make a recommendation to the Port Commission on a firm at the July board meeting and also seek legal counsel's review of the conflict of interest clause. Subject to those two changes, staff recommends approval to publish the RFP on May 29.

A motion was made by Commissioner Singhania to approve the RFP subject to the changes noted by staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fratila with all Commissioners present voting in favor of the motion.

16. Approval of an RFP for Grant Writing Services.

Ms. Allen stated that staff met with the Finance Committee on May 26 to discuss an RFP for a grant writer for a three-year term. She explained that the qualified firm would perform the following:

- analyze the capital program and determine potential grant funding sources
- write applications once the NOFOs (Notice of Funding Opportunities) are released
- propose a monthly retainer fee
- propose a lump sum fee for grant application for the BCA (Benefit to Cost Analysis) for five programs that include:
 - PIDP
 - USDOT CRISI
 - US EDA grant programs
 - TCEQ funding opportunities
 - TXDOT seaport connectivity
- propose an hourly rate for grants not specified in the above listing

Ms. Allen further stated that a considerable amount of time is spent in house having to prepare and manage an RFP for grant application adding that with a firm selected, Port Freeport will be better prepared and positioned ahead of the NOFO release. She also stated that the firm selected should provide a demonstration of the understanding of the project needs by supplying 5 examples of relevant experience in the past 5 years. Scoring criteria will be weighted as follows:

Firms’ Team, Background, Resources and Staff	40 points
Financial Proposal	35 points
Examples of relevant experience	10 points
Relevant experience with Port Freeport	10 points
References	5 points
Total	100 points

Staff seeks approval of the proposed RFP which will be published May 29. Proposals will be due June 29, and staff will then make a recommendation to the Port Commission at the July 23 meeting. Commissioner Croft noted that this was reviewed by the committee in detail adding that a lot of times staff hears about opportunities at the last minute and scramble to get

things done which takes away from their daily operations in order to meet the timeline, so it makes a lot of sense to move forward with a grant writer who also may be able to bring forward other opportunities the port may be missing. Commissioner Fratila also commented that grant writing is a specific talent, and if you're used to doing it and know how to do it effectively, it shortens the time and is very efficient.

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

17. Approval of a Resolution Authorizing Submission of a 2026 Port Infrastructure Development Program Grant Application for the Inner Harbor Berth 3 Modernization Project.

Mr. Miura stated that back in March, the Commission approved staff to hire the Goodman Corporation to prepare the port's 2026 Port Infrastructure Development Program grant application for the Inner Harbor Berth 3 Modernization project. He explained that the project includes modification of transit shed 3 (moving the wall back 100 feet), demolition of the bulk rice loader and installation of a new modern loader with a dust collection system, and installation of pallet racks in the warehouse. Total cost for the project is \$12,550,000 with staff requesting federal funding of 75%. Mr. Miura stated that a commitment letter has to be submitted with the application; therefore, staff is requesting approval of the resolution authorizing submission of application and the port's commitment of 25%. Mr. Miura also stated that the port has received significant support for this project and if the project is funded and completed, it would add approximately 80% available utilization to the berth as it's the most underutilized berth in the harbor complex. Support letters received for the project include Riviana, Amports, Volkswagen Group of America (U.S. and German Headquarters), Economic Alliance of Brazoria County, HGAC, TxDOT Maritime, TAG Houston, the Greater Houston Port Bureau, Representative Vasut, Representative Barry, Senator Huffman, Representative Weber and Judge Sebesta. Staff recommends approval.

A motion was made by Commissioner Croft to approve the resolution authorizing submission of a 2026 Port Infrastructure Development Program grant application for Inner Harbor Berth 3 Modernization project. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fratila with all Commissioners present voting in favor of the motion.

18. Approval of a Resolution Authorizing a Grant Agreement with the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration for an FY2025 Port Infrastructure Development Program Grant for the Velasco Terminal Area 4 Improvement Project.

Mr. Miura stated that staff seeks authorization to enter into a grant agreement with MARAD to accept up to \$11 million in funding for the Velasco Terminal Area 4 project that was submitted last year. He explained that Area 4 is currently aggregate, and the funds contributed toward the project will improve the area with concrete drainage utilities, high mast lighting and necessary pertinences. He further noted that when the grant application was filed, the port asked for a 75% cost-share (75% - federal, 25% - port). The port was awarded \$11 million for 50% so the funding commitment needs to be adjusted. The proposed resolution would allow the port to enter a grant agreement with the federal government, authorize the executive director to sign on the port's behalf and adjust the funding commitment of 50% instead of 25%. Staff recommends approval of the resolution.

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

19. 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, 34 and property on Quintana Island.
4. The potential exchange, lease or value of real property including by not limited to lot located at CR434A.

20. RECONVENED OPEN SESSION:

21. Adjourn.

With no further business before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 4:52 PM.