PORT OF CENTRALIA
Established 1986

3508 Galvin Road · Centralia, WA 98531-9002
Phone 360-736-3527 · Fax 360-330-5666
www.portofcentralia.com

Minutes
Regular Meeting of the
PORT OF CENTRALIA
December 17, 2025
Port of Centralia Administrative Office & Via Teleconference
3:00 PM

Attendees: Commissioners: Kyle Markstrom, Julie Shaffley, and Peter Lahmann
Port Staff: Amy Graber, Director of Finance & Administration
Port Counsel: Ray Liaw, Van Ness Feldman
Public: Scott Tennant; Randy Mueller; Gary Odegaard; Wendy Tripp; Elizabeth Cameron; Jan Banevich; Cynthia Mudge; Jennifer West; and Brian Dow
Teleconference: 10 unknown callers

1) **Call Meeting to Order/Introductions:** Commissioner Markstrom called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2) **Approval of Agenda:** Commissioner Shaffley made a motion to approve the December 17, 2025, agenda as amended. Commissioner Lahmann seconded the motion. The motion carried.

3) **Good of the Order/Public Comment:** Commissioner Markstrom opened the meeting to public comment and stated the rules regarding public comment.

   Scott Tennant, of Chehalis, commented on the Port of Chehalis's use of public comment.

   Gary Odegaard, of Centralia, commented on the interim director and the Executive Director's separation agreement.

   Jan Banevich, of Centralia, commented on the Executive Director's employment contract.

   Cynthia Mudge, executive director of the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce, commented on a tour of UNFI that she attended and announced an upcoming Chamber event.

   Elizabeth Cameron, of Centralia, commented on the Executive Director's separation agreement and Commissioner Markstrom's ability to negotiate the agreement.

   Brian Dow, of Centralia, commented that Commissioner Markstrom should resign due to community atmosphere.

   Commissioner Markstrom replied to Brian Dow that he was elected by the same community. He also replied to Elizabeth Cameron that he was emotional regarding the Executive Director's termination due to significant emotional angst for the Port's and the community's future.

4) **Approval of Minutes:** Commissioner Shaffley made a motion to approve the December 3, 2025, regular meeting minutes. Commissioner Lahmann seconded the motion. The motion carried.

   Commissioner Lahmann stated that he wished to rescind his vote on the Executive Director's termination and asked why the Port would release an employee that had done such a great job for the Port Commission. Commissioner Markstrom asked Ray Liaw, Van Ness Feldman, if a vote can be rescinded. Ray Liaw replied that Commissioner Lahmann would need to make a motion during new business.

5) **Approval of Warrants:** Commissioner Lahmann made a motion to approve warrants 24695 through 24718 with an aggregate amount of $213,653.33. Commissioner Shaffley seconded the motion. The motion carried.

6) **New Business:**

   a) **Lease Agreement:** Commissioner Lahmann made a motion to approve the Lease Agreement with Engel Holdings for the building located at 3707 Galvin Road and yard located on Lots 47 & 48. Commissioner Shaffley seconded the motion. The motion carried.

      Commissioner Markstrom opened the agenda item for public comment. There was no public comment made.

      Commissioner Lahmann asked if Van Ness Feldman drew up the Lease Agreement. Ray Liaw replied that Van Ness Feldman did not draw up the Lease Agreement.

   b) **Appointment of Interim Director:** Commissioner Markstrom made a motion to appoint Amy Graber, Director of Finance & Administration, as Interim Executive Director at the same base salary as the Port's Executive Director position. Commissioner Shaffley seconded the motion. The motion carried 2-1.

      Commissioner Markstrom noted that he wanted to respect the new incoming Commission, but the Port needs someone to carry the torch now and Amy Graber has agreed to help. He stated the new Commission can appoint another Interim Executive Director in January or any time in the future.

      Commissioner Lahmann stated that his only issue was the salary rate and thought the current rate was way out of line. Commissioner Markstrom asked Commissioner Lahmann if he thought $217,000 was out of line. He encouraged Commissioner Lahmann to look at the Washington Public Port Association's yearly salary survey that shows that many ports close to the Port of Centralia have executive directors with higher salaries. He added that it is standard practice to pay an interim the same rate as the previous director, and the salary can be negotiated when a new executive director is hired.

      Commissioner Shaffley stated that she agreed with the motion because the Port needs continuity and Amy Graber has the knowledge and experience to help with the transition. She also noted that Amy Graber will be performing her usual duties as the Director of Finance & Administration in addition to the duties of Interim Executive Director and should be compensated for that.

Commissioner Lahmann said that he had full faith in Amy Graber to do the job and only objected to the wage rate. Commissioner Markstrom said that it would be interesting to see who the Port will hire as the new executive director if Commissioner Lahmann thinks that the salary is way out of line. He said it is a complex business with many intricacies, and it takes the right person.

Commissioner Markstrom opened the agenda item for public comment.

Gary Odegaard, of Centralia, commented that he was not opposed to Amy Graber as the interim director.

Jan Banevich, of Centralia, commented that she did not disagree with Amy Graber as the interim director but disagrees with the salary rate.

Jennifer West, of Centralia, commented that she disagreed with the interim executive director.

Randy Mueller, of Ridgefield, commented that he was the former Port of Ridgefield CEO and his salary was $222,000. He stated that he supported Amy Graber's appointment and did not think the salary was out of line with other Ports, noting the many metrics a Port Commission needs to assess when determining a salary for the position. He also stated that he would be potentially interested in the Interim Executive Director position if the new Commission is interested in January. He added that the Port needs someone at the helm January 1 and that it is important to retain some institutional memory through Amy Graber, since the Port just lost a whole bunch.

c) **Commissioner Reports:** Commissioner Lahmann reported that he attended a Centralia City Council meeting and a Lewis County Board of County Commissioners meeting.

Commissioner Markstrom reported that the mediation with the City of Centralia and Lewis County was postponed due to the weather. He reported that the separation agreement with Executive Director Kyle Heaton has been negotiated and that more information will be available to the public at a future date. He thanked Commissioner Shaffley for her years of service to the Port of Centralia and stated that it had been a pleasure to serve with her as a Port Commissioner. He said that he appreciated Commissioner Shaffley's steadfast leadership and professionalism. Commissioner Markstrom noted that Executive Director Kyle Heaton was not present at the meeting and that his last day at the Port is December 31, 2025. He thanked Kyle Heaton for his contributions to the Port and the community. He said that the community's economic impact under Kyle Heaton's tenure was undeniable through his capabilities in development, working with clients, and bringing businesses to the community. He noted that when the coal mine shut down in 2006 it was a scary time for the community, but Kyle Heaton and the previous Commissioners stepped up carried the torch bringing a lot of businesses and jobs to the community. Commissioner Markstrom said he was looking forward to seeing what the Port can achieve in the future.

Commissioner Shaffley reported that she attended the UNFI tour and noted how impressive it was. She said that UNFI was 70% automated with zero job losses, only changes to job duties from picking items and order gathering to mechanics, robotics, computer technicians, and forklift operators. She said the facility was extremely clean. UNFI has 570 employees with 35

job openings working 4-10 shifts. She also said the company has over 1,700 volunteer hours in 2025 cleaning up roads, has donated over 1.7 million pounds of food to area food banks, and are a huge asset to the community. She also reported that the first wall came up at the Logistics Property Company's project site. Commissioner Shaffley stated that she felt honored to serve the community for the previous 10 years. She thanked Port staff for their hard work and help to the Port. She said she had learned a lot from the knowledge and patience of Kyle Heaton, Amy Graber, and Erin Maloney over her tenure. She thanked her fellow Commissioners for their leadership and expertise they have given to the Port. She was proud of the accomplishments the Port team has brought to the community through jobs, increased tax base, new retail businesses, community involvement, flood mitigation, and a financially stable and growing Port.

7) **Executive Session:** Commissioner Markstrom adjourned the meeting to executive session to evaluate a complaint pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(f) at 3:32 p.m. He expected the executive session to reconvene at 4:02 p.m. with no decisions likely.

8) **Executive Session Extension:** Commissioner Markstrom informed the public that executive session is extended and would reconvene at 4:12 p.m. with no decisions likely.

9) **Reconvene:** Commissioner Markstrom reconvened the meeting at 4:12 p.m.

10) **Adjourn:** Commissioner Shaffley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:12 p.m. Commissioner Lahmann seconded the motion. The motion carried.

COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER