



*Maryland Port Administration
Open Session Meeting Minutes, #424
Tuesday, January 6, 2026*

MEETING DATE & LOCATION

The Four Hundred and Twenty-Fourth Session of the Maryland Port Commission was called to order at 9:04 a.m. on January 6, 2026, by Acting Secretary, Samantha Biddle. The Commission met in Open Session from 9:04 a.m. until 9:44 a.m. in the Stanton Room, 20th floor, World Trade Center, 401 E. Pratt Street, Baltimore, MD 21202.

ATTENDANCE

Chairman and Officials:

Acting Secretary Biddle and Commissioners Barber*, Brewer, Neuman*, Richardson, Roberts, and Webb.

Executive Members:

Jonathan Daniels (Executive Director), Brian Miller (Deputy Executive Director, Operations & Logistics), Robert Munroe (Deputy Executive Director, Administration and Environment), Matthew Wypyski (Deputy Executive Director, Commercial Development).

Directors:

Bradley Smith (Director of Maritime Commercial Management & Strategic Initiatives), Cindy Burman (Director of Cruise Marketing and Business Services), Dominic Scurti (Director of Planning), Holly Miller (Director, Office of Navigation, Innovation & Stewardship), Jennifer Guthrie (Director of the Office of Government Relations and External Affairs), John Boden (Director of Human Resources), Kathleen Pickett-Bowen (Director of Security), Melody Countess (Chief Financial Officer & Treasurer), Richard Scher (Director of Communications), Ryan Barry (Director of Operations), Steve Johnson (Director of Engineering), Tracy Pinder (Director of Internal Audit), Trisha O'Neal (Acting Director of Procurement), William Richardson (Director of the Environment), Phil Whaling (Assistant Attorney General, Deputy Principal Counsel).

Affiliates:

Mary Kay Radford (Executive Finance Manager).

Staff:

Marvis Harden (Special Assistant to the Executive Director), Krystal Jones (Executive Office), and Paul Wainaina (Office of Information Security and Technology).

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Richardson moved to approve the Open Session Minutes of the Four Hundred and Twenty-Third Maryland Port Commission (MPC) meeting. Commissioner Brewer seconded the motion, and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the Open Session Minutes.

*Attended via Teams/phone

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE, Jonathan Daniels, Executive Director

Mr. Daniels welcomed the new year, expressed appreciation for the staff and leaders who were key to the accomplishments of 2025, and conveyed optimism for a successful year in 2026.

Mr. Daniels reported a strong rebound in cargo for 2025. Most major commodities, including automobiles, containers, and roll-on/roll-off machinery increased over 2024 levels. Container volumes in 2025 surpassed those of 2023, exceeding the prior record pace.

Mr. Daniels highlighted the major accomplishments of 2025, starting with Cruise. Carnival Cruise Line, the world's largest cruise line, will continue serving the Port of Baltimore under its latest five-year contract, which has a five-year renewal option, making it potentially a 10-year agreement. Carnival has maintained a presence in Maryland since 2004. MPA is also working with Royal Caribbean Cruise Line (RCL) on a new long-term seasonal service and is looking to fill additional port-of-call slots with luxury brands. *Ponant* is expected to arrive in October 2026 as part of the America 250 Year Celebration.

MPA's public terminals received a top security grade for the 16th consecutive year from the United States Coast Guard (USCG). The comprehensive USCG review included an assessment of MPA's cyber and physical security initiatives and programs. Mr. Daniels congratulated the MPA Security Team, which was echoed by the Commissioners and Acting Secretary Biddle.

The Port of Baltimore (POB) welcomed the Evergreen Ever Model, a container ship able to accommodate 15,372 twenty-foot-long containers, the second largest vessel to ever call on the port.

The Howard Street Tunnel portion of the clearance project was completed in September 2025, with a double-stack train passing through the renovated tunnel, originally built in 1895. The full project is expected to be on-line in April 2026, allowing the POB to handle an additional 160,000 containers annually and creating approximately 13,000 new jobs.

In partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MPA helped secure \$72 million in federal design and construction funding for the Mid-Chesapeake Bay Environmental Restoration Project. The project will use sediment dredged from the POB shipping channels to rebuild James and Barren Islands on Maryland's Eastern Shore, supporting the ongoing environmental restoration program. Mr. Daniels credited the success of this effort to Holly Miller and her team.

Mr. Daniels congratulated MPA's Communications Department for its success in communicating MPA's successes to a continuously expanding audience and for its recognition by the American Association of Port Authorities which awarded its annual Lighthouse Award in October 2025 to Communications for their communications strategy and delivery.

Mr. Daniels thanked Acting Secretary Biddle for her ongoing support in her current role and her strong leadership since Secretary Wiedefeld stepped down. Acting Secretary Biddle expressed her gratitude, stated that change is inevitable and thanked Mr. Daniels for his leadership.

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS OVERVIEW, Jennifer Guthrie

Jennifer Guthrie, Director of the Office of Government Relations and External Affairs, provided an overview of the Office of Government Relations and a look ahead at the upcoming legislative session. The Office works to increase engagement and advance funding and policy initiatives of the MPA and greater Port of Baltimore.

In 2025, the MPA engaged with elected officials from all levels of government, including members of Congress. Ms. Guthrie emphasized getting legislators out to see the Port and the sites overseen by the Dredged Material Management Program provides important context to the information MPA regularly conveys to them. The Office of Government Relations plays a key role in engaging industry groups, labor unions, and Port businesses, thereby cultivating an advocacy network among port-related sectors. Ms. Guthrie provided statistics on the number of legislators, international delegations and diplomats hosted during 2025, which included 154 diplomats, students, and representatives from 39 countries across six continents. These meetings are important for sharing ideas, best practices, and establishing a connection. Ms. Guthrie recognized the MPA Operations, Security and Communications departments for their critical work in making the many port visits possible and successful.

Ms. Guthrie discussed the 2025 legislative session in Annapolis and reporting requirements outlined in the Joint Chairmen's Report. She also discussed federal developments, including the passage of the Water Resources and Development Act of 2024 and the inclusion of \$187.9 million in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' fiscal year 2025 Budget and Work Plan related to the federal channels and joint projects with the MPA.

Ms. Guthrie noted that the legislative session in Annapolis begins on January 14, 2026, with MPA budget hearings set for February 13, 2026, in the Senate and February 16, 2026, in the House. She welcomed the attendance of the Port Commissioners at the hearings.

Regarding federal legislation, the MPA is working on requests for the next reauthorization of the Water Resources and Development Act and updating federal appropriations requests as part of MPA's advocacy efforts in Washington, D.C. Ms. Guthrie and Mr. Daniels advised that updates on the legislative session will be provided to the Commission.

At the local level, Ms. Guthrie concluded by emphasizing the importance of the Maritime Industrial Overlay zoning district in Baltimore City which protects the maritime industrial activities and areas from encroachment by residential areas. Protecting the existing vital truck routes leading to and from the POB are also important to the long-term health of the Port.

Commissioner Neuman recognized the impressive amount of work done by the Office of Government Relations with only one staff member, Ms. Guthrie.

VOTE TO CLOSE MEETING

At 9:54 a.m., in accordance with the State General Provisions Article, 3-305(b)(4) of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Commissioner Roberts moved that the Commission meet in Closed Session, Commissioner Webb seconded and the motion was approved unanimously. See attached Closing Statement. The Commission met in Closed Session from 9:53 a.m. until 10:54 a.m. Acting Secretary Biddle, Commissioners Barber*, Brewer, Neuman*, Richardson, Roberts, and Webb, and Jonathan Daniels (Executive Director), Brian Miller (Deputy Executive Director, Operations & Logistics), Robert Munroe (Deputy Executive Director, Administration and Environment), Matthew Wypyski (Deputy Executive Director, Commercial Development), Phil Whaling (Assistant Attorney General, Deputy Principal Counsel), Melody Countess (Chief Financial Officer & Treasurer), Mary Kay Radford (Executive Finance Manager), and Marvis Harden (Special Assistant to the Executive Director), were present for the closed session.

The following topics were discussed in the closed session:

State General Provisions Article Citation #	Topics Discussed
§ 3-305(b)(4)	MPA revenues and proposal for a business to locate, expand, or remain in the State.

Mary Kay Radford, Executive Finance Manager, discussed MPA 2025 revenues, including revenues for North Locust Point.

Commissioner Richardson made a motion to move out of the closed session, seconded by Commissioner Webb and approved unanimously by the Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Roberts made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Brewer. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:54 a.m.