

**Maryland Port Commission**  
**Open Session Minutes**  
**January 9, 2024**

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The Four Hundred and Fourth Session of the Maryland Port Commission was called to order at 8:33 a.m. by Secretary of Transportation Paul J. Wiedefeld. The Commission met in Open Session from 8:33 a.m. until 9:03 a.m. in the Stanton Room, 20<sup>th</sup> floor, World Trade Center, 401 E. Pratt Street, Baltimore, MD 21202.

**Present:** Secretary Wiedefeld and Commissioners Barber (via telephone), Dandy, McDonald, Richardson (via telephone), Roberts, Webb and Commerce Secretary Kevin Anderson (*ex-officio*).

**Staff:** Samantha Biddle (MDOT Deputy Secretary), Brian Miller (Interim Acting Executive Director), Robert Munroe (Deputy Executive Director, Administration and Environment), Philip Whaling (Assistant Attorney General and Principal Counsel), Richard Scher (Director of Communications), Dominic Scurti (Director of Planning), Ryan Barry (Director of Operations), Holly Miller (Director of Harbor Development), Steve Johnson (Director of Engineering), Richard Powers (Director of Business Development), Bradley Smith (Director of Maritime Commercial Management & Strategic Initiatives), Kathleen Pickett (Director of Security), Wonza Spann-Nicholas (Director of Finance), Jennifer Guthrie (Director of Office of Government Relations and External Affairs), William Richardson (Director of the Environment), John Boden (Director of Human Resources), John Arnold (Director of Internal Audits), Cindy Burman (Deputy Director of Business Development and Cruise), John Thornton (General Manager of Procurement), Trisha O’Neal (Deputy Manager, Procurement), Mark Riesett (Procurement Supervisor, Construction/AE), Jayson Knott (Maryland Department of Commerce Senior Director, Office of Business Development), Paul Wainana (Office of Information Security and Technology), and Krystal Jones (Executive Office).

**Minutes of the Four Hundred and Third Closed Session and Open Session Meeting**

Commissioner McDonald moved to approve the Closed Session and Open Session Minutes of the Four Hundred and Third Port Commission meeting. Commissioner Roberts seconded the motion. The Commission then voted unanimously to approve the Closed and Open Session Minutes.

**Interim Acting Executive Director, Brian Miller’s Update**

Brian Miller provided an update on recent activities at the Port of Baltimore. Mr. Miller stated that this would be his last Maryland Port Commission meeting as the Interim Acting Executive Director. Jonathan Daniels, currently the Executive Director of Port Everglades, will start as the Executive Director of the Maryland Port Administration on February 5, 2024.

Mr. Miller thanked the MPA staff for the incredible support he has received during the last six months in his role leading the agency. It has been a challenging and great experience personally

and the support of the MPA executive leadership team has been a major contributing factor. When Secretary Wiedefeld asked him to take this role, one of Mr. Miller's first goals was to improve the workplace culture of the MPA which has been accomplished. During this time, the MPA held several agency-wide employee events that fostered personal interactions across the agency and recognized employee contributions.

### Cargo Update

Mr. Miller reported that 2023 has been a very good year for the Port. MPA is finalizing end-of-year cargo numbers; early indications are that MPA will be setting new records for key commodities.

MPA is also moving forward with some exciting projects that will pay dividends for decades to come such as the Howard Street Tunnel reconstruction project and the Mid-Chesapeake Bay Island Ecosystem Restoration (Mid-Bay) Project.

### Budget

Mr. Miller reported that MPA faces significant budget issues and is working closely with MDOT to make the necessary adjustments to address the fiscal challenge.

### Closing Remarks

Finally, Mr. Miller thanked Secretary Wiedefeld for giving him the opportunity to lead the organization, and he thanked the members of the Maryland Port Commission for their support and guidance. Secretary Wiedefeld thanked Mr. Miller for assuming the role of Interim Acting Executive Director and leading the agency through this time of transition.

### **MPA Office of Human Resources Overview, John Boden, Director of Human Resources**

John Boden provided an overview of the re-established MPA Office of Human Resources. The MPA maintained its own Human Resources Office until 2017, when most functions of the office were transitioned to the Maryland Department of Transportation (MPA's parent agency) in a pilot program for MDOT to provide Human Resource services to the MPA, a program that was designated to eventually roll out to MDOT's other modes. In 2022, MDOT decided to end the pilot program and return the Human Resources responsibilities back to the MPA.

John Boden started as the MPA Director of Human Resources in June 2023. His task was to fully staff the HR department through which the full complement of Human Resources services will be provided to the MPA. The HR department has developed a mission statement to guide the department's operations.

### Mission Statement

“The goal of the Office of Human Resources is to provide its internal customers (MPA Employees) with efficient, accurate, and solution-oriented service while being an innovative leader within the public sector for Human Resources. The office will strive to remain highly knowledgeable on the resources available to MPA Employees and to utilize policies, procedures,

and resources to maximize human capital. Its core values include honesty, communication, follow-through, fairness, and diversity.”

### Organization

Mr. Boden reported that, in six months, HR has filled three critical internal positions which cover most of the functional areas of the office. The main areas of responsibility of the Office of Human Resources are 1) Employer Employee Relations and Employee Services, 2) Classification, Compensation, and Recruitment, and 3) Organizational Development. The HR office has hired talented, skilled managers for areas (1) and (2), and it is in the process of recruiting an organizational development officer.

The Employer Employee Relations and Employee Services functional area handles: employee benefits and leave, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and MDCares (state provided employee support services and counseling programs), employee onboarding, progressive discipline, and grievances. Current major projects in this area include training for managers on progressive discipline and Grievance Conference Officer hearing training, and grievance Q&A development for employees.

The Classification, Compensation, and Recruitment functional area handles classifications for positions, full cycle recruitment, salary negotiation, vacancy strategy, acting capacity, bi-lingual pay, and competitive reclassifications. Current major projects include a revamp of recruitment tracking and process, and hiring manager training.

The Organizational Development (OD) functional area handles tuition reimbursement and continued development programs, needs analysis and strategic direction for organizational development, reviewing options for outsourcing, creation of development tools and trainings, assisting in delivering/developing process trainings. The major projects include needs analysis for the 2024/2025 Strategic Plan, revamping communication for Tuition Reimbursement and Continued Development Programs, and communication for existing resources.

### Accomplishments (First Six Months)

In the first six months of the reestablishment of the office, HR has: reduced the vacancy rate by 50% (currently standing at 7.4%), filled three critical internal positions, created new Delegation of Authority, attended outreach events, established better recruitment tracking and communication, assisted management in resetting expectations, enhanced communication surrounding performance appraisals and open enrollment, began utilizing self-scheduling for interviewing, and increased autonomy for recruitment and classification/compensation processes.

### Major Goals and Expectations for 2024 and Beyond

The 2024 goals of the HR Office include leader and manager development, enhancing organizational culture, change management and career development, enhancing internal mobility, and promoting DEI (Diversity Equity and Inclusion). Beyond 2024, the Office’s goals include developing a career pathways program, succession planning, and performance appraisal training.

Commissioner Barber congratulated Mr. Boden on accomplishing so much in six months and noted that the revitalized Human Resources Office positions the MPA for success in the future. Mr. Miller commended Mr. Boden and Robert Munroe for rebuilding the MPA Office of Human Resources. Secretary Wiedefeld noted that it requires a focused effort to support the development of employees and be responsive to them. This kind of effort enables employees to plan their careers and makes working for a State agency more appealing.

### **Contract for Approval, John Thornton, General Manager, Procurement**

John Thornton, General Manager, Procurement, introduced Mark Riesett, Procurement Supervisor, Construction/AE, to present the following contract to the Maryland Port Commission for approval:

1. Contract #522089 – World Trade Center (WTC) Elevator Modernization; Elcon Enterprises, Inc., dba Elevator Control Services, Upper Marlboro, Maryland; \$6,762,935. Term: 572 workdays from Notice to Proceed.
- After discussion, a motion to approve Contract #522089 was made by Commissioner Dandy, seconded by Commissioner Roberts, and approved unanimously by the Commission.

John Thornton introduced Trisha O’Neal, Deputy Manager, Procurement, to present the following contract to the Maryland Port Commission for approval:

2. Contract #219031-IT, Modification No. 2 – Programming Support Services [for the Port Operations and Security System (POSS) and other MPA information technology systems and projects]; Advanced Analytical Systems, Inc., Chantilly, Virginia; \$4,275,527. Modification Term: Add three resources to the contract for the period of February 15, 2024 – September 30, 2024, and exercise the first and only five-year renewal option (including the additional three resources) for the period of October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2029.
- After discussion, a motion to approve Modification No. 2 for Contract #219031-IT was made by Commissioner McDonald, seconded by Commissioner Webb, and approved unanimously by the Commission.

### **Maryland Department of Commerce Secretary, Kevin Anderson**

Secretary Kevin Anderson, Maryland Department of Commerce, and an ex-officio member of the Maryland Port Commission, stated that the Governor recognizes that the Port of Baltimore is an economic engine and critical to moving Maryland’s economy forward. Secretary Anderson highlighted the importance of the Port servicing the cargo needs of the Midwest region of the country, in addition to the Baltimore-DC metro area. He stated that the Port and Maryland are rich with assets and improved strategies are needed to take full advantage of those assets. The goal of the State of Maryland is to grow the economy to benefit all its citizens, especially those in rural and urban communities. The State’s GDP needs to grow, and to do so will require the scaling up of businesses.

Secretary Wiedefeld stated that as he and Secretary Anderson travel throughout the State, they see the importance of the Port. Jayson Knott, Maryland Department of Commerce Senior Director, Office of Business Development, commented that the Port is a major selling point as they encourage businesses to locate in Maryland. MPA and Commerce work closely together; Mr. Knott highlighted the work of Richard Powers, Director, MPA Business Development, Nicholas Porter, MPA Manager, Container Business Development, and Joseph Marecki, MPA Manager, Roll-on/Roll-off Cargo, in joint business development efforts with Commerce.

**Move into Closed Session**

At 9:03 a.m., in accordance with State General Provisions Article, Sections 3-305(b)(1)(i)(ii) of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Commissioner Dandy moved that the Commission meet in Closed Session, and Commissioner Roberts seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. See attached Closing Statement. The Commission met in Closed Session from 9:03 a.m. until 9:19 a.m. Secretary Wiedefeld and Commissioners Barber (via telephone), Dandy, McDonald, Richardson (via telephone), Roberts, Webb, and Commerce Secretary Kevin Anderson (*ex-officio*), Samantha Biddle (MDOT Deputy Secretary), and MPA Staff Krystal Jones (Executive Office) were present for the closed session.

The following topics were discussed in closed session:

<b>State General Provisions Article Citation #</b>	<b>Topics Discussed</b>
§ 3-305(b)(1)(i)(ii)	Executive Search Process

No actions were taken in the closed session. The closed session adjourned at 9:19 a.m.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner McDonald and seconded by Commissioner Roberts. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:19 a.m.