

**Maryland Port Commission**  
**Open Session Minutes**  
**November 7, 2023**

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The Four Hundred and Second Session of the Maryland Port Commission was called to order at 9:01 a.m. by Secretary of Transportation Paul J. Wiedefeld. The Commission met in Open Session from 9:01 a.m. until 9:47 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, Dandy, McDonald, Richardson, Roberts (via telephone) and Webb.

**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 Marketing), Bradley Smith (Director of Maritime Commercial Management & Strategic Initiatives), Kathleen Pickett (Director of Security), 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), Mary Kay Radford (Finance Manager), John Thornton (General Manager of Procurement), Ken Kolarik (Office of Information Security and Technology), and Krystal Jones (Executive Office).

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

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

**Port of Baltimore Official Naming Legislation, Commissioner David Richardson**

Commissioner David Richardson discussed the introduction of legislation to the Maryland General Assembly to officially name the Port of Baltimore after former Congresswoman, Helen Delich Bentley. The Port of Baltimore was designated as the Helen Delich Bentley Port of Baltimore in 2006 by Executive Order of then Governor Robert Ehrlich. Commissioner Richardson thought that it would be a worthy tribute to Mrs. Bentley to officially name the Port after her in honor of what would have been her one hundredth birthday in November 2023. Mrs. Bentley, who was considered the “Mother of the Port,” was a great advocate for the Port of Baltimore. The official designation in legislation would recognize her sustained and ardent support of the Port of Baltimore and her many accomplishments, including being the first female Chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission.

## **Interim Acting Executive Director, Brian Miller's Update**

Brian Miller, Interim Acting Executive Director, thanked the entire MPA team for their contributions and the outstanding jobs that they have done. This has been a busy fall season so far and the Maryland Port Administration has good news that transcends all its departments.

### **Cargo Update**

MPA's final third quarter cargo numbers will be available later this week, but the latest numbers through August continue to show that the MPA is having a very strong 2023 at its public terminals. Roll-on/Roll-off cargo is up 28 percent. Containers are up 6 percent. Overall general cargo is up three percent. These numbers are increases over last year's record numbers for each of those cargos.

### **Cruise Update**

MPA's cruise business continues to rebound very strongly from the overall cruise industry shutdown due to the pandemic. The newest cruise line calling on the Port of Baltimore, Norwegian Cruise Line, is operating a fall and winter schedule that is going well. NCL will return next fall. Carnival and Royal Caribbean continue to sail year-round schedules from Baltimore. All three of MPA's cruise lines are sailing at full capacity.

### **Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) Tour**

The Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) tour season is in full swing. Deputy Executive Director Bob Munroe will join Secretary Wiedefeld later today for the Talbot County CTP meeting. The annual CTP meeting tour involves MDOT and its modal agencies meeting with Maryland's counties and Baltimore City to discuss the state of transportation in Maryland and to provide an outlook on the capital budget for transportation projects for the next six years. This tour presented the Draft FY2024-FY2029 Consolidated Transportation Program Report to the local municipalities. Mr. Miller recently spoke at the Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Harford County CTP meetings.

One of the items that Mr. Munroe will discuss at the Talbot CTP meeting is the Poplar Island Ecosystem Restoration Project, and the Mid-Chesapeake Bay Ecosystem Restoration Project, or Mid-Bay, which will restore James and Barren Islands. Poplar Island is located in Talbot County, while the Mid-Bay islands are located in neighboring Dorchester County. Holly Miller, Director of Harbor Development, and MPA's Harbor Development team work very closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on both projects which use, or in the case of the Mid-Bay project, will use dredged material from the Chesapeake Bay in the restoration of the islands.

Poplar Island will continue receiving dredged sediment from Chesapeake Bay shipping channels until approximately 2032 when Mid-Bay will assume the role as the main recipient of dredged material. MPA has a very comprehensive community outreach program in association with our dredging projects, including hosting more than 3,000 participants, including many students, for tours, birding events, and other outreach.

## Community and Port Industry Outreach

An example of MPA's community outreach is Mr. Munroe's recent attendance at the unveiling of a mural in the St. Helena community of Dundalk. St. Helena has been home to Port workers for generations and the mural that was unveiled includes an image of the Port of Baltimore. MPA continues to communicate and work frequently with St. Helena and other local residential areas on port issues that are important to them.

Constant communication and collaboration also apply to truckers at the Port of Baltimore. Mr. Miller stated that one of the things that he has done in his interim acting role has been to communicate frequently with the Maryland Motor Truck Association thereby sustaining and building on this important relationship. The Port of Baltimore is a predominately truck-oriented port, so it is imperative to have strong and good working relationships with our trucking community.

## MPA Office of Security

MPA's Security Director Kathleen Pickett has been doing a terrific job since she started in July of this year. Ms. Pickett has given presentations to the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia, and recently gave a presentation in Norfolk, Virginia as part of a maritime security roundtable. Also, MPA has a very capable staff within the MPA Office of Security who support Ms. Pickett. The Port and its security are in very capable hands.

## **Port of Baltimore and MPA Cargo Volumes, Dominic Scurti, Director, Planning**

At the last Commission meeting, Commissioner Richardson had asked for a complete "snapshot" of all commodities at the Maryland Port Administration from 2019 vs. 2023 including cruise data, which he believed would provide the Commission with a better overall view of business at the MPA. Commissioner Richardson also asked to view the status of commodities for the same timeframe within the entire Port of Baltimore (public terminals and private terminals). In response to his request, Dominic Scurti, Director of Planning, presented the Commission with data on cargo volumes at the MPA and within the greater Port of Baltimore.

Mr. Scurti reported that the Port of Baltimore reported record cargo numbers in 2019. Those numbers decreased during the pandemic and, since then, the numbers are back to pre-pandemic levels, and in some cases, will exceed the pre-pandemic records.

## Vessel Arrivals to Port of Baltimore

The Port of Baltimore is on pace to receive 2,100+ vessels and handle over 50 million tons of foreign cargo in 2023. The Port of Baltimore received nearly 2100 vessels in 2022 and handled 43.23 million tons of foreign cargo in 2022. These numbers include both public and private terminals.

## MPA/Port of Baltimore Annual Cargo

Port of Baltimore has handled 34.7 million tons of foreign cargo as of August 2023. MPA general cargo stands at 7.8 million tons handled as of August 2023. Port of Baltimore foreign

cargo handled was 43.2 million tons in 2022. MPA general cargo handled was 11.4 million tons in 2022. Port of Baltimore domestic cargo handled was 4.5 million tons in 2021, the last year in which numbers are available.

### Coal Exports

Coal is the largest commodity at the Port of Baltimore. Prior to the pandemic, 2019 was a record year for coal exports with 21,534,243 million tons handled. This current year, 2023, is on pace to surpass that record. As of August 2023, the number of tons handled is 17,853,224. The numbers from 2022 are down due to the explosion at the CSX facility in Curtis Bay in December 2021.

### Sugar Imports

Sugar is a major commodity at the Port of Baltimore. Sugar imports saw a significant decrease during the pandemic, in 2020 and 2021, but they rose back to pre-pandemic levels in 2022. Sugar imports for 2023 are running slightly ahead of 2022 numbers which resulted in 759,941 tons handled. Current numbers are 536,540 tons as of August 2023.

### Salt Imports

Salt imports are dependent upon the weather. Imports for 2023 (536,540 tons) are running behind 2022 (1,078,380 tons) as last year's winter was benign with little impactful precipitation.

### Gypsum Imports

Baltimore's gypsum imports are running ahead of 2022 imports (916,917 tons). Gypsum imports for 2023 stand at 796,648 as of August 2023. Gypsum is used to make fertilizer, plaster and drywall.

### Alumina Imports

Alumina imports through the Hawkins Point terminal have remained flat and are tracking slightly behind 2022 volumes. There were 326,894 tons handled in 2022. Current volumes are 195,479 tons as of August 2023.

### POB Automobiles

Overall, automobiles have not returned to pre-pandemic levels though they rebounded in 2022. Imports for 2022 stand at 573,831 units handled, while exports stand at 176,332 for 2022.

### MPA General Cargo

2022 was a record year for MPA general cargo with 11,363,812 tons handled. MPA is on pace to surpass that in 2023. General cargo includes breakbulk, steel, forest products, Roll-on/Roll-off cargo, automobiles and containers.

## MPA Containers

The total container volumes at the MPA Terminals are up 6% from 2022 year-to-date through August. In 2022, there were 535,899 import laden containers, 289,120 export laden containers, and 243,209 export empty containers moved through the Port. Currently, there are 368,800 import laden containers, 217,485 export laden containers, 157,559 export empty containers, as of August 2023.

## MPA Automobiles

Since 2018, MPA has seen some of the automotive business shift from the MPA's public terminals to private terminals within the Port of Baltimore. Fiat/Jeep moved over to AMPORTS' private terminal, while BMW relocated to Tradepoint Atlantic. The Port of Baltimore has maintained the automotive business, it's just that some of the business has moved from MPA terminals to private terminals.

The MPA saw 300,947 imported units at its public terminals in 2022, and 125,215 exported units. Current volumes stand at 182,393 imported units as of August 2023, and 72,264 exported units.

Regarding this shift in the automotive sector at the Port, Rick Powers, Director of Marketing, commented that the MPA markets and promotes the entire Port of Baltimore. This shift provides the MPA with more space at its public terminals which allows the MPA to pursue other business.

## MPA Roll-on/Roll-off Cargo

2022 was the second-best year on record for Roll-on/Roll-off cargo tonnage at MPA public terminals. The MPA saw 762,111 import tons handled in 2022, and 316,834 export tons. MPA Roll-on/Roll-off tonnage is up 28% as of August 2023. Current volumes stand at 695,103 import tons handled as of August 2023, with 223,504 export tons handled.

## MPA Imported Forest Products

MPA public terminals experienced a record year in 2022 for import tons of paper handling: 831,309 tons. Current volumes stand at 463,514 year-to-date.

## Comments

Commissioner Richardson was appreciative of the presentation and stated that it was a great report.

## **Cruise Volume Activity, Cindy Burman, Deputy Director, Cruise and Business Development**

At the last Commission meeting, Commissioner Richardson asked about the status of cruises at the Port of Baltimore post-pandemic versus pre-pandemic. Secretary Wiedefeld asked about data on the available seats versus the filling of seats for cruises out of Baltimore, and metrics for the availability of seats versus actual bookings. In response to those requests, Cindy Burman,

Deputy Director of Business Development and Cruise, gave a presentation on cruise volume activity at Cruise Maryland, the MPA's cruise terminal at the Port of Baltimore.

### Cruise Ship Capacity

The capacity of the cruise ships which homeport out of Baltimore is:

#### **Royal Caribbean Vision of the Seas**

- 1018 cabins
- 2036 passengers (Double Occupancy)
- 2514 passengers (Maximum)

#### **Carnival Legend**

- 1062 cabins
- 2124 passengers (Double Occupancy)
- 2549 passengers (Maximum)

#### **Norwegian Sky**

- 1002 cabins
- 2004 passengers (Double Occupancy)
- 2405 passengers (Maximum)

#### **Norwegian Sun**

- 968 cabins
- 1936 passengers (Double Occupancy)
- 2323 passengers (Maximum)

Cruise lines determine their success by cabin capacity instead of the number of individual cruisers. They measure their capacity based on double occupancy rates. More than two passengers per cabin results in additional revenue for the cruise lines.

The MPA/Cruise Maryland measures its progress by the number of passengers and the number of cruise sailings scheduled.

### Total Number of Cruises

Cruising has rebounded to pre-pandemic levels with 98 cruises in 2022. There have been 63 cruises in 2023 through August. The cruise industry shut down during the pandemic, slowly opening back up in 2021. The schedule is full and active, and the ships are at full capacity.

Carnival and Royal Caribbean sail out of Baltimore year-round. Norwegian Cruise Line just began sailing out of Baltimore in September 2023 with a limited schedule. The numbers reflected in this update primarily focused on Carnival and Royal Caribbean.

### Number of Cruises per Cruise Line

There are 49 sailings on Carnival in 2023 and 45 on Royal Caribbean. There are six scheduled Port Calls where cruise ships include Baltimore as a destination stop on their itineraries. The Port Calls serve as a great economic impact for Baltimore and the region as the cruisers visit various attractions, generating revenue along the way.

There are fewer homeport sailings in 2023 as compared to 2022 because some of the scheduled sailings are longer in duration (journey cruises).

### Total Number of Passengers

2019 was a record year for total passengers with 471,123. There were 394,546 total passengers in 2022. There have been 292,797 total passengers through August 2023. MPA/Cruise Maryland expects the total passenger numbers in 2023 to be close to the 2019 numbers.

### Number of Passengers per Cruise Line

Carnival brought 213,257 passengers through Baltimore in 2022, while Royal Caribbean had 181,289 passengers. Royal Caribbean often has longer sailings than Carnival which accounts for the difference in passenger numbers. There were 158,806 passengers for Carnival as of August 2023, and 132,991 for Royal Caribbean.

### Total Number of Cars Parked

There were 45,470 cars parked in 2022, which exceeds the 2019 pre-pandemic number of 39,013. In 2022, the cars were parked longer. Currently, there have been 30,598 total cars parked as of August 2023.

### Number of Cars Parked per Cruise Line

Again, the numbers show that 2022 has outpaced the numbers from 2019. There were 24,653 cars parked for Carnival and 20,817 cars parked for Royal Caribbean in 2022. Currently, there have been 17,028 cars parked for Carnival and 13,570 cars parked for Royal Caribbean.

## **2024 Legislative Preview, Jennifer Guthrie, Director, Office of Government Relations and External Affairs**

Jennifer Guthrie gave the Commission a preview of upcoming legislation the MPA will have before the Maryland General Assembly in the 2024 legislative session. The draft MPA departmental bill amends the existing law establishing the Cox Creek Citizens Oversight Committee.

The purpose of the bill is to amend the composition and responsibilities of the Cox Creek Citizens Oversight Committee. The bill seeks to replace six obsolete (or inactive) member entities and update the responsibilities of the committee to allow for more coordination and collaboration with key stakeholders active in the area.

The benefits of the bill will be in the promotion of continued support for the long-term plan for dredged material management, specifically at the Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility (DMCF), and the encouragement of valuable and diverse citizen input and feedback on the development of the former Tronox property.

Ms. Guthrie stated that the bill also clarifies the role of the Committee. Mr. Munroe stated the language is being tailored to reflect that the Committee is an advisory body only and not a judicial body.

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

John Thornton, General Manager of Procurement, presented the following contract to the Maryland Port Commission for approval:

1. Contract #223016-S – Production of the *Port of Baltimore* Magazine, Media Two, LLC, dba Today Media Custom Communications; \$350,000. Term: January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2026 (Three Years with One (1) Two-Year Renewal Option).

After discussion, a motion to approve Contract #223016-S was made by Commissioner Richardson, seconded by Commissioner Barber, and approved unanimously by the Commission.

**Move into Closed Session**

At 9:47 a.m., in accordance with State General Provisions Article, Sections 3-305(b)(1)(i)(ii) and (4) of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Commissioner McDonald moved that the Commission meet in Closed Session, and Commissioner Barber seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. See attached Closing Statement. The Commission met in Closed Session from 9:47 a.m. until 10:06 a.m. Secretary Wiedefeld and Commissioners Barber, Dandy, McDonald, Richardson, Roberts (via telephone), and Webb, and Brian Miller (Interim Acting Executive Director), Robert Munroe (Deputy Executive Director, Administration and Environment), Philip Whaling (Assistant Attorney General and Principal Counsel), and MPA Staff Krystal Jones (Executive Office) were present for the closed session. Brian Miller (Interim Acting Executive Director), Robert Munroe (Deputy Executive Director, Administration and Environment), and Philip Whaling (Assistant Attorney General and Principal Counsel) were present in the closed session until they exited just prior to the Section 3-305(b)(1)(i)(ii) discussion on the Executive Search Process.

The following topics were discussed in closed session:

<b>State General Provisions Article Citation #</b>	<b>Topics Discussed</b>
§ 3-305(b)(4)	Sparrows Point Container Terminal
§ 3-305(b)(1)(i)(ii)	Executive Search Process

No actions were taken in the closed session. The closed session adjourned at 10:06 a.m.



## **Adjournment**

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Richardson and seconded by Commissioner Barber. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:06 a.m.