

# MISSISSIPPI PORT AUTHORITY

## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### REGULAR MEETING

**February 26, 2026**

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Minutes of the Mississippi State Port Authority Board of Commissioners Meeting, Thursday, February 26, 2026, at 2510 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1450, Gulfport, Mississippi at which the following Commissioners and staff were present:

Commissioners: Mark Loughman, President  
Robert J. Knesal, Vice-President  
Kathryn Dennis Spear, Secretary  
James Moody, Treasurer  
Cowles Symmes, Commissioner

Staff: Jon Nass, CEO  
Shawn Meyer, COO  
Jennifer Smith, Chief of Staff  
Kecia Laneaux, Executive Affairs Manager  
James Buras, Port Engineer  
Errol LaRue, Counsel  
Todd Harman, Director of Finance  
Matt Gabbett, Director of Operations  
Gary Pitcovich, Assistant Director of Operations  
Teresa Ehrlich, Project Manager  
Cindy Ford, Contract/Administrative Assistant  
KeCheira Shelby, Principal Accountant  
Michelle Freeman, Receivables/Financial Analyst  
Melissa Scallan, Director of Communications & Marketing  
Kristen Bellati, Marketing & Public Relations Specialist  
Samantha Gundlach, Communication & Marketing Assoc.

Ben Stone, Legal Counsel

Others: Philip Carter, MDA  
Bill Cork, MDA  
Dax Alexander, Brown, Mitchell & Alexander  
Al Curtis, HDR  
Trey Scott Mauldin & Jenkins  
Joey Beattie, Gallagher

Chelsea Paige, Hilton Garden Inn Gulfport  
David Machado, MP Design Group  
Nick Moody, MP Design  
Max Barber, RWR

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Commissioner Loughman noted the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 a.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Loughman.

The invocation was given by Michelle Freeman, MSPA.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No public comments.

Trey Scott, Mauldin Jenkins, LLC presented the results of the FY25 audit.

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Commissioner Symmes moved to approve the Minutes from January 22, 2026, Board Meeting. Commissioner Moody seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Symmes moved to approve travel (March 15-17) – Nass to Boston, MA; (April 14-16) – Nass to Distrito Anhembi, Brazil; (April 20-22) – Nass to New Orleans, LA; (May 16-20) – Nass to Curacao; (May 26-29) – Nass to Los Cabos, Mexico. Commissioner Moody seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

*Commissioner Moody left the meeting.*

Commissioner Symmes moved to approve the disbursements for Equitable Financial Life Insurance Company (\$1,741.09) and Wright National Flood Insurance (\$1,916.00). Commissioner Knesal seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

*Commissioner Moody returned to the meeting.*

*Commissioner Loughman left the meeting.*

Commissioner Spear moved to approve the disbursement for Mississippi Power Company (\$143,646.35). Commissioner Symmes seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

*Commissioner Loughman returned to the meeting.*

*Commissioner Spear left the meeting.*

Commissioner Moody moved to approve the disbursement for D.N.P., Inc. (\$288,180.42). Commissioner Symmes seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

*Commissioner Spear returned to the meeting.*

Commissioner Symmes moved to approve the disbursements listed below except for Equitable Financial Life Insurance Co., Wright National Flood Insurance, Mississippi Power Company and D.N.P, Inc. Commissioner Moody seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

FINAL CHECKLIST FOR FEBRUARY 26, 2026			
BILLS FOR THE MONTHS OF JANUARY 2026 AND FEBRUARY 2026 APPROVED AND PAID FROM THE GROSS REVENUE FUND OF THE MS STATE PORT AUTHORITY AT GULFPORT			
CHK #	VENDOR	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
62802	Kentwood Springs	Drinking Water	579.04
62803	AFLAC	Employee Deductions	154.44
62804	AGJ Systems & Networks, Inc.	Server OS Upgrades and Sage Install	15,050.12
62805	AirGas Gulf States	Acetylene, Oxygen and Argon Cylinders	412.02
62806	All Safe Technologies, LLC	Fire Alarm Monitoring	615.30
62807	Amazon Capital Services, INC.	Office Supplies, Receipt Scanners	1,612.80
62808	City of Gulfport	Water	14,183.02
62809	Consolidated Electrical Distributors, Inc	Maintenance Supplies	23,624.00
62810	C Spire Wireless	Cell Phone Services	1,396.06
62811	C Spire Wireless	Cell Phone Services	1,474.35

62812	C Spire Business Solutions	Cell Phone/Internet Services	1,827.03
62813	Deluxe Cleaners, Inc.	Tablecloths Cleaning	124.80
62814	DNA Underground, LLC	Emergency Water Repair	2,350.00
62815	D.N.P., Inc.	24-EN-05 Retainage	288,180.42
62816	DSD Associates, Inc.	Set Up Fringe Benefit Codes	50.00
62817	Equitable Financial Life Insurance Co.	Employee Deductions	1,741.09
62818	Express Services, Inc.	Temp Employee	255.00
62819	Federal Express Corp.	Express Mail Services	16.98
62820	Fuelman	Fuel for MSPA Vehicles	703.14
62821	Grainger, Inc.	Maintenance Supplies	72.93
62822	Great Southern Club	Monthly Dues	315.79
62823	Whitney Bank Divisional Property	September Lease for Suite 1450	28,494.10
62824	John Hood	Reimbursement	107.33
62825	Imperial Bag & Paper Co., LLC	Janitorial Supplies	508.79
62826	MS State Treasurer Fund 3360900000	Telephone	114.87
62828	KLDiscovery Ontrack, LLC	Professional Services	1,477.00
62829	Robert J. Knesal	Per Diem	455.50
62830	Mark P. Loughman	Per Diem	120.00
62831	Lowe's Home Center, Inc.	Maintenance Supplies	974.64
62832	Daniel Malicoat	Reimbursement	50.18
62833	Maritime Defense Strategy, LLC	Maritime Defense Strategy Consulting Services	3,650.00
62834	Mark Dunning Industries, Inc.	Dump Services	1,260.00
62835	Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC	Audit Services	25,000.00
62836	Mississippi Business Alliance, Inc.	Membership Dues	402.63
62837	James Moody	Per Diem	80.00
62838	MS Power Company	Electricity	143,646.35
62839	NAVEX Global, Inc.	Subscription	2,546.87
62840	Pass Road Mini Storage, LLC	Storage Unit Rent	593.00
62841	Gary Pitcovich	Reimbursement	240.69
62842	PRAM	Membership Dues	190.00
62843	Quadient Leasing USA Inc	Postage Machine Lease	195.57
62844	Redd Pest Solutions	Pest Control Services	387.00
62845	RJ Young Company, Inc.	Printer Maintenance	650.00
62846	Rotary Club of Gulfport	Membership Dues	285.00
62847	Stericycle, Inc.	Document Shredding Services	192.38
62848	Munro Products, Inc.	Maintenance Supplies	780.00
62849	Southern Admin. and Benefits	Monthly Service Fee	208.00
62850	Southern Admin. and Benefits	Monthly Service Fee	208.00
62851	Southern Admin. and Benefits	Monthly Service Fee	12,409.87
62852	Cowles Edgar Symmes	Per Diem	80.00
62853	The Focus Group	Website Update	1,215.00
62854	Southern Tire Mart, LLC	Tire Installation	1,124.35
62855	United Way of South MS, Inc.	Employee Deductions	135.00

62856	U.S. Bank	Legislative Reception Lodging, AAPA Flight	909.00
62857	U.S. Bank	Website Hosting, Subscription Renewals, Supplies-Ops	871.02
62858	Wavetop Solutions LCC	Leadership Training	12,250.19
62859	Wright National Flood Ins.	Insurance	1,916.00
62860	Zoro Tools, Inc.	Maintenance Supplies	641.71
			Total
			599,108.37
<b>TRANSFERS</b>			
ACH	Sage Software, Inc.	ERP License	10,023.75
ACH	Swetman Security Services, Inc.	Security Guard Services	104,731.95
ACH	Norma Jean Ladner Soroe	Transcription Services	364.48
ACH	Rotolo Consultants, Inc. dba RCI	Landscaping Services	1,240.60
ACH	SSA Gulf Inc.	Rent - Cotton Compress	1,800.00
ACH	Jon T. Nass	Reimbursement	613.70
ACH	South Mississippi Business Machines	Copier Maintenance	509.00
ACH	Portable Services, Inc	Portable Restroom Services	778.58
ACH	Kathryn Dennis Spear	Per Diem	80.00
ACH	Andrew Haines	Business Development and Consulting Services	23,917.00
ACH	Timeless Designs of Lucedale LLC	Interior Plant Maintenance	279.69
ACH	Melissa Scallan	Reimbursement	43.86
ACH	Aesir Services, Inc.	Environmental Online Consultants	500.00
ACH	Covenant Government Affairs, LLC	Professional Consulting Services	10,000.00
ACH	Madison Lodging, LLC	Legislative Reception Lodging	258.00
			Total
			754,248.98

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Commissioner Symmes moved to approve the Port User Licenses, pending receipt of all fees and insurance documents. Commissioner Knesal seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

The following items were approved:

NEW LICENSES:

Vendor: Liz & Nomie's Gourmet Eats, LLC

RENEWAL LICENSES:

Vendor: Mike Gartman Transfer Service  
U.S. Maritime Services, LLC

Steamship Agent: Nord-Sud Shipping Inc.

Commissioner Symmes moved to approve the following progress payments: Balch & Bingham (\$22,334.92), J.E. Borries, Inc. (\$254.56) and MP Design Group (\$145,080.31). Commissioner Moody seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Symmes moved to approve Change Order No. 1, final payment, retainage payment, and issuance of the Notice of Completion to J.E. Borries, Inc. for contract 26-EN-01 Pilots Boat Pier Extension. Commissioner Knesal seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Symmes moved to approve Change Order No. 1, Contract 25-EN-01 maintenance dredging for West Pier Berths 1-6 and East Pier Berths 1-3 to increase the contract amount by \$523,700.00 and extend the project by 245 calendar days for a total of 545 contractual days. The final contract amount will be \$5,810,355.00. Commissioner Moody seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Symmes moved to approve the first amendment to the standard contract agreement with SoftResources for ERP consulting services. The amendment incorporates the scope of implementation support services into the agreement and adds funding for those services. Commissioner Spear seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Spear moved to approve an amendment to MOU between MSPA and MDEQ for completion of geotechnical engineering work in the Federal Navigation Channel to Gulfport. The amendment changes the schedule for the work from 4 months to 6 months to account for contractor delays in mobilization. Commissioner Symmes seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Symmes moved to approve Work Order No. 21 for an amount not to exceed \$120,140.00 for engineering services of the East Pier under wharf concrete repairs as outlined in MP Design Group’s proposal. All work is to be billed and paid in accordance with the rates in Amendment No. 1 to Contract 23-EN-01. Commissioner Knesal seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Symmes moved to approve issuing a purchase order to J. Allen Ford in the amount of \$59,717.00 for the purchase of a white 2025 Ford Transit 15-passenger van and to issue a check in the same amount to J. Allen Ford for full payment upon satisfactory delivery. Two quotes have been provided for van purchase. Commissioner Moody seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Symmes moved to approve Work Order No. 5 with HDR Engineering, Inc. under Contract 24-EN-04 for Strategic Master Plan update. All the work will be billed according to the Professional Services Agreement. Commissioner Spear seconded and the motion. The motion passed, with all commissioners voting in favor except Commissioner Knesal voted against.

Commissioner Symmes moved to accept the FY2025 annual financial statements presented by Mauldin and Jenkins LLC. Commissioner Spear seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Symmes moved to approve Strategic Regional Alignment Agreement between MSPA and the Gulf Coast Business Council. Commissioner Moody seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

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ENGINEERING UPDATE:

James Buras reported on current engineering projects.

OPERATIONS REPORT:

Shawn Meyer reported on the maritime activity for January 2026:

Vessels	11		Vehicles	12,000
Tugs	4		Railcars	620
Tonnage (YTD)	1,252,620		Barges	19
Tonnage	115,535		TEU (monthly)	13,189
TEU’s (short tons)	103,673			

Year-to-date tonnage decreased by 6 percent. Monthly tonnage has decreased by 48 percent. The significant monthly decrease compared to the prior fiscal year is attributed to two ore vessel calls in the last fiscal year versus one ore vessel call this fiscal year.

Fiscal year-to-date TEUs decreased by percent, and monthly TEUs declined by 10 percent. Additionally, a reduction in fruit shipment was reported.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:

Executive Director Nass discussed the Port's long-standing partnership with the U.S. Military in support of its training missions.

It was noted that newly elected members of the Gulfport City Council will participate in a Port tour as part of ongoing outreach efforts with city government.

The channel deepening and widening project remains on track. The technical review of the feasibility study has been completed.

American Cruise Line (ACL) is scheduled to arrive at the Port with its first vessel next Tuesday.

The AAPA Conference will take place next week in Washington, DC, during which Congressman Ezell will be recognized as Port Person of the Year.

GENERAL COUNSEL'S COMMENTS:

Ben Stone had no comments.

MDA'S COMMENTS:

Bill Cork, Executive Director of the Mississippi Development Authority, expressed appreciation for the opportunity to attend MSPA board meeting.

Mr. Cork commended Port staff for timely submission of documentation for execution.

Discussion followed regarding the future of the maritime industry in Mississippi, current business recruiting efforts and the long-term outlook for the Port of Gulfport.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS:

Commended Mr. Cork for his continued partnership with the Port.

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Commissioner Symmes moved to close the meeting to discuss the need for an Executive Session. Commissioner Moody seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Symmes moved to enter Executive Session to discuss legal, real estate and personnel matters. Commissioner Moody seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

(THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ENTERED INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT APPROXIMATELY 10:33 A.M.)

Commissioner Symmes moved to come out of Executive Session. Commissioner Moody seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Loughman stated that no action took place during the Executive Session.

Commissioner Loughman moved to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:37 a.m.

Approved and Attested



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Mark Loughman  
President



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Kathryn Dennis Spear  
Secretary