



ANNUAL PUBLIC HEARING

Pursuant to Section [15-31a\(n\)](#) of the General Statutes of Connecticut, “for the purpose of evaluating the adequacy of the State’s maritime policies, facilities and support for maritime commerce and industry.”

**Tuesday, June 16, 2026
10:00 AM**

Location:
The Westport Library
20 Jesup Road
Brooks Place Room (Main Level)
Westport, CT 06880

Zoom link was provided.

**Please Note: In addition to the notes below, an audio recording and a link to a video recording of this meeting can be found on the Authority’s website at <https://ctportauthority.com/governance/>*

Board Attendance

Vice-Chair Grant Westerson; James Donegan; Gaffney Feskoe; Sally Kruse; Dave Pohorylo; Paul Hinsch; Doug Dalena; John Johnson; Robert Mezzo

Absent: Thomas Gill; David Kooris; Kaelie Moran; Kirti Patel; Thomas Patton; Felix Reyes; Harry Rilling; Kristin Urbach; Chair Paul Whitescarver; Christine Xenelis

Staff/Other: Michael O’Connor; Anthony Afriyie; Conor Byrne; Jill Dowling-Moreno; Fayola Haynes; Caleb Ortiz Diaz

NOTES

1. **Call to Order**

Vice-Chair Grant Westerson called the Annual Public Hearing to order at 10:00am.

2. **Connecticut Port Authority Presentation**

(Begins at 2:24 of the audio recording)

Executive Director Michael O’Connor provided a presentation that included a review of the Connecticut Port Authority’s (Authority) 2026 progress and priorities. He provided an overview of staffing, marketing and communications, Authority website including business directory, contact form, Foreign Trade Zone information, tourism, ship tracker and social media channels including Facebook and LinkedIn. He noted that Mintz + Hoke continues to provide communications support to the Authority for the EPA grant funded New London State Pier Shore Power Project which will install shore power with a mobile cable positioning system on the pier. He provided an overview of Round 5 of the Small Harbor Improvement Projects Program (SHIPP) and noted that applications for Round 6 will open in September. He provided an overview of the Authority’s engagement with shoreline partners including association memberships, event sponsorships for local events such as the CT Maritime Heritage Festival in New London, participation in industry

organizations such as the American Association of Port Authorities and North Atlantic Ports Association, engagement with municipal and business leaders, and creation of two new grant programs for education and communities. He noted that the maritime education focused grant is currently posted for public comment on the [CT Law Journal](#). He noted preparations for work with the legislature for continuation of SHIPP in 2027. He provided an overview of ongoing activities including operations at State Pier, sponsorship and re-application for a federal grant for the Groton fuel terminal, updates on the EPA Clean Ports grant for the installation of shore power and a mobile cable positioning system at State Pier, commercial fisherman leases at State Pier, Fort Trumbull Pier 7 needs for rehabilitation, and recent legislative action to create a Freight Working Group. He noted that he will serve as Chair of the working group which will include Commissioners at DECD and DEEP as well as other partners. He noted that the goal for the working group is to review policy changes or incentives that could be applied in Connecticut to improve the use of freight rail, sea lanes and ports to alleviate highway traffic. He provided an overview of dredging activity in the state including the completed maintenance dredging in New Haven Harbor and Stony Creek, upcoming work in New Haven channel in 2026 and 2027, anticipated work in 2029 and 2030 in Bridgeport and Black Rock channels, planning for future management of dredging, and continued work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for this planning. He provided an overview of 2026 priorities for the Authority including dredging, logistics for freight operations, federal grants, SHIPP continuation, engagement and future uses for State Pier.

Michael O'Connor asked for questions from the attendees. He provided information regarding the non-federal sponsor, New Haven Harbor Improvement Project, and Bridgeport and Black Rock Harbor Navigation Projects.

3. **Public Hearing**

(Begins at 28:45 of the audio recording)

Public Comment was made by:

- Lynnelle Jones of Norwalk, CT
- Erin McKenna, Planner, City of Stamford
- Geoff Steadman, CT Harbor Management Association

Stephen Rutter submitted a question online asking what is the maximum amount allowed for SHIPP grants and Michael O'Connor replied that it is \$400,000.

4. **Adjournment**

(Begins at 44:39 of the audio recording)

Vice-Chair Grant Westerson thanked Michael O'Connor, Authority staff and the Westport Library. Motion to adjourn made by James Donegan. Meeting adjourned at 10:46am.