CONNECTICUT
Port Authority

NOTICE OF
REGULAR MEETING OF
CONNECTICUT PORT AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Tuesday, October 27, 2026**
**12:00 PM**

**Location: Connecticut Port Authority**
**455 Boston Post Rd., Suite 204**
**Old Saybrook, CT 06475**

**Zoom link was provided.**

**Please Note: In addition to the minutes below, an audio recording of this meeting can be found on the Authority's website at https://ctportauthority.com/governance/*

**Board Attendance**

Chair Paul Whitescarver; Vice-Chair Grant Westerson; Doug Dalena; James Donegan; Gaffney Feskoe; Paul Hinsch; John Johnson; David Kooris; Sally Kruse; Robert Mezzo; Dave Pohorylo; Harry Rilling; Kristin Urbach; Graham Stevens; Felix Reyes; Kirti Patel

Absent: Thomas Gill; Thomas Patton; Christine Xenelis

Staff/Other: Michael O'Connor; Jill Dowling-Moreno; Anthony Afriyie

**DRAFT MINUTES**

1. **Call to Order**

   Chairman of the Board Paul Whitescarver called the meeting to order at 12:00pm.

2. **Approval of minutes of the Board of Directors Regular Meeting on July 28, 2026**

   Motion to approve the minutes of the July 28, 2026 Board of Directors Regular Meeting made by Grant Westerson, seconded by James Donegan. So, VOTED with NO opposed and NO abstentions.

3. **Public Comment**

   None

4. **Small Harbor Improvement Projects Program (SHIPP) Round 6**

DRAFT

*(Begins at 2:35 of the audio recording)*

**Hear and act on a request to approve project recommendations for the Small Harbor Improvement Projects Program (SHIPP) Round 6.**

Michael O'Connor provided an overview of the process and noted that available funding for SHIPP Round 6 was $1.519M. He noted that a review committee comprised of Board members reviewed recommendations from Authority staff. He noted that fifteen (15) municipalities and thirteen (13) private entities applied for SHIPP grants, and that seven (7) out of the fifteen (15) applications from municipalities are being recommended for funding totaling $811,504. He noted that seven (7) of the thirteen (13) applications from private entities are being recommended in two major categories of sampling and biological testing and the difference in transportation cost due to the inability to use the Eastern Long Island Sound disposal site. He noted that the Authority reached out to the seven (7) private entities to ask if they were interested in receiving 64.5% of the funding requested so that all recommended projects could receive some funding due to limited funds available for a total of $688,743. He noted that municipalities receive priority over private entities. He further noted that $240K is being granted due to the unavailability of the Eastern Long Island Sound disposal site, and $447K for biological sampling. He noted that for municipalities, $507K is going towards dredging, $25K is going towards plans and buoy installation and $280K is going towards dock design and construction. He noted that for SHIPP Round 5, out of the eighteen (18) grants totaling $3.7M, $761K went towards sampling, totaling $1.2M towards biological sampling for SHIPP Rounds 5 and 6. He noted that biological sampling projects are only recommend if they have a high likelihood of success, and that so far, the SHIPP Round 5 sampling and testing projects have all passed.

Michael O'Connor provided an update regarding SHIPP grant allocations and noted that $5M has been requested for a State Bond Commission meeting in December. He noted needed legislative action to continue SHIPP in 2027. John Johnson asked if all applicants had been contacted and Michael O'Connor noted that only private entities had been contacted and that all awardees would be contacted after approvals by the Board. Paul Whitescarver noted the list of recommendations provided to the Board.

Motion to approve the next round of SHIPP grants as recommended by the committee made by Kristin Urbach, seconded by Sally Kruse. So, VOTED with NO opposed and an abstention by Graham Stevens.

Graham Stevens from CT-DEEP introduced himself and noted that he is newly appointed to the Authority's Board of Directors and is abstaining from the vote since he joined the Board in the middle of the process and is not indicating a positive or negative view of the grants or decisions the Board has made.

5. **Finance Committee Update**

**(a) FY 2027 Q1 Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA) Report**

*(Begins at 9:14 of the audio recording)*

**Hear and act on a recommendation to authorize submission of the FY 2027 Q1 quarterly financial report to the Office of Fiscal Analysis.**

Michael O'Connor noted the OFA quarterly financial report for the quarter ended September 30, 2026.He noted the total amount of funding available of $7.288M as of the end of the quarter and noted that at the end of the same period last year that the total was $5.6M and the year prior total of $4.2M. He noted the continued increase in funds as more money is collected than expended from operations at State Pier. Paul Whitescarver noted that a graph of vessel activity at State Pier can viewed on the Authority's website at Connecticut's Deepwater Ports – Connecticut Port Authority.

Motion to approve the FY2027 Quarter 1 Office of Fiscal Analysis Report made by John Johnson, seconded by Grant Westerson. So, VOTED with NO opposed and an abstention by Graham Stevens.

**(b) Grant Updates**

*(Begins at 11:14 of the audio recording)*

**i. Maritime Education Networking and Training Opportunity for Residents (MENTOR)- Futures Sponsorship Program**

Michael O'Connor provided an update on the new grant program, noting that it drives next generation exposure to the maritime industry with grant amounts up to $5,000. He noted that online applications are reviewed every 60 days, with staff reviewing applications for recommendation to him with his authority for approvals per the current process. He noted that for this first round, that three (3) applications were approved and provided in the packet to the Board, and that they included Light the Way for book printing and distribution, New London Community Boatworks for building boats in the New London area and Lisbon Central School for program fees for more of their students to attend the Project O program. He noted the six-month timeline for activity for these grants and that those who applied but were not awarded can re-apply in the appropriate timeframe.

**ii. MENTOR-Leaders**

Michael O'Connor noted that this new program was budgeted at $15K to provide scholarship funding to Massachusetts, Maine and SUNY Maritime Academies to award scholarship funds to their students who are Connecticut residents. He noted that communications are in-process. He also noted the tour he attended at International Yacht Restoration School (IYRS) in Newport, RI and noted that after learning of the amount of students that attend from Connecticut and the great work they do, that the school will be considered for future scholarship funds.

**iii. Community Grant Program**

Michael O'Connor noted that this new program is for grants up to $10,000 to enhance access, promote tourism, and fund community initiatives that highlight the waterfront. He noted that those applications are also reviewed every 60 days on the same schedule as MENTOR-Futures. He noted that four (4) applications were approved for New London, Cromwell, and Black Rock for signage, banners and markers, and for West Haven for kayak racks. He noted that the next round of applications is due by the end of November.

Michael O'Connor noted that Kristin Urbach hosted a tour of IYRS last week that he and John Johnson attended, and that there will be another tour available on November 20th if other Board members are interested in attending.

Kirti Patel, Deputy Commissioner, Economic Development, Chief Manufacturing Officer, State of CT, asked about the funding for out-of-state programs that Connecticut residents attend and asked if the Authority could provide the total number of students on an annual basis and what percentage is benefiting Connecticut residents. Michael O'Connor noted that the Authority would get and provide that information to DECD.

**iv. EPA Clean Ports Program – New London State Pier Shore Power Project**

Michael O'Connor provided an update regarding the project to install a mobile cable positioning system at State Pier. He noted that Zinus has delivered parts to the U.S. and have conducted final assembly. He noted Orsted is managing the project, and that the team was in Washington to view assembly last week. He

noted that the high and low voltage platforms are almost complete, with factory acceptance testing to start later this week. He noted they are on track for delivery in the next four to six weeks and will be stored in the warehouse at State Pier. He noted that Enstructure will operate the equipment and that training will be done by the vendor once the units are on site. He noted that ABB is on track with transformer purchases and that they are responsible for switchgear, transformers relaying, and outlets on the pier. He noted that Moffatt & Nichol is the engineer for the project and is monitoring factory acceptance testing for the gears and work ABB is doing to source the necessary parts. He noted that they will be involved in the construction bid process anticipated early next year. He provided further details regarding upcoming RFP's and RFQ's for project electrical and construction work. He noted that the project is on track with budget and schedule based on parts availability and available space on the pier for construction work. Paul Whitescarver noted there would probably not be interference with pier operations given the timeframe of 9 to 12 months out for construction.

Grant Westerson asked what percentage of vessels that use the pier can take advantage of shore power and Michael O'Connor noted it for future opportunities with other styles of freight, and that the low voltage system can plug in to smaller ships such as tugs. Paul Whitescarver noted Dave Pohorylo's previous concern that many foreign vessels do not have the ability to plug in to shore power. Dave Pohrylo noted that he has not seen any over the last few years. There was additional discussion regarding the EPA Clean Ports Program grant, marketability of the pier, freight and cargo interest and IMO standards.

**v. PIDP Grant for Groton Marine Terminal**

Michael O'Connor noted that there had been no announcements to date for the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) grant application through MARAD that the Authority supported for the Groton Marine Terminal. He noted scenarios for being awarded or not being awarded and the potential effects on long-term operations of the facility and home heating oil for the winter season.

**(c) Notification/Approval of Work Items at State Pier**

*(Begins at 25:24 of the audio recording)*

**Hear and act on a recommendation to authorize management of the Connecticut Port Authority to allocate up to $100,000 for capital items concerning State Pier operations.**

Michael O'Connor provided an update from the discussion of this item at the Finance Committee meeting and noted that the committee recommends a $100,000 budget item for capital expenditures at State Pier. He noted a roof drain and flooding issue that was corrected, and a need for an outside supply of water at the warehouse on the pier and the current issue which is estimated at approximately $11K to correct. He also noted that Christine Xenelis from CT-DOT provided millings from the I-95 roadwork project to State Pier that will be used to fix road conditions along the commercial fishing area. He noted that Enstructure is responsible for routine maintenance at the pier and that these items are outside of that and the Authority's responsibility. Gaffney Feskoe asked if the funds could be spent at the discretion of the Executive Director and Michael O'Connnor confirmed they could within the budget and that it would likely be included in the budget for next year. Michael O'Connor also noted that if funds were depleted, he would come back to Board, and that any expenditures over $5K require the approval of the Chairman of the Board.

Motion to approve the recommendation of the Finance Committee to authorize the Executive Director to allocate up to $100,000 for capital expenditures at State Pier made by Grant Westerson, seconded by John Johnson. So, VOTED with NO opposed and an abstention by Graham Stevens.

6. **Human Resources Committee Update**

*(Begins at 29:01 of the audio recording)*

**(a) Quarterly Personnel Status Report to the Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA)**

**Authorize submission of the quarterly Personnel Status Report to the Office of Fiscal Analysis.**

Michael O'Connor provided a brief overview.

Motion to approve submission of the report made by Grant Westerson, seconded by Gaffney Feskoe. So, VOTED with NO opposed and an abstention by Graham Stevens.

**(b) Schedule of Positions and Total Staffing Levels FY 2027**

**Hear and act on a recommendation to approve the Schedule of Positions and Total Staffing Levels for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2027.**

Michael O'Connor noted that the proposed changes to the salary ranges in the proposed FY 27 Schedule of Positions was discussed by the HR Committee and that further discussion is needed regarding ranges for the Community Liaison positions as well as some other additional changes. He asked that this item be moved to a future meeting.

Motion to table this item made by Grant Westerson, seconded by John Johnson. Item tabled.

7. **Executive Director Update**

*(Begins at 30:45 of the audio recording)*

Michael O'Connor introduced the slideshow that was presented which included Authority activities during the year. He provided updates including convening a working group that is discussing Abandoned and Derelict Vessels in the state; travel and attendance at conferences and meetings; meetings and coordination with U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; leadership trainings; organizational memberships, committees and coalitions; event sponsorships; coordination for projects with colleges and universities in the state; New Haven Habor Improvement Project (NHHIP) and Bridgeport and BlackRock dredging project updates; other areas planned for dredging in the state; updates on the convening and chairing of a freight working group to recommend policy changes and provide incentives to maximize the use of freight rail and sea lanes to move freight around the state; current operations at State Pier in New London including updates on Sunrise Wind, discussions regarding future opportunities for State Pier and discussions regarding the HDA agreement with HDA partners; nuclear power potential options and opportunities; and legislative priorities for the new year including the Authority managing dredge resources in and around the state including funding, prioritization and collaboration, and managing disposal of materials; SHIPP program continuation with planned funding; and investment in maritime economic development with the potential for the Authority to manage a program similar to the Community Investment Fund focused on maritime capital investment in the state.

Graham Stevens asked if budget or legislative proposals that the Authority provides to the legislature would be shared with the full Board and Michael O'Connor confirmed that they are and will be provided. Michael O'Connor asked Paul Whitescarver for a Strategy Committee meeting in November to view and provide feedback on those proposals.

8. **Executive Session pursuant to Section 1-210(b)(4) of the General Statutes of Connecticut for the purpose of discussing active or pending claims.**

   *(Begins at 53:38 of the audio recording)*

   Paul Whitescarver read the above. Motion to enter executive session made by Grant Westerson, seconded by John Johnson. So, VOTED.

   Paul Whitescarver noted that the Board was entering executive session at 12:53pm and invited Michael O'Connor and Jill Dowling-Moreno into executive session.

   Paul Whitescarver noted that the Board returned from executive session at 1:18pm.

9. **Settlement Agreement**

   *(Begins at 54:45 of the audio recording)*

   **Hear and act on a request to authorize the Executive Director to finalize negotiations and enter into a settlement agreement between Blakeslee Arpaia Chapman and the Connecticut Port Authority.**

   Motion to authorize the Executive Director to finalize negotiations and enter into a settlement agreement between Blakeslee Arpaia Chapman, Travelers, Kiewit, and the Connecticut Port Authority with the Connecticut Port Authority's allotment not to exceed $1M made by Grant Westerson, seconded by Gaffney Feskoe.

   Chairman of the Board Paul Whitescarver noted his disappointment that it had to come to this but noted that he thinks this is the best way to move forward.

   So, VOTED with NO opposed and an abstention by Graham Stevens.

10. **Adjournment**

    *(Begins at 55:55 of the audio recording)*

    Michael O'Connor expressed his appreciation for the engagement that he has had with Board members during his time at the Authority since January 2025, the engagement staff has had with the Board and the support he has received from everyone to advance the maritime economy in the State of Connecticut. He noted that if anyone has any insights or questions, to reach out to the Authority.

    Adjournment. So, VOTED. Meeting adjourned at 1:20pm.