

The Portsmouth Port and Industrial Commission

March 24, 2026

COMISSIONERS PRESENT: Angelia Allen – Chair
Keith Rice – Vice Chair
Edward Barham, III – Commissioner
Arnette McSwain – Treasurer
Benjamin Foster – Commissioner
Ronald Peterman – Commissioner

ALSO PRESENT: Brian Donahue – Secretary
Charles J. Bauman, III – Assistant Secretary
Mark Hugel – City Council Liaison
Dr. William Dodson – City Council Liaison
Steven Carter – City Manager
Jeff Miller – Deputy City Attorney
Kelsey Swieringa – Assistant City Attorney
Chris Gullickson – Port of Virginia

GUESTS: Stephen Jenkins – Chief of Police
James McCann, Tourism Manager
Steve Edwards, Assessor

ABSENT: Peter Hansen – Commissioner
Derek Challenger – Interim City Attorney
LaKeitha Forest – Finance

Welcome & Call to Order

- The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Roll Call

- Mr. Donahue, Secretary, called roll. A quorum was present.

Minutes

- The minutes from the February 24, 2026, Regular Meeting were presented and adopted.

Action: On a motion by Ms. McSwain and seconded by Mr. Peterman, the Commissioners approved the minutes from the February 24, 2026, Regular Meeting as presented.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barham - yes; Mr. Foster - yes; Mr. Hansen - absent; Ms. McSwain - yes; Mr. Peterman - yes; Mr. Rice - yes; Ms. Allen - yes. Approved 6-0 vote

Financials

- No financials presented; the PPIC's last Quarterly Financial Report was presented during the December 23, 2025, meeting.

Old Business

- **Port of Virginia Update:** Mr. Chris Gullickson from the Port of Virginia reported that the long-term channel deepening and widening project is complete; positioning the port as a primary deep-water gateway. Additionally, he also discussed recent positive cargo activity and community engagement efforts.
- **DeLong Agricultural Transloading Facility:** Mr. Bauman briefed the Commission on ongoing site development at DeLong's Agricultural Transloading Facility at 1 Harper Ave. Excavation work is scheduled to begin on April 1st. The contractor is set to arrive on-site on April 6th to begin staging equipment. DeLong is actively working with Dominion Energy to secure the necessary electrical infrastructure for the site. While site development continues, the status of federal grants from MARAD or the Department of Commerce remains pending, with decisions having been delayed by approximately two weeks.
- **3920 -3930 Burtons Point Road:** Mr. Donahue advised the Commission that the site is under contract with Stonemont Financial Group for the construction of a 184,000-square-foot industrial warehouse. The developer has been accepted into the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality's Voluntary Remediation Program as of March 5th, which was a necessary step for their financing. Additionally, a \$50,000 Brownfield grant has been successfully closed out. The Burtons Point Road improvement project is also now complete. The area has been transformed from a former gravel road into a paved city street with new curb, gutter, and pedestrian infrastructure. The developer is currently preparing engineering site and building plans, with a target closing date of April 17th. There was a follow-up request regarding the potential installation of street lighting along the new roadway to improve safety for pedestrians, including Navy personnel.
- **American Cruise Lines Tourism Collaboration:** Mr. Bauman and Mr. McCann, Tourism Manager, discussed collaboration efforts with American Cruise Lines to enhance tourism and landside visitor engagement in the city. The City and PPIC have submitted a grant request under the Virginia Port Authority's "Aid to Local Ports" program. The application requests \$200,000 in funds, supported by matching commitments from American Cruise Lines (\$50,000), the City (\$25,000), and the PPIC (\$25,000). Future projects such as the installation of six new historic interpretive signs and a GPS-based mobile walking tour app were discussed. The walking tour app will allow cruise visitors to create custom, self-guided tours, incorporating their personal interests in food, history, or specific landmarks. The Tourism team is also curating a variety of experiences for visitors, ranging from wildlife and conservation outings at Paradise Creek and Hoffler Creek to museum tours and local entertainment options.

New Business

- **Docking & Harbor Management:** Stephen Jenkins, Police Chief, provided a presentation on Docking and Harbor Management in the city. He highlighted the challenges of abandoned and derelict vessels in Portsmouth's waterways.

The primary reasons for this issue include:

Financial and Resource Constraints: Many of the individuals living on these vessels are "long-term liveaboards" with limited resources. Often, these boats do not have working motors or are in severe disrepair.

The "Free Boat" Cycle: Chief Jenkins noted that because older boats are sometimes given away for free (as "projects"), individuals acquire them without the means to properly maintain, repair, or store them.

Eviction from Marinas: There are recorded instances where vessels previously housed at local marinas were towed out by operators after the owners could no longer afford to pay their docking fees.

Lack of Impound Infrastructure: Unlike abandoned vehicles on city streets, there is no "towboat yard" or established impound process to manage these vessels once they are abandoned, making removal a complex and expensive logistical challenge for the city.

Chief Jenkins proposed a Harbor Master position to address the management of derelict vessels, enforce docking regulations, and improve overall waterfront safety and aesthetics.

- **NNSY Area Development Plan:** The commission reviewed the Norfolk Naval Shipyard infrastructure optimization plan, noting potential opportunities for private industry development and improvements to parking in the Southgate area.
- **HR Chamber State of the City Event** – The Portsmouth State of the City event will be held on May 8, 2026, from 12:00-2:00pm at River's Casino. A table has been procured for the Commissioners' attendance.
- **PPIC/City Council Joint Meeting** – A joint meeting of the City Council and PPIC has been scheduled for July 13, 2026, at 5:30pm in the City Council Conference Room, 801 Crawford St., 6th floor. The committee was asked to provide high-priority topics of discussion to present during this meeting.

Closed Meeting

Action: At 9:42 am Mr. Rice, seconded by Mr. Foster, moved to go into a closed meeting: pursuant to Virginia Code Subsection 2.2-3711 A.6 for the purpose of discussion or consideration of the investment of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved where, if made public initially, the financial interest of

the governmental unit would be adversely affected, specifically regarding Project SeaArc and American Cruise Lines.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barham - yes; Mr. Foster - yes; Mr. Hansen - absent; Ms. McSwain - yes; Mr. Peterman - yes; Mr. Rice - yes; Ms. Allen - yes. Approved 6-0 vote

Open Meeting

Action: At 10:09 a.m. Mr. Rice, seconded by Mr. Barham, moved that each Commissioner certify that, to the best of his or her knowledge: (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting just concluded.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Barham - yes; Mr. Foster - yes; Mr. Hansen - absent; Ms. McSwain - yes; Mr. Peterman - yes; Mr. Rice - yes; Ms. Allen - yes. Approved 6-0 vote

Items Submitted by Commissioners

- None

Report Backs

- **Vision 2030 Strategic Plan Update** – Mr. Donahue provided an update on the implementation of Vision 2030: the Portsmouth Economic Development Department's five-year strategic plan. The Department is actively utilizing the plan to guide both business retention and expansion efforts, as well as attraction and recruitment activities targeting specific industry sectors. Recent developments, such as the announcement of Radiant Forge locating in Portsmouth last month, are cited as direct results of the initiatives outlined in the plan. The next phase involves the formation of business and industry roundtables, which will begin meeting semi-annually. These will focus on key sectors including the defense industry, logistics and distribution, healthcare, and workforce development.
- **Crawford Bay Waterfront Development** – Mr. Donahue informed the PPIC of the City's and EDA's plans for soliciting development interest in the Crawford Bay waterfront development site. A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was released for the project in March. A pre-proposal conference was held on March 16, 2026, attracting over 65 attendees, including members of the development community, general contractors, architects, engineers, and local citizens. The conference was well received by attendees. The deadline for submitting RFQ responses is April 30, 2026. Following the receipt of submissions, the city will shortlist respondents. A formal Request for Proposals (RFP) process is scheduled to be issued to the selected respondents in June 2026.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:13 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Donahue
Secretary

Angelia Allen
Chair