



**Port of Port Townsend
Public Workshop
Wednesday, February 8, 2023, 9:30 AM**

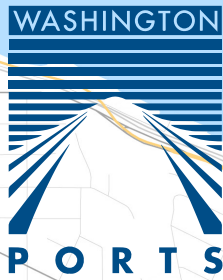
To be held in person at the Point Hudson Pavilion Building, 355 Hudson Street, Port Townsend
and also online

Via <https://zoom.us/> – or call (253) 215-8782, use Webinar ID: 862 6904 3651, Password: 911887

AGENDA

A. WPPA, Governance and Management Guide – Chapter 1 Governance and Management

This workshop is open to Commissioners, Management, other Port staff, Consultants and the public. It is not the opportunity to give public testimony, but if Commissioners request input from individuals in the audience, those people may speak. The principal purpose of the workshop is to allow Port staff and the Board of Commissioners to communicate with each other and/or Consultants, answer Commission questions, and get the Commission's opinions and input regarding the subject topic(s).



WASHINGTON PUBLIC PORTS ASSOCIATION

Port Governance and Management Guide

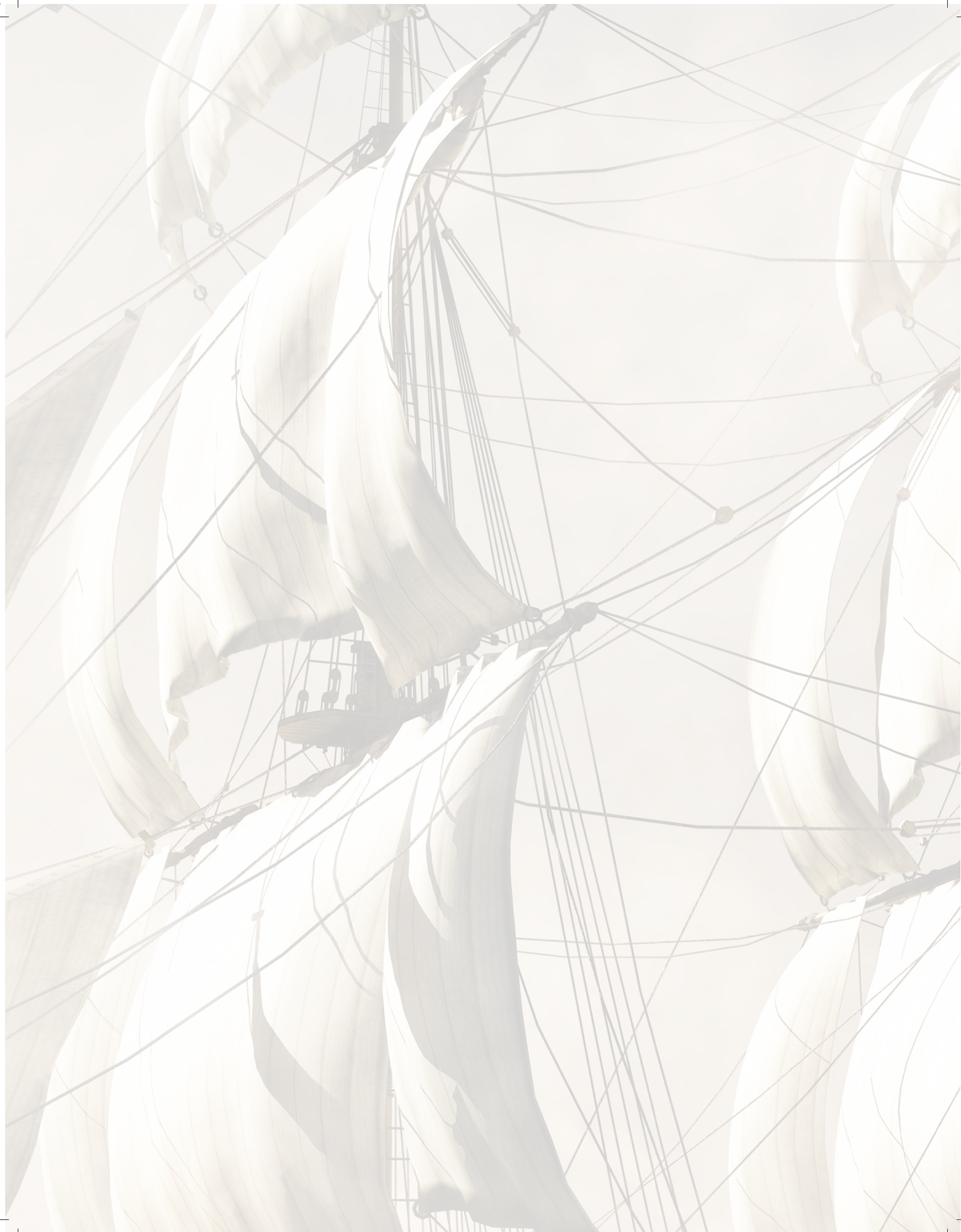
A comprehensive, practical handbook to assist port commissioners and senior staff as they govern, manage, and operate Washington State's public ports.

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PREFACE

“Experience is what you get when you didn’t get what you wanted.”

– **Randy Pausch**, American educator, professor of computer science, human-computer interaction, and design at Carnegie Mellon University

The Washington State Port Governance and Management Guide was created to consolidate the vast amount of information that is available and needed by Washington’s public ports, their elected commissions, and their appointed senior staff to successfully manage one of Washington state’s most critical types of special-purpose governments. The guide is a joint vision of the Washington Public Ports Association (WPPA), member company Maul Foster & Alongi (MFA), and Lifetime Member Jim Darling. All who envisioned this guide and contributed to it recognize the need to capture and make accessible the vast wealth of knowledge about ports in a single location for port leaders today and in the future.

During the drafting of the guide, a multitude of documents, reports, and previous publications were augmented by original research and interviews to compile the most comprehensive resource in support of the success of every Washington state port. In some cases, the language of select WPPA publications has been used verbatim.

This guide is a resource and cannot take the place of regulatory information or legal advice. Commissioners and staff are advised to refer to RCW Title 53 regarding port districts and their port counsel for specific information related to your port.

WPPA will host ongoing trainings for its members based on the content of the guide, which will be updated periodically to keep pace with the rapidly evolving port industry and the issues and policies that affect it. Readers are encouraged to share with WPPA any content in need of updates, as well as new and emerging topics of interest.

The guide is available as an interactive .pdf online and in print. Visit www.washingtonports.org to access and print the guide, or email WPPA at washington.ports@washingtonports.org to request a printed copy.

This guide would not have been possible without the contributions of WPPA member and partner organizations. The primary contributors include WPPA staff and former and current Washington State port executives, staff, and legal counsel.

A special thanks to the primary contributors to the Washington State Port Governance and Management Guide

Jim Darling, principal author and former Port of Bellingham executive director

Jim is a Life Member of the WPPA and served as its Chair of the Environment Committee for more than 11 years. He led the negotiations with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources on behalf of the port industry for the model Port Management Agreement and served on a host of other statewide and industry committees. Jim is a graduate of the University of Illinois with a bachelor's degree in Sociology/Finance and a Master's in Public Administration. He was adjunct professor at Western Washington University and was on the Huxley College Advisory Board. Jim continues to serve on multiple community boards and committees. Born in Seattle, Jim is a third-generation Washingtonian.

Abbi Russell, principal editor and project manager

Abbi has spent nearly 20 years working for and with public agencies, including serving in the U.S. Army, and working 12 years as a Public Information Officer for the Port of Vancouver USA and Washington State Department of Transportation. She has helped agencies, businesses, and nonprofits talk with their communities about issues large and small, including multimillion dollar transportation and energy projects, industrial and commercial development, major natural disasters, and more. Abbi holds a bachelor's degree in Public Affairs from Washington State University and is a senior communications and outreach specialist for Maul Foster & Alongi.

Abbi's work on the guide was greatly assisted by the hard work of fellow MFA communications specialists Charla Skaggs and Claire Moerder, and MFA graphic designers Ryan Cole and Cora Lee.

Frank Chmelik, primary resource, WPPA corporate counsel, and frequent contributor to WPPA port education forums

Frank has represented port districts, fire districts and business throughout Washington state for 30 years. For the past decade Frank and Chmelik Sitkin & Davis, P.S. has served as the general counsel for the Washington Public Ports Association. Frank authors the WPPA's monthly "Knowing the Waters" blog on municipal legal issues and provides legal advice to the WPPA staff and the executive committee.

Blending business, municipal, employment, land use, litigation and environmental law experience, members of the firm have worked with governments all over the state to help them operate efficiently and achieve their goals. Frank Chmelik started his legal career as a U.S. Army JAG Corps officer where he served as a prosecutor and defense counsel at Fort Lewis. He then worked for the Seattle law firm Karr Tuttle Campbell. In 1987, he moved to Bellingham where he co-founded the law firm of Chmelik Sitkin & Davis, P.S. Each year, since 1999, when the

selection began, Frank has been chosen by Washington Law & Politics Magazine as a “Super Lawyer®” representing the top 5% of the lawyers in Washington. Frank has served as a member of the American Bar Association’s House of Delegates and as a member of the American Bar Association’s Standing Committee on Military Law. In 2014 Frank was elected a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation. Frank holds a bachelor’s degree in economics and political science from Claremont Men’s College and earned his juris doctorate from the Hastings College of Law at the University of California.

Special thanks to Steve Taylor, President of Maul Foster & Alongi, and the firm’s 150 owner-professionals whose expertise and support made the guide possible

Maul Foster & Alongi is an integrated multidisciplinary professional organization consulting in planning and development services, GIS and data analysis, environmental, engineering, communications, and health and safety. MFA is a locally owned Pacific Northwest consulting firm established in Vancouver, Washington by Jim Maul, Tom Foster, and Neil Alongi. Since its inception in 1996, MFA has grown from four employees to more than 150 employees and now has offices in Vancouver, Seattle, and Bellingham, Washington; Portland, Lake Oswego, and The Dalles, Oregon; and Kellogg and Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. In 2013, MFA became a 100% employee-owned company.

In gratitude to the industry leaders who contributed their wisdom and experience

John Carter, Carter Consulting: Former Chief Financial Officer, ports of Bellingham and Everett

David Fleckenstein and staff: Washington State Department of Transportation Aviation Division

Don Goldberg: Director of Economic Development, Port of Bellingham

Bill Hager: Senior Planner, Maul Foster & Alongi; former Planning and Real Estate Director, Port of Bellingham

Jay Hester: Executive Director, Port of Sunnyside

Matt Hoffman: Senior Planner, Maul Foster & Alongi

Alan Hughes: Principal Geologist, Maul Foster & Alongi

Jennifer Noveck: Research and Communications Coordinator, Port of Bellingham

Don Olmsted: Ports Manager, Washington State Department of Natural Resources

Lisa Parks: Executive Services Director, Port of Olympia

Skip Sahlin: Vice President, Project Development, Stevedoring Services of America

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Damon Smith: Airport Consulting and Senior Management, Mead and Hunt

Dan Stahl: Executive Director, Port of Longview

Mark Wilson: Executive Director, Port of Kalama

Dan Worra: Executive Director, Port of Anacortes

Sara Young: Executive Director, Port of Skagit

With appreciation for the support, guidance, and excellent insights of WPPA staff



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THE GOVERNANCE ELEMENT
Commission



THE MANAGEMENT ELEMENT
Executive Director

1. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

“A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don’t necessarily want to go, but ought to be.”

—Rosalynn Carter

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Thoughtful governance and responsible management are the hallmarks of effective port authorities in Washington state. These organizational elements, when aligned and unified, result in the highest level of performance and public trust.

Chapter 1 explores the concepts of these governance and management elements. It presents principles and practical tools to further the alignment of these elements in today's Washington port authority.

More information about the specific roles of elected commissioners and appointed staff can be found in Chapter 3. Sailing historians, when referring to the early days of oceangoing shipping, describe the captain of a vessel as articulating the purpose of a voyage and mapping its route, while the boatswain was responsible for the vessel's performance, attending to its rigging and gear. This sailing analogy is not far off the respective roles of today's port commission and executive director. The Board of Commissioners (captain) defines the port's core mission and overall direction. The executive director (boatswain) manages operation of the port, moving it efficiently in the direction set by the commission. This is the essence of port governance and management in Washington state.

Like many complex organizations, understanding and subscribing to the proper functions of governance and management can be elusive for Washington port authorities. It is a challenge that requires continuous focus and adjustment by elected commissioners and appointed staff. With the rare exception of Washington's very small ports, some of which do not have compensated staff, the applicability of governance and management concepts is consistent across all ports.

Per Washington state statute, all actions, duties, and responsibilities fall to the elected Board of Commissioners, acting as a body of the whole, excepting those actions, duties and responsibilities delegated to a chief executive officer. In other words, the Board of Commissioners is responsible for governance and gives authority to the executive director to manage day-to-day port operations. The application of this statute is as diverse as the state's 75 public ports, and for good reason: Every single port in the state is different, and this statute provides the proper controls for the Board of Commissioners to decide how best to run their ports.

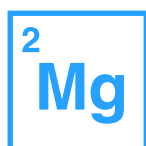
Ports utilize "executive director," "manager," and "chief executive officer" to characterize the staff member who reports directly to the commission and oversees the balance of the port's staff. For clarity, this manual will refer to this staff member as "executive director."



THE GOVERNANCE ELEMENT

The governance element is foundational to a port's existence. Governance involves continuously assessing and adjusting the port's strategic direction, adopting policies, allocating resources, responding to opportunities and risks, and establishing and maintaining a functioning culture that underpins the organization and its achievements. The success of the commission rests on the exercise of its authority, the quality of its decision making, and its willingness to be held accountable.

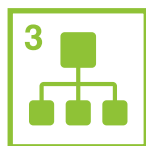
Individual commissioners set the tone of the organization. The key to setting the tone relies on commissioners acting deliberately and thoughtfully after reviewing the recommendations of their professional staff and considering public input.



THE MANAGEMENT ELEMENT

The management element is the operating arm of today's port. Management is responsible for executing the direction of the Board of Commissioners when they act as a body of the whole. The executive director is accountable to the commission for making policy, financial, and technical recommendations; executing policy and operational direction; overseeing staff and operations; and providing professional feedback on the port's progress, opportunities, and challenges.

For any port to function at peak efficiency, there must be trust and a teamwork-driven relationship between the commission and the executive director, as well as among the commissioners themselves. This aspect of management is critical to a port's daily functions and its overall success.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The organizational structure of a port reflects the management element in operational detail. Ports are generally hierarchical organizations and tend to reflect some combination of three distinct structural models as described in Table 1.

Table 1

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	DESCRIPTION	EVALUATION
Line of Business	Organized by financial performance and similarity of asset type, such as marinas or real estate, within individual business cost and revenue centers.	Provides strong financial performance metrics that can accommodate both asset and staff accountability.
Functional (Matrix)	Organized by area of expertise, such as finance or contract negotiation, but with one port-wide cost and revenue centered accounting approach.	Creates a sense of unity within the organization. Can be less useful in evaluating performance of assets.
Geographic	Organized by physical location, with distinct geographic-based cost and revenue centers (e.g., "North County").	Used less often in contemporary port management as it is less efficient and managers tend to be generalists.

The most common mix of these organizational structures in today's port is a combination of the functional and line-of-business structures. The functional structure captures traditional overhead skills such as human resources, finance, maintenance, lease negotiations, planning, and environmental. The line-of-business structure includes the operational and financial division of port assets, which generally include real estate, marine facilities, airfields, broadband, and the like.

It is also common in the mixed structure to create business-unit accounting systems to assess financial performance. These systems consider the overhead costs of operating a port as a cost of doing business that should be allocated to the line of business to accurately reflect the true cost performance. Allocating these overhead charges, as well as allocation of debt service and capital costs, provide a true cost-revenue picture. Port organization and budgets are discussed in more detail in chapters 3 and 4.

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES IN WASHINGTON PORTS

Washington ports are, by their nature and legal construct, complex organizations. They require leaders to have a breadth of governance and management skills if the organization is to be successful. This complexity arises from several conflicting organizational characteristics. On the one hand, ports are public institutions with all the legal requirements and public expectations of traditional local government. On the other hand, they are expected to conduct business in the private marketplace, with its competitive and often confidential tendencies. This can lead to tension that manifests itself in:

- The tempo of decision-making, which must balance the urgency of market opportunities with the need for thoughtful deliberation
- The need to “play it close to the vest” while adhering to unwavering standards of transparency and openness
- The capacity to balance traditional products and services rooted in history and community expectations with societal expectations of staying current with today’s accelerating technology

All these tensions are baked into the complexity of leading today’s Washington state port authority. Though formidable, these challenges are often what draw citizens to run for port office and attract professional managers to the industry. Fortunately, there are tested principles that have guided those in leadership positions of very successful port authorities.

KNOW WHEN TO LEAD AND WHEN TO BE LED

Misunderstanding the roles and dynamics of leadership is often the root cause of professional leadership changes in Washington state ports. In essence: Who is in charge, the elected commission or the professional manager who was recruited for their experience and previous success? The answer is simple: The elected commission is ultimately the final decisionmaker. But in practice, this is not quite so straightforward.

As described above, by statute all decisions are reserved to the commission acting as a body of the whole, except for what they formally delegate to the executive director (see more detail in Chapter 3). But the dynamic is much more nuanced. While there is certainly a formal governance relationship between the commission and the executive director, it must be recognized that there is a more subtle and informal relationship driven by personalities, experience, and expectations. It is incumbent upon the executive director to know when, how, and for which issues they should demonstrate leadership to the commission. At all times, the

executive director must keep in sight the approved boundaries of their authority—those clearly outlined in the delegation of powers—and avoid overstepping them. With time and experience, executive directors develop an intuitive sense of how close they are to the bounds of their authority while providing the bold and innovative leadership their commission has come to expect.

By the same token, the commission and individual commissioners have an obligation to know when to lead and when to be led by their elected colleagues or executive director. This, too, comes with experience, coupled with a sense of shared commitment to the organization's success.

If this dynamic is misunderstood and not practiced effectively, the result is quite often a change in leadership. A port's delegation of power is instrumental in establishing the formal boundaries of authority, but the subtleties of knowing when to lead and when to be led is an outcome of experience and an acute awareness of one's role in port leadership.

AFFORD THE COMMISSION THE ROOM IT NEEDS TO GOVERN

As previously discussed, the elected commission is the ultimate authority in a port's decision-making hierarchy, but the commission must be given room to govern as a body of the whole. This may seem obvious at first blush, but it is often a source of frustration and a major element in the collapse of a port's institutional harmony. Underlying this frustration are the complexity of issues facing today's ports and the makeup of a port's elected board. The decisions and issues that rise to the attention of a port commission are complex and sometimes controversial. Decisions on these issues must be made by a group of individuals acting as a body of the whole, but sometimes that body is made of individuals who joined the elected body to enact change. This can make it challenging to find common ground and make a consensus group decision.

Tempo and logistics must be considered and respected for successful group decision-making. This orchestration requires thoughtfulness and advanced planning to give the commission the space it needs to make critical decisions as a group.

Tempo is a function of the complexity and controversy surrounding a particular issue. That complexity is often attributable to the size of a financial commitment, reliance on market projections, project cost estimates, or real or perceived community impacts. It may also be a function of controversy among individual commissioners' positions or the port's constituents, or embedded in interest groups that may be polarized on a topic. Tempo is the pace at which a decision is made. It is unreasonable to expect an elected body to meet, discuss, and make a measured decision on a complex or controversial matter at too quick a pace.

British historian Northcote Parkinson, considered by some to be the authority on modern public administration, developed the Law of Triviality. Parkinson succinctly defined this law as meaning, "the time spent on any item of the agenda will be in inverse proportion to the sum involved."

Parkinson also advanced the notion that “work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion. If something must be done in a year, it’ll be done in a year. If something must be done next week, it’ll be done next week. If something must be done tomorrow, it’ll be done tomorrow.”

With all due deference to Parkinson, complex issues need to be afforded the time it takes to reach concurrence on a measured outcome. It is the obligation of port leadership to schedule deliberations on these topics over a series of meetings, if necessary, and on a timeline that is commensurate with the complexity and significance of the outcome. A successful approach may include consideration of an issue in a work study session or series of sessions before calendaring a formal meeting where a decision is to be made.

Likewise, the logistics of deliberations are important. Creating a physical setting to accommodate a healthy and productive discussion, such as a round table format, is critical. Even more critical is providing commissioners with complete, relevant, and effective background material in a timely manner to afford them sufficient time to prepare for deliberation. This requires comprehensive work by port staff to provide background material that accurately frames the issue, explores pros and cons, assesses impacts, identifies alignment with a port’s strategic direction, and is respectful toward opposing views. It is a failure of leadership to rush a critical decision or inadequately support a commission entering a deliberation while acting as a body of the whole. Room to govern requires adequate time and complete information.

BALANCE PROCESS AND CULTURE

There are two fundamental drivers that can contribute or detract from the successful operation of a port. The first is organizational process that guides a port’s actions and the second is the organizational culture that underlies those actions.

Organizational process is the body of adopted steps or defined actions an organization takes to accomplish its mission. In essence, these are the rules and policies that govern a port’s operation, formalized in keystone documents that are required by law or are industry best-management practices. As public agencies, ports operate in a reasonably regulated environment that still affords a great deal of flexibility and discretion in how a port can best serve its community. These keystone documents and practices are identified and discussed in more detail throughout this manual. Staying abreast of these process requirements and practices should be an annualized priority of a port.

Organizational culture is the medley of the beliefs, assumptions, values, and interpersonal dynamics that contribute to the unique character and environment of an organization. Culture is as significant as process and plays a crucial role in the overall economy and efficiency of a port’s operation. Culture can be elusive and its durability is often rooted in institutional history as well as the character of its governance and leadership. Organizational culture evolves as

societal norms and the industry change. The most effective port leaders are those who are in tune with these changes and thoughtfully adapt their organization's culture over time.

Organizations with strong cultures can rely less on process to achieve success. However, there is always a certain amount of process required by law and demonstrated by successful industry practice.

Embracing process without resenting its presence and respecting the history and norms that constitute a port's culture are key ingredients to the successful operation of a port. Balancing these two fundamental drivers is essential.

SEEK ALIGNMENT FOR SUCCESS

One of the greatest disrupters to a port's success is misalignment. Misalignment can occur between members of a commission, between the commission acting as a body of the whole and its staff, and between the port and the community it serves or the market in which it competes.

The political construct of Washington ports anticipates a degree of individual divergence on the priorities and/or direction of the organization. However, it is expected that the port's Board of Commissioners will seek and find accord, allowing the port to move toward common goals and outcomes. This is the essence of deliberative democracy, which results in the opportunity for shared consensus to emerge. A critical feature of a healthy and productive port, shared consensus is only achieved when organizational process and culture both prioritize alignment.

Organizational alignment can be greatly enhanced and solidified through the adoption of and reliance on the port's suite of keystone documents. A port's strategic plan, its operating and capital budgets, and a current Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements (CSHI) are examples of documents that help create and maintain alignment when thoughtfully developed and continually referred to by leadership and staff.

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR PORT LEADERS

There are a host of proven tools to align a port's governance and management elements.

Rely on Keystone Documents

Keystone documents are those documents that are either required by state statute or are highly recommended best management practices for Washington ports. They include a variety of policies and practices that require commission approval and strict adherence by staff. They range from the adoption of the annual operating and capital budget to leasing policies that assure consistency and thoughtfulness in how a port manages its affairs.

Keystone documents required by law include:

KEYSTONE DOCUMENT	REFERENCE CHAPTER
Annual Operating and Capital Budget	4
Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements	8
Tax Levy	4
Promotional Hosting Policy	10
Purchasing Policy	9
Public Records Policy	10

Keystone documents that are recommended best management practices include:

KEYSTONE DOCUMENT	REFERENCE CHAPTER
Strategic Plan and Annual Action Plan	8
Multi-year Financial Forecast for Operating and Capital	4
Financial Guidelines or Business Practices	4
Leasing Policies	3
Delegation of Powers	5
Environmental Policies	8
Communication Plan	0

Track meeting time

One of a port's most precious commodities is the time spent in formal and informal meetings. Not only is the actual time spent in meetings a valuable commodity, the content also matters greatly. Governance time is limited in any given year and the topics put on an agenda must be commensurate with the governance role of the commission.

Time management for the commission can be greatly enhanced by:

- Adopting a well-thought-out delegation of powers to assign certain decisions to the executive director
- Relying on an annual budget development process that provides a clear roadmap for the near- and mid-term
- Having confidence in an insightful strategic plan that identifies the port's direction for the mid- and long-term

Routine Commission Updates

One of the great challenges of complex organizations is maintaining effective communication between an elected body and staff. Effective communications enhances alignment between the elected board and the staff. Conversely, the absence of effective communications can lead to misalignment and difficult relationships.

There are many communication tools available to a port. One of the most effective is a periodic update to the commission from the executive director. Because of the pace of port activities, it is recommended that these reports be made weekly and in writing, whether via a digital tool, such as email, or a printed tool, such as a memo.

Weekly updates are subject to public disclosure. For dependability, they should be consistent, accurate, and delivered on the same day of the week or month. Updates should include any topics about which the commission desires or needs to be notified, specifically:

- Executive director reporting that is required by the delegation of powers (e.g., leases or purchases executed administratively within the executive director's authority)
- Copies of critical communications from external parties
- Updates on projects and initiatives
- Upcoming calendar events (e.g., public events, community events, meetings)
- Upcoming issues that require commission forethought
- Notes of interest about staff or community members (e.g., retirements, accomplishments, recognition) near- and mid-term

Annual Agenda Planner

Ports use a variety of approaches to pre-establish meeting agendas that traditionally involve some combination of the executive director acting in concert with the president of the commission. This approach can be augmented by creating an annual agenda calendar.

Under this approach, the management team develops an annual meeting calendar immediately following the approval of the annual operating and capital budget. This calendar forecasts the agenda topics to be addressed at each individual commission meeting throughout the year. Some of these topics are driven by annual prescribed processes and events, such as the consideration and adoption of the annual budget or tax levy, while some are driven by the typical progress on budgeted projects, purchases, and initiatives. In any case, a reasonable forecast of commission actions can be developed ahead of time to help commissioners and staff plan their individual schedules, balance limited resources, and provide an overall sense of structure and predictability.

Recommended steps to develop an annual agenda calendar include:

- Appoint staff leads: Following the adoption of the annual operating and capital budget, the executive director assigns management responsibility to individual staff members as project and issue leads.
- Develop an expected timeline: Staff leads develop individual project, initiative, or purchase timelines scheduled over the fiscal year and identify needed commission updates, decision points, and approval of such matters as bids, contracts, and agreements.
- Develop an annual commission calendar: The management team as a group reviews and calendars the months of the year when specific commission actions or progress updates are expected to occur.
- Review with the Commission: The executive director reviews the annual calendar with the commission, detailed by date and agenda topic for each meeting of the fiscal year, and revises as necessary.
- Set individual preliminary meeting agendas: Individual meeting agendas for formal sessions or work study sessions are finalized throughout the year based on the annual calendar. As the fiscal year progresses, agendas will be invariably modified and adjusted with the ebb and flow of progress.

SUMMARY

Chapter 1 reviewed the delicate and often elusive concepts of port governance and management. These elements, when aligned, give a port the greatest chance of being successful in achieving its goals and ambitions.

There are time-tested tools to support a port in achieving and sustaining organizational alignment. When these tools are used in concert with a clear understanding of the leadership principles that define a port's culture, a port's success is greatly enhanced, which helps it achieve much in support of its community.

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