



**Port of Port Townsend
Public Workshop
Wednesday, May 10, 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. Presentation/Update from the Northwest Maritime Center Chief Executive Officer Jake Beattie
- B. Discussion with Economic Development Council Executive Director Cindy Brooks.....
- C. WPPA, Governance and Management Guide — Chapter 3 Port Administrative Functions2

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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	
1. Governance and Management	6
2. The Origin and Authority of Washington Ports	18
3. Port Administrative Functions	38
4. Budgeting, Finance and Compliance	55
5. Port Operations	82
6. Economic Development	150
7. Property Restoration and Reuse	170
8. Planning	188
9. Port Purchasing and Contracting	222
10. Transparency and Ethics	242
Appendix A	

3. PORT ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS

"Management is efficiency in climbing the ladder toward success. Governance determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall."

—Modified from Stephen Covey

PORT ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS

Administer: From the Latin word administrare, “to help, assist; manage, control, guide, superintend; rule and direct.”

The administrative functions of a port operate at the confluence of governance and management. These functions are the machinery that propels the port. From the deliberations of the commission and the analysis of the chief financial officer to the workings of the maintenance crew, running a modern port can be both challenging and rewarding.

It has been often said that there is no greater honor than to be in public service, even with all its flaws, challenges, and frustrations. Whether an elected official or appointed staff member, serving the community can be among the most rewarding experiences of one’s career and life.

Having a clear understanding of the respective administrative functions of elected port commissioners and compensated professional staff is foundational to the smooth and effective operation of today’s port authority. Clarity on these functional roles, when combined with the bedrock principles of leadership, results in success.

The concepts of governance and management are explored in some detail in Chapter I. The governance element defines the port’s core mission and overall direction and is the foundational responsibility of the elected port commission. The management element is the foundational responsibility of the executive director overseeing the staff as the operating arm of the port. These elements are more finely granulated in the day-to-day administrative functions of a Washington port authority.

Chapter III explores the administrative functionality of running a Washington port, a structure and process that is further defined in statute and steeped in over a century of widely used and well-vetted best practices.

KEY ROLES

The key administrative roles described below are defined by law and port practice. This makes them distinct from the important and necessary core organizational functions that are further described in this chapter.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Board: The Commission

A port commission is a quasi-judicial body (board) established through RCW 53. Acting as a body of the whole, the commission sets the tone and charts the direction of a port and evaluates the port’s progress. The commission is accountable to the community it serves and the electorate that voted it into office. In general, all powers afforded to Washington port

authorities are to be undertaken by the commission excepting those matters the commission specifically delegates to its professional staff. (RCW53.12.270)

The commission's basic duties and responsibilities include:

- Elect officers of the commission
- Adopt rules (i.e., bylaws) for governing the transaction of port business and running commission meetings
- Appoint professional staff and administrative oversight roles (e.g., executive director, auditor, attorney, and treasurer).
- Approve keystone documents (e.g., budget, tax levy, Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements, policies)
- Approve all formal actions that have not been formally delegated to the executive director (e.g., agreements, property acquisitions, bid contracts)
- Conduct and participate in port meetings and accept public comment
- Represent the port

The length of commissioners' terms vary. In general, commissioner terms are six years. However, in port districts that are countywide and have county populations that exceed 100,000 residents, the commissioners' terms are four years (RCW53.12.172). There are provisions in the statutes to reduce six-year commissioner terms to four years through a voter ballot initiative (RCW52.12.175). This provision was created in the 1990s and one of the consequences of shifting from six-year to four-year terms for countywide ports is that two out of three elected commissioners are subject to re-election every four years. This creates a circumstance in which a commissions' majority policy and project direction can change every 48 months. In today's lengthy capital project and regulatory environments, this can create some uncertainty that can hamper project funding and progress.

Most Washington state port commissions consist of three nonpartisan commissioners elected in staggered, six-year cycles. A few commissions have five members, which is a local option that requires voter approval.

Commissioners are elected from a geographically defined district. These geographic districts can be coterminous with the county districts for countywide port authorities or can be independently established in countywide or less-than-county districts. There are exceptions to this district allocation. For example, the five Port of Seattle commissioners are elected at large from throughout King County.

It is incumbent upon a port to periodically "redistrict its governmental unit, based on the population information from the most recent federal decennial (10 year) census" (Chapter 29A.76 RCW). The federal decennial census is undertaken pursuant to Article 1, Section 2

of the U.S. Constitution and was last completed in 2020. The Washington State Legislature has created a five-member Redistricting Commission to oversee the redistricting process for state and local government districts. Ports have a statutory obligation to timely reflect census trends in their districts and balance any demographic changes with the receipt of new federal decennial census data provided by the state.

Individual commissioners are compensated for their service. The rates of compensation vary based on a specific port's gross operating revenue, as provided in the statutes. However, the commission can set compensation in lieu of the statutory provisions, and individual commissioners may waive all or any portion of their compensation (RCW53.12.260).

Acting as a 'Body of the Whole'

Individual commissioners have little authority when acting alone. When port commissions act, they must "act as a body of the whole" unless the commission has previously taken formal action to delegate specific authorities to an individual commissioner or the executive director.

The delegation of authority to the executive director is perhaps one of the most significant governance actions the commission can take. It solidifies the extent of management authority, reflects the level of trust between the elected board and the professional staff, and defines the culture and operational efficiency of the organization. The delegation of power as a critical governance tool is discussed below in more detail.

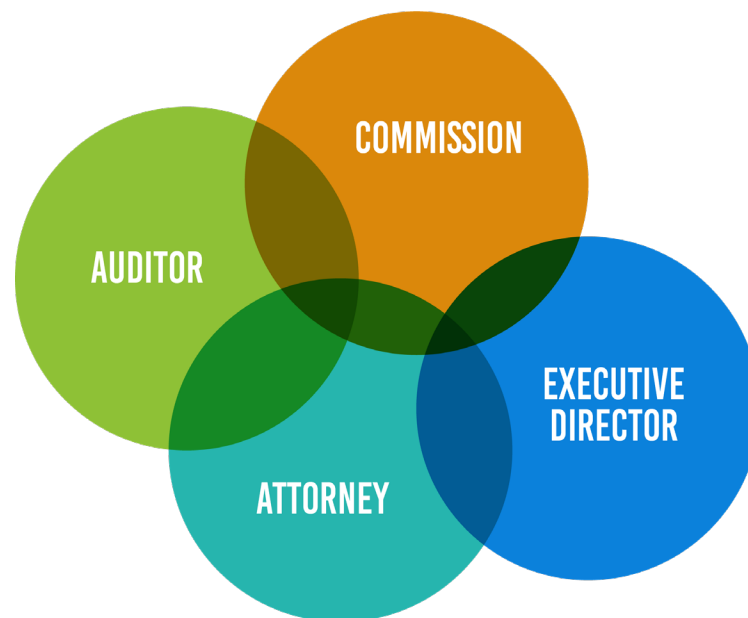
Commissioners and staff must be cognizant that their individual statements may be perceived by those outside the organization as having the agency's full authority. This perception can give rise to a sense of reliance on that statement.

This notion of real versus apparent authority can be problematic and the person who officially speaks for the port should be defined clearly in advance. Legally speaking, apparent authority refers to a situation where a reasonable third party would infer that an agent, elected official, or employee of a port, has the authority to act. Any agreement made in this situation would be bound by the employee's or commissioner's actions, even if the employee or commissioner had no real authority—expressed or implied. Real authority is assigned by statute or formally delegated by the appropriate officer of the port.

Checks and Balances

Inherent in the development of Washington's port statutes was the understanding of the need for checks and balances. The commission form of government is somewhat different than the structures of our national and state governments. Within those structures there is a clear distinction between the judicial, legislative, and executive branches, each with their own authorities and responsibilities, and purposely juxtaposed to create balance. The Washington port commission structure of government created a form of checks and balances

through the appointment of a port auditor and attorney, in addition to the executive director. The practical intent of the statutes was to create independent voices that report directly to the commission to advise them on compliance issues with statutory mandates and best practices. In a sense, this creates an internal check and balance on port decisions and operations.



Rules Governing the Transaction of Business

It is incumbent upon port commissions to consider and adopt rules of procedure (bylaws) that further define how the commission will act as a body of the whole. In addition to adopting bylaws, port commissions are required to adopt an official seal to certify formal documents. (RCW 53.12.245)

The specific content of these bylaws is not statutorily specified. As the sideboards governing the transaction of a port's business, the bylaws define the specific workings of the commission as it sits as a body of the whole. The following topics are traditionally addressed in commission bylaws:

- Meeting standards of decorum, such as Roberts Rules of Order and the like
- Selecting commission officers
- Rules of order and agenda structure (regular, special, executive, and open meetings)
- Use of resolutions
- Minutes and public record
- Guidelines for public input
- Roles of officers
- Spokesperson

- Commitments to values, such as transparency and ethics
- Filing a commission vacancy consistent with state law
- Travel approval and conditions
- Appointments to outside boards, commissions, and advisory committees
- Commissioner absences
- Remote meetings

Commissioner Duties and Responsibilities

It may be of great value for a port district to develop a job description for port commissioners. It further clarifies responsibilities and provides additional distinction between the governance element and the management element. What follows is catalog of those likely duties and responsibilities, either formally adopted or found in best practices, for commissioners and, more specifically, commission officers.

All commissioners participate in:

- Selecting the commission president and secretary (RCW 53.12.245)
- Selecting the port treasurer, if it is not the county treasurer
- Adopting an annual budget and tax levy
- Approving the delegation of powers to the executive director
- Selecting and appointing the executive director, auditor, and attorney
- Routinely approving an updated Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements (CSHI)
- Approving specific actions outside the boundaries of the delegation of powers to the executive director
- Planning, prioritizing, and adopting the port's mission, priorities, and goals (see Chapter VIII for further discussion on strategic planning)
- Evaluating and approving port policies and procedures on topics including, but not limited to, finance, personnel, purchasing, promotional hosting, land acquisition, public records, leasing, and meeting logistics
- Receiving and processing formal and informal public input
- Staying abreast of industry and community trends and issues
- Representing the port at official events
- Conducting performance evaluations of the executive director

Ports are also required to elect a commission president and secretary. Through their bylaws, some port districts have also added a vice president position to serve in the absence of the standing president. It is common for ports to rotate officer appointments from a sense of equity. While there are not any specific statutory provisions detailing the roles of officers, it is assumed those responsibilities would be addressed in the bylaws.

Commission President

In addition to the general duties and responsibilities of each commissioner, the commission president potentially has several other responsibilities and duties:

- Presiding over all meetings, including executive sessions, and maintaining order and decorum
- Setting the tone and atmosphere of port meetings
- Managing public input and commission discourse
- Speaking on behalf of the port on views and positions held collectively by the commission following commission action
- Executing appropriate documents following full commission approval
- Creating a preliminary and final agenda for each meeting in conjunction with the executive director

Commission Secretary

- In addition to the general duties and responsibilities of each commissioner, the secretary potentially has additional responsibilities and duties:
- Overseeing the official documents of the port commission
- Overseeing distribution and retention of official records

Practical Tips for Port Commissioners

The job of a port commissioner can be daunting, yet it can also be highly rewarding. The following practical tips for port commissioners are the accumulation of the wisdom and insights of those who have served before.

The single most important characteristic of a commission working well together is **FOCUS**.

Follow through on all commitments.

Good intentions are the seeds of action, but follow-through makes it happen. Port commissioners are well-intentioned and motivated, but progress requires seeking consensus and a push for action.

Own the Commission's priorities established as a body of the whole.

Seek out alignment within the commission to prioritize the issues that are important and within range of accomplishment. Remain steadfast on those priorities while retaining the willingness to exercise flexibility as conditions change. Act as a body of the whole.

Communicate effectively, both internally and externally.

Communication is a two-way street. Internally it often requires the appropriate level of structured dialogue between the executive director and commissioners. Externally it requires

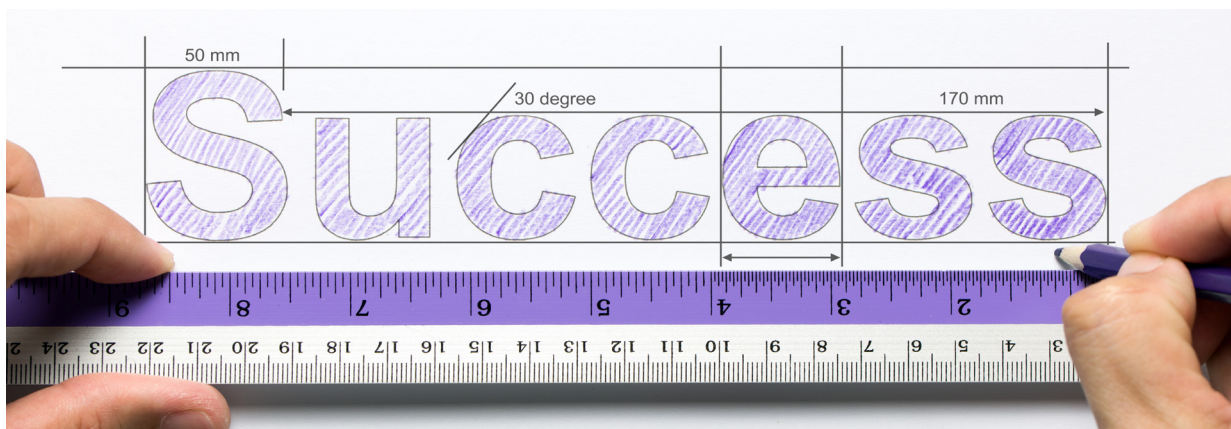
constant bridging of community, tenant, and constituent interests by commissioners to the staff. The simple rule of thumb is: No surprises!

Understand the issues and seek input from within and outside the port.

A port commissioner is not expected to know all the details of the myriad of issues and decisions that come forward. In preparing to act on an issue, a commissioner should seek guidance and input from fellow commissioners, the executive director, and staff, as well as from port tenants, customers, and the district's constituency.

Stick to governance and let the management team manage.

Port efficiency requires adherence to the appropriate governance role of the commission while respecting the management role of staff. The key to that efficiency is delegating to the staff and then respecting that delegation. Avoid micromanagement at all costs. Not everything needs commission attention, and it's important to be mindful of the commission's time.



Duties and Responsibilities of the Executive Director

The executive director is the port's principal employee and is selected and appointed by the commission. This selection and appointment are done with the clear expectations that the executive director is fully accountable to the commission and serves at its pleasure. The executive director is part of the commission's strategic team and serves as the bridge to staff, tenants, customers, and contractors.

It is incumbent upon the executive director to communicate fairly and consistently with each member of the commission. Information that is shared with one commissioner should be shared with all commissioners. This is a nonnegotiable standard of respect and communications that helps foster trust and efficiency.

Commissions are well-advised to conduct routine reviews of the executive director's performance. These evaluations should be done annually and provide a retrospective assessment of performance as well as the commission's expectations of future accomplishments. To maximize internal alignment, the executive director's performance

should be based on progress in accomplishing the commission's formal goals and priorities. Those goals and priorities are captured in a number of keystone documents including the port's budget, CSHI, and strategic plan. This is an inflection point in the organizational effort to achieve alignment on priorities.

It is quite common for ports to have a personal contract with the executive director as the port's chief executive officer. These contracts typically include key provisions that address term of employment, compensation and benefits, obligation for routine performance evaluations, termination and severance specifics, outside employment restrictions, contract renewal and modifications, travel and business expense approval process, conditions surrounding serving as spokesperson for the port, resignation notice, conflicts of interest, confidentiality, and dispute-resolution procedure.

One of the keystone governance documents that a commission approves by resolution is the delegation of powers to the executive director (RCW 53.12.270). Operating with a thoughtful delegation affords the commission and the executive director the clarity of responsibilities that minimizes conflict and improves alignment within the organization.

The commission has a valuable opportunity when crafting and approving a delegation of powers to determine where it will spend its limited commission time operating as a body of the whole and what actions and topics it reserves to itself. While on the surface it may appear to be a transfer of commission responsibility, it is in truth a re-affirmation of the commission's own desired and preferred role within the organization. This role focuses on the port's overall, long-term strategic direction, priorities, and vision, rather than the day-to-day management of the port. This is the governance role of defining the port's core mission and overall direction and setting its course for the future.

A delegation of powers to the executive director that provides an optimal balance for the commission traditionally includes delegation of these matters, often within limits established by the commission:

- Spending
- Expected financial performance metrics and reporting requirements
- Hiring and terminating of staff who report to the executive director
- Operational responsibility
- Secondary delegation to staff
- Disposition of surplus property
- Leasing property and fiscal security requirements
- Setting rates and fees
- Acquiring property
- Purchasing and contracting

- Spokesperson role

Executive Director Job Description

The job description for the executive director varies from port to port, however there are a number of industry standards for desired duties and responsibilities, experience, skills and training/education that are fairly common. These standards include:

- Duties and responsibilities
 - » Counseling and communicating with the commission
 - » Making specific recommendations to the commission
 - » Implementing the port's plans, strategies, and priorities
 - » Ensuring consistency with port policy
 - » Overseeing and motivating staff performance
 - » Ensuring a safe and healthy work environment
 - » Overseeing the port's financial performance
 - » Managing the port's real assets, including leases and fee structures
 - » Guiding the marketing of revenue-producing port assets
 - » Administering port contracts
 - » Guiding communications and public outreach
 - » Managing the port's programmatic efforts, such as economic development
 - » Developing effective relationships with the community, tenants, customers, and suppliers
 - » Ensuring regulatory compliance for port operations and facilities, including state audits
- Desired skills and experience
 - » Public speaking and presentations
 - » Technical and business writing
 - » General computer skills
 - » Personnel management, including performance assessments
 - » Negotiating expertise, including with labor contracts and real estate leases
 - » Ability to prioritize, analyze, and manage complex situations
 - » Port operations (i.e., marine, aviation, real estate, environmental remediation, economic development)
 - » Finance and public accounting

- » Legal standards for public agencies
- » At least ten years of senior management experience
- Desired education and training
 - » Formal education, including bachelor's degree and possibly master's degree in a relevant field (e.g., business administration, public administration, finance, economics)

Duties and Responsibilities of the Auditor

As a part of the necessary system of checks and balances to ensure the accountability of port funds, Washington state statutes have established a mandatory auditing process to monitor expenditures. RCW 53.36.010 requires the port commission appoint a port auditor for this purpose. The auditor reviews expenditures for compliance and coordinates the movement of funds with the port's treasurer.

The auditor reports directly to the commission, and much like the port attorney, provides opinions on compliance matters. Quite often a port's auditor also serves as the chief financial officer or lead accountant. In that financial capacity they report to the executive director and are part of the management team. This dual role and reporting structure—auditor to the commission and chief financial officer to the executive director—can be properly managed with dedication and transparency.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Attorney

Like the port's auditor, the attorney reports directly to, and serves at the pleasure of, the commission. Port attorneys can be in-house employees or contract attorneys. The attorney's primary role, as general legal counsel, is to provide legal advice to the commission as well as the staff regarding port operations, commercial matters, compliance issues, and risk exposure. There are occasions for which the port's general counsel will need to be supplemented by special counsel on a particularly narrow topic or on an effort that takes considerable workload beyond the capacity of general counsel.

It is paramount for the attorney to be impartial to the business decisions a port commission makes and advise independently on the legality and risk exposure. The attorney is politically neutral to the actions and priorities of the commission.

Regarding staff, a good practice is the common understanding that the port attorney can share any staff-derived information with the commission but is under no obligation to share commission-derived information with the staff. This practice greatly enhances the essence of checks and balances for the port.

Selection and Role of the Treasurer

The county treasurer of the county in which a port district exists is, by law, the port's treasurer. However, if the port district's gross revenues, excluding taxes and capital grants, exceed \$100,000 for the last fiscal year, the commission, by resolution, may choose to select an alternative qualified treasurer who has experience in financial matters. That appointee must be bonded and required to act in concert with the port's auditor in reviewing and issuing distribution of port funds. (RCW 53.36.010)

The primary role of the port treasurer is to manage all funds and invest idle funds. It is becoming more and more common for local governments such as ports to have investment policies that dictate or restrict the types of investment vehicles in which the agency may invest idle funds. In the case of those ports that rely on their county treasurer for the investment of idle funds, it is likely the county has a written investment policy. (RCW 53.36.050)

The key components of an investment policy include:

- Performance standards and targets
- Reporting, review, and oversight
- Investment diversification to balance risk and exposure to loss
- Authorized and/or restricted types of investments
- Authorized financial institutions and/or brokers
- Delegation of authority and responsibility

Core Port Organizational Functions

Finance and Accounting forecast and metrics

Chapter IV addresses port finances, funding, and budgeting in greater detail. What follows is a general description of the distinct finance and accounting administrative functions of a port. It is important to first distinguish between accounting and finance.

Accounting is the practice of assessing what has happened in the past. The word "accounting" stems from the concept of accounting for the past. It is a rear-window view of the world and is critical to evaluating past performance and providing a platform for looking forward. It focuses on financial reporting in a uniform and standard format using approved and industry-accepted methodologies. These methodologies are developed by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and are the accepted standards used by local and state governments across the United States.

Finance derives from a French word that means, "to settle a debt." Finance is forward-looking and takes a strategic view of planning for the financial future of a port. It is a windshield view of the world and is essential in developing a financial strategy to address planned events, unforeseen circumstances, and new opportunities. Much of the work of financial analysis involves evaluating future investment options and determining the best debt instruments to

undertake capital work. Like accounting, it is a critical tool for managing today's port authority.

Ports that reach a certain size threshold will retain full-time finance directors or chief financial officers. Quite often the port's accounting function is within their purview, as is financial forecasting and project funding. In the WPPA 2020 port survey, approximately one-third of Washington ports indicate they have a finance director. Other key financial roles include bond counsel, external financial advisors, and bond underwriters, which are discussed in more detail in Chapter IV.

Human Resources

Human resources (HR) is another key administrative area. Its scope and size within an organization is a direct function of the number of employees. Ports must have a threshold number of employees to justify an in-house HR function. Many ports contract for these services or combine it with the duties of their attorney.

Notable HR functions include:

- Recruiting and hiring staff
- Developing job descriptions and establishing wage levels
- Soliciting and overseeing benefit programs
- Managing disciplinary investigations and terminations
- Negotiating collective bargaining agreements
- Managing performance appraisals
- Guiding training needs
- Overseeing workplace safety and regulatory compliance

Communications

Effective communications are one of the greatest challenges facing today's port. In the WPPA 2020 port survey, communication with the community was ranked as one of the greatest challenges for ports, along with local government relations, which can largely be a communication issue.

Communications is as specialized as HR or financial services. One of the challenges with effective communications is that everyone regards themselves as a communicator and the need for professional communications advice is often underappreciated and overlooked. This can cause unnecessary consternation and disruption.

Communications is an external and internal need. Ports must communicate effectively with their community, stakeholders, local agency partners, regulatory agencies, legislators, news media, and others. Likewise, they must communicate effectively with their staff, tenants, customers, contractors, labor partners, and others internal to day-to-day operations. These

two distinct audiences are undoubtedly interconnected: every staff member is a community member, labor partners also have the ear of their legislators, and so on.

Ports must strategically and consistently communicate relevant news and issues with internal and external audiences through channels that resonate with them. These could be multiple forms of digital communications as well as the old-fashioned paper flyer, depending on the audiences. How ports communicate matter as much as what they are communicating; if information is in the wrong place, it doesn't matter the content because no one will see it.

Communications should be proactive whenever it's possible and prudent to do so, but sometimes it makes more sense or is only possible to be reactive. Proactive, transparent, and consistent communications build a foundation on which ports can effectively interact with their stakeholders, customers, and community. It also creates understood and available pathways for stakeholders, customers, and the community to interact with the port. This promotes the port generally to its audiences and provides a framework so that when a port is proposing a new project, making a significant change, or managing potentially controversial issues in the public eye, the channels of information and collaboration are already established and trustworthy relationships built.

The golden rules of communications include:

- Choosing the appropriate spokesperson for the issue
- Planning ahead and knowing target audiences
- Communicating early and often; not leaving an information void
- Being consistent and clear; using plain language audiences will understand
- Following up: Doing what the port said it would do
- Being honest if something goes wrong and sharing how the port will correct it

Another important facet of communications is emergency communication planning around coping with and recovering from crisis situations, either manmade or natural. It is these times during which effective and timely communications are the most critical. Communication planning is discussed in more detail in Chapter VIII.

Environment

Prioritizing port stewardship of the environment has given rise to the retention of in-house environmental staff across Washington's port industry. Unlike HR, the decision to retain full-time in-house staff to address this growing need is a function of a port's involvement in environmental issues rather than its actual size.

Most ports are involved in environmental matters, whether they are investing in the adaptive re-

use of brownfield sites for economic benefits, remediation of historical contamination wherein the port is a liable party, or avoiding future liability through an aggressive compliance program. As one measure of port involvement in environmental matters, the 2020 WPPA survey revealed that a quarter of ports have used Washington State Model Toxics Control Act funds to address environmental concerns.

Approaches to environmental liability, responsibility, and opportunities are discussed in more detail in Chapter VII.

Planning (Permitting)

Planning is a traditional administrative function that is either managed with in-house staff or contracted out to specialty firms. Planning is essentially getting and being ready for the future: A future that is in alignment with the port's vision or in which the port will continue to thrive as external conditions change and new trends emerge.

A future in alignment with the port's vision requires planning for the preferred outcome. It involves creating and analyzing a range of scenarios from which the preferred outcome is prioritized. A common port example of preferred outcome planning is designing an industrial park. Preferred outcome planning is visionary and, while it cannot ignore real conditions and trends, it is considered a white-boarding exercise.

A future in which the port will continue to thrive faced with changing conditions and emerging trends requires response planning and preparation. Response planning for resiliency identifies emerging trends (threats or opportunities) and forecasts the impacts of these trends. It requires developing a range of response scenarios and associated preparations a port should make to continue to thrive amidst future change. Port examples of response planning include developing plans to accommodate sea level rise, significant changes in commercial real estate market demand, anticipated deterioration of port facilities, or catastrophic weather events. Response planning is rooted in being prepared for either external conditions that evolve over time or are abrupt in the case of more catastrophic events.

Thoughtful planning is a characteristic of a well-organized port and it requires prospective leadership of commission and staff. It is applicable to such needs as land use, commercial and industrial property development, port facility needs, staff succession, financial forecasting, environmental response, open space needs, communications approaches, regulatory demands, and overall strategy. These planning concepts are explored in more detail in future chapters of the Manual.

Facilities

Port facilities include a wide range of real assets, including commercial and industrial buildings, traditional infrastructure, emerging infrastructure such as dark fiber, marinas, docks and wharves, airfields, parks and open space, roadways, parking lots and structures, mitigation installations, rolling stock, fixed mechanical equipment, and technology systems. As noted

above, planning and proactively managing these facilities is critical to a port's long-term success.

Proactive management of port facilities include a number of proven practices and processes:

- **Life cycle costing:** The process of compiling all costs a real asset will incur or is expected to incur over its useful life, including the original investment and any anticipated salvage value.
- **Maintenance cost charge-back:** During the life of an asset, the cost to maintain it in working order is often charged back as a cost to the programmatic elements using the facility. For example, the use of a fixed cargo dock would be a cost allocated against the financial performance of a cargo operation. There exist both off-the-shelf and custom software systems to track these costs.
- **GIS inventory systems:** A geographic information system (GIS) framework is designed to gather, organize, analyze, and present data in easily understandable map and visualization layers. It is a very good approach to visually and spatially organize a port's physical assets, apply management information such as maintenance schedules, and track costs. It is a user-friendly tool for facility managers.

Port facility-management staff reflect a broad spectrum of skills and experience, ranging from structural and civil engineering to best-practice maintenance approaches. These skills and experience are often augmented by specialty firms that have a particular discipline focus.

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