

**PORT OF BENTON
SPECIAL COMMISSION
BUDGET WORKSHOP MINUTES
OCTOBER 13, 2025**

A. CALL TO ORDER: The Special Commission Budget Workshop meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. at the Port of Benton Commission Meeting Room, 3250 Port of Benton Boulevard, Richland, Washington.

PRESENT: Commissioner Roy D. Keck, Commissioner Scott D. Keller, Commissioner Lori Stevens (attended virtually)

PORT STAFF PRESENT: Diahann Howard, Jeff Lubeck, Quentin Wright, Cassie Hammond, Julia Mora, Summers Miya, Ron Branine, Joe Pisca, Angela Saraceno-Lyman, Audrey Burney, Brandin Lopez, Bryan Bell
ALSO PRESENT: John O’Leary Gravis Law

The following attendees attended via remote communications: Jorge Celestino, Sheri Collins, Cassie Hammond

The Special Commission Meeting Budget Workshop was noticed as required by RCW 42.30.070.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Jeff Lubeck led those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. BUDGET WORKSHOP

1. 2026 Proposed Budget Review

The 2026 proposed budget was presented by Director of Finance and Auditor Jeff Lubeck.

Lubeck provided an overview of the budget, noting that the Port of Benton’s proposed 2026 budget is balanced, shows a net surplus, and supports port strategies and objectives.

The proposed budget reflects the port’s commitment to fiscal responsibility, transparency, operational excellence and delivering on its economic development mission. The property tax levy rate is decreasing for 7th year in a row.

Key financial highlights include:

- Major assumptions
 - BUILD/RAISE grants approved/funded to support rail improvements
- Major pending items
 - Land sale to Atlas Agro. Not included in budget.
 - Property Tax Revenue
 - Preliminary estimates used while waiting for final numbers from the Benton County Assessors Office
- Major items Noted
 - Lease revenues down in total
 - Due to the end of aggregate mining royalties and the sale of two properties
 - Other lease increases partially offset these losses
 - Rail
 - BUILD (RAISE) grant is \$9.5 million over several years

- 2579 facility upgrade (grant, loan, port-funded) \$6.4 million over two years
- Airports
 - Prosser pavement rehabilitation and electrical replacement - \$3 million
 - Richland apron reconfiguration - \$2.1 million
- Other
 - Barge electrification grant
 - Complete strategic plan
 - Waterfront development plan
 - Asset maintenance and management

Lubeck highlighted key budget takeaways:

- 2026 budget is balanced
- Operating revenues are decreasing slightly
- Property tax levy rate decreased
- Large amount of capital projects and grants
- Significant planning projects completed
- Net surplus of \$105,000

Operating revenues of \$7.5 million are down 2% from 2025 primarily due to loss of aggregate contract with American Rock, with non-operating revenues of \$18.6 million, up 17% from 2025.

Lubeck reviewed all aspects of the proposed 2026 budget and provided comparisons with the 2025 budget totals.

Lubeck noted that the proposed 2026 budget would be available in the Port office as well as the Port website.

2. 2026 Comprehensive Plan Draft and Review

Executive Director Diahann Howard presented a draft overview of the Comprehensive Plan as required by RCW 53.20.010, noting that the plan would also be brought forward at the October meeting and available for public comment.

Howard overviewed the comprehensive plan, highlighting any updates to property slated for sale or lease.

Howard pointed out each area of the Port district, noting major projects planned in 2026 for each area.

Howard noted that the draft Comprehensive Plan would be available in the Port office and on the Port website.

D. ADJOURNMENT: With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:26 a.m.


 Roy Keck
 Commission Secretary