



PORT OF KENNEWICK REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

MAY 26, 2026 MINUTES

Commission Meeting recordings, with agenda items linked to corresponding audio, can be found on the Port's website at: <https://www.portofkennewick.org/commission-meetings-audio/>

Commission Vice President Skip Novakovich called the Regular Commission Meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ROLL CALL

The following were present:

Board Members: Kenneth Hohenberg, President (Excused)
Skip Novakovich, Vice President
Raul Contreras Gonzalez, Secretary

MOTION: *Commissioner Contreras Gonzalez moved to excuse Commissioner Hohenberg's absence from the May 26, 2026 Commission Meeting; Commissioner Novakovich seconded. With no further discussion, motion carried unanimously. All in favor 2:0.*

Staff Members: Tim Arntzen, Chief Executive Officer
Nick Kooiker, CFO/Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Larry Peterson, Director of Planning
Amber Hanchette, Director of Real Estate
Rochelle Olson, Director of Governmental Affairs
Bridgette Scott, Executive Assistant
David Phongsas, Marketing/Capital Projects Coordinator (via telephone)
Carolyn Lake, Port Counsel (via telephone)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Hanchette led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were made.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Direct Deposit and E-Payments Dated May 15, 2026**
Direct Deposit and E-Payments totaling \$95,188.90
- B. Approval of Warrant Register Dated May 26, 2026**
Expense Fund Voucher Number 107977 through 108000 for a grand total of \$204,801.65
- C. Approval of Regular Commission Meeting Minutes May 12, 2026**

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MOTION: *Commissioner Contreras Gonzalez moved to approve the Consent Agenda; Commissioner Novakovich seconded. With no further discussion, motion carried unanimously. All in favor 2:0.*

ACTION ITEMS

A. Mid-Columbia Children's Museum Request for Proposals Response

Mr. Arntzen presented a draft letter responding to the Children's Museum Request for Proposals (RFP) (*Exhibit A*). Mr. Arntzen outlined the details of the letter and suggested The Willows property for the site of the Children's Museum.

Mr. Peterson reviewed the RFP and stated The Willows property best meets the criteria established by the Children's Museum.

Commissioner Contreras Gonzalez believes the downtown area would be more suitable for what they are looking for.

Commissioner Novakovich agrees with the language in the draft response and stated The Willows is a great location for many reasons.

It is the Consensus of the Commission to approve staff sending the response letter to the Children's Museum regarding their Request for Proposals.

REPORTS, COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. CEO Report

Mr. Arntzen reported on the following:

- The Port hired a new facilities supervisor, who will start June 1, 2026.
- Ms. Hanchette has been working with local animal rescue organizations regarding the feral cat issue on Clover Island.
- Mr. Phongsa reported that the Port will hold a pet adoption at Columbia Gardens on June 27, 2026 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

B. Commissioner Meetings (formal and informal meetings with groups or individuals)

Commissioners reported on their respective committee meetings.

C. Non-Scheduled Items

Ms. Olson attended the Spring Washington Public Ports Association Conference and stated there were a lot of great topics covered, including ADA compliance.

Mr. Kooiker stated staff has started working on the 2027-2028 Budget.

Mr. Peterson stated that Daybreak Commons is at the 60% design stage and hopes to present a draft to the Commission in the near future.

Mr. Arntzen outlined the budget process.

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Commissioner Novakovich stated the Port has discussed a passenger boat for several years and believes he may have found a funding source through TRIDEC.

Mr. Arntzen stated there may be an opportunity to partner with TRIDEC and he would like to discuss the specific details further with the Commission at a future meeting.

The Commission approves of staff moving forward on researching the passenger boat concept.

Commissioner Novakovich complimented staff on doing a great job for the Port of Kennewick.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments were made.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to bring before the Board; the meeting was adjourned at 2:38 p.m.

APPROVED:

**PORT of KENNEWICK
BOARD of COMMISSIONERS**

Excused

Kenneth Hohenberg, President

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Skip Novakovich

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Skip Novakovich, Vice President

Signed by:

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Raul Contreras Gonzalez, Secretary

DRAFT

[Month Day], 2026

Jill Randerson
Mid-Columbia Children's Museum
c/o Jill Randerson Exhibit Management

Re: Mid-Columbia Children's Museum Location: Request for Proposal

Dear Ms. Randerson & Board:

Thank you for sending your request for proposal regarding locations for the planned Mid-Columbia Children's Museum.

We are pleased with your proactive approach and appreciated your recent presentation to our Board of Commissioners. Your plans are exciting and will certainly benefit our community and broader region.

We have evaluated the site specifications outlined in the RFP and presentation materials to accommodate your envisioned facility, some of which include:

- 2.5- to 3-acre site to accommodate a 30,000-square-foot building with 1 acre minimum of outdoor space
- Parking for a minimum of 120 cars and three school buses at/adjacent to the facility (with curbside drop-off)
- Adjacent to arterial roads
- Room to expand

In determining if Port of Kennewick has a site to propose, we considered two of our developments: Vista Field and The Willows.

I believe you are familiar with Vista Field and the port's multi-year public engagement effort to involve the community in the planning for the future of Vista Field. Through surveys, meetings, a pattern-language workshop, a weeklong public charrette series, and a citizen oversight committee, the community told us they wanted a pedestrian-focused urban regional town center.

Our development at The Willows is a nearly 7-acre site near the intersection of E. Columbia Drive and Washington Street within Kennewick's Historic Waterfront District. The Willows is also part of the 16-acre Columbia Drive Urban Revitalization Area.

It is important to note that both Vista Field and The Willows are zoned as Urban Mixed Use (UMU) districts, so do not fit the suburban nature of your proposed facility, its parking needs nor requirement for future expansion.

For example, UMU zoning requires a minimum of 75% of a property's right-of-way frontage to be built out as linear building frontage (if located on "A" streets, which are primary streets where building setbacks, façades and parking locations are purposely controlled to allow a pleasant streetscape from all perspectives). Vehicle access is limited to alleys or cross streets. Additionally, parking areas and drive aisles must be set back at least 40 feet from "A" street frontages.

Proposed Site

With the above requirements in mind, Port of Kennewick submits for your consideration The Willows development with the caveat that modifications to the children's museum building and parking needs would be necessary. We propose:

- Up to 3 acres at The Willows closest to E. Columbia Drive (non-waterfront)
- 3-year lease at \$1 per year (with building permit obtained by the end of the third year)
- Following project completion and certificate of occupancy issuance, lease at \$1 per year for mutually acceptable terms

The terms set forth in this letter do not constitute an offer, other considerations, such as a construction completion time frame, may be relevant. Additionally, no offer can be made except by a majority affirmative vote by the Port of Kennewick Board of Commissioners pursuant to an official commission meeting.

The Willows property is easily accessible from U.S. Highway 395, located near historic downtown Kennewick amenities and would be more tolerant of your project specifications. While Vista Field has the same UMU zoning restrictions, that location is not designed to support your future expansion requirement. Additionally, The Willows does not have required property owners' association fees, which we estimate to be \$20,000 per year at Vista Field based on the land and facility sizes outlined in your RFP.

Should you be interested in further conversation or a site visit, please do not hesitate to contact me or Amber Hanchette, the port's director of real estate.

If you do not select The Willows property, please consider staying within the Port of Kennewick district. One such location would be at or near the Southridge Sports and Events Complex. Alternatively, while not in our district, you might explore Richland's former City Hall site.

We truly appreciate the time and effort your organization has invested in developing plans for a children's museum in our community.

Sincerely,

Tim Arntzen
Chief Executive Officer