

**MINUTES**  
**PORT AUTHORITY SPECIAL MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2025**  
**4:30 P.M.**  
**CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**Members Present:** Commissioners Geoff Smith, Kris Heichel, Jeff Austin, Michael Bednar, Lee Bjorndal, and Tim Ruzek.

**Members Absent:** Commissioner Jason Baskin

**Staff Present:** Port Authority Executive Director Craig Clark, Port Authority Attorney Craig Byram

**Others Present:** City Clerk Brianne Wolf

Commissioner Austin called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

**Item #2. – Approval of minutes of the August 5, 2025 meeting:** Motion by Commissioner Bednar, seconded by Commissioner Heichel, approving the minutes of the August 5, 2025 meeting. Carried.

**Item #3. – Approval of Claims for Payment:** Review of the claims paid from July 4, 2025 through October 9, 2025. Motion by Commissioner Ruzek, seconded by Commissioner Bjorndal, approving the claims. Carried.

**Item #4. – Review of September 30, 2025 Unaudited Financial Statements:** There were no questions or comments on the financial statements. Motion by Commissioner Bednar, seconded by Commissioner Heichel, approving the financial statements. Carried.

**Item #5. – Election of Secretary:** Executive Director Craig Clark stated with the exit of Mr. Dankert, the former Secretary, they needed to elect a new secretary, and he would like to appoint City Clerk Brianne Wolf. Motion by Commissioner Ruzek, seconded by Commissioner Bjorndal, approving the election of Brianne Wolf to Secretary. Carried.

**Item #6. International Paper Lease of 1811 14<sup>th</sup> St NE:** Executive Director Craig Clark provided an update on International Paper and their lease agreement, stating that International Paper has proposed a two-year lease agreement. The lease amounts would be adjusted by 5% and 4% in the next two years. Mr. Clark requested the agreement include the Port Authority's ability to market the facility when the lease agreement was nearing its end. He stated International Paper has expressed interest in staying in the community. He is seeking approval to proceed with the lease agreement.

Commissioner Ruzek would like to see a building assessment conducted on this property within the next year or two.

Mr. Clark stated it is difficult to find companies to do this.

Commissioner Ruzek asked about the costs of the roof repair.

Mr. Clark stated it would be \$200,000.

Commissioner Heichel would like to see a five-year lease agreement.

Commissioner Ruzek stated they need to escalate the priority of obtaining an assessment of this building and develop a plan for when they are six months out from this lease. He stated since the Port Authority hasn't approved the lease agreement, he would like the lease to include advertising the building at least nine months prior to the end of the lease agreement.

Commissioner Austin stated since they are two years out on the lease, they could start the planning process now.

Commissioner Bjorndal asked if they could start the negotiations at one year and see where the discussions go from there.

Commissioner Ruzek asked if twelve months is what the Port Authority wants. Can they approve it as is, provided this number of months is specified, and then Mr. Clark will not have to present it to the Port Authority again? However, if they negotiate down from that, he will need to come back to the Port Authority.

Mr. Clark stated the deadline is January 1, 2026.

Motion by Commissioner Ruzek, seconded by Commissioner Heichel, to approve the lease agreement with a twelve-month advertising provision. Carried.

**Item #7. Executive Director Report:** Mr. Clark stated the Port Authority submitted a state bonding request for the Hormel Institute for a Minnesota Bioimaging Center project. The Hormel Institute has scheduled tours on November 5<sup>th</sup> with the House Capital Investment Committee.

Mr. Clark stated Harty Mechanical has demonstrated the five job creations that were required by the agreement with the Port Authority.

Mr. Clark stated the thirteen-acre Brownfield site is at a standstill due to the government shutdown.

Mr. Clark stated they have made the final payment to the contractor for the Creekside Business Park road connection. They are waiting for the reimbursement of the EDA grant for the final payment back to the Port Authority. This is also on hold due to the government shutdown.

Mr. Clark relayed there is an individual who would like to put a quick oil change on the parcel 34.014.0020. The Port Authority imposed a requirement that a fast casual food business be placed at this location and that the developer create a strip mall. Mr. Clark would like to know if the Port Authority Commissioners would be in favor of this type of business going into this location. Currently, the Port Authority members are not in favor of this type of business occupying the location.

Mr. Clark gave updates on the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Municipal Airport and the MnDOT Bridge projects.

Mr. Clark invited the Port Authority Commissioners to attend the Comprehensive Plan presentation on November 19<sup>th</sup> at the Ruby Rupner Building.

Mr. Clark stated there is a new business going into the old Shopko building; Ollie's Bargain Bin. This new store will need to install a loading dock at the back of the building, and the Port Authority owns the parcel that intersects with the location of the loading dock. Mr. Clark stated they will have to work with this company in the future regarding their loading dock encroaching on Port Authority land.

Commissioner Heichel would like to do some goal setting and would like to know if a meeting could happen this year.

Commissioner Ruzek would like to conduct a goal setting meeting after the Comprehensive Plan results in November.

Port Authority Secretary Brianne Wolf suggested December 3<sup>rd</sup> as the next meeting to start their goal setting. All commissioners agreed.

**Item #8. Adjournment:**

With no further business, motion by Commissioner Bednar, seconded by Commissioner Heichel, to adjourn the meeting at 5:34 p.m. Carried.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

President: \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_