



Port of Grays Harbor

On Washington's Pacific Coast

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For Immediate Release

Port Commission selects Deputy Director Leonard Barnes as the next Executive Director

ABERDEEN, WASH. – At a Special Commission Meeting on Thursday, the Port of Grays Harbor Commission selected Deputy Executive Director Leonard Barnes as the Port's next Executive Director following the retirement of Gary Nelson next March.

Leonard Barnes joined the Port of Grays Harbor in 1984. As the Deputy Executive Director, Mr. Barnes has overseen the Port's business development, industrial property leases, and airport and marine terminal operations since 2005. Leonard has been active in many industry and community organizations, boards, and committees during his time with the Port including the Northwest Marine Terminals Association, Greater Grays Harbor, Inc., Grays Harbor Council of Governments, Washington Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board, Washington Public Ports Association, the American Association of Port Authorities, and the Grays Harbor YMCA.



Deputy Executive Director Leonard Barnes was chosen to become the Port of Grays Harbor's next Executive Director

"He is most certainly the right person for the job as our largest customer nears a major expansion and we take on the largest infrastructure improvement project in the history of the Port. We have a high degree of confidence that Mr. Barnes will be a great leader for the Port of Grays Harbor," stated Port Commission President Tom Quigg.

“I am truly grateful for the opportunity and vote of confidence from the Commissioners to lead the Port during this transformational time,” shared Leonard Barnes. “With so many exciting and important projects on the horizon, I look forward to seeing them to fruition for our partners and our community. The Port has an awesome staff in place, and I am honored to lead this team.”

“Leonard has a proven track record of developing and maintaining customer and community partnerships, bringing economic development and jobs opportunities to the table, and possesses an extensive knowledge of international and business markets,” shared Port of Grays Harbor Commission Secretary Stan Pinnick. Port Commission Vice President Phil Papac added, “We look forward to watching Mr. Barnes lead the Port into this new and exciting chapter.”

At a Special Meeting on November 30, 2023, the Commission chose to recruit an Executive Director from within Port staff after reviewing the various options laid out at the November Commission Meeting including recruiting a new Executive Director using an outside firm, recruiting using Port staff or recruiting an Executive Director from within the Port’s existing leadership team. The Commissioners reviewed internal candidate qualifications during an Executive Session following the regular December Commission meeting on December 12, 2023.

At the Special Commission Meeting today, the Port Commission directed Director of Finance & Administration Mike Folkers and the Port’s legal counsel Art Blauvelt to begin negotiating an employment agreement with Mr. Barnes to serve as the next Executive Director at the Port of Grays Harbor. The Commission will consider the employment agreement at its regular Commission meeting on Tuesday, January 9, 2024.

Founded in 1911, the Port of Grays Harbor is one of Washington State’s oldest port districts and Washington’s only deep-water port located directly on the Pacific Ocean. The Port of Grays Harbor operates 4 deep-water marine terminals, the Westport Marina, Bowerman Airport, Grays Harbor ship assist services, numerous public waterfront access facilities, in addition to industrial and business parks throughout the County. The addition of Satsop Business Park increased the Port’s properties to more than 1,000 acres of industrial properties and an additional 1,200 acres of sustainably managed forestland. Strategically located midway

between Seattle and Portland and less than 1 ½ hours from open sea, the Port of Grays Harbor provides businesses a diverse portfolio of facilities. More information on the Port of Grays Harbor's facilities and operations is available at portofgraysharbor.com or satsop.com.



Deputy Director Leonard Barnes stands with the Port Commission after being selected as the next Executive Director of the Port of Grays Harbor at a Special Meeting on Thursday.