

KITSAP TRANSIT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES OF January 20, 2026

Board of Commissioners Present:

Driskell, Robert, Teamsters Local No. 589, *non-voting member, Absent*
Mockler, Anna, Councilmember, City of Bremerton
Moriwaki, Clarence, Mayor, City of Bainbridge Island, **Vice Chair**
Putansuu, Robert, Mayor, City of Port Orchard, *Arrived 8:34 AM*
Rolfes, Christine, Kitsap County Commissioner
Root, Oran, Kitsap County Commissioner
Rosapepe, Jay, Councilmember, City of Port Orchard
Stern, Ed, Mayor, City of Poulsbo
Walters, Katie, Kitsap County Commissioner, **Chair**
Wheeler, Greg, Mayor, City of Bremerton

Staff Present:

Sanjay Bhatt, Marketing & Public Information Director; Jackie Bidon, Clerk of the Board, Public Records Officer; Michael Bozarth, Operations Director; John Clauson, Executive Director; Dennis Griffey, Vehicle and Facilities Maintenance Director; Steffani Lillie, Service and Capital Development Director; Charlotte Sampson, Executive Assistant/Deputy Clerk of the Board; Paul Shinnars, Finance Director; Nick Zylstra, Marine Services Director

Also Present: David Weibel, Legal Counsel

Select the video Zoom address below or copy and paste into your browser address field to hear the Kitsap Transit Board of Commissioners discussion of a specific topic, or the complete meeting. Note the video time stamp beside the topic.

https://kitsaptransit.zoom.us/rec/share/c_rm1eVjXgHOQkaaZ0ayWcTrvym4iXxsVophcc-dNI5gcezFMCMaIWpy5D0UEPIk.n6jtfSN3liZ99v_b

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1. CALL TO ORDER: Commissioner Walters called the meeting of the Kitsap Transit Board of Commissioners to order at 8:30 AM.

2. AGENDA REVIEW

Upon review by the Board, the agenda remained unchanged.

3. CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS

0:00:49, Commissioner Walters noted that several Board members attended an impressive Martin Luther King Day ceremony held at the fairgrounds.

4. FULL DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS

- a. Resolution No. 26-06, Approve ILA with Port of Bremerton Construction of Port Orchard

Marina Breakwater

0:01:46, Executive Director Clauson explained that the resolution would authorize Kitsap Transit to enter into an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with the Port of Bremerton for the Port Orchard Marina Breakwater replacement project, including provisions for vessel mooring and potential electric ferry charging. The new breakwater design is intended to mitigate wake impacts and provide moorage for two Kitsap Transit vessels. Clauson further noted that if the Port of Bremerton does not proceed with the project, it is obligatory to reimburse Kitsap Transit for any funds previously provided.

Councilmember Rosapepe moved and Commissioner Root seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-06, authorizing staff to enter into an Interlocal Agreement with the Port of Bremerton to provide funding in the amount of nine hundred seventy-three thousand four hundred forty-one dollars (\$973,441) for the construction of the Port Orchard Marina Breakwater Replacement Project and moorage.

Discussion:

0:05:00, Councilmember Rosapepe asked about the source of the funding and requested clarification on whether any refunded funds could result in the loss of grant funding.

0:05:15, Executive Director Clauson stated that the funding would come from local dollars.

Motion passed unanimously.

0:06:17, Commissioner Rolfes noted that the signature page in Exhibit A contains a scrivener's error. The error, located on page 9 of the Board Packet, reflects "TRASIT" and will be corrected to "TRANSIT" prior to signing.

- b. Resolution No. 26-07, Approve CO 3 KT 25-986 Bremerton Dock Sewer and Sanitary Repiping

0:07:28, Executive Director Clauson explained that the project involves replacing the piping that services the vessels by pumping wastewater off the boats and supplying fresh water onboard. The contractor determined that the existing connection pipe had deteriorated to the extent that replacement was necessary to ensure a secure and reliable connection.

Discussion:

0:08:45, Councilmember Mockler asked where the sewage is directed after it is pumped off the vessels.

0:08:57, Executive Director Clauson stated that the sewage is directed into the city system.

0:09:06, Councilmember Mockler asked whether the replacement work is occurring within the city's section of the pipe.

0:09:12, Executive Director Clauson stated that he did not believe the replacement work was within the city's section of the pipe and did not anticipate any impact on the city. He explained that the corrosion is located at the connection point between the two systems and will be addressed as part of the upgrade.

0:09:27, Councilmember Mockler asked if Executive Director Clauson's assessment proved incorrect and there were an impact on the city, who she should contact regarding the matter.

0:09:33, Executive Director Clauson confirmed that she should contact him directly.

0:09:38, Commissioner Root asked whether the third change order was due to increased repair overages.

0:09:55, Executive Director Clauson explained that the contractor identified additional work outside the scope of the original project. Some plumbing was located underwater, resulting in unforeseen repairs addressed in Change Orders 1 and 2. The cumulative total of all three change orders exceeds the Executive Director's 10% authority, necessitating Board approval. He noted that the repairs included in Change Order 3 differ from those in the prior change orders.

0:10:31, Mayor Moriwaki asked whether Kitsap Transit would be adding funds to the Capital Budget to cover the additional project costs.

0:10:37, Executive Director Clauson stated that the cost is included in the Capital Budget and noted that project estimates are developed to anticipate any additional costs that may arise.

Commissioner Root moved and Mayor Putaansuu seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-07, authorizing staff to approve contract KT 25-986, Change Order 3, in the amount of twenty-three thousand nine hundred seventy-nine dollars (\$23,979) for additional materials required.

Motion passed unanimously.

c. Resolution No. 26-08, Approve Enetai Overhaul Parts Purchase

0:11:56, Executive Director Clauson reported that Kitsap Transit solicited bids for parts needed to complete the overhaul of the Enetai's engines and requested approval to award the contract to Pacific Power Group. He noted that Pacific Power Group is the sole vendor capable of supplying the required MTU engine parts, making this a sole source contract.

Discussion:

0:12:46, Commissioner Rolfes asked which route the Enetai operates on.

0:12:50, Executive Director Clauson stated that the Enetai operates on both the Southworth and Kingston routes.

0:13:01, Commissioner Walters asked whether Marine Services would be adding the parts to its inventory or if this would be a one-time purchase.

0:13:09, Executive Director Clauson stated that the parts being purchased are those necessary to complete the engine rebuild.

0:13:17, Mayor Putaansuu asked whether staff would be performing the engine rebuild.

0:13:18, Executive Director Clauson responded that staff would not be performing the rebuild; Pacific Power Group will complete the work.

0:13:32, Councilmember Mockler asked whether there might be a way to avoid a sole source procurement in the future.

0:13:47, Executive Director Clauson explained that, because Pacific Power Group is the sole distributor for the OEM parts, avoiding a sole source procurement is unlikely. He noted that using aftermarket parts could provide alternatives, but doing so may affect the engine warranty.

0:15:03, Mayor Stern noted that engine rebuilds are expected to occur on a regular schedule and asked what the current reserve for replacement is, as well as whether the agency is reserving funds aggressively enough to meet anticipated future costs.

0:15:28, Executive Director Clauson stated that staff plans to bring forward a Board-level discussion regarding a vessel replacement program. He noted that there is currently no reserve sufficient to fund vessel replacement and that the present project pertains to ongoing maintenance. He acknowledged that the vessels operate intensively and require periodic engine rebuilding based on engine hours and emphasized that Kitsap Transit aims to be proactive rather than reactive in addressing engine needs.

0:16:23, Mayor Moriwaki asked how long the vessel would be out of service.

0:16:27, Executive Director Clauson stated that the vessel is expected to be out of service for approximately three months.

Mayor Moriwaki moved and Mayor Stern seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-08, approving staff to purchase parts from Pacific Power Group for the M/V Enetai Half-Life Engine Overhaul in the amount of five hundred seventy-seven thousand five hundred ninety-four dollars (\$577,594).

Motion passed unanimously.

d. Discussion – 2026 Goals

0:18:01, Executive Director Clauson noted that the Board had requested additional discussion regarding the Kitsap Transit 2026 Goals included in the Board packet. He explained that the goals presented were developed after soliciting input from both the Board and Kitsap Transit Directors.

0:18:43, Commissioner Walters read the proposed 2026 Goals aloud.

0:19:41, Board discussion followed.

Councilmember Mockler commented that the proposed 2026 Goals function more as a work plan than as true goals. She suggested that the Board consider what outcomes they want to achieve in 2026 and what they hope to accomplish for current riders and potential future ridership.

Mayor Moriwaki commented that the goals presented are worthwhile but align more closely with a vision statement than with concrete, measurable goals.

Mayor Stern stated that he would like to see a more clearly defined program to address bus shelters, noting that if the agency aims to increase ridership by 10%, improving shelter from the weather would be a logical goal. He added that another potential goal, perhaps for 2027, would be to contract a consultant to evaluate the viability of offering free routed bus service.

Commissioner Walters requested clarification on whether the intent was to revise the 2026 Goals or to approve them at the staff level, and what the overall objective of the discussion was.

Executive Director Clauson stated that it is the Board's prerogative to modify any of the listed goals. He asked the Board to keep in mind that goals with associated costs are likely not included in the 2026 budget. If a revised goal requires additional funding, Kitsap Transit will return to the Board for further direction.

Commissioner Rolfes stated that the comments offered were appropriate to the discussion. She noted prior conversations about holding a retreat-style meeting to establish goals and suggested that such a session occur before development of the 2027 budget. She explained that a retreat would allow the Board to consolidate goals identified over recent years and develop a more complete goals document. Commissioner Rolfes agreed with Councilmember Mockler that increasing ridership by 10% is an important objective but emphasized the need to identify the steps required to achieve it. She requested a four-hour retreat-style meeting to allow for deeper discussion and development of a strategic plan.

Commissioner Walters noted that prior discussions included reaffirming the agency's mission and taking a closer look at it. She suggested approving the 2026 Goals as recommended by staff and

then, for 2027, holding a retreat to discuss and develop the next set of goals moving forward.

Commissioner Root noted that the Board may amend the 2026 Goals throughout the year if needed. He added that establishing a baseline is important and expressed support for holding a retreat to further develop the goals.

Commissioner Walters noted that the Board may be missing the work plan that should accompany each goal, including the steps needed to achieve them.

Councilmember Rosapepe agreed to move forward with the presented goals, noting that they are measurable. He also emphasized the importance of viewing them from a strategic standpoint, with both high-level direction and corresponding measurable objectives.

- Resolution No. 26-03, Adoption of 2026 Goals

Councilmember Rosapepe moved and Commissioner Root seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-03, adopting Kitsap Transit's 2026 Goals.

Discussion:

0:28:14, Councilmember Mockler suggested that the Board set a date for the retreat during the current meeting while all members were present.

0:29:53, Executive Director Clauson stated that he preferred to schedule the retreat at a later date, requesting time to secure an appropriate facility, a facilitator, and other elements needed to ensure a productive session. He noted that his target timeframe for the retreat would be in the spring, ideally by late spring at the latest.

0:30:44, Commissioner Walters requested that a proposed retreat date be included on the next meeting agenda as a follow-up item.

0:30:49, Executive Director Clauson agreed to Commissioner Walters' request.

0:30:50, Mayor Putaansuu concurred with the Executive Director's approach to scheduling the retreat. He suggested that adding a couple of hours to a Board Work Study meeting would be a logical option, as those meetings are already on Board members' calendars.

0:31:30, Mayor Wheeler suggested that the Board discuss what they hope to achieve, what is not currently being achieved, and how goals and goal-setting should be defined. He added that goals should include measurable outcomes and that the Board should be prepared to consider what decisions they will be expected to make in support of those goals.

0:33:34, Commissioner Walters summarized that Executive Director Clauson will return to the Board with a recommendation on holding either a retreat or an extended work study session to

discuss 2027 goals, along with a more strategic planning component.

Motion passed with eight (8) ayes and one (1) nay (Councilmember Mockler).

e. Presentation – Kitsap Transit 2026 World Cup Service Update

0:34:24, Executive Director Clauson prefaced the presentation by noting that the 2026 World Cup is approaching quickly and that he wanted to review Kitsap Transit's proposed plans for the event. He stated that he had asked Sanjay Bhatt to present the proposals so the Board could discuss them, refine them, and gain a clear understanding of the framework they are working with.

0:35:43, Sanjay Bhatt, Marketing & Public Information Director, reported that development of the 2026 World Cup response plan has been a collaborative effort among all department directors. He presented a detailed proposal for expanded transit service during the June and July event, including special night routes, park-and-ride shuttles, and ferry take-home buses, with service operating until midnight on game days.

Discussion:

0:38:57, Commissioner Root asked for clarification on what "take-home buses" are.

0:39:00, Mr. Bhatt explained that take-home buses wait at the ferry terminal for arriving ferries, allowing passengers to board for drop-off-only service, with no additional passenger pickups beyond those coming off the ferry.

0:39:24, Councilmember Mockler expressed concern that Bremerton businesses would be bypassed by the take-home bus service, resulting in a lost opportunity for local businesses to generate revenue.

0:39:51, Executive Director Clauson clarified that the shuttles are not limited to a single trip. He noted that returning event-goers who wish to visit downtown businesses may do so, as the take-home bus service will operate until midnight, allowing passengers to catch a later bus after spending time downtown.

The Board discussed concerns related to downtown Bremerton parking and enforcement, expectations for Bremerton-area events, and the proposed Fan Zone. Board members requested a copy of the 2026 World Cup Service Update presentation, and staff agreed to distribute it.

f. Discussion – Return Grant Funds for Port Orchard Transit Center

1:09:20, Executive Director Clauson explained that Kitsap Transit had secured a grant to plan for a Port Orchard Transit Center to support bus-to-ferry connections in downtown Port Orchard. A consultant was hired, and several site concepts were developed as part of the broader downtown redevelopment effort. He noted that Kitsap Transit had intended to purchase the building

currently housing the library to construct a permanent transit center on that footprint. However, the project has become politically sensitive, and the agency is nearing the deadline to utilize the grant funds. As a result, Kitsap Transit will be returning the funding to the federal government.

1:10:49, Steffani Lillie, Services and Capital Development Director, reported that Kitsap Transit has expended \$219,000 of the original \$750,000 grant. Including the agency's required match, the total planned investment was \$937,000. Based on the funds spent to date and the remaining balance, Kitsap Transit will return \$530,777 to the Federal Transit Administration. Lillie stated that this is the appropriate point to conclude the project, noting that the \$219,000 expenditure resulted in a completed planning document and does not require repayment. She added that moving forward would obligate Kitsap Transit either to complete the remaining planning work or repay the full amount of the grant.

Discussion:

1:12:03, Mayor Putaansuu commented that the situation is unfortunate, noting that an improved transit center in downtown Port Orchard is important to the city's redevelopment efforts. He stated that a majority of the Port Orchard City Council does not currently support the proposed location and prefers that the transit center be sited elsewhere.

1:14:27, Commissioner Root asked whether there was any flexibility in the project, including options related to bus stops or sheltered stops.

1:14:40, Ms. Lillie explained that because these were competitive grant funds rather than formula dollars, the remaining funds must be returned.

1:15:40, Commissioner Walters noted that no action was required on this item.

1:15:44, Executive Director Clauson confirmed that no Board action is required and stated that he wanted the Board to be informed before the funds are returned. He reiterated that Kitsap Transit will return the grant funds to the Federal Transit Administration.

1:15:57, Commissioner Rolfes asked whether a communications strategy was in place to explain that Kitsap Transit is returning the grant funds and not proceeding with the transit center project. Commissioner Rolfes emphasized that the community should be informed about the status of the plan.

1:17:59, Councilmember Rosapepe stated that any public notification should come directly from Kitsap Transit.

1:18:22, Executive Director Clauson stated that if the Board wishes to communicate this information to the community, Kitsap Transit will proceed accordingly.

1:18:34, The Board discussed whether to provide community notice regarding the return of grant

funds to the Federal Transit Administration and the decision to pause development of the Port Orchard Transit Center. The Board agreed to proceed with returning the funds without issuing a formal public statement.

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ITEMS

1:22:52, Executive Director Clauson informed the Board of a correction to Resolution 26-05, Approve Purchase of Wheelchair Lift Vans, approved on January 6, 2026. The resolution had originally stated that the vans would be purchased using the Washington State DES Contract; however, the correct procurement contract is the State of Arizona Procurement Contract. He noted that all other elements of the purchase, including price, delivery, and vehicle specifications remain unchanged.

Executive Director Clauson introduced Nicholas (Nick) Zylstra as the new Marine Services Director.

1:23:55, Marine Services Director Nick Zylstra greeted the Board and shared that he previously worked for Argosy Cruises in Seattle. He expressed that he is excited to join Kitsap Transit.

Executive Director Clauson reported that he had received pressure to operate a special Sunday ferry route to accommodate a Seattle Seahawks event. He noted that such service is not included in the current budget but suggested that the Board consider implementing a pre-paid ticket system in the future to offset the cost of similar requests.

Executive Director Clauson invited the Board to tour the newly acquired third-floor space, noting that it is move-in ready aside from pending technology setup.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

7. FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER:

1:28:39, Commissioner Rolfes stated that, in the interest of transparency, the meeting minutes should clearly reflect the decision made regarding the Port Orchard Transit Center and should include Steffani Lillie's comments.

8. ADJOURN: At 10:00 AM, Chairperson Walters adjourned the regular meeting.

ADOPTED by the Board of Commissioners of Kitsap Transit at a regular meeting thereof, held on the 3rd day of February, 2026.

Attest: DocuSigned by:

Jackie Bidon

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Jackie Bidon, Clerk of the Board

Signed by:

Katharine T. Walters

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Katharine T. Walters, Chairperson