

## **KITSAP TRANSIT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES OF April 07, 2026**

### **Board of Commissioners Present:**

Driskell, Robert, Teamsters Local No. 589, *non-voting member*  
Moriwaki, Clarence, Mayor, City of Bainbridge Island, **Vice Chair**  
Putansuu, Robert, Mayor, City of Port Orchard  
Rebelowski, Jane, Councilmember, City of Bremerton  
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; Mary Pauly, Human Resources Director; Charlotte Sampson, Executive Assistant/Deputy Clerk of the Board; Paul Shinnars, Finance 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/aSnE1UOQQXAHpoEvuByGagpdHUSCcA6UzPTzRIsqtS9bB8lO9S3w4nesQ900rsEs.2txvSHXTZnHQwPw5?startTime=1775582631000>

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**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairperson Walters called the meeting of the Kitsap Transit Board of Commissioners to order at 10:30 AM. Chairperson Walters welcomed new Board member Jane Rebelowski, who will represent Bremerton.

### **2. AGENDA REVIEW**

Upon review by the Board, the agenda remained unchanged.

### **3. CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS**

Commissioner Walters recognized the efforts of those involved in Driver Appreciation Day, which took place after the March 18 meeting. Members visited various locations, including the Silverdale Transit Center, to thank drivers and distribute donuts.

#### **4. PRESENTATION – Executive Director PSNS, Jennifer Herbig**

*0:1:44*, Executive Director of PSNS & IMF Jennifer Herbig attended the meeting to present a token of appreciation on behalf of the Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility employees. She thanked Kitsap Transit for its strong support during the federal government shutdown in October and November 2025.

Executive Director Herbig read a statement from the Shipyard Commander, Captain J.D. Krinklaw:

“On behalf of the entire workforce at PSNS and IMF, I am writing to express our sincere gratitude for Kitsap Transit's invaluable support during the Fall 2025 government shutdown. Your decision to provide free transit for all shipyard workers had a significant and positive impact on the morale of our team. This generous gesture not only relieved a considerable financial burden but also reduced the stress and uncertainty that many of our employees were facing during that challenging time and reiterated the support of our community for what we do. The availability of reliable, free transportation ensured that our dedicated workforce could continue to report for duty every day. This was instrumental in allowing us to proceed with our critical mission of maintaining the U.S. Navy fleet and upholding our nation's defense. We are incredibly fortunate to have a community partner as thoughtful and supportive as Kitsap Transit. Please extend our heartfelt thanks to your entire team for their outstanding service and commitment to our community. Sincerely, J.D. Krinklaw, Captain, U.S. Navy Commander.”

Executive Director Herbig also presented a token of recognition, a United States flag that was flown over the shipyard along with a Certificate of Authenticity, addressed to Mr. John Clauson, Executive Director of Kitsap Transit. “This flag honors your dedicated partnership and unwavering commitment to our workforce. By providing essential transit services to shipyard personnel during the government shutdown, you ensure the continued readiness of the fleet and demonstrated the true spirit of community and service.”

*0:5:17*, Executive Director Clauson noted that Kitsap Transit’s partnership with the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard has spanned more than 40 years. He thanked the Board for supporting the request to provide free rides for shipyard employees, emphasizing the strength of the long-standing collaboration.

#### **5. COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT**

*1:56:46*, Executive Director Clauson briefed the Board on the CAC meeting of March 26 which covered several topics including community feedback, route capacity issues, and board composition discussions. Community members raised concerns about passenger capacity on the Southworth bus route, leading to discussions about potentially adding a larger coach or second coach, and exploring demand response options as an alternative. The CAC is considering adopting

their first-ever resolution regarding adding two non-elected members to the Board and will address Chairperson and Vice Chair positions at their next meeting.

0:09:33, The Board requested an update on the Board Composition Committee, including clarification on when the committee's work is expected to begin.

0:09:47, Executive Director Clauson reported that staff anticipates a July timeline and is currently finalizing planning efforts.

## **6. CONSENT / ACTION ITEM:**

- a. Warrants for February 2026
  - o Warrant numbers transit fund 175940 to 176264 of \$2,926,748
  - o Warrant numbers ferry fund 610036 to 610124 of \$1,691,462
  - o Payroll Account disbursements of \$3,801,731
  - o ACH clearing account payments of \$59,289
  - o Travel Account Disbursements of \$10,146
  - o Purchasing Card Disbursements of \$80,474
- b. Minutes of February 17, 2026

0:10:33, **Mayor Putaansuu moved and Mayor Moriwaki seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda.**

### **Discussion:**

None.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

## **7. FULL DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS**

- a. Resolution No. 26-22, Approve Change Order 1, KPFF Consulting Engineers  
Seattle Terminal Environmental Study

0:11:07, Executive Director Clauson explained that the resolution authorizes a scope expansion and Change Order 1 with KPFF, the consultant performing environmental review and preliminary engineering for the permanent Seattle ferry terminal project. The original plan assumed Washington State Ferries (WSF) would remove Pier 48; however, the legislature has not funded this work, preventing WSF from committing to the demolition. This change in project conditions led the Federal Transit Administration to place the process on hold. The change order, approximately \$550,000, will allow KPFF to complete the necessary environmental work related to Pier 48's removal. The work will be structured so it can be transferred to WSF should future legislative funding be approved. Clauson emphasized that taking this step is essential to avoid significant delays or the potential need to restart the project and noted that Kitsap Transit will continue advocating for WSF funding in the next legislative session.

**Mayor Putaansuu moved and Mayor Stern seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-22, authorizing staff to approve contract Change Order 1 in the amount of five hundred five thousand four dollars (\$505,004), contingent on the Executive Director obtaining a letter of support from Washington State Ferries supporting Kitsap Transit's environmental work for Pier 48. This increases the contract total to five million six hundred fifty-two thousand five hundred sixty-two dollars (\$5,652,562) and reauthorizes the Executive Director's authority in accordance with Kitsap Transit's Procurement Policy.**

**Discussion:**

0:15:22, Board discussion included Kitsap Transit's expenditure and the potential of the legislature giving Kitsap Transit relief for the demolition of the pier at a later date, documentation from WSF supporting and agreeing to this path, Kitsap Transit's investment, amending the motion to include assurances from WSF, timeline for the project, FTA and NEPA processes.

0:26:05, As the original motion maker, Mayor Putaansuu offered an amendment that requires the Executive Director to obtain a letter of support from Washington State Ferries (WSF) before moving forward with Change Order 1. The second on the motion (Mayor Stern) concurred with the amendment

0:27:25, Commissioner Walters stated that **Resolution No. 26-22 was moved by Mayor Putaansuu and seconded by Mayor Stern to adopt Resolution No. 26-22, authorizing staff to approve Contract Change Order 1, amended per documented letter of support from the Washington State Ferries.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Executive Director Clauson will notify the Board upon receipt of the letter of support from Washington State Ferries.

- b. Resolution No. 26-23, Award Contract KT 25-012 to Perteet - Ruby Creek

0:33:58, Executive Director Clauson stated that the contract marks an important milestone in advancing the Ruby Creek Park & Ride and Transit Center project in Port Orchard. The agreement authorizes hiring Perteet as the construction management firm. He noted that staff is nearing readiness to request authorization to go out to bid for construction, and this contract represents the first step toward moving the project into production.

**Mayor Putaansuu moved and Councilmember Rosapepe seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-23, authorizing staff to award Contract KT 25-012 to Perteet for Construction Management Services for the Ruby Creek Park and Ride Project in the amount of one million eight hundred one thousand fifty-six dollars (\$1,801,056).**

**Discussion:**

None.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- c. Resolution No. 26-24, Approve Safety Trainer Hours Increase to Full Time

0:36:47, Executive Director Clauson explained that the resolution requests approval to convert the Safety and Security Trainer position in the HR Department from half-time to full-time. Following the Board's approval of the 2026 Budget, the employee who previously split time between Marine Services and HR accepted the newly created full-time Marine Services position, leaving a half-time vacancy in HR. Recruitment efforts identified qualified candidates, all seeking full-time employment, and increasing federal expectations around safety and security further support the need for expanded capacity. The additional cost for the remainder of the year is estimated at \$33,000, which can be absorbed within the existing operating budget. The resolution also authorizes corresponding updates to the organizational chart.

**Councilmember Rosapepe moved and Commissioner Root seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-24, authorizing staff to increase the part-time Safety & Security position to full-time and to update the Kitsap Transit Organizational Chart accordingly.**

**Discussion:**

None.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- d. Resolution No. 26-25, Delegate Appointing WSTIP Board Member

0:40:18, Executive Director Clauson explained that the resolution requests authorization to delegate appointing authority for Kitsap Transit's representation on the Washington State Transit Insurance Pool (WSTIP) Board to the Executive Director. He noted recent concerns raised among transit agency directors regarding WSTIP activities and stated that many peer agencies have already delegated this authority to their executive leadership. Kitsap Transit has historically brought these appointments to the Board for action, making this request a procedural alignment with statewide practice. Delegating this authority will allow the Executive Director to make appointments or changes as needed.

**Commissioner Rolfes moved and Commissioner Root seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-25, delegating to Kitsap Transit's Executive Director future authority of appointing its primary and alternate Board member representatives to the WSTIP Board of Directors.**

**Discussion:**

None.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- e. Resolution No. 26-26, Approve 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2026 Procurement

*0:43:50*, Executive Director Clauson reported that Kitsap Transit has shifted to a quarterly process for seeking authorization to go out to bid. For the second quarter of 2026, staff requested approval to issue bids for a new Kingston ferry boat, the West Bremerton Transit Center design, and the scheduled two-year dry-docking project for the Enetai. He noted that any bid awards requiring Board approval will be brought back after evaluation.

**Councilmember Rosapepe moved and Mayor Moriwaki seconded the motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-26, authorizing staff to advertise and seek bids for projects and procurements during the second quarter of 2026.**

**Discussion:**

None.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ITEMS**

*0:46:23*, Executive Director Clauson briefed the Board on last week's early release of Puget Sound Naval Shipyard employees. He noted that PSNS implemented a phased departure plan to minimize community impacts and that Kitsap Transit coordinated closely with shipyard leadership throughout the event. Kitsap Transit activated the Annapolis ferry early, prepared a fast ferry for potential Seattle-bound passengers, and deployed Worker/Drivers as needed. The agency also activated its Emergency Operations Center to monitor conditions and document lessons learned. Clauson reported that operations went smoothly, impacts to the community were minimal, and the debrief identified areas for future improvement.

*0:49:20*, Executive Director Clauson reported that Kitsap Transit is actively working with Washington State Ferries (WSF) and the Attorney General's Office to clarify ownership and property interests associated with the Bremerton Transportation Center and ferry terminal. The project, which involved multiple partners and significant federal and state funding, has lacked a definitive delineation of ownership responsibilities. Staff are coordinating with the Federal Transit Administration to ensure compliance with federal requirements for any property transfers. Clauson noted that, after more than 20 years of intermittent progress, recent staffing changes at WSF have renewed momentum, and he is optimistic that the matter will be resolved soon.

0:51:06, Executive Director Clauson informed the Board that Kitsap Transit received notice from the Federal Transit Administration that federal funding for the planned all-electric passenger-only ferry between Port Orchard and Bremerton, totaling more than \$7 million, will be withdrawn unless the vessel's propulsion system is changed from all-electric to hybrid or diesel. A decision must be communicated to FTA by Friday. Staff has consulted with the state regarding whether state funding can support a hybrid vessel, and while formal approval is pending, initial feedback has been positive. Clauson recommended proceeding with a hybrid propulsion system, consistent with existing fleet experience. This change will require design modifications by Glosten, the vessel designer, and a future change order will be brought to the Board. He emphasized the importance of preserving project funding and ensuring the vessel can move forward to construction.

0:54:19, Commissioner Rolfes requested a cost analysis before a final decision is made to shift the vessel design from all-electric to hybrid. She asked for follow-up information outlining the pros and cons of the change, the additional design and contract costs, and the potential risk that federal funding could still be withdrawn even after modifying the propulsion system.

0:55:07, Executive Director Clauson responded that staff would attempt to provide the requested cost information; however, the agency must notify FTA of its propulsion decision by Friday, leaving limited time for analysis. He noted that the Open Public Meetings Act prevents seeking Board consensus outside a public meeting. Clauson stated that hybrid propulsion would avoid the need for costly charging infrastructure and aligns with Kitsap Transit's experience operating the *Waterman*. He added that design-modification cost estimates from Glosten may not be available before the deadline. He emphasized concern that delaying the decision could jeopardize more than \$7 million in federal funding.

0:58:19, Mayor Moriwaki expressed disappointment that the Board may need to shift from an all-electric vessel to a hybrid design, noting that Kitsap Transit has been a forward-thinking agency in adopting innovative technologies such as electric buses, inductive charging, and passenger-only ferries. He stated that the loss of the all-electric option is frustrating and feels it is driven by external forces beyond the agency's control. He acknowledged the difficult position staff is in given the short federal deadline and recognized the significant work already invested in the project.

1:00:16, Executive Director Clauson stated that he appreciated the opportunity to brief the full Board on the issue rather than addressing it solely with the Chair. He emphasized that the shift away from an all-electric vessel does not eliminate Kitsap Transit's broader pursuit of electric ferry technology. The agency continues to hold state funding and a completed design for a high-speed electric hydrofoil prototype and is evaluating charging infrastructure needs. He noted that Kitsap Transit is working with local firms and expects the prototype could be built in Washington, subject to a competitive bid process. Clauson added that, in the case of the Port Orchard to Bremerton vessel, hybrid propulsion appears to be the only viable option to retain federal funding, as state funding alone is insufficient to construct the vessel.

1:01:43, Councilmember Rosapepe noted that no formal Board action was being requested at this time and expressed support for the Executive Director's recommendation given the tight federal deadline. He acknowledged the Board's shared disappointment but stated that moving forward with a hybrid vessel is necessary to avoid future operational and funding challenges. He added that the agency could revisit all-electric options in the future as conditions evolve.

1:02:40, Mayor Putaansuu asked whether a hybrid vessel would be able to meet current Annapolis route sailing times or whether operational adjustments to the schedule would be required.

1:03:00, Executive Director Clauson stated that if the vessel purchased does not provide an improvement over the Waterman, schedules may need to be revised. Discussion on vessel size.

1:04:05, Commissioner Rolfes noted that this is a big change and suggested formalizing the Board's decision on record, indicating that prior decisions regarding this project were made by formal vote. She acknowledged that a resolution could not be prepared for action at this meeting but stressed the need to not have this perceived as an administrative decision.

**1:05:01, Motion made by Mayor Putaansuu and seconded by Commissioner Rolfes to support pivoting from an all-electric vessel to a hybrid electric vessel for the Port Orchard to Bremerton route, due to changes in federal funding opportunities.**

**Motion passed with seven (7) yays, one (1) nay (Rolfes).**

1:05:53, Commissioner Walters confirmed that Kitsap Transit still has plans for an electric boat and asked if this could be converted back to all-electric if the opportunity arises. Executive Director Clauson stated that staff could explore that.

1:06:40, Mayor Moriwaki requested Board acceptance of his change in vote from "yay" to "nay", emphasizing that his decision stemmed from his strong belief in the Board's previously established policy direction on propulsion systems and indicating he could not support the change.

1:07:19, Chairperson Walters accepted Mayor Moriwaki's change in vote.

**Motion passed with six (6) yays and two (2) nays (Rolfes, Moriwaki).**

1:07:34, Continuing with his report, Executive Director Clauson reported that, due to recent changes in the Transit Board's composition and Councilmember Mockler's departure, the alternate representative position for the PSRC Transportation Policy Board is now vacant. He noted that this role represents Kitsap Transit at PSRC and suggested that the Board consider updating the appointment at its next meeting, with the alternate position corresponding to Mayor Putaansuu seat.

## **9. STAFF RECOGNITION / PROGRESS REPORTS**

- a. Recognizing Drivers of the Month for February 2026 (10:45am)

0:28:16, Jeff Vinecourt, ACCESS Manager, recognized the ACCESS Driver of the Month for February 2026, Ed Turner.

0:30:30, Thomas Gilbert, Routed Manager, recognized the Routed Driver of the Month for February 2026, Serena Belisle.

0:32:17, Cyndi Griffey, Worker/Driver Manager recognized the Worker/Driver of the Month for February 2026, Jennifer Norton.

- b. Draft Financial Reports through February 2026
- c. Capital Work in Progress February 2026
- d. Fuel Costs Report through the end of March 2026

**10. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

1:11:58, Cory Rigtrup, Business Agent for ATU Local 587, stated that he has long viewed Kitsap Transit as a model employer, particularly for its positive performance system and supportive approach to developing employees. He noted that these practices had influenced labor agreements in other counties. Rigtrup expressed concern that, over the past several months, employees have perceived a shift in the agency’s culture, as reflected in significantly increased attendance at union meetings. He asked Kitsap Transit to reflect on its values and reaffirm its commitment to a collaborative, employee-centered relationship.

**11. FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER:**


1:13:55, Commissioner Rolfes stated that she would like a written memo summarizing the advantages and disadvantages of moving to a hybrid vessel and the rationale behind leadership’s recommendation. She asked that this information be distributed prior to the next meeting to ensure the Board fully understands the impact of the change.

**12. ADJOURN:** At 11:45 AM, Chairperson Walters adjourned the regular meeting.

**ADOPTED** by the Board of Commissioners of Kitsap Transit at a regular meeting thereof, held on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2026.

Attest:

Signed by:  
  
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 Katherine T. Walters, Chairperson

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 Jackie Bidon, Clerk of the Board