

COMMISSION AGENDA

Item No: 4A

Meeting: 2/21/19

DATE: February 8, 2019

TO: Port Commission

FROM: John Wolfe, Chief Executive Officer

Sponsor: Don Esterbrook, Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Project Manager: Lou Paulsen, Director, Strategic Operations Projects and Risk Management

SUBJECT: Recognition of the Tacoma Seafarers' Center

A. PURPOSE

The Port Commission will be briefed on the valuable work of the Tacoma Seafarers' Center and given an opportunity to recognize the Center's Director, Chaplain Paul Peterson and the Center's Board Chairperson, Mr. Ed Egan.

B. BACKGROUND

As its website states, *the Tacoma Seafarers' Center endeavors to bring peace to the world through serving the dedicated seafarers of the world.* With one paid staff member and more than 20 volunteers, this nondenominational, nonprofit ministry welcomes and cares for vessel crew members and merchant marine officers whose vessels travel across the oceans bringing cargoes to and from the Port of Tacoma. Their team helps hundreds of mariners each month and, with vessel liner services, many return regularly.

Though its roots date back to 1897, the Center has operated in recent years out of a modest Port-owned facility at 1118 Port of Tacoma Road. Its services for visiting mariners are free of charge and include:

1. Access to computer and WiFi so crew members can chat by video with family and friends back home
2. Free transportation to and from local venues, particularly shopping centers
3. Support during times of crisis when the mariners are far from their homes

Of note, all crew members arriving in Tacoma between late November and December receive a free holiday gift box containing candy and basic necessities. More than 1,500 gift boxes were distributed during the recent 2018 holiday season.

The Tacoma Seafarers' Center remains a respite for the visiting mariner, a safe place where individuals from many cultures and languages can come to receive support and a welcoming smile. In this way, Center staff and volunteers serve as the face of the South Sound community, and their hospitality sets a standard of warmth and friendship worthy of emulating.