

# Port Manatee Previews Potential Cargo Partner

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PALMETTO — Port Manatee is considering constructing a two-acre cargo pad. At [Thursday's Port Authority Board meeting](#), Gulf Coast Bulk Equipment Inc. demonstrated their wares in a presentation that impressed Authority members.



Richard Tager is President of [Gulf Coast Bulk Equipment, Inc. \(GCEB\)](#) located at 2327 S Dock Street, Palmetto, FL. He moved to the Tampa area in 1996 with Western Bulk Carriers and opened GCEB in 2008, with hopes to expand his bulk business.

GCEB has expanded its operations into the Northeast, South Atlantic and the U.S. Gulf. They provide Marine Terminal Operations, as well as equipment for off-loading bulk vessels.

Gulf Coast Bulk Equipment, Inc. has recently been awarded a contract by Mosaic for both Port Manatee and Port Tampa, to handle their fertilizers, salt, aggregates and various other bulk commodities.

Tager's experience comes from his years in military service and as a Civilian Transportation Officer at the Pentagon and Fort McNair in Washington D.C.

The Port Authority previously approved Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) grant funding for Phases II – V of the intermodal container yard in the amount of \$3,906,825.

While this project is still viable and ongoing, due to the current demand for a cargo pad, a request has been made to FDOT for the transfer of \$1,500,000 of said current grant funding for the construction of cargo pads.

The port has a contract pending with GCBE to construct a two-acre cargo pad, with GCBE paying the full amount, and then Florida Department of Transportation FDOT will reimburse 50 percent of the cost.

When board members return from their summer recess, they will consider the three-year contract.

Besides GCBE's innovative 'hopper to truck' equipment, members were elated with Tager's claim that 60 percent of their employees are vets, and that they are sticking with a program that vows to raise that number to 75 percent for newly-hired employees.