



Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority

SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE WOODS HOLE, MARTHA'S VINEYARD AND NANTUCKET STEAMSHIP AUTHORITY

January 25, 2023

The Members of the Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority Board met Wednesday, January 25, 2023, in the first-floor meeting room (Room 103) of the Authority's Administrative Offices, 228 Palmer Avenue, Falmouth. The following Board members were present: Chair Robert F. Ranney of Nantucket; Vice Chair Robert R. Jones of Barnstable; Secretary James M. Malkin of Dukes County; and Peter J. Jeffrey of Falmouth. Moira E. Tierney of New Bedford was absent.

1. General Manager Robert B. Davis provided an update on the general internet openings for the 2023 summer schedule. On January 17, 2023, when the Authority opened its website to summer reservations on the Nantucket route at 5 a.m., a short time later the site did not perform as expected. While the site was never down, customers experienced difficulty proceeding through the virtual waiting room to the main site. When they were able to access the main website, many customers then experienced difficulty completing the reservation process.

An analysis of the Nantucket opening uncovered two issues:

- The Authority's cloud-based servers hosting its website databases were not properly set up to handle both the volume and duration of web traffic associated with the opening.
- When those cloud-based server configurations were changed, the second issue occurred when several of the Authority's internal web servers could not then maintain a connection to the cloud servers and were taken off-line.

By 12:30 p.m. that Tuesday, the site was functioning normally. On the general opening day for 2023 summer reservations on the Nantucket route, the Authority processed approximately 9,153 transactions totaling \$4,748,000 in revenue. On the comparable day in 2022, the Authority processed a record 9,499 transactions representing nearly \$4.7 million in revenue. In 2021, it processed 5,530 transactions representing \$2.7 million in revenue.

It should be pointed out that, prior to opening its summer reservation period, the Authority ran multiple load tests on the site in November 2022 and received normal results. Network connectivity and other technical configurations were further verified prior to the summer reservation openings. On the opening day for Headstart reservations on January 10, 2023, the site processed over 8,300 transactions and did not have similar issues.

Late last week, an additional load test ran for an extended period of time. This load test did not include the waiting room. Vendors reported that this test simulated over four times the volume of queued transactions that have been seen in the live production queue during the busiest usage. Following configuration changes, the CPU utilization of the web servers was at 17%.

While the overall results of 23,212 transactions during the January 24, 2023, general opening on the Vineyard route were positive, Mr. Davis said he is not satisfied with the experience that many of our customers had during the booking process. Staff feels it is imperative that the Authority seek to hire a consultant to review all its systems. This would include the website, systems development and applications used by all aspects of the operation, as well as its use of on-site and cloud services.

Mr. Davis proposed that the charge to the consultant would be to examine and evaluate and provide a template with steps and timelines to give us more reliable and current IT infrastructure. This report should also include an overall risk assessment. The Members agreed, and they voted unanimously to form a working group comprised of staff, Falmouth Member Peter J. Jeffrey, and Port Council member John F. Cahill, to develop a Request for Proposals for such consulting work.

2. Communications Director Sean F. Driscoll and representatives from Projekt202 (formerly known as ADK Group) then reviewed the infrastructure of the new website and mobile application to review the ways in which the reservation experience will be improved on the new website under development.
3. Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project Manager Bill Cloutier and Mr. Davis provided an update on the Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project, which is now in Phase 5D, with enabling work occurring in the vehicle staging area in preparation for construction of the new terminal building and utility building.
4. Director of Marine Operations Mark Amundsen and Mr. Davis provided an update on the conversation status of the *M/V Aquinnah*, *M/V Monomoy* and the *M/V HOS North Star*. Following additional requests and questions from prospective shipyards interested in performing the work, staff felt it was beneficial to reschedule the bid opening from January 18, 2023, to February 8, 2023.

In addition to responding to the questions raised, part of the decision to move the bid opening date involved estimating a potential timeline for completion of the first vessel. That timeline projected completion at the end of the summer. Since SSA personnel will be needed to pilot the vessels from the shipyard to Fairhaven, availability of the additional

crews during that time of year was considered. By pushing the opening and award of the contract back to February, crewing concerns should be lessened in the fall.

5. Mr. Amundsen then provided an update on the dry dock of the *M/V Woods Hole*, which is currently underway at Senesco Shipyard in Kingstown, Rhode Island. Highlights of the project include bow thruster overhaul; new cathodic installation; structural steel renewals; blasting and costing the hull and superstructure; installation of an ultraviolet water purification system; and port and starboard shaft overhauls. The current total contract price is \$1,380,619.
6. Mr. Amundsen then provided an update on the commissioning of the spare engine for the *M/V Iyanough*. Earlier this month, Port Engineer Zack Lawrence traveled to the MTU factory in Germany to witness the dyno testing of the new, fully built engine. Testing went well.
7. Messrs. Cloutier and Davis provided an update on the recent dredging at the Nantucket Terminal. Shortly after the first of the year, the Authority received the final permit needed to commence the dredging at the Nantucket Terminal. AGM Marine Contractors had previously positioned their equipment on Nantucket in anticipation of receiving the Army Corps permit. Dredging began January 7, 2023, and was completed on January 13, 2023; approximately 2,026 cubic yards of materials were removed.
8. The Board approved the preseason sale of discounted high-speed ferry ticket books from March 19, 2023, through April 1, 2023. The 20% sale remains quite popular, as over 45% of the yearly ticket book sales for the *M/V Iyanough* occur during the promotional period.
9. The Board voted to reauthorize the Authority's Investment Policy, which formally establishes the types of permitted investments that can be made with the Authority's fund.
10. The Board voted to adopt a Bond Anticipation Notes Resolution authorizing the treasurer to issue and sell on a competitive basis not later than March 30, 2023, pursuant to an Official Notice of Sale, at a price not less than par and accrued interest, on the behalf of the Authority up to \$33,000,000 in Steamship Authority Bond Anticipation Notes.
11. Mr. Davis informed the Board that, per the Members' prior authorization, he awarded Contract No. 16-2022, Dry Dock and Overhaul Services for the *M/V Governor*, to the lowest eligible and responsible bidder, Senesco Marine LLC of North Kingstown, Rhode Island, for a total contract price of \$1,173,050.
12. Mr. Davis presented a "short list" of names to the Members for renaming the *M/V HOS North Star*. Last year, to encourage public participation, the Authority held a naming contest, with a prize of a \$250 SSA gift cards each available entrants who suggested a name that was chosen by the Board. More than 8,200 entries were received, comprising more than 9,200 name suggestions. Following discussion, the Members voted to rename the *M/V HOS North Star* the *M/V Barnstable*.

13. General Counsel Terence J. Kenneally informed the Board that the Authority had received a request for a license renewal from 41 North Offshore LLC, and that staff would begin the review and public comment period soon.

The next monthly Board meeting is currently scheduled to be held at 9:30 a.m. February 21, 2023, in the second-floor meeting room of the Authority's Hyannis Terminal. Please look for the formal notice for the meeting that will appear on this website. Thank you.