

**MINUTES**  
**OF THE**  
**PORT COUNCIL**  
**OF THE**  
**WOODS HOLE, MARTHA'S VINEYARD**  
**AND NANTUCKET STEAMSHIP AUTHORITY**

March 3, 2021

First-Floor Meeting Room (Room 103)  
Steamship Authority Administrative Offices  
228 Palmer Avenue, Falmouth, Massachusetts

Port Council Members present: Chairman Edward C. Anthes-Washburn of New Bedford; Vice Chairman Eric W. Shufelt of Barnstable; Secretary Robert S.C. Munier of Falmouth; Mark H. Rees of Fairhaven; Nathaniel E. Lowell of Nantucket; Joseph E. Sollitto Jr. of Oak Bluffs; and John Cahill of Tisbury (all of whom participated via Zoom videoconferencing).

Authority Board Members present: Chair Kathryn Wilson of Falmouth; and members Robert R. Jones of Barnstable and James M. Malkin of Dukes County (all of whom observed the meeting via Zoom videoconferencing).

Authority Management present: General Manager Robert B. Davis; Treasurer/Comptroller Mark K. Rozum; General Counsel Terence G. Kenneally; Communications Director Sean F. Driscoll; Director of Marine Operations Mark H. Amundsen (who participated via Zoom videoconferencing); Woods Hole Reconstruction Project Manager William J. Cloutier; Director of Shoreside Operations Alison A. Fletcher; Director of Human Resources Janice L. Kennefick; and Health, Safety, Quality, and Environmental Manager Angela M. Sampson.

1. Mr. Anthes-Washburn called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.
2. Mr. Anthes-Washburn announced Mr. Driscoll was making a video and audio recording of today's meeting.

3. Mr. Anthes-Washburn announced that, in response to Gov. Charlie Baker’s executive orders concerning the necessity to conduct public meetings in line with social distancing guidelines during the current state of emergency involving the COVID-19 pandemic, all of the Port Council members were participating remotely in the day’s meeting because their physical attendance would be unreasonably difficult. All the members were participating via Zoom videoconferencing and were clearly audible to one another. As a result of the members’ remote participation, all votes taken were to be by roll call vote.
  
4. Upon a motion by Mr. Lowell and a second by Mr. Sollitto, the Port Council **voted** 6-0 to approve the minutes of their meeting in public session on February 3, 2021. (Mr. Shufelt abstained from voting on the motion.)
  
5. Mr. Davis provided an update on the Authority’s activities and performance regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, including the following:
  - The Authority has continued its cleaning and sanitization efforts, including the use of electrostatic sprayers along with backpack foggers on a daily basis to dispense hospital-grade disinfectant, along with a prolonged antimicrobial agent for longer protection.
  - Since Gov. Baker’s COVID order requiring masks, even when social distancing is possible, an overall improvement with compliance has been observed, although mask wearing compliance remains a challenge and reports persist of individuals who have removed their mask for whatever reasons.
  - President Biden issued Executive Order 13998, which “requires masks be worn on all public maritime vessels, including ferries, to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19.” Much of what is contained in this Executive Order has been in place since Gov. Baker’s order, Mr. Davis said.
  - In response to both orders, Authority personnel continue to reinforce the need to wear a mask, as signs have been posted on the buses, at the terminals, and onboard the vessels. Additionally, PA announcements have been made at the terminals, the vessels are making multiple announcements and crews have been instructed to make additional rounds.
  - Vessel crews, before the beginning of their watch, are given a wellness screening by a trained medical professional.
  - Shoreside personnel are given the wellness questionnaire, which they need to complete and provide to their supervisor in order to be given clearance to report to work or be sent home.
  - Employees have been told that under no circumstances should they be coming to work while they are sick, for their own safety, the safety of their fellow crewmembers and for the safety of passengers. If any employee comes to work sick, they will be sent home – period.
  - Staff continues to monitor demand for vehicle space, but at this point, it is anticipated that the schedule modifications that became effective January 16, 2021, will remain in effect through the end of the winter schedule on March 31, 2021.

- The Authority continues to send out email notices to customers traveling on-island about how to register with the state, should they be out-of-state visitors.
- The Authority has created a dedicated landing page on its website for coronavirus updates ([www.steamshipauthority.com/2019coronavirus](http://www.steamshipauthority.com/2019coronavirus)), as well as its Facebook and Twitter pages, its eNews and local media outlets. Mr. Davis noted that, since its inception, the landing page had seen nearly 134,000 visits, with approximately 2,500 visits in the last thirty (30) days and nearly 700 visits in the past seven (7) days.

Mr. Anthes-Washburn asked when the Authority's employees might be able to receive a coronavirus vaccine; Mr. Davis said he last spoke with officials from the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Health and Human Services approximately two (2) weeks ago, and he planned to check in with them later this week. He said he was hoping that, by the middle of this month, a vaccination event for the Authority and other local transit workers could be arranged.

6. Mr. Rozum then reviewed via a PowerPoint presentation the January 2021 business summary, which showed that the Authority carried fewer passengers (down 19.4%) but more automobiles (up 1.1%) and trucks (up 4.0%) than it did in January 2020.

In January 2021, the Authority had approximately \$4,909,000 in income and \$8,283,000 in expenses for a net operating loss of \$3,374,000, which was \$957,181 less than budgeted, although Mr. Rozum noted that was due to timing issues on the ordering of various engine parts that would be recorded in the February 2021 financials.

In January 2021, the Authority's vessels made a combined 1,465 trips, of which eight (8) were canceled for mechanical reasons on the Vineyard route and two (2) were canceled for mechanical reasons on the Nantucket routes.

7. Mr. Davis provided the following updates on the Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project since the Port Council last met:

- Marine contractor Jay Cashman Inc. had a slight delay with activities as some members of their crew needed to quarantine because of a possible COVID-19 exposure. As work resumed, the landside crew worked on driving the steel sheets for the "deadman" wall to support the bulkhead.
- On the north side of the site, crews prepared concrete forms and made repairs to the existing structure in order to be able to hang the new bulkhead sheet piles. Carpenters and ironworkers installed the forms and rebar for the concrete wall at the north property line.
- Cashman's crew completed driving the final remaining 16-inch piles for the passenger pier. Cashman's crew also set the falsework for the 30-inch piles for the floating passenger pier and setting those pipe piles. The crew then started to cut the piles to height in order to fill and cap the piles.
- The carpenters continue to pre-fabricate the canopy to be installed on the south pier by drilling the timber arches at our Gifford St property.

Mr. Davis said the Authority has sent out 136 community email updates for the project.

Mr. Cloutier then shared a PowerPoint presentation of recent activity from the Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project.

Mr. Anthes-Washburn asked for an update on the timeline for completion of the marine work; Mr. Cloutier said the project is challenged by two (2) monopiles that were unable to be driven to their design depth, as was the head dolphin for the slip. If the design and construction teams can get through those challenges, he said the project would be in good shape.

Mr. Munier asked for an update on the project's financial situation; Messrs. Cloutier and Davis noted that the Board had, at its February meeting, approved a change order of \$208,610 for work related to the obstructions on monopiles No. 24 and No. 31. Resolving the engineering issues behind the three (3) issues Mr. Cloutier noted earlier will result in additional change orders, he said. Mr. Davis said the original marine contract was for approximately \$43,000,000, and the total cost is now approximately seventeen percent (17%) above that.

Mr. Lowell asked how the Authority assessed the figures included in the change order requests; Mr. Cloutier said staff analyzes them when they are received and review them with Jay Cashman Inc. to obtain an agreement as to the price. Mr. Lowell noted the Cashman crews should be getting better at the monopile driving process due to prior work in Slips No. 2 and No. 3; Mr. Cloutier said yes, noting that the use of the vibratory hammer and diesel hammer had been refined following the prior phases of the project.

Mr. Munier asked that subsequent presentations include financial updates as he asks the same question each month; Mr. Davis said staff would include it moving forward.

8. Mr. Davis noted that the first community input session on the landside design phase of the project has been scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on March 23, 2021, via Zoom. The project's design team, led by BIA.studio, will be on the call to discuss design criteria and objectives. The Authority is attempting to foster an open dialogue with community stakeholders, to answer questions related to the project design, and to listen to public comments and input.

Mr. Davis noted this session is being held to coincide with the completion of approximately forty percent (40%) of the schematic design phase; a second session will be held when the schematic design phase is at approximately ninety percent (90%) completion. Then, during the subsequent design development phase, sessions will again be held at the forty percent (40%) and ninety percent (90%) milestones (approximately in October and December of this year).

9. Mr. Amundsen shared a PowerPoint presentation regarding the dry docking of the *M/V Woods Hole* at Thames Shipyard in New London, Connecticut, which had recently been completed. The highlights of the project included the installation of a new diesel oil purifier

system; overhaul of two (2) generators and alternators; overhaul of port and starboard tail shafts and bearings; and overhaul of the bow thruster. The contract price with credits was \$751,982, but following change orders the updated price was \$907,485.

Mr. Rees asked for details about the diesel fuel purifier system, and Mr. Amundsen described the process. He called it an “insurance policy” for having high-quality fuel available for the engines. Mr. Davis also noted that the Authority has a program to test vessel fuel regularly.

Mr. Munier noted the freight deck needed to be repainted only a few years after the vessel was constructed and asked if there were any other issues that were now presenting themselves from the construction of the vessel. Mr. Amundsen said the Authority got a good product and that the paint issues were more preventative in nature.

9. Regarding the Safety Quality Management System (“SQMS”) project, Mr. Davis provided the following updates from project vendor Safety Management Systems LLC (SMSLLC):
  - Training materials, agendas and scheduling arrangements have been completed and confirmed for SMSLLC onsite training March 15-26, 2021, to introduce personnel to Phase 2 and Phase 3 documentation (the SQMS Guide, Vessel Operations Manual and Terminal and Facilities Operations Manual).
  - SMSLLC remains currently focused on Project Phase 4, the final SQMS document development phase, which includes a Support Operations Manual (SOM) and completion of the GUIDE (i.e., primarily quality management elements remaining under development per the Project Management Plan). The timeline for Phase 4 is mid-March 2021, though it is likely that an additional one to two weeks will be necessary to complete documentation. SMSLLC deems this “likely” due to the related volume of documentation and interview notes factoring into the development of the SOM. Extended staff interviews during late January were productive, and SMSLLC aims to achieve accuracy within its draft documentation.
  - SMSLLC also provided additional assistance to the Authority with respect to defining its organizational structure and essential lines of communication and reporting. While not a significant distraction, the task may contribute to the timeline delay affecting Phase 4.
  - The Authority submitted the recently drafted Public Transit Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) for agency review and comment. The document was returned to the Authority with several comments that will be addressed by SMSLLC following commencement of the SQMS “hard implementation” phase commencing during early April.
  - The overall project timeline remains unchanged for the Authority to achieve SQMS certification during June 2021.
  
10. Mr. Driscoll then provided the following updates on the website redesign project, which was included in the 2021 Capital Budget approved by the Port Council and Board at their respective February meetings:

- The project team has conducted internal surveys to gather feedback on what works and what does not about the Authority’s current website, as well as a wish list for the new site and/or a mobile application.
- In the same vein, an online survey to gather customer comments was launched Friday, February 19, 2021, and will remain open through 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, March 21, 2021. The threshold for a statistically viable sample was set at 1,000 survey responses; as of Tuesday, approximately 1,250 to 1,300 surveys had been completed. Qualified participants will be able to enter a drawing for one of four \$500 gift cards, to either Amazon.com or a local merchant of their choice.
- Meanwhile, the Authority’s marketing research firm, Consumer Insight Associates, has been provided with a list of twenty-eight (28) key stakeholders with whom they will conduct telephone interviews to get more in-depth input on the website redesign. The list of interviewees includes representatives from both the Port Council and Board, as well as government, business and community representatives from both the islands and mainland communities.
- The website redesign project committee expects to receive a final report on the survey the week of April 5, 2021, and that information will be used to help develop the Request for Proposal.
- After interviewing two (2) firms, the website redesign project committee has selected Regan Digital Studio to provide technical guidance and assistance to the project team as they work to develop the RFP. Like Pierce-Cote Advertising, Regan Digital is a division of Regan Communications, the Authority’s longtime communications and advertising partner. Regan Digital’s president, Dave Jensen, has more than fifteen (15) years’ experience in operations and digital marketing. Mr. Jensen not only has a deep well of technical knowledge but insight into industry trends, both of which will help the project team develop a new website to serve the Authority’s customers. An added benefit is a continuation of the Authority’s partnership with Regan, which will allow their years of familiarity with the Authority’s operations to be reflected in our website design efforts.
- The project team expects to issue the RFP on or about May 1, 2021, and bring a recommendation to the Board for a vote in August or September 2021.

Regarding the project cost as included in the 2021 Capital Budget, Mr. Driscoll clarified that the \$2,000,000 line item is the total available funding based on grant awards from the FAST Act Ferry Boat Program. On the Cape Cod Metropolitan Planning Organization’s 2020 Transportation Improvement Plan, both the redesigned website and a mobile web application were listed as separate Projects In Need of Funding in the amounts of \$1,250,000 and \$750,000 each, respectively. These amounts were priced individually and may realize cost savings based on the specific bids and vendors who reply to the RFP. In the event the total costs come under those levels, the Authority may have the opportunity to reallocate remaining grant and capital funding.

Mr. Driscoll also noted the funding could be used for not only the development process but also any equipment upgrades that may be required because of this process. Additionally, as with any procurement item of more than \$100,000, the contracts for this project will come to the Board for review and a request for approval.

Mr. Anthes-Washburn inquired about the scope of the website project, and Mr. Driscoll said it was limited to the design and functionality of the website and its content management system and not the reservation system. Mr. Anthes-Washburn asked if the new website would integrate the various communications systems that were in place; Mr. Driscoll said that examination was currently being done by the project team, but the new website and/or mobile app would bring additional tools to the Authority's disposal. Mr. Anthes-Washburn asked if the Authority was using a Customer Relationship Management software; Mr. Driscoll said it was not at this time.

In response to questions from Mr. Cahill about technical aspects of the project, Mr. Driscoll offered to connect him with Director of Information Technologies Curt J. Van Riper for further discussion.

11. Mr. Davis then presented a draft of the proposed 2022 Operating Schedules for discussion purposes only. He noted the proposed schedules from January 5, 2022 to January 2, 2023 would start one day earlier than 2021 for both the Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket routes, but they would end two (2) days earlier. The 2022 Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Operating schedules would be essentially the same as 2021 with the exception of the assigned vessels and the start and end dates of the schedules and some minor modifications to the Martha's Vineyard route's winter schedule.

Staff is proposing to split the winter schedule for the Vineyard route into two (2) schedules, Mr. Davis said. The approved winter service for 2021 was scheduled to operate from January 4 through March 31, 2021, with the freight vessel berthing on island with a scheduled 5:30 a.m. trip. The 2022 early winter schedule for the Vineyard route is proposed to operate from January 5 through February 15, 2022. During this schedule, the freight vessel will berth in Woods Hole and the first trip by the *M/V Katama* will depart at 6:30 a.m. to the island. The remaining late winter schedule for the Vineyard route is proposed to operate from February 16 through March 29, 2022. During this schedule, the freight vessel will berth on island and the first trip by the *M/V Katama* will depart at 5:30 a.m. to Woods Hole. The quantity of trips and the trip times for these schedules would be the same as the approved 2021 schedule with this exception.

Mr. Davis also shared a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate the vessel assignments and scheduling.

In response to a question from Mr. Lowell, Mr. Davis said the *M/V Iyanough* would be triple-crewed in the summer, which would enable the vessel to run its fifth round trip every day. When the vessel is double-crewed, it can run only four (4) round trips. As staff continues to monitor passenger traffic patterns, Mr. Davis said adjustments may be made, but he hoped 2022 would bring a return to the typical staffing pattern for that vessel.

Mr. Cahill asked if the 2022 schedule has the same vehicle capacity as 2019, and Mr. Davis said the biggest issue he saw was the *M/V Island Home* heading to dry dock in the winter of 2022. That may require additional service on the Vineyard route to meet vehicle demand

during peak times, he said, noting that the *M/V Katama* was berthing on the island due to an uptick in freight demand in the early-morning hours.

Mr. Cahill asked if the Authority was expecting 2022 to be a recovery from the effects of COVID-19; Mr. Davis said he hoped the passenger traffic would return, but the schedule would continue to be built around vehicular demand.

Mr. Munier asked if the 5:30 a.m. trip from Woods Hole was planned again for 2022; Mr. Davis said it was, and it will start with the May 17, 2022 schedule and would end on October 19, 2022. In response to further questions from Mr. Munier, Mr. Davis said he saw no changes in demand for the 5:30 a.m. trip. Its scheduling coincides with an uptick in traffic shortly before Memorial Day, he said. Mr. Munier said it is very important that the Authority continue to justify the need for that trip so people can understand how important it is.

12. Mr. Davis presented his draft goals for 2021 as such:

1. Complete Phase 4 of the reconstruction of the Woods Hole Terminal (marine work) before the start of the 2021 Summer Operating Schedule on June 23, 2021.
2. Complete the schematic design phase, as well as the design development phase, for the Woods Hole Terminal Building and Utility Building including opportunities for community engagements and obtain the necessary permitting for the construction of the same.
3. Issue an invitation for bids and the award of a contract for the construction of the Authority's new maintenance warehouse, shops and office facility at the Authority's Falmouth Maintenance site on Bernard St. Jean Drive, subject to availability of funding.
4. Oversee a study of a website upgrade/redesign in preparation for the solicitation of proposals and award of a contract for the redesign of the website and/or development of a mobile app to begin in fall 2021.
5. Issue a request for proposals and the award of a contract for a qualified solar developer to develop solar array canopies at the Authority's Thomas Landers Parking Facility.
6. Complete a Fleet Useful Life, Functional Obsolescence Survey as the initial stage in the Authority's vessel replacement program.
7. Complete an evaluation on the feasibility for alternative power technology systems for the Authority's vessel replacement program.
8. Complete the development and implementation of the Safety Quality Management System (SQMS) in order to achieve certification during June 2021.
9. Pursue capital grant funding opportunities from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration and other federal and state agencies.

Mr. Davis said he wished to obtain the Port Council's input on whether these goals should be for the calendar year or not, as they would typically run for the year starting July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, but staff delayed their creation due to the management of COVID-19.

Mr. Anthes-Washburn noted that the Port Council had periodically requested a review of the Enabling Act to determine if the creation of a “rainy day fund” or other changes would be necessary in light of the effects of the pandemic and wondered if that should be one of Mr. Davis’ goals. Mr. Davis he had some discussions with the Executive Office of Administration and Finance as to whether or not the order of the flow of monies to the Authority’s special-purpose funds should be changed, but the issue would remain as to how the Authority would fund a rainy-day fund and, once funded, how it would be used. Mr. Anthes-Washburn said, if staff was fine with not pursuing a change to the Enabling Act, Mr. Davis might want to give an update to that effect to close the issue.

Mr. Rees said he thought the proposed goals were succinct, unambiguous and measurable, but suggested there be more details as to the timing and milestones included in them to show progress. Mr. Munier agreed, but he said there are some goals that are qualitative but still important, such as improving the Authority’s relationship with the community. He also noted there was no mention of investigating freight service to New Bedford, which is still an open matter.

Mr. Lowell said if the Authority could find revenue streams that were in the millions of dollars for its capital projects, that would be helpful, but he said he was wary of involving the state legislature too much in the Authority’s operations.

13. Mr. Anthes-Washburn then asked for public comment, and Mr. Malkin asked if the Port Council could provide its opinion on the issue of whether or not Mr. Davis’ goals should be for the calendar year or for the traditional July 1 through June 30 time frame. Since so many of the goals are tied to the Authority’s finances, it might make sense to tie the evaluation to the fiscal year, but he said he was open to doing it either way.

Mr. Davis said his evaluation is typically tied into the nonunion group’s evaluations, which are done in the late spring. Mr. Rees suggested the goals cycle might want to line up with the Authority’s budget timeline, which Mr. Davis said begins internally in May and then presents a draft budget in September and a final proposal in October.

Mr. Malkin noted that, from a practical standpoint, the Board would theoretically be evaluating Mr. Davis on these goals in three (3) months’ time. Mr. Anthes-Washburn said it might make sense, then, to have some goals be applicable to the following year and have certain milestones applicable to the next several months. Mr. Munier said that might add to the complexity of how the goals would be achieved, and noted that the Port Council and Board have typically been fairly flexible as to the timing of Mr. Davis’ goals.

Mr. Davis said if the Port Council was amenable, the matter could be discussed at the following meeting after the Board has a chance to weigh in.

At 11:00 a.m., Mr. Anthes-Washburn ended his participation the meeting.

Mr. Shufelt agreed that the matter should be brought back up at the next Port Council meeting after the Members had a chance to offer their thoughts.

Then, at approximately 11:03 a.m., upon a motion from Mr. Lowell and a second from Mr. Sollitto, the Port Council **voted** 6-0 to adjourn their meeting.

A TRUE RECORD

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Robert S.C. Munier, Secretary

Documents and Exhibits Used at the Port Council’s March 3, 2021 Meeting

1. Agenda for the Port Council’s March 3, 2021 Meeting, posted March 1, 2021.
2. Minutes of the Port Council’s February 3, 2021, Meeting in Public Session (draft dated February 11, 2021).
3. Business Summary, January 2021 (draft).
4. PowerPoint presentation, Business Summary – January 2021, dated March 3, 2021.
5. PowerPoint presentation, Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project, dated March 3, 2021.
6. PowerPoint presentation, *M/V Woods Hole* dry dock, undated.
7. Proposed draft, 2022 Operating Schedules, dated March 1, 2021.
8. PowerPoint presentation, Preliminary Draft of the Proposed 2022 Operating Schedules, dated March 3, 2021. Graphic, 2021 Internet General Opening NT Route, undated.
9. General Manager’s Goals for the Year 2021, undated draft.