

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

May 5, 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; 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).

Port Council Members absent: Secretary Robert S.C. Munier of Falmouth.

Authority Board Members present: Chair Kathryn Wilson of Falmouth; and member Robert R. Jones of Barnstable (both 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; 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 9:02 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** 5-0 to approve the minutes of their meeting in public session on April 7, 2021. (Mr. Anthes-Washburn abstained from the vote.)

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 and President Biden’s issuance of Executive Order 13998 requiring mask usage, an overall improvement with compliance has been observed, although mask wearing compliance remains a challenge. An amendment was later issued to the federal executive order allowing masks to be lowered when individuals are eating or drinking.
 - 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.
 - Effective May 19, 2021, the unaccompanied drive-on/drive-off service on the Hyannis/Nantucket route will resume after the Authority worked with employees at those locations to determine appropriate safety measures.
 - Also on May 19, 2021, the Authority’s concessionaire, Centerplate, will restart limited food and beverage sales on board the vessels. Centerplate is also planning to supplement those services with vending machines on board as it is anticipated staffing issues will continue to be a concern. Several safety enhancements are being made to the lunch counters, including the installation of Plexiglas shields at lunch counters. Centerplate is also sourcing vendors for canned drinks in lieu of bottled drinks given the local movements to ban single-serve plastic beverage containers.

- The Authority has created a dedicated landing page on its website for coronavirus updates (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 more than 144,000 visits, with approximately 5,600 visits in the last thirty (30) days and approximately 1,400 visits in the past seven (7) days.

In response to a question from Mr. Anthes-Washburn, Mr. Davis stated that, as transportation workers became eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine effective March 22, 2021, the Authority has worked with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Cape Cod Healthcare and the Barnstable County Department of Health and Environment to arrange vaccine distribution for its personnel. Cape Cod Healthcare offered two (2) days of vaccine clinics at the Cape Cod Melody Tent, and the county planned to hold three (3) days of vaccinations for local transit workers at the Authority’s Hyannis Terminal, Cape Cod Gateway Airport and the Authority’s administrative office in Falmouth. However, only one of those was held as a national “pause” was put into place on the Johnson & Johnson vaccine being used. A subsequent clinic was held using a different vaccine, at which nearly 200 individuals were seen.

6. Mr. Rozum then reviewed via a PowerPoint presentation the March 2021 business summary, which showed that the Authority carried more passengers (up 45.1%), automobiles (up 57.1%) and trucks (up 32.4%) than it did in March 2020; however, those numbers are reflecting the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Compared to budgeted figures, which use 2019 traffic as the baseline starting in March, passenger traffic was down 6.2%, automobile traffic was up 4.9% and truck traffic was up 2.6%. Year-to-date figures versus budgeted estimates show the Authority has carried fewer passengers (down 15.4%) but more automobiles (up 0.7%) and trucks (up 1.3%) than anticipated.

In March 2021, the Authority had approximately \$5,978,000 in income and \$9,669,000 in expenses for a net operating loss of \$3,692,000, which was \$268,000 less than budgeted. Year-to-date figures show the Authority has a net operating loss of \$11,170,000, approximately \$1,774,000 less than the budgeted amount.

In March 2021, the Authority’s vessels made a combined 1,401 trips, of which fifteen (15) were canceled for mechanical reasons on the Vineyard route and zero (0) were canceled for mechanical reasons on the Nantucket route

Mr. Lowell noted he believed the high-speed ferry passenger numbers would be strong this year; Mr. Rozum concurred, although he said the service was off to a slow start in April.

7. Mr. Cloutier shared a PowerPoint presentation of recent activity from the Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project. Mr. Anthes-Washburn asked for an update on the timeline, and Mr. Cloutier said it was continuing to be a challenge and would not be done until early July. Mr. Davis said the south passenger pier likely would not be in use this summer and that a lot of the timeline for the remaining work depends on how quickly the

south head dolphin can be finished in Slip No. 1. Another monopile required additional piles to be driven to support it.

Mr. Sollitto asked what the original schedule was for the work, and Mr. Davis said the slip was supposed to be ready for the start of the summer schedule on June 24, 2021, and the Authority was pursuing alternatives should that not be the case. In response to a question from Mr. Anthes-Washburn, Mr. Davis said one possibility was to berth the *M/V Sankaty* in Fairhaven and have it travel to Woods Hole empty each morning and return to Fairhaven empty each evening, which will require overtime pay for the crews.

8. Regarding the landside design, Mr. Davis said staff was still working on responses to the nearly 100 questions raised by Woods Hole community members, and he anticipated the review of those would be done in the following week. Another community input session will be held when the project's schematic design phase reaches approximately ninety percent (90%) completion, approximately in June, and again when the subsequent design development phase hits the forty percent (40%) and ninety percent (90%) thresholds, which should occur in October and December, respectively.
9. Mr. Amundsen shared a PowerPoint presentation regarding the dry-docking of the *M/V Governor* at Thames Shipyard in New London, Connecticut. The highlights of the project include an ultra-high pressure blast of the main deck; repair of a damaged rudder taper; shaft repairs; and an overhaul of the emergency diesel generator and alternators. The contract price with credits was \$808,183; following change orders, the updated price stands at \$1,294,060. The 2021 budget estimate for the dry-docking was \$1,051,600.
10. Regarding the Safety Quality Management System (SQMS) project, Ms. Sampson said the Systems Operations Manual (SOM) remains under review. Project vendor Safety Management Systems LLC (SMSLLC) and the Authority have agreed to extend the SQMS certification until October 2021 to allow sufficient time for vessel and shoreside personnel to fully implement the system.
11. Mr. Driscoll then provided the following updates on the website redesign project:
 - Following the close of the public survey in March, the project team is working with consulting firm Regan Digital Studio to draft the Request for Proposals for the new website and mobile application.
 - The team expects the RFP to be issued on or about June 1, 2021, and be due approximately 45 days later.
 - The project team expects to then review the proposals and bring a recommendation to the Board at its September meeting.

Mr. Cahill asked on how the project is being funded, and Mr. Driscoll said that grant funding from the Federal Highway Administration's Ferry Boat Funding Formula had been

designated on the Barnstable County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for this project.

12. Mr. Rozum then presented a PowerPoint with the 2020 Cost of Service analysis. The highlights of the analysis for the Vineyard route were as follows:

- The cost of vessel operations decreased by \$398,000, or 1.3%.
- Indirect non-vessel costs increased by \$121,000, or 0.4%.
- Overall, the cost of service decreased by \$277,000, or 0.4% versus 2019.
- The 2020 vehicle occupancy rate was 79.6% versus 79.1% for 2019.

Highlights of the analysis regarding the Nantucket route were as follows:

- The cost of vessel operations increased by \$187,000, or 0.9%.
- Indirect non-vessel costs decreased by \$173,000, or 1.0%
- Overall, the cost of service increased by \$14,000, or 0.0% versus 2019.
- The 2020 vehicle occupancy rate was 80.9% versus 82.8% for 2019.

Mr. Lowell said he believed 2021's cost of service report would more closely resemble 2019; Mr. Rozum agreed, although it remains to be seen how much passenger revenue would affect the final results.

Mr. Davis noted the occupancy figures were based on the total year and said there were times of the year with much higher demand in certain directions. The total also includes trips when a nearly empty boat had to sail to be in position for a full trip in the other direction. Mr. Davis said 80% is typically the appropriate year-round occupancy figure.

Mr. Anthes-Washburn said this type of analysis helped the Port Council and Board immensely as they were deciding how to cut back service as the pandemic took hold.

13. Mr. Rozum then reviewed the 2022 draft budget policy statement.

Mr. Rees said the emphasis on training in the draft statement was good and asked if Mr. Rozum had started any projections on the Authority's health insurance costs for 2022. Mr. Rozum stated the Authority would be in negotiations with its unions for new contracts this year, so those costs would be contractually driven. Currently, employees pay 20% of their health costs, he said.

Mr. Rees asked about the prospect of additional federal funds and how those would be handled in the budget; Mr. Rozum said he was discussing the issue with the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority (CCRTA) and RSM US LLP, the Authority's audit firm. Mr. Davis noted the Authority had recently executed a Memorandum of Understanding with the CCRTA regarding the distribution of approximately \$8.4 million in Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act funding.

Then, upon a motion from Mr. Sollitto and a second from Mr. Lowell, the Port Council **voted** 6-0 to recommend approval of the draft budget policy statement as proposed.

14. Mr. Sollitto noted he had attended the public hearing on the 2022 proposed operating schedules and asked if studies had been done as to how much traffic on the bridges was attributable to the Authority. Mr. Davis said the Cape Cod Commission does extensive traffic monitoring, including over the bridges and at points along Woods Hole Road. Mr. Sollitto asked if those studies were available for review; Mr. Davis said he would gather them and forward them to the Port Council. Mr. Sollitto then asked how many trucks were regularly on the 5:30 a.m. departure from Woods Hole; Mr. Davis said 10 or 11 trucks that are less than forty (40) feet in length are typically on the trip in the summer time. Mr. Lowell noted the Authority was using a vessel that eliminated the need for trucks to back up and had prohibited larger trucks from taking that trip.
15. Mr. Lowell noted a recent letter to the editor in local papers regarding another ferry line that spent approximately \$10 million on a ferry and criticized the Authority for the cost of its vessels. He asked Mr. Davis to respond to it; Mr. Davis said the situation was not “apples to apples” as the ferry in question was a high-speed vessel and it was being compared to the construction of the *M/V Woods Hole*.
16. Mr. Lowell asked about the Authority’s planning process for its next vessel; Mr. Davis said a survey of the Authority’s fleet was under way, which is the first step in that process. He said he expected it to be complete in the next three (3) to four (4) months.
17. Mr. Anthes-Washburn asked for public comment. Dukes County Commissioner Leon Brathwaite said he thought the Authority was doing a good job and was in good hands.

Then, at approximately 10:23 a.m., upon a motion from Mr. Lowell and a second from Mr. Sollitto, the Port Council **voted** 6-0 to adjourn its meeting.

A TRUE RECORD

Robert S.C. Munier, Secretary

Documents and Exhibits Used at the Port Council’s May 5, 2021 Meeting

1. Agenda for the Port Council’s May 5, 2021 Meeting, posted April 30, 2021.
2. Minutes of the Port Council’s April 7, 2021, Meeting in Public Session (draft dated May 3, 2021).
3. PowerPoint presentation, Business Summary – March 2021, dated May 5, 2021.
4. Business Summary, March 2021 (draft).
5. PowerPoint presentation, Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project, dated May 5, 2021.
6. PowerPoint presentation, *M/V Governor* dry dock, undated.
7. Staff Summary #A-662, 2020 Analysis of Rates versus Cost of Service, undated draft.
8. PowerPoint presentation, 2020 Analysis of Rates versus Cost of Service, undated.
9. Staff Summary #A-661, 2022 Budget Policy Statement, undated draft.