

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

July 14, 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 (who joined the meeting at 9:06 a.m. following the recording and remote participation announcements); 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); Reservations and Customer Relations Manager Angela C. Campbell; 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. Shufelt called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

2. Mr. Davis announced that, pursuant to the Senate Bill 2475 signed into law by Governor Baker on June 16, 2021 and in line with social distancing guidelines followed during 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.
3. Mr. Davis announced Mr. Driscoll was making a video and audio recording of today's meeting.
4. Mr. Shufelt noted his middle initial was incorrect in the minutes presented to the Board; Mr. Driscoll said he would correct it. Then, upon a motion by Mr. Cahill and a second by Mr. Lowell, the Port Council **voted** 3-0 to approve the minutes of their joint meeting in public session with the Board on June 25, 2021 pursuant to the above-mentioned change. (Messrs. Munier, Rees, Sollitto, and Shufelt abstained from the vote.)
5. Mr. Rozum reviewed via a PowerPoint presentation the May 2021 business summary, which showed that the Authority carried fewer passengers (down 12.1%), more automobiles (up 5.7%), and fewer trucks (down 6.4%) than it did in May 2019, the month used for budget purposes. Year-to-date figures versus budgeted estimates show the Authority has carried fewer passengers (down 12.2%) but more automobiles (up 4.9%) and trucks (up 0.1%) than anticipated.

In May 2021, the Authority had approximately \$12,357,000 in income and \$9,187,000 in expenses for a net operating income of \$3,169,000, which was \$441,000 higher than budgeted. Year-to-date figures show the Authority has a net operating loss of \$7,934,000, approximately \$2,637,000 less than the budgeted amount. Mr. Rozum said several maintenance expenses planned for the spring were delayed until the fall until the full effects of COVID-19 on the Authority's finances could be determined.

In May 2021, the Authority's vessels made a combined 2,205 trips, of which two (2) were canceled for mechanical reasons on the Vineyard route and zero (0) were canceled for mechanical reasons on the Nantucket route.

Mr. Munier asked what Mr. Rozum's takeaway was from the figures, noting that the Authority seemed to be in generally good financial condition; Mr. Lowell said the May figures were too early to draw any conclusions for the year. Mr. Rozum said the preliminary June figures, which he shared via a PowerPoint slide, showed a mix of automobiles that had more standard-fare travelers than excursion-fare travelers, which Mr. Davis said is driving the positive variance in the automobile revenue. Mr. Davis said more standard-fare travelers was a changing traffic pattern that the Authority has been seeing for a while as it emerges from COVID-19. Mr. Davis further said June passengers were down closer to the

10% figure expected in the 2021 operating budget, but the first few weeks of July 2021 were likely to be down due to the poor weather.

Mr. Anthes-Washburn asked how traffic was on the islands; Mr. Sollitto noted it was very heavy and it was hard for locals to get off the island because so many reservations were made earlier than normal. Mr. Cahill said he agreed with that assessment.

6. Mr. Cloutier shared a PowerPoint presentation of recent activity from the Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project, noting that the barges and cranes have left the site and that work was now focused on opening Slip No. 1 for the *M/V Sankaty* to berth. He said waterside work will resume in the fall to finish several dolphins.

Mr. Anthes-Washburn asked what work was remaining at the site; Mr. Cloutier said the south head dolphin and monopiles 24 and 31 needed remediation work. Additionally, riprap had to be installed at the south edge of the site, and Mr. Davis noted adjustments to several fenders now in use would be made as well. Mr. Cloutier said it was expected that the fall would entail four (4) to six (6) months of work.

Mr. Anthes-Washburn asked if all the slips were now operable; Mr. Cloutier said Slip No. 1 would be operable to tie up a vessel but not to load or unload it. The *M/V Sankaty* is now berthing in Fairhaven and transiting to and from Woods Hole daily to run its daily published schedule.

Mr. Munier noted the project was approximately \$1,000,000 under its original estimate and asked Mr. Cloutier how he thought it would end up. Mr. Cloutier said the additional work would be “expensive” and that, of the ten (10) monopiles installed, four (4) of them had to be supported in some fashion due to interference. Mr. Davis noted the original contract with Jay Cashman Inc. called for a five-year contract period, so discussion was to take place regarding the work to begin this fall. Mr. Cloutier said it made sense to stop at the beginning of July so the *M/V Sankaty* could berth in the slip.

Mr. Davis noted the Authority had sent out 155 community email updates so far, and that those would continue over the summer as work was to be ongoing at the site.

7. Regarding the landside design, Mr. Davis said the second community engagement forum was held July 7, 2021 via Zoom. At the forum, design staff presented changes to the utility building design, which now includes a flat, rather than pitched, roof, which was a direct result of input from the community stakeholders. Also presented were updates on a potential geothermal system being considered for the site, a concept for Cahoon Park, and information on potential phasing of the project’s construction. Future community engagement forums will be held 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. Regarding the Safety Quality Management System (SQMS) project, Ms. Sampson said the Systems Operations Manual (SOM) remains under review as Phase 4 of the project. Once that is complete, Phase 5 can commence, which includes documentation review and internal assessments. Ms. Sampson said project vendor Safety Management Systems LLC (SMSLLC) and the Authority plan to obtain certification of the SQMS in December 2021 to allow sufficient time for vessel and shoreside personnel to fully implement the system.

Mr. Munier asked if, prior to the certification by the American Bureau of Shipping, the Authority would hold a “mock audit” of its own; Ms. Sampson confirmed that would be the case and that it would take approximately nine (9) days.

10. Regarding the landside terminal project, Mr. Munier asked if BIA.studio was presenting a business case to the Authority for the geothermal energy system. Mr. Davis said they would, and noted that Mr. Cloutier, along with assistant project manager Joseph Levesque and BIA.studio architects Chris Iwerks and Lian Davis recently met with officials at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy to get their input on a geothermal system that was installed at that institution’s library approximately five (5) to six (6) years ago.

Mr. Munier asked if the system could be paid for by grant funding; Mr. Davis said funds would be sought in that regard.

Mr. Cloutier said the economics of the system would be addressed when the schematic design cost estimates are issued in the coming weeks. He noted the Massachusetts Maritime Academy building was one of the first in the state to receive “platinum” LEED certification, and the geothermal system played a big role in that.

Mr. Lowell said based on his experiences geothermal energy systems are, in his opinion, high-maintenance and that the Authority would also need to install a traditional system in order to maintain reliability. Mr. Lowell asked if the utilities would still be run underground at the terminal site; Mr. Cloutier said they would.

11. Mr. Driscoll then provided the following updates on the website redesign project:
- More than thirty (30) agencies have requested, and been sent, the RFP after it was issued June 1, 2021.
 - Two (2) addenda have been issued to the RFP as questions have come in from potential bidders. A third addenda, and hopefully the last, is in the works.
 - The due date remains August 16, 2021.
 - The project team expects to then review the proposals and bring a recommendation to the Board at its September or October 2021 meetings.
12. Mr. Amundsen presented a PowerPoint with an update on the dry docking of the *M/V Gay Head* at Thames Shipyard in New London, Connecticut. The highlights of the work to be performed include installation of a new fire detection system, blast and coating of potable water and ballast tanks, and overhaul of the anchor windlass. The contract amount is

\$1,131,445, he said. Mr. Anthes-Washburn asked how long the work would take to perform; Mr. Amundsen said the vessel was due back during the second week of August 2021.

13. Mr. Davis then discussed preferred space allocations on the vessels, noting that the Authority had seen a change in traffic patterns and more people booking their travel earlier in the year than in years past. Mr. Davis said the off-island travelers have largely been customers who have been planning their travel early in the year.

Mr. Davis said the Authority allocates 120 vehicle spaces per day for travelers eligible for preferred space on the Vineyard route. Of those, ninety (90) are available seven (7) days ahead of travel, and thirty (30) are available the day before travel. Mr. Davis said the Authority last examined the preferred space program in 2012, at which time it was observed that a significant number of the seven-day preferred spaces were not being booked. The program was changed at that time to allow the unused portion of the seven-day preferred spaces to go on sale to the general public three (3) days ahead of time. By and large, the remaining preferred spaces were then booked in that time frame.

Mr. Davis said he believed the Authority needed to review the program again and determine if 120 spaces per day in the on-season was the appropriate number or if changes needed to be made, including looking at travel patterns to determine if more one-day spaces needed to be added. Mr. Davis said the Authority tries to spread the preferred spaces over a number of trips with the knowledge that people need to travel at different times, but if it is determined that certain trips are using the majority of the spaces then it may make more sense to reallocate them. Mr. Davis noted it becomes a balancing act to make sure there is space for islanders and visitors alike. Mr. Davis further noted the allocation changes that occur in the off-season, when eighty (80) spaces per day are set aside for preferred space on the Vineyard route, will also be examined.

Mr. Davis said he hoped the review would be further along but staff recognizes there has been a shift in travel patterns, which shows how important it is for the Authority to effectively manage its allocations at any given time.

Mr. Sollitto asked if the Authority could move preferred space allocations to earlier boats off-island and later boats on-island and have fewer available in the middle of the day; Mr. Davis said that was one option worth considering. Another consideration is if the Authority should continue its practice of making unused seven-day preferred spaces available to the public or hold them all for the one-day preferred spaces. He noted the preferred spaces are used when islanders have medical needs. He said it may not be possible to make these changes this summer because of the Authority's booking status.

Mr. Davis further noted that going into the Independence Day holiday, there were many individuals who showed up trying to travel on standby after booking tickets for August or beyond.

Mr. Lowell said the situation reminded him of the period when the Authority offered “guaranteed standby” on the Vineyard route. He said the system does not work perfectly but it does work, and if travel is this busy there should not be any empty space on a boat at all.

Mr. Sollitto asked if staging vehicles was part of the problem given the limited space available; Mr. Davis agreed limited spacing was one of the reasons why the Authority went to reservation-only travel on the Vineyard route on summer weekends. He noted the Blue Line was available for island residents who were trying to get off-island on those days and these were all matters that needed to be examined. He said there had been a few instances where high numbers of standby travelers caused traffic to back up onto Woods Hole Road. Mr. Davis said he apologized to the community for the congestion and staff would, likewise, be examining those situations to see what could be done to eliminate or keep backups to a minimum. Mr. Davis said the Authority needs to give islanders comfort that they know they can obtain travel space on relatively short notice.

Mr. Sollitto asked for an explanation of the Blue Line; Mr. Davis said the term refers to the policy wherein, on reservation-only days, islanders can come and get in a “standby” line and travel on a space-available basis.

Mr. Cahill said the problem is “very real” and he was glad the Authority would be looking into it. He said anything that could be done for August and September would be good, as people call both himself and Messrs. Sollitto and Malkin constantly to complain they cannot get off the island. He said, if trips are canceled during those periods, reallocating those spaces to preferred spaces would be a benefit. Mr. Davis said the Authority would be limited in what it can do and it would examine the situation. Messrs. Cahill and Sollitto both said they would like to be part of those discussions.

At 10:15 a.m., Mr. Rees ended his participation in the meeting. Before departing, he noted he had filled out his review of Mr. Davis and said he thought overall Mr. Davis was doing a terrific job.

Mr. Sollitto asked Mr. Davis if the reversion of unused seven-day preferred spaces to public use at three (3) days before travel could be changed for the end of summer; Mr. Davis said it should be a matter of a programming change and staff would look into it.

14. Ms. Kennefick then led the Port Council in its review of Mr. Davis’ performance. She discussed with the Port Council the process for reviewing Mr. Davis. Mr. Munier noted that Mr. Davis had, in the past, provided updates on his goals but, without that document, judging him on some of the goals was difficult. Mr. Anthes-Washburn asked, and Mr. Davis confirmed, that the Port Council had approved the goals in December 2020.

Mr. Anthes-Washburn said he generally gave Mr. Davis high grades, saying the number of detailed reports given to the Port Council as the Authority emerged from COVID-19 gave the organization the ability to adapt and make sure its operations were responsive to the new realities. He said as soon as that situation was seemingly in hand, a new “virus” hit in

the way of the ransomware incident and Mr. Davis' and staff's reaction to that challenge was exceptional.

Mr. Lowell said he gave Mr. Davis a high score overall, and while no one can earn 100% he said Mr. Davis is getting better overall. He said he did not think Mr. Davis was going to be this good at the job when he was hired, which he said should not be construed as a negative comment. Rather, while he knew Mr. Davis was the right individual for the job, he did not know he would be able to juggle as many hurdles and obstacles as he has. He said he was not surprised by the difficulties encountered with the Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project and said he approved of the way the change orders were being handled with the vendor and the work was getting done. He noted that, following the comprehensive review of the Authority's operations that was done in 2018, the Authority has made positive changes to its operations and the new employees who were hired as a result of that study have performed well.

Mr. Cahill left the Port Council meeting at 10:22 a.m. and returned by 10:40 a.m. No votes were taken in his absence.

Mr. Shufelt said he echoed the comments made thus far and said Mr. Davis has gone above and beyond to ensure the safe and effective operations of the Authority during the pandemic. He said Mr. Davis and his management team deserve a high level of praise and respect in a difficult, long-term situation, and that everyone should be thankful that Mr. Davis is leading the Authority into the future. He said he scored Mr. Davis at 97.5% overall.

Mr. Munier said he thought Mr. Davis did a good job and was an excellent administrator, noting that one of his strong characteristics is his ethical decision-making, which underpins everything else that is happening. The Authority is an incredibly complex organization, and Mr. Munier said he feels comfortable with the reports that are presented to the Port Council and he likes the fact that they evolve as needed. He said the Authority has professional communications with Mr. Driscoll and good safety procedures in place with Ms. Sampson and that a high bar has been set for the Authority's operations. Mr. Munier said his two items of concern remain community relations, which, despite public hearings and frequent email blasts, remains a challenge if the loudness of the noise can be used as a judge. Secondly, while the Authority is often diverted with daily crises, he said the Authority needs to continue thinking strategically about its traffic issues and its routes. He said he graded Mr. Davis at an 88% overall.

Mr. Sollitto said there were some questions he was unable to answer but, overall, he said he thought Mr. Davis had been very responsive and appreciated his calm manner, especially with the recent ransomware incident. Mr. Sollitto said his observations were that Mr. Davis had done a wonderful job, and rated him at 92% overall.

Mr. Anthes-Washburn said, on behalf of the Port Council, that Mr. Davis was doing a great job. Mr. Davis thanked the Port Council for their kind words and said, while a number of them touched on it, his successes were due to the team he has behind him, from the

management staff to the frontline workers, all of whom were striving to make the Authority the best organization it could be.

15. Mr. Rozum then reviewed a series of graphs with the Port Council, covering net directional traffic, advanced bookings and a breakdown of truck traffic as well as preliminary June traffic figures. Regarding truck traffic, Mr. Rozum noted that in both 2018 and 2019, more than half of the truck traffic on an average weekday was from pickup trucks and not larger, commercial vehicles, and the highest daily average was approximately 525 trucks, which occurred in both July 2018 and July 2019.
16. Mr. Anthes-Washburn asked for public comment. Mary Longacre said she would like the Authority to also perform an analysis of preferred space allocations on the Nantucket route, noting that those residents were experiencing the same difficulty securing bookings as Vineyard residents were.

At 10:42 a.m., Mr. Lowell ended his participation in the meeting.

Catherine Bumpus said she appreciated Mr. Davis' comments on traffic backups in Woods Hole but said they were not occasional and were, in fact, very regular. She said she would love it if the Authority would integrate into its thought process when the Eel Pond bridge was up and how that relates to its traffic patterns. She said she knows it is hard, from the terminal, to see how traffic is backing up on Woods Hole Road but added it would be terrific if the Authority could put a whole bunch of ideas on the table and see what might work. She said ideas that didn't work 10 years ago might work now and that everyone would like it if traffic did not back up past the motels on Woods Hole Road. Mr. Davis said the situation is not something the Authority will accept and that it needs to be addressed.

Mr. Sollitto asked if a second traffic booth might be of assistance; Mr. Davis said there was one at the terminal, but the Authority, like many companies, is having difficulty filling the positions it planned on having for this summer.

Mr. Malkin said he and others on the Vineyard agreed that traffic backups in Woods Hole are a public safety issue. He said he believed the issue was tied to people showing up without reservations trying to get on standby, and that was likely a big part of the recent issues.

Then, at approximately 10:48 a.m., upon a motion from Mr. Sollitto and a second from Mr. Shufelt, the Port Council **voted** 5-0 to adjourn its meeting.

A TRUE RECORD

Robert S.C. Munier, Secretary

Documents and Exhibits Used at the Port Council’s July 14, 2021 Meeting

1. Agenda for the Port Council’s July 14, 2021 Meeting, posted July 12, 2021.
2. Minutes of the June 22, 2021, Joint Board and Port Council Meeting in Public Session (draft).
3. PowerPoint presentation, Business Summary – May 2021, dated July 14, 2021.
4. Business Summary, May 2021.
5. PowerPoint presentation, Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project, dated July 14, 2021.
6. PowerPoint presentation, *M/V Gay Head* dry dock, undated.
7. Advanced Vehicle Reservation Activity by Month, All Routes, as of July 12, 2021.
8. 2018 and 2019 Average Weekday Truck Traffic, Martha’s Vineyard Route.
9. Power Point presentation, June 2021 Traffic Update, dated July 14, 2021.