

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

April 1, 2025

Second-Floor Conference Room  
Steamship Authority Hyannis Terminal  
141 School Street, Hyannis, Massachusetts

Port Council Members present: Chair Nathaniel E. Lowell of Nantucket; Vice Chair Gordon M. Carr of New Bedford; Secretary Gregory R. Egan of Barnstable; and members Eric R. Dawicki of Fairhaven; Robert S.C. Munier of Falmouth; Joseph E. Sollitto Jr. of Oak Bluffs; and John F. Cahill of Tisbury. Other than Messrs. Egan and Dawicki, all members participated via Zoom videoconferencing.

Authority Board Members present: Chair James M. Malkin of Dukes County; Secretary Peter J. Jeffrey of Falmouth; and Member Robert R. Jones of Barnstable.

Authority Management present: General Manager Robert B. Davis; Treasurer/Comptroller Mark K. Rozum; General Counsel Terence G. Kenneally; Chief Operating Officer Mark H. Amundsen (who participated in the meeting via Zoom); Communications Director Sean F. Driscoll; Director of Shoreside Operations Alison A. Fletcher; Port Captain Paul F. Hennessy; Director of Engineering and Maintenance Zachary A. Lawrence; Director of Information Technologies Stephen M. Colman; computer technician Shawn Cameron; and floating agent Wendy Botelho.

1. Mr. Lowell called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.
2. Mr. Lowell announced Mr. Driscoll was making a video and audio recording of the day’s meeting; Louisa Hufstader (representing the *Vineyard Gazette*) indicated she was making an audio recording of the meeting.

3. Mr. Lowell announced that, pursuant to Section 20 of Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, as amended, Port Council members were participating remotely in the day's meeting because their physical attendance would be unreasonably difficult. Those 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. Sollitto and a second by Mr. Carr, the Port Council **voted** 7-0 to approve the minutes of the meeting on February 11, 2025.
5. Mr. Amundsen shared a PowerPoint update on the *M/V Aquinnah* and *M/V Monomoy* conversion projects under way at Alabama Shipyard in Mobile, Alabama. The *M/V Aquinnah* is substantially complete, with the completion of the incline/stability tests and ongoing engine and mechanical startups. The Authority's sea trials are to be scheduled, after which the U.S. Coast Guard sea trials will be held prior to departure. Recent milestones for the *M/V Monomoy* include installation of the sponsons and stern ramp; and the final welding of the bow and stern sections.
6. Mr. Lawrence shared an update on the *M/V Iyanough* dry dock at Fairhaven Shipyard in Fairhaven, Massachusetts. Highlights of the work included application of hull coatings, reassembly of the water jet buckets, renewal of the starboard jet guard, replacement of the guard platform and the installation of engine No. 3 at the Authority's Fairhaven Vessel Maintenance Facility.. The total project cost, with change orders, is \$578,863.

Mr. Lowell noted the spare engines was an amazing way to manage the vessel's maintenance. Mr. Munier asked if the engines were swapped on a proscribed or failure basis; Mr. Lawrence said it was done on hour-based maintenance. The engines end up being swapped between 21,000 and 24,000 hours for major overhauls. In response to a question from Mr. Egan, Mr. Lawrence noted that the *M/V Iyanough* engines incur about 4,000 operational hours per year.

Mr. Dawicki asked if MTU had a certification program to work on the engines; Mr. Lawrence said they did, and several Authority personnel have gone through that process.

In response to a question from Mr. Lowell, Mr. Lawrence recounted that, prior to the resumption of service, a failure of the port generator occurred. A spare was available off the shelf, and it was swapped, and no issues have occurred since.

7. Mr. Amundsen shared a presentation updating the *M/V Woods Hole* dry dock at Thames Shipyard in New London, Connecticut. Highlights of the work included rub rail repairs, removal and refurbishing of the propeller, and repairs to the bow thrusters. Mr. Amundsen noted the need for the bow thruster repairs was uncovered following oil analysis performed quarterly, which allowed for the preventative work to be performed. The total project cost, with change orders, is \$1,229,236.

Mr. Munier asked if there was anything systemic that the Authority should be considering regarding the bow thruster failure; Mr. Amundsen said it was not easy to say if there was a bigger issue or if it was due to wear and tear. The Authority follows factory overhaul intervals, and the thruster may have made it the full length of the interval, but it also may have failed. It was the Authority's planned maintenance program that allowed it to be caught on time, he said.

8. Mr. Davis shared an update on the Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project. Recent milestones included the removal of the exterior wall forms at the terminal building and the preparation for the installation of the glulam roof and curtains; installation of floor rebar and insulation in preparation for the base cement pour on the second floor of the utility building; trenching for the geowells feeding the utility building; and installation of various utility lines.

Mr. Cahill asked what the site would look like as summer starts and if there were safety concerns; Mr. Davis said the goal is to shrink the work zone as much as possible. The passenger walkways will also be repainted to be more clearly delineated; there are multiple versions of the paths now due to shifting work sites, he said. The passenger pickup and drop-areas will be relocated, and golf carts will be used to shuttle people around the site as needed.

Mr. Sollitto asked the estimated completion date; Mr. Davis said it was scheduled to be complete prior to summer 2026. Another phase of the project will follow, however, including final site work, bike parking, and Cahoon Park.

Mr. Munier asked the square footage of the site; after a brief search, Mr. Driscoll said the net square footage of the utility building was about 4,500 square feet, and the terminal was about 5,400 square feet.

Mr. Dawicki asked if a community meeting could be held to update Falmouth on the progress of the site. He noted it was always contentious when a new project was under way but creating a dialogue might help display some of the many good things happening at the site. Mr. Davis said a number of the questions recently posted have been discussed, but he was in discussions with Falmouth Board Member Peter Jeffrey about such a meeting being scheduled. Mr. Dawicki said the Authority should be nothing but proud of the project and that he was personally excited about it. Mr. Munier said one thought might be to have a walkabout at the site to see what's going on.

9. Mr. Davis presented an update on the Request for Responses (RFR) for the new reservation system. He noted nine (9) submissions were received before the deadline, and the evaluation team has been reviewing each independently and as a group. In the coming weeks, four (4) firms will be holding demonstrations to the evaluation team.

Mr. Dawicki asked what the criteria were for choosing those firms; Mr. Rozum said there were more than 700 criteria on the operational side and several hundred on the customer experience side. Mr. Dawicki said this was the most important project on the Authority's plate right now, and it's the one he keeps worrying about. It will be exciting moving forward but also a little bit scary.

10. Mr. Amundsen, Capt. Hennessy, and Mr. Davis reviewed updates on the *M/V Barnstable* service. The vessel has more consistently been meeting service speeds and expected drafts under various conditions. Deck loading times have continued to improve, although training and an extended learning curve are to be expected as the season progresses. Staff also shared a replay via Marine Tracker of a recent trip of the vessel showing that it was meeting expected speeds.

Mr. Lowell asked several questions regarding the "H" versus "I" boat designations and said, overall, the work in progress has been great.

Mr. Munier asked if, overall, the Authority was fulfilling and maintaining its schedule; Mr. Davis said they were. Capt. Hennessy said it remains a work in progress but it is progressing. Mr. Lowell said the boat can be late on the Nantucket route without an overall affect on the schedule, but that will not be the case on the Vineyard run.

Mr. Lowell noted it was very important to get the multi-stop food trucks on the first trip to the island each day.

11. Ms. Fletcher then provided an update on the Blue Line usage for the Woods Hole-Martha's Vineyard route. From January 4-March 21, 2025, the Blue Line was utilized successfully 762 times leaving Vineyard Haven. Due to vessel space availability, the Blue Line was not needed leaving Woods Hole until January 10, 2025. From January 10- March 14, 2025, it was used 273 times. She said staff was recommending continuing with the program due to the ongoing construction in Woods Hole.

In response to a question from Mr. Sollitto, Ms. Fletcher said customers did not have to give up reservations to try and travel earlier than booked.

Mr. Cahill said he had used the Blue Line and it's worked out very well.

Mr. Dawicki asked what the reception was beyond the island residents. Ms. Fletcher said it's a learning curve, especially regarding the fact that the Blue Line does not mean automatic travel, but in general there has been availability for travelers showing up without a reservation.

Then, upon a motion by Mr. Sollitto and a second by Mr. Cahill, the Port Council **voted** 7-0 to recommend continuation of the Blue Line to the Board.

12. Ms. Fletcher then presented the preliminary draft of the 2026 Operating Schedules. The proposed 2026 operating schedules from January 5, 2026, to January 5, 2027, would start one (1) day later and end one (1) day later than the 2025 schedule for both the Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket routes. The 2026 Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket operating schedules would be essentially the same as 2025, with the exception of the assigned vessels and the start and end dates of the schedules.

The proposed 2026 operating schedules from January 5-March 29, 2026, would start one (1) day later and end one (1) day later than in 2025 for both the Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket routes. Neither route would see changes to the trip times, quantity of trips, or vessel crewing during this schedule.

The proposed 2026 operating schedules from March 30-May 13, 2026, would start four (4) days later and end one (1) day later than in 2025 for both the Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket routes. Neither route would see changes to the trip times, quantity of trips, or vessel crewing during this schedule.

The proposed 2026 operating schedules from May 14-June 18, 2026, would start one (1) day later and end one (1) day later than in 2025 for both the Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket routes. Neither route would see changes to the trip times, quantity of trips, or vessel crewing during this schedule.

The proposed 2026 operating schedules from June 19-September 10, 2025, would start one (1) day later and end one (1) day later than in 2025 for both the Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket routes. Neither route would see changes to the trip times, quantity of trips, or vessel crewing during this schedule.

The proposed 2026 operating schedules from September 11-October 22, 2026, would start one (1) day later and end one (1) day later than in 2025 for both the Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket routes. On the Martha's Vineyard route, the *M/V Governor* will be double-crewed, which would offer three (3) round trips per day with an optional fourth round trip. The Nantucket route would see no changes to the trip times, quantity of trips, or vessel crewing during this schedule.

The proposed 2026 operating schedules from October 23, 2026-January 5, 2027, would start one (1) day later and end one (1) day later than in 2025 for both the Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket routes. Neither route would see changes to the trip times, quantity of trips, or vessel crewing during this schedule.

The proposed 2026 high-speed ferry schedule for Nantucket would start four (4) days later and end one (1) day later than 2025. There would be no changes to the trip times, quantity of available trips or vessel crewing.

Mr. Lowell said staff should look at the shoulder seasons to see if the triple-crewed freight boats were necessary; Mr. Davis said there may be an opportunity to double-crew a boat

during that period. Mr. Lowell further noted that passengers should be aware of which freight boats they can travel on as passengers.

Mr. Sollitto spoke in favor of the 5:30 a.m. trip from Woods Hole, saying it was impossible to find parking in Oak Bluffs or Vineyard Haven during the summer and most deliveries were made off the street.

Mr. Davis noted there was work planned at the Vineyard Haven terminal starting in the fall, which may mean the 5:30 a.m. trip from Vineyard Haven does not run at certain points based on construction scheduling. Mr. Sollitto asked if Oak Bluffs could be used during those times, but Mr. Davis said the weather was too rough to risk it.

Mr. Munier noted he annually asked the question about the 5:30 a.m. trip from Woods Hole, and it was really important to make that case as strongly and accurately as possible.

13. Mr. Driscoll presented the results of the 2025 preseason sale, noting a total of 4,173 ticket books were sold during the sale. This total is down from 2024 but is still higher than the 12-year average. The sale generated \$1,101,299 in revenue for the Authority at a cost of \$275,290 due to the discount offering. The sale saw a new high for a single customer's purchase, which was 140 ticket books, he said.
14. Mr. Rozum then reviewed via a PowerPoint presentation the February 2025 business summary, which showed the Authority carried fewer passengers (down 6.8%), fewer vehicles of less than twenty (20) feet (down 6.9%) and fewer freight trucks (down 5.5%) than it did in the same period in 2024.

During February 2025, the Authority's vessels had 1,446 trips scheduled, of which five (5) were canceled for mechanical reasons on the Vineyard route and two (2) were canceled for mechanical reasons on the Nantucket route, he said.

In February 2025, the Authority had approximately \$5,276,000 in operating income and \$10,856,000 in operating expenses, which, combined with nonoperating income and nonoperating expenses, resulted in a net operating loss of \$5,537,000, which was \$1,258,000 lower than budgeted. Year to date, the Authority has seen a net operating loss of \$10,531,000, about \$2,209,000 lower than budgeted.

Preliminary traffic data for March 1-14, 2025 showed the Authority carried more passengers (up 1.9%) and more vehicles of all sizes (up 0.5%) on both routes, he said.

Mr. Munier asked what the message was from the figures; Mr. Rozum said it was too early to draw any conclusions. Even though the weather was similar to last year, it was still not conducive to traveling. Mr. Lowell noted there was a certain level of service that cannot be reduced, even during these slow months.

15. Mr. Rozum noted the audited financial statements had been signed off on by the auditors on March 28, 2025, a month and a half earlier than in 2024. There was one finding regarding IT systems and access by third-party vendors that was already being remediated.
16. Mr. Davis noted the Board had voted at its March meeting to create an IT Executive Steering Committee, and the Port Council could appoint one (1) or two (2) members to it as it sees fit.

Mr. Cahill noted this was an exciting time and this was an appropriate stage to open the project up to raise their comments and concerns and add value to the process.

Then, upon a motion by Mr. Sollitto and a second by Mr. Carr, the Port Council **voted** 7-0 to appoint Messrs. Cahill and Dawicki to the committee.

17. Mr. Sollitto asked where the Authority was regarding opening Oak Bluffs; Mr. Davis said some IT staff were already there working to prepare for its May 13, 2025, opening. Mr. Davis further noted he had already received a request from Oak Bluffs to divert trips during the annual fireworks show in August. He also said the generator switch gear has been installed, and the generator itself will be brought over closer to the terminal's reopening. Mr. Sollitto asked if the *M/V Island Home* would be used there this summer; Mr. Davis said it would not.
18. Mr. Cahill asked if the contract had been signed with Faststream yet; Mr. Davis said it had not, as the person who needed to sign it was currently on vacation. Mr. Munier said that should be done as soon as possible.
19. Mr. Lowell thanked engineering personnel for fixing a cable on Nantucket quickly on the previous Sunday morning.
20. In response to Mr. Lowell's call for public comment, Amy Cody said she was "disappointed" the Board decided to table the question of adding a nonvoting public member to the GM Search Committee. She thanked Messrs. Lowell and Munier for their leadership in this regard.

She also thanked Mr. Jeffrey for his leadership on creating the IT Executive Steering Committee.

Ms. Cody said she recently traveled through Woods Hole and found it to be a very confusing construction zone. The sooner signage and markers could be put up, the better.

Ms. Cody said she wanted to hear if Mr. Davis was really committed to having a public meeting on the terminal project, as one had not been held for three (3) years. If many people are asking questions, then people seem to need to understand what is going on down there. Mr. Davis said he had been in discussions with Peter Jeffrey about the matter and had not scheduled one yet, but once it did an announcement would be put out.

Mr. Dawicki noted Mr. Davis and the staff were juggling four (4) or five (5) major projects and, while communication is important, he suggested that people should be “kind” and “generous” and realize that the Authority was doing a good job of it. People are looking at things with a fine-tooth comb because they’re interested, but on balance the staff was doing a good job. Mr. Davis said his team is doing the work of managing these projects and that he was thankful for their hard work.

At 11:07 a.m., Mr. Munier ended his participation in the meeting.

Jonathan Chatinover said his son was recently on a bus approaching the terminal and could not get to it because of traffic on Cowdry Street. He asked if the Authority had considered having Cowdry be an entrance only and Railroad Avenue be an exit; Mr. Davis said the traffic plan was still under consideration, but he noted there would be two (2) check-in booths when the work was done.

Then, at 11:09 a.m., upon a motion from Mr. Sollitto and a second by Mr. Cahill, the Port Council **voted** 6-0 to adjourn its meeting.

*A TRUE RECORD*

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Gregory R. Egan, Secretary



Documents and Exhibits Used at the Port Council's April 1, 2025, Meeting

1. Agenda for the Port Council's April 1, 2025, meeting (dated March 28, 2025).
2. Recording announcement.
3. Statement regarding remote participation.
4. Minutes of the February 11, 2025, Port Council meeting (draft dated March 13, 2025).
5. Presentation, *M/V Aquinnah* and *M/V Monomoy* Conversion at Alabama Shipyard, dated April 1, 2025.
6. Presentation, *M/V Iyanough* Dry Dock at Fairhaven Shipyard, dated April 1, 2025.
7. Presentation, *M/V Woods Hole* Dry Dock at Thames Shipyard, dated April 1, 2025.
8. Presentation, Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project Update, dated April 1, 2025.
9. Presentation, *M/V Barnstable* Performance Update, dated April 1, 2025.
10. Staff Summary #SO-2025-04, Blue Line Update, undated draft.
11. Staff Summary #SO-2025-05, Preliminary Draft of the Proposed 2026 Operating Schedule, dated March 28, 2025 (draft).
12. Presentation, February 2025 Business Summary, dated April 1, 2025.
13. February 2025 Business Summary.