

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

January 6, 2026

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

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

Authority Board Members present: Member Robert R. Jones of Barnstable, who observed the meeting via Zoom.

Authority Management present: Treasurer/Comptroller Mark K. Rozum; General Counsel Terence G. Kenneally; Chief Operating Officer Mark H. Amundsen; Communications Director Sean F. Driscoll; Director of Shoreside Operations Alison A. Fletcher; Port Captain Paul F. Hennessy; Director of Human Resources Janice L. Kennefick; Director of Engineering and Maintenance Zachary A. Lawrence; and Director of Information Technologies Stephen M. Colman.

1. Mr. Carr called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
2. Mr. Carr announced Mr. Driscoll was making a video and audio recording of the day's meeting; Jason Graziadei (representing the *Nantucket Current*) and Louisa Hufstader (representing the *Vineyard Gazette*) indicated they were making an audio recording of the meeting. At 9:16 a.m., Eunji Seonwoo (representing the *Martha's Vineyard Times*), indicated to Mr. Driscoll that he had joined the meeting and was making an audio recording.

3. Mr. Carr 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. Munier, the Port Council **voted** 7-0 to approve the minutes of its joint meeting with the Board on December 9, 2025.
5. Mr. Carr noted the reservation system update would be taken out of order as Mr. Cahill had to leave the meeting early. Tom Innis from Gibbous LLC, who appeared via Zoom, then reviewed recent activity in the project via a presentation. He noted there had been "tremendous interest" in the beta testing group, with approximately sixty (60) people volunteering to be part of the testing group. Recent work has focused on finalizing the requirements for E-Dea in the "solution design phase," which is scheduled to last until the end of February 2026. He said there was a lot to do to finalize certain elements within the reservation system, which would result in a consolidated project plan and finalized launch date. The current plan calls for a preliminary launch in the fall and a full launch in January 2027.

Mr. Innis noted numerous policy changes would need to be presented to the Port Council and Board. To inform those discussions, a series of town hall meetings would be held, the dates for which are being finalized. The discussions from those meetings will be presented to the Board and Port Council for review. He noted the project is much more than a reservation system project, which is why it's been named the True North Initiative, as numerous operational components are in play to streamline policy and standardize operational processes, policies and procedures at the Authority's terminals. The review process will be a balancing act to make sure the process respects and preserves the needs of the different routes with the implementation of policy through the reservation system. He noted the team was also working with E-Dea on the True North Initiative's final procurement plan.

Mr. Dawicki asked for more details on the procurement plan, and Mr. Innis said several different pieces are being updated to ensure a smooth rollout of the new system, including hardware for ticket scanning and Wi-Fi at the terminals. As an example, the hardware upgrades require low-voltage cabling and updated handheld scanners. Mr. Dawicki asked if these upgrades were budgeted; Mr. Innis said there was an initial estimate at the onset of the project, but the final costs would be determined as part of the process. Mr. Amundsen noted numerous upgrades were completed as a part of the Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project, but upgrades at the other terminals would be needed.

Mr. Munier asked for a summary of the management structure of the project team. Mr. Amundsen said he was the project sponsor, Gibbous is providing project management services, and the project team includes representatives from marine and shoreside operations, IT, and accounting.

Mr. Munier asked if the status dashboard of the project was functioning as a risk matrix for the project; Mr. Innis pointed the “key risks, issues, and selected resolution(s)” portion of the dashboard and reviewed the items presented there. Mr. Munier asked about the cadence of bringing the overall project team together, and Mr. Innis noted the steering team met weekly and the IT Executive Steering Committee, the Port Council, and the Board all met monthly.

Mr. Egan asked what the phased rollout of the system would look like. Mr. Innis said it would be in two (2) major steps: in the fall, reservations for the winter season could be booked through the new reservation system, while trips until that point would be completed through the current system. In January 2027, the new reservation system would manage all bookings.

Mr. Innis then shared a slide from a prior presentation with an overview of the project teams.

Mr. Carr noted that a joint working session with the Board was tentatively scheduled to follow the January 20, 2026, Board meeting. He asked his fellow members to hold that time open while the scheduling details were finalized. Mr. Lowell asked if attendance through Zoom would be available, and staff said it would. Mr. Lowell noted that recent sessions were helping everyone figure out the nuances involved in the Authority’s operations.

6. At 9:30 a.m., Mr. Cahill ended his participation in the meeting.

7. Mr. Lawrence shared a PowerPoint update on the status of the *M/V Monomoy* and showed photographs of the vessel’s wheelhouse and the aft end of its pilothouse. He said it was anticipated the vessel would leave Mobile, Alabama, that afternoon. Mr. Amundsen said the vessel would stop in Tampa, Port Everglades, and Morehead City before arriving in Fairhaven. Weather permitting, the voyage should take nine (9) or ten (10) days.

Mr. Egan asked if the lessons learned from the first two (2) vessels had been incorporated into the *M/V Monomoy*; Mr. Lawrence said about seventy-five percent (75%) of those had been, within reason. There was still work to be done in Fairhaven to prepare the vessel for service.

In response to a question from Mr. Sollitto, Mr. Lawrence confirmed the skeg extension had been performed on the *M/V Monomoy*.

8. Mr. Amundsen shared an update on the Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project. He noted the utility building as nearly complete and shared photographs of the second-floor area, the stairwells, and in-progress work on finishing painting, pipe insulation, and fire protection measures. Milestones at the terminal building include installation of equipment

for the heating and air conditioning, installation of piping in the restrooms, installation of fire prevention water supply piping, framing, and rough electrical wiring. Trenching and repaving work is ongoing outside of the building, and the work is expected to be complete within the week.

The current project cost, including change orders, is \$36.4 million.

Mr. Munier asked when the buildings would be open; he said mid- to late-May 2026 .

Mr. Munier asked when the traffic circulation study would be complete; he said it would be presented at the next meeting.

9. Mr. Driscoll then presented a request to authorize the 2026 Preseason Sale of high-speed passenger ticket books. For the past fourteen (14) years, the Authority has offered a twenty percent (20%) discount on the sale of high-speed passenger ticket books for a short period prior to the return of the *M/V Iyanough* to service. This preseason promotion continues to be quite popular, nearly half of the yearly ticket book sales for the *M/V Iyanough* occur during the promotional period.

In 2025, the preseason sale promotion began on Sunday, March 16, 2025, and ended on Saturday, March 29, 2025. It resulted in 4,173 ticket books sold and generated \$1,101,298.50 in revenue for the Authority at a cost of \$275,290.50 due to the discount offering. This total was down seven percent (7%) from the prior year but is still above the average sales for the event.

Staff is proposing that the Authority continue to offer a twenty percent (20%) discount on the sale of electronic ticket books for the high-speed ferry during the period from Sunday, March 22, 2026, through Saturday, April 4, 2026. The discount would apply solely to electronic ticket books for adults, seniors and children. Staff requests that the Board allow the general manager flexibility to change the proposed preseason sale dates should the return of the *M/V Iyanough* to service be delayed for any reason.

Mr. Lowell noted the goal of the promotion was to make sure everyone who lives on Nantucket gets a ticket book, but there are always people who miss the sale. He asked if it could be extended for a week to allow more people the opportunity to make their purchases.

Mr. Dawicki asked what the goal of the promotion was; Mr. Lowell noted it allowed more people on the *M/V Iyanough* instead of other services. Several ideas for extending the service were discussed, and Mr. Driscoll suggested the discount period be extended until Saturday, April 11, 2026, to allow for more promotion during the operation of the vessel. He added the promotion was initially conceived to mark the return of the high-speed service each year because it was not operated as a year-round service.

Then, upon a motion by Mr. Carr and a second by Mr. Sollitto, the Port Council **voted** 6-0 to recommend the matter to the Board with the extended dates as discussed.

10. Mr. Rozum then reviewed via a PowerPoint presentation the November 2025 business summary, which showed the Authority carried fewer passengers (down 5.2%), more vehicles of less than twenty (20) feet (up 2.3%) and more freight trucks (up 0.2%) than it did in the same period in 2024. Year-to-date figures show the Authority has carried more passengers (up 0.8%), more vehicles of less than twenty (20) feet (up 0.2%), and fewer freight trucks (up 0.2%) than it did for the same period in 2024.

During November 2025, the Authority’s vessels had 1,798 trips scheduled, of which sixteen (16) were canceled for mechanical reasons on the Vineyard route and two (2) were canceled for mechanical reasons on the Nantucket route, he said.

In November 2025, the Authority had approximately \$8,374,000 in operating income and \$11,673,000 in operating expenses, which, combined with nonoperating income and nonoperating expenses, resulted in a net operating loss of \$1,945,000, which was \$585,000 more than budgeted. Year to date, the Authority has seen a net operating gain of \$15,085,000, about \$300,000 lower than budgeted.

Preliminary traffic data for December 1-21, 2025, showed the Authority carried fewer passengers (down 2.3%) and fewer vehicles of all sizes (down 1.0%) on both routes combined, he said.

Mr. Lowell asked if cancellations on the high-speed service could be presented separately as they were “not the same” as cancellations to the “lifeline” service. Mr. Rozum said he could do so and added that data was in the monthly trip traffic reports that were distributed. Mr. Lowell asked if the high-speed ferry data was “apples to apples” with 2024; Mr. Rozum said it was.

11. Mr. Sollitto asked if there was a possibility of getting Wi-Fi on the freight decks for those who did not leave their cars; Mr. Amundsen said he would review at its potential.
12. Mr. Sollitto asked how the Palmer Avenue staging study was proceeding; Mr. Amundsen said the topic of standby would be part of the True North workshops. Ms. Fletcher noted that staff would return to the staging plan now that the holidays were over.
13. Mr. Lowell thanked staff for their recent work with hunting organizations on Nantucket.
14. In response to Mr. Carr’s call for public comment, Amy Cody said she was surprised there was no discussion of the recent Office of Inspector General’s report about the website development project. She noted that Mr. Lowell had commented that the Authority needed to tell the facts and its story differently because it was being picked to pieces; she said she did not see it as being picked to pieces as the report revealed “serious flaws in management.”

Mr. Carr noted the report had been issued December 18, 2025, and that it was under review by both the Port Council and Board, as well as management, and that a response would be prepared.

Ms. Cody then asked how many ticket books had been sold for the fast ferry last year; Mr. Driscoll said it was 4,173.

15. Mary Musacchia clarified that project sponsor meant the person “at the top of the food chain” for the reservation system project; Mr. Amundsen confirmed that was correct. She then asked if the budget and timeline for the project were finalized, and Mr. Amundsen said they would be presented to the IT Steering Committee, the Port Council, and Board in the near future.

Ms. Musacchia asked if the traffic circulation study could be presented to the Woods Hole community for their input; Mr. Amundsen said that could be considered.

Then, at 10:18 a.m., upon a motion from Mr. Carr and a second by Mr. Sollitto, the Port Council **voted** 6-0 to adjourn its meeting.

A TRUE RECORD

Joseph E. Sollitto Jr., Secretary

Documents and Exhibits Used at the Port Council’s January 6, 2026, Meeting

1. Agenda for the Port Council’s January 6, 2026, meeting (posted December 31, 2025, revised January 2, 2026).
2. Recording announcement.
3. Statement regarding remote participation.
4. Minutes of the December 9, 2025, joint meeting in public session (draft).
5. Presentation, *M/V Monomoy* Conversion at Alabama Shipyard, dated January 6, 2026.
6. Presentation, Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project Update, dated January 2026.
7. Presentation, True North Initiative, dated January 2026.
8. Staff Summary #COMM 2026-01, Approval of Preseason Promotion for High-Speed Passenger Ticket Books (undated draft).
9. Presentation, Business Summary, November 2025, dated January 6, 2026.
10. November 2025 Business Summary.