

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

March 10, 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. Cahill, Egan, Dawicki, and Lowell participated via Zoom videoconferencing.

Authority Board Members present: Chair Peter J. Jeffrey of Falmouth; Members Robert R. Jones of Barnstable and Edward T. Gavin of Dukes County observed the meeting via Zoom.

Authority Management present: General Manager Alexander T. Kryska; Treasurer/Comptroller Mark K. Rozum; General Counsel Terence G. Kenneally; Chief Operating Officer Mark H. Amundsen; Communications Director Sean F. Driscoll; Director of Information Technologies Stephen M. Colman; Director of Shoreside Operations Alison A. Fletcher; and Director of Human Resources Janice L. Kennefick.

1. Mr. Carr called the meeting to order at 10 a.m.
2. Mr. Carr announced Mr. Driscoll was making a video and audio recording of the day's meeting; Louisa Hufstader (representing the *Vineyard Gazette*), Kaie Quigley (representing the *Nantucket Inquirer and Mirror*), and Eunki Seonwoo (representing the *Martha's Vineyard Times*) stated they were making audio recordings of the meeting.

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 the joint Port Council and Board meeting on January 20, 2026, and the Port Council meeting on February 3, 2026.
5. Mr. Rozum then reviewed via a PowerPoint presentation the January 2026 business summary, which showed the Authority carried fewer passengers (down 5.9%), fewer vehicles of less than twenty (20) feet (down 3.4%) and fewer freight trucks (down 6.5%) than it did in the same period in 2025.

During January 2026, the Authority's vessels had 1,596 trips scheduled, of which two (2) were canceled for mechanical reasons on the Vineyard route and two (2) were canceled for mechanical reasons on the Nantucket route, he said.

In January 2026, the Authority had approximately \$6,240,000 in operating income and \$11,628,000 in operating expenses, which, combined with nonoperating income and nonoperating expenses, resulted in a net operating loss of \$5,207,000, which was \$1,065,000 below budget.

Preliminary traffic data for February 1-21, 2026, showed the Authority carried fewer passengers (down 0.3%) and more vehicles of all sizes (up 3.1%) on both routes combined, he said.

Mr. Rozum said fuel costs for March 2026 hit the executed strike price of \$2.40 per gallon of diesel, which traded as high as \$4.03 a gallon. He added the pricing does not reflect delivery price differences in Providence versus New York.

Mr. Munier asked Mr. Rozum why January traffic was down, and Mr. Rozum said it was very cold on the weekends so it likely suppressed travel. Mr. Rozum added the expense side changes were mostly due to timing.

6. Mr. Lawrence shared updates on the following Engineering and Maintenance items:
 - *M/V Monomoy* outfitting: The initial U.S. Coast Guard walk through is complete, and machinery testing is in process. The sea trial date is to be determined based on the timing of remaining work items.
 - *M/V Iyanough* dry dock: Replacements of generator injectors, main engine injectors and turbos, and the passenger windows are in progress. The company sea trial is scheduled for March 20, 2026, the U.S. Coast Guard sea trial is scheduled for March

- 24, and the return to service is scheduled for March 30, 2026. The total project cost is \$449,033.
- *M/V Island Home* dry dock: The vessel returned to the Fairhaven Vessel Maintenance Facility on March 7, 2026.
 - *M/V Nantucket* dry dock: under way at Thames River Shipyard. The total project cost is \$1,559,883.
 - Vineyard Haven Terminal underdeck concrete repairs: thirty-eight percent (38%) of the demolition work repairs have been addressed. The scheduled completion date for the project is May 8, 2026.

Mr. Lawrence said staff would have a better breakdown of *M/V Monomoy* expenses at the upcoming Board meeting, as there was a question as to how ongoing crew expenses would be categorized.

Mr. Carr asked who was performing the concrete repair, and Mr. Lawrence said it was ACK Marine.

7. Mr. Amundsen shared an update on the Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project. Recent updates at the terminal building include:

- The building is construction weathertight, and exterior building finishes are nearing completion
- Prep for the exterior terrace concrete is under way and is nearing completion
- The exterior curtain wall installation is nearing completion
- The mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and fire protection rough installation is complete, and the installation of finishes is under way
- The installation of interior ceiling finishes is under way
- The installation of stone flooring and wall cladding finishes is under way

Recent updates at the utility building include:

- The BDA system installation is nearing completion
- Building commissioning is in progress and nearing completion
- The contractor is addressing punch list items
- Owner training is in progress

The current project cost, including change orders, is \$37 million.

Mr. Kryska noted the traffic circulation study was still in process and had been delayed due to the recent weather. He said he was hoping it would be finalized in the next week or so. Mr. Carr said there was still some time to digest that but it would be good for the public to have an understanding of what the traffic flow at the site will look like.

Mr. Carr asked if the opening date was still “in pencil” for Memorial Day, and Mr. Amundsen confirmed. Mr. Carr noted that was ten (10) weeks away and that, while there was a hundred-year storm, the need for this work did not take a break.

Mr. Munier asked what questions would be answered by the circulation study; Mr. Kryska said it would be the traffic flow on the site and how to safely and effectively exit vehicles that were leaving the site in the least-impactful way possible to the neighbors.

8. Mr. Amundsen then provided an update on the True North Initiative and the reservation system replacement project. He noted recent process included work on the solution design, holding in-person and online town hall meetings, and taking public feedback on proposed policy changes. Upcoming key activities include refining and approving the solution design, sharing a second round of draft policies with the Board and Port Council. He noted the policy review would be discussed later in the meeting.

Mr. Kryska said the IT Executive Steering Committee discussed a preliminary draft of the project budget at their meeting on March 9, 2026, and staff had some work to do before a revision would be brought back to them.

9. Mr. Kryska then discussed the potential marketing of the *M/V Governor* or *M/V Sankaty* for sale as, with the arrival of the *M/V Monomoy*, the Authority now has eleven (11) vessels in its fleet. Mr. Kryska said he knows there is a lot of history with both vessels, but the *M/V Governor* can only run on the Woods Hole-Martha’s Vineyard route and cannot dock in Oak Bluffs. There are limits to its capabilities to travel in bad weather, so in the judgement of staff that is the correct vessel to offer up for sale.

Mr. Amundsen added that the vessel has an anchor chain-driven rudder system, which puts it at risk in case major repairs are needed. The vessel has had a tremendous career, he said, but it’s near the end of its useful life for the Authority.

Mr. Sollitto said it was his favorite boat and it “runs and runs and runs,” Mr. Amundsen said it carries a lot less cargo and does not properly fit into the Authority’s allocations.

Mr. Munier said the *M/V Sankaty* does fit into the scheme of the Authority’s other freight boats and the *M/V Governor* is a further step back. While it’s been a tremendous boat, it can’t be placed into the system on a regular basis.

Mr. Kryska noted the carrying costs for each vessel of \$1.25 million a year don’t include the berthing fees for the *M/V Governor*, which had to be placed at Fairhaven Shipyard over the winter.

Mr. Carr said he appreciated staff’s recommendation and it seemed the clear choice to him.

Mr. Lowell said the *M/V Sankaty* has good passenger amenities and is easy to load and is a great spare vessel. He said it's a good backup that can go into service easily if necessary. Mr. Amundsen agreed that having a standby vessel is definitely a positive for the Authority.

Mr. Dawicki said it seems like the decision in this direction is correct but he said the situation needs a "real risk analysis." He asked if a risk analysis had been done and shared with the Members; Mr. Amundsen said Marine Safety Consultants has done final inspections and performed a value assessment, and those materials were provided to the Port Council. He said he believed there was enough history with the vessels to have a good understanding of the pros and cons. Mr. Dawicki said he wanted the data to push the direction of the Authority. Mr. Carr asked Mr. Dawicki if he thought the data might cause a different conclusion to be reached, and Mr. Dawicki said he knew the Vineyard loved the *M/V Governor*. Mr. Carr said that was an emotional response. Mr. Lowell said he understood what Mr. Dawicki was saying but he noted that the island hated the *M/V Eagle* when it came online and now it's a favorite.

In response to questions from the members, Mr. Amundsen said if the *M/V Sankaty* maintenance continues, the vessel will run quite well.

Mr. Egan noted this would reduce the number of available backup vessels and asked what the history of that number was. Mr. Amundsen said the Authority has historically had a 10-vessel fleet, at least one of which was designated as a spare during most operating periods. He added the *M/V Governor* saw very limited service in 2025, but the decision was one of utility and carrying costs.

Mr. Munier asked what the likelihood was of getting money for the *M/V Governor*. Mr. Kryska said there were a number of smaller car ferries in the Caribbean, but Hornblower is selling a number of its dinner cruise boats so the market prices have been pushed down.

Then, upon a motion by Mr. Cahill and a second by Mr. Lowell, the Port Council **voted** 7-0 to recommend the Board authorize the general manager to market the *M/V Governor* for sale subject to the outcome of a data risk analysis.

10. Mr. Kenneally then reviewed a license request by Helen H Offshore Fishing Corp. for events on April 4, 2026 and May 4, 2026 to provide interisland service between Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket for intramural sporting events. Mr. Kenneally noted that Helen H had filed a license request for this service on an ongoing basis, but the review period for that request would extend beyond these requested dates.

Mr. Lowell said this is helping the sports teams and is a really smart move. He said whatever could be done to help the schools should be done.

Mr. Munier noted the staff summary refers to the Coast Guard inspection of other vessels, so he wanted to confirm the vessels were all in proper order, which Mr. Kenneally confirmed.

Mr. Sollitto asked if the Town of Oak Bluffs had been informed; Mr. Kryska said that would be confirmed.

Then, upon a motion by Mr. Lowell and a second by Mr. Sollitto, the Port Council **voted** to recommend the matter to the Board.

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

11. Messrs. Kryska and Amundsen then reviewed the first phase of proposed policy changes in support of the new reservation system.

After reviewing the results of the open houses and public information sessions, the following proposed policy changes were offered:

- 1) Deck Space Management: change to linear feet from car-equivalent unit
- 2) Standby: change to the purchase of a refundable standby ticket on a specific, unavailable trip from the use of an open ticket or pended ticket.
- 3) Wait list: change to specific trip selections before and after a purchased ticket or a purchased standby ticket from an open-ended query that is untethered to the date or time of a purchased ticket.
- 4) Transferable Reservations: During the Head Start program for Preferred and Excursion customers, change to transferrable reservations being purchased directly for another individual at that time from being able to designate certain number of reservations as transferrable at a later time.
- 5) Special program discounts: Change to one discount per product from being able to “stack” discounts on a ticket. (Note that certain products in the E-Dea system will be priced to avoid any increase in cost to those customers.)
- 6) Preseason bulk commercial shipping lottery: Change to one lottery from multiple lotteries per reservation period.

Mr. Lowell asked if any changes would be made to Preferred Space, and Ms. Fletcher said they were trying to keep it as close as possible to the current system.

Mr. Carr said it has been a fascinating process to watch, and that sometimes he would like to see the graphics of the current system as it had been conveyed to the public. He said he gathered that the public sessions have generally been well received.

Then, upon a motion by Mr. Cahill and a second by Mr. Sollitto, the Port Council **voted** 6-0 endorse the policy changes as part of the Phase 1 policy review for the E-Dea reservation system, which will be codified through updates to the Customer Handbook and associated policy documents.

Mr. Kryska said there will be additional public engagement on the second phase of policy changes, and those dates should be announced soon.

12. Mr. Kryska noted there had been recent discussion on the eligibility for the Blue Line and whether it should be limited to full-time residents. He said the number of Excursion Program customers is much higher than the Preferred Program, but he wanted to get input from the Board and Port Council.

Mr. Sollitto noted that several municipalities have offered tax rate preferences to full-time residents and if that could be used as the qualification. Ms. Fletcher noted the Excursion Program was already tied to being on the street list and required bills to prove residence. The Preferred Program was for those who owned property but did not live on the island full time.

Mr. Rozum said of the Preferred Space usage, only 2% on the Nantucket run and 2.4% on the Vineyard Run were not being used at the excursion fare, which is the closest barometer to usage possible.

Mr. Sollitto said he did not think a lot of people knew what the Blue Line was.

Mr. Rozum said the usage of the Blue Line needed to be better tracked so as to provide data to inform these discussions. He noted that a review of the Excursion Program qualifications and benefits might be in order, as it was brought up during budget discussions last year.

Mr. Lowell said he's never heard of a nonresident getting on the boat before him and that it is not an issue on Nantucket.

Mr. Dawicki said the intent and goal of the program should be firmly established and what the legal standard was to determine qualifications.

13. Mr. Kryska said he had been approached by a national advertising firm about installing video displays on the boats for advertising purposes. He said the Authority was not ready for it yet and would have to issue an RFP, but he wanted to obtain the Board's input.

Mr. Driscoll relayed that the advertising program had been kept deliberately small over the years and this inquiry would open up both opportunities and risks for the program. He recalled the discussion in 2024 about an advertisement placed by PETA that resulted in the program briefly being discontinued and a national, digital option may make such placements more common. He said there was nothing in the advertising policy that would stop such ads from being placed. He said, from a practical standpoint, it sounds great because it's a manual process now.

Mr. Kryska said before an RFP would be issued other ferry company policies should be examined. He said he was not prepared to start that process but wanted a temperature check on the concept.

Mr. Rozum said a certain percentage of inventory might be reserved for local businesses.

Mr. Driscoll said the earliest such a program could be in place was 2027 due to competing priorities for support from the IT Department.

Mr. Lowell said nostalgic people will get upset about commercializing the boats and there may be a way to find balance with it. He said the MBTA was not a good comparison to the situation because the “ownership” over the Authority’s vessels was different for its customers.

Mr. Cahill suggested speaking with the local business associations to get their input on the potential program.

14. Mr. Kryska said a meeting had been held with Robert B. Our on their license request and that staff was trying to move the request forward as quickly as possible.
15. Mr. Driscoll reminded the members that the preseason sale on high-speed ticket books starts March 22, 2026.
16. In response to Mr. Carr’s call for public comment, Mary Musacchia asked that meaningful time be left for public comment and adjustments before it is put into place. She added that Woods Hole and Falmouth have business associations as well that should be consulted about advertising, and she asked that advertising not be allowed outside of the building.
17. Leon Brathwaite asked if a transferrable reservation could be sent via text and not email, and staff said they would find out.
18. Amy Cody thanked Mr. Dawicki for his call for a risk analysis on the sale of a vessel. She said she strongly supported making the Blue Line for residents only and that every time she has tried to use it the line has been full of out-of-state license plates. She also asked about the proposal for off-site staging in Woods Hole and asked if it would be put into practice now that spring had arrived, and Mr. Kryska said staff would review the proposal.

Then, at 11:51 a.m., upon a motion from Mr. Sollitto and a second by Mr. Lowell, 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 March 10, 2026, Meeting

1. Agenda for the Port Council’s March 10, 2026, meeting (posted March 6, 2026; revised March 9, 2026).
2. Recording announcement.
3. Statement regarding remote participation.
4. Minutes of the January 20, 2026, Joint Board and Port Council Meeting in Public Session.
5. Minutes of the February 3, 2026, Port Council meeting (draft dated March 6, 2026).
6. Presentation, Business Summary, January 2026, dated March 10, 2026.
7. January 2026 Business Summary.
8. Presentation, Engineering and Maintenance Updates, dated March 10, 2026.
9. Presentation, Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project, dated March 2026.
10. Staff Summary #COO-2026-01, Proposed Policy Changes, Phase 1 Reservation System, dated March 9, 2026.
11. Presentation, True North, dated March 10, 2026.
12. Staff Summary #GM-810, Request for Authorization to Market the *M/V Governor* or *M/V Sankaty* for Sale, dated March 10, 2026.
13. Unnumbered Staff Summary, Request for a Limited Passenger License Agreement with Helen H Offshore Fishing Corp., undated draft.