

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

May 5, 2026

Virtual Meeting Only

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, Robert S.C. Munier of Falmouth, and Nathaniel E. Lowell of Nantucket. All members participated via Zoom videoconferencing.

Port Council Members absent: Eric R. Dawicki of Fairhaven.

Authority Board Members present: Chair Peter J. Jeffrey of Falmouth, who participated in the meeting via Zoom, and Member Robert R. Jones of Barnstable, who 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 Shoreside Operations Alison A. Fletcher; and Director of Engineering and Maintenance Zachary A. Lawrence.

1. Mr. Carr called the meeting to order at 9:04 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*) stated she was making an audio recording of the meeting.
3. Mr. Carr announced that, pursuant to Section 20 of Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, as amended, all Port Council members were participating remotely in the day's meeting

because their physical attendance would be unreasonably difficult. 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. Cahill and a second by Mr. Sollitto, the Port Council **voted** 5-0 to approve the minutes of the Port Council meeting on April 7, 2026. (Mr. Munier abstained from the vote.)
5. Mr. Rozum then reviewed via a PowerPoint presentation the March 2026 business summary. He started with the trip summary, which showed the Authority missed a total of twelve (12) trips for mechanical reasons, 202 for weather reasons, and 239 for low traffic. Regarding the weather cancellations, he stated the Vineyard route had sixty-four (64) more missed trips for weather than in 2025, and the Nantucket route had six (6) more trips canceled for weather. The higher-than-expected number of canceled trips had a negative effect on the Vineyard-route traffic, which he said would be shown on the following slides.

In March, the Authority carried fewer passengers (down 9.4%), fewer vehicles of less than twenty (20) feet (down 6.1%) and fewer freight trucks (down 2.4%) than it did in the same period in 2025.

In March 2026, the Authority had approximately \$7,026,000 in operating income and \$13,502,000 in operating expenses, which, combined with nonoperating income and nonoperating expenses, resulted in a net operating loss of \$5,977,000, which was \$2,054,000 below budget.

Preliminary traffic data for April 1-21, 2026, showed the Authority carried fewer passengers (down 1.8%) and fewer vehicles of all sizes (down 0.1%) on both routes combined than it did in the same period in 2025.

Mr. Sollitto asked why so many trips were missed on the Vineyard route, and Mr. Rozum said the Nantucket route usually has more "one-off" weather cancellations, while the Vineyard tends to miss service for days at a time. One day of missed service equates to forty-two (42) one-way trips, he noted. Also, the days before and after a weather event can show reduced demand due to people canceling plans or other interruptions to businesses.

Mr. Munier said the weather cancellations were clear but asked if the traffic cancellations were a result of lowered demand; Mr. Rozum said most of those were in the first week of March when the region was still being affected by the late February blizzard and many people could not or would not travel during that time.

6. Mr. Rozum then reviewed the draft 2027 budget policy statement, which includes the preparation of a vessel maintenance overhaul schedule and a tentative operating schedule. He said the preliminary budget drafts are expected to be presented in September. Following public budget open houses, the draft budget will then come to the Port Council and Board in October for review and a vote.

Mr. Carr said the comments about fuel in the statement were “fairly ominous” and asked how long the Authority was willing to wait to execute its fuel hedges for next year. Mr. Rozum said staff discusses that with its hedging consultant often, and that the purchase of the fuel options remains high. He said there were many variables at play and the situation was being monitored closely.

Mr. Munier noted the policy said staff was evaluating adding project management and training positions versus the continued use of third-party contractors. Mr. Rozum said the positions would likely have to go to the Board for creation and that a cost-benefit analysis would be done before those positions were requested. Mr. Munier asked if people on staff had those skills; Mr. Rozum noted that former employees Bill Cloutier and Sean Mulcahy had served as project managers for the Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project, but since then that project, and others, have been managed by outside vendors. Mr. Munier noted that a good project manager would be able to handle multiple projects at once.

Then, upon a motion by Mr. Sollitto and a second by Mr. Cahill, the Port Council **voted** 6-0 to recommend approval of the policy statement to the Board.

7. Mr. Carr noted the Board goals and action items would be taken out of order to accommodate Mr. Jeffrey’s schedule.

Mr. Jeffrey then noted the Board has adopted its goals and action items for the year, which included the creation of two (2) new standing committees in addition to the IT Executive Steering Committee: a Capital Planning Committee and a Governance Committee. He said each would be composed of two (2) Board members and three (3) Port Council members, and a firm charter for each would be part of the individual committee’s charge.

Mr. Jeffrey said he was asking the Port Council to name its three (3) representatives, with the idea that the members would be appointed or reappointed at the December joint meeting.

He said the Board approved Mr. Jones to the Capital Planning Committee and is waiting on its next appointment until New Bedford appoints its new Board Member. Dukes County Member Edward T. Gavin was named to the Governance Committee.

Mr. Carr noted that everyone had day jobs, but the Authority needs a little more from its Port Council and Board members at the present.

Mr. Munier asked about the cadence of the meetings; Mr. Jeffrey said he presumed the Capital Planning Committee would likely meet monthly. The Governance Committee would likely meet less frequently after its start-up period, and he added that he’d like to see these meetings begin in June.

Mr. Munier asked if the committees would have the opportunity to create their own mission; Mr. Jeffrey said the Board established a general charter but it's broad enough to allow the committees some flexibility.

Mr. Lowell said he was “thrilled” by the creation of the committees and noted that, without Zoom, it would not be possible.

Then, upon a motion by Mr. Sollitto and a second by Mr. Cahill, the Port Council **voted** 6-0 to name Messrs. Lowell, Munier, and Carr to the Capital Planning Committee and Messrs. Egan, Sollitto, and Carr to the Governance Committee.

8. Mr. Lawrence shared updates on the following Engineering and Maintenance items:

- *M/V Nantucket* dry dock: the vessel is out of the dry dock at Thames Shipyard and is due back in service within the next few days. Change orders included an extended dry dock period to perform bow and stern door repair work that normally would be done in Fairhaven. The total project cost is \$1,796,029.
- Vineyard Haven Terminal underdeck concrete repairs: 100% of the demolition work repairs have been completed and ninety-seven percent (97%) of the repair areas have been poured. The scheduled completion date for the project is May 8, 2026.

He added that the *M/V Aquinnah* was being prepared for its annual repair period and the *M/V Barnstable* was preparing for its biennial dry docking.

Mr. Egan asked if the vessel that had the prop damage had been in dry dock yet; Mr. Lawrence said that was the *M/V Barnstable*, and it has not occurred yet. Mr. Lowell said having a vessel in dry dock in the summer is unusual, but Mr. Lawrence said it was a matter of scheduling and availability.

Mr. Sollitto asked about the issue with the *M/V Monomoy* on its first day in service; Mr. Lawrence said it was an issue with a communications signal between the main engines and the wheelhouse, but that it has been rectified.

Mr. Munier asked about the general state of shipyard availability for dry docks. Mr. Lawrence said fourteen (14) shipyards received each package, and at most three (3) responses are received. That does not give the Authority the opportunity to stack its dry docks at the same time, but in June staff will be attending a Marine Log conference to help network and build relationships with other shipyards. Mr. Munier said this is an important data point for consideration by state and national lawmakers who are concerned about shipyard availability. Mr. Amundsen noted many ferry companies have relationships with specific shipyards, and a lot of them are filling up with work. The Authority is working on getting its specs out earlier, but other shipyard relationships must be developed as an alternative.

Mr. Carr asked if Mr. Lawrence was familiar with the floating dry dock just deployed in East Boston; Mr. Lawrence said he had heard of it, but he was not sure of its capacity.

Mr. Amundsen then noted the *M/V Iyanough* recently had a crack in its transom area, which required the vessel to be removed from service. The area is being surveyed, but the repairs should be able to be done while the vessel is pierside. Mr. Lawrence added the crack was found during a routine inspection and that a repair plan was being developed.

9. Mr. Amundsen shared an update on the Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project. The Authority has the occupancy permit for the utility building, and the terminal building occupancy date is June 16, 2026. The glass awnings are due to arrive in the second week in May and access is expected by May 21, 2026, for IT and other project work.

Mr. Gordon asked Mr. Amundsen his confidence in the June 16, 2026, date; Mr. Amundsen said it was high and that it's amazing how it's coming together. He said the terminal building will be a bonus to the traveling public.

Mr. Amundsen said the current estimate for the project is \$37 million, about \$2.1 million under budget.

10. Mr. Kryska noted the traffic circulation study had been provided to the members. He said, with the Railroad Avenue curb cut, traffic will flow through the site "fairly nicely" and without the curb cut it will become more difficulty. Staff has met with the Department of Public Works to discuss the curb cut and will continue discussions this month. Mr. Kryska said staff have met with the traffic mitigation and bike/pedestrian committees as well. He added that Falmouth police have been authorized to use embarkation funds to place patrols at the area, and terminal staff will be bolstered this summer as well.

11. Mr. Amundsen then provided an update on the True North Initiative, including the recent progress and upcoming key activities, including sharing an updated release plan and procurement plan. E-Dea will be on site for a week in May, which he said has proven beneficial to advancing the project.

Mr. Amundsen reviewed the proposed revised timeline, which would split the winter/spring bulk freight reservation process into two (2) phases: the winter bulks would go into the legacy system and the spring bulks would go into the new system, with a go-live date at the end of March 2027. That gives the project two (2) additional months for training and communication and will move that internal training out of the busy August season.

Mr. Carr noted that, at the recent IT Executive Steering Committee, there was a question of extended cost by changing the timeline as discussed, and Mr. Amundsen said it was verified there was no cost.

Mr. Amundsen further reviewed the benefits and drawbacks of the timeline shift. Mr. Carr noted it would take some management effort to make sure the right people were in place for the project.

Mr. Rozum then reviewed the preliminary budget for the project, which totals \$6.4 million in one-time costs and annual costs starting at \$3.4 million in year one, \$1.1 million in year two, then \$500,000-\$600,000 in years three through five.

Mr. Sollitto asked why the project timeline was being moved; Tom Innis with Gibbous LLC said keeping the project timeline as it stood might affect the quality of the release. Impatience is understandable, but on balance the project team felt it was important that the launch be a success.

Mr. Cahill said one could build a case this was already five (5) years late, so two (2) months was not as big a shift. He said it was disappointing, but he supports it.

Then, upon a motion by Mr. Cahill and a second by Mr. Lowell, the Port Council **voted** 6-0 to recommend approval of the revised timeline to the Board.

12. Mr. Innis then reviewed the second phase of proposed policy changes, including:

- Preferred Spaces
- Cancellation Policy
- Change Policy
- No-Show Policy
- Coupon Book Subscriptions
- Gift Cards
- Furlough Fare Policy
- Motorcycle Policies
- Commercial Preseason Booking Process
- Commercial No-Show Policy
- Change and Cancellation Policy for Commercial Vehicles
- Commercial Reservation Transfer Policy
- Smoothing Policy (Commercial)
- Updates to Commodities (Commercial)
- Steel Tread Vehicle Policy (Commercial)

Mr. Innis said the policies had been discussed at length and reviewed the highlights of each before asking for questions.

Mr. Sollitto noted the \$10 fee for the first change for a reservation would be a problem, and asked if it would have to be paid even if they were changing a reservation to an earlier time. Mr. Innis said yes and added that the E-Dea software was an “all or nothing” solution to change fees. Mr. Innis said the project team continues to work with E-Dea on this topic. Mr. Kryska said Mashpee reservation staff and terminal personnel will be empowered to

waive the fee if customers contact them needing a last-minute change. He said staff are trying to get the public to engage with the new system and be on board with it.

Mr. Lowell asked what the commercial change and cancellation policies would be; Mr. Innis noted that vehicles twenty (20) feet and over must cancel more than twenty-four (24) hours ahead of travel to avoid a fee. Reservations can be altered online by shippers directly without contacting the Trucks Department.

Then, upon a motion by Mr. Cahill and a second by Mr. Lowell, the Port Council **voted** 6-0 to recommend the policies to the Board.

13. Mr. Munier, noting he had a hard stop at 11:20 a.m., asked that the air quality and sea level rise items be taken out of order. Mr. Kryska said the Authority had been approached by the Martha's Vineyard Commission and the Vineyard Lands for Our Community about installing air quality and sea level sensors, respectively, at the Vineyard Haven Terminal. He noted that, while there was concern about potentially negative data being uncovered, the information would be helpful to the Authority's capital planning efforts.

Mr. Cahill noted that the Vineyard Lands for Our Community organization was working with the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and Brown University to set up a network of the sea level rise sensors across New England. The intention is to start in Vineyard Haven then expand to other ports.

Mr. Amundsen noted that installing the sensors would be "simple" installations.

Then, upon a motion by Mr. Cahill and a second by Mr. Sollitto, the Port Council **voted** 5-0 to recommend the matter to the Board. (Mr. Munier abstained from the vote.)

14. Mr. Kryska noted the Oak Bluffs Terminal was opening for the season May 14, 2026, and the Authority would be holding a brief celebration to mark the event.
15. In regard to the potential freight service from New Bedford to Nantucket, Mr. Kryska noted the Robert B. Our vessel had passed inspection.
16. Regarding the Fleet Disposition Analysis, Mr. Sollitto asked if the *M/V Governor* was being used to its best capacity and that, with the *M/V Barnstable* going into dry dock, he would think having the vessel available would be helpful.

Mr. Cahill asked Mr. Kryska what his preference for disposition was; Mr. Kryska said it remained the *M/V Governor*. He said the staff would start preparing the vessel for sale in the fall but would not take any action until after Labor Day.

Then, upon a motion by Mr. Cahill and a second by Mr. Munier, the Port Council voted 6-0 to recommend to the Board that the *M/V Governor* be marketed for sale.

17. Mr. Kryska then presented the draft proposed 2027 Operating Schedules for discussion, noting that they are similar to this year's schedule. The 5:30 a.m. trip from Vineyard Haven in the winter is tentative depending on slip construction. The 5:30 a.m. trip from Woods Hole in the summer is also in the schedule, but he noted staff would continue to track trucks that come to the terminal before 5:10 a.m. Repeated violations of that policy would be cause for reservations being revoked.

Mr. Kryska said he continues to seek hard data on the need for the 5:30 a.m. trips.

Mr. Munier said as much detail as possible is necessary as, in the years past, the argument has been strong for the 5:30 a.m. trips.

Mr. Lowell said this was an important topic because a boat running behind schedule can cause bigger problems on the Vineyard route and this was a matter of properly spacing out the trips.

Mr. Sollitto said he does not think people understand how big a traffic problem there is on the Vineyard and that there is nowhere to offload trucks once the streets become busy.

At 11:20 a.m., Mr. Munier ended his participation in the meeting.

18. In response to Mr. Carr's call for public comment, Mary Musacchia said she hopes the new reservation system will have the ability to stage trucks and freight better. Trucks get to the terminal early and cause backups in Woods Hole, and the reservation system needs to be able to handle that.

She added that Woods Hole residents live with parking issues all the time due to the freight boats, and none of the traffic benefits the village.

19. Amy Cody noted that the business summary did not record a cancellation due to mechanical reasons on the Vineyard route on March 21, 2026. She added that she liked the idea of a full-time project manager. She noted there had not been discussion recently about staging cars at Palmer Avenue and she wanted to keep that on the minds of staff. She also noted that the 5:30 a.m. trip from Woods Hole started in 2011 and that then-Board Member Mark Hanover stated it would be discontinued if it disturbed residents, and that promise has been broken every year since.

20. Beth O'Connor asked if residents would essentially get one free reservation change if they called and asked for me; she said if some people got that and others didn't it would be an

uproar. Mr. Kryska said he appreciated the feedback, and that the intention was to keep the system as close as possible to the current one.

21. Steve Bernier, owner of Cronig’s Market, said the three (3) big markets on the island have rarely used the 5:30 a.m. trip and that it’s the multistop trucks that do. The first thirty (30) minutes of the day is a small piece of the puzzle and, based on the comments from the neighbors, he suggested the schedule go without the trip for a year and then try to justify bringing the trip back in 2028. He said, given time to adjust, he thinks the shippers can make it work.

22. Margaret Hannemann thanked Mr. Bernier for his comments and said if any Vineyarders lived on Woods Hole Road they would think differently about the matter.

Then, at 11:38 a.m., upon a motion from Mr. Sollitto and a second by Mr. Lowell, the Port Council **voted** 5-0 to adjourn its meeting.

A TRUE RECORD

Joseph E. Sollitto Jr., Secretary

Documents and Exhibits Used at the Port Council’s May 5, 2026, Meeting

1. Agenda for the Port Council’s May 5, 2026, meeting, posted April 30, 2026.
2. Recording announcement.
3. Statement regarding remote participation.
4. Minutes of the April 7, 2026, Port Council meeting, draft dated April 28, 2026.
5. Presentation, Business Summary, March 2026, dated May 5, 2026.
6. March 2026 Business Summary.
7. Staff Summary #A-727, 2027 Budget Policy Statement, dated April 28, 2026.
8. Presentation, Engineering and Maintenance Updates, dated May 5, 2026.
9. Presentation, Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project, dated May 2026.
10. Letter to General Manager Robert Davis, re: Response to Howard Stein Hudson Transportation Peer Review, Woods Hole Ferry Terminal Reconstruction Project, 1 Railroad Avenue, Falmouth, MA, dated January 12, 2026.
11. Letter to General Manager Robert B. Davis, re: Transportation Peer Review – Response to Responses 2 Issues Summary, Woods Hole Ferry Terminal Reconstruction Project, 1 Cowdry Road, Falmouth, Massachusetts, dated January 16, 2026.
12. Email from Steven Findlen to Alex Kryska, re: Woods Hole Terminal Site Circulation Follow Up, dated March 12, 2026.
13. Presentation, True North, May 2026 Port Council.
14. Presentation, True North, Proposed Policy Changes, undated.
15. Presentation, Fleet Disposition Analysis, dated April 2026.
16. Steamship Authority Joint Board and Port Council Committees, undated.
17. Staff Summary #SO-2026-01, Preliminary Draft of the Proposed 2027 Operating Schedules, dated May 1, 2026.
18. Capital Expenditure Status Report, dated April 28, 2026.
19. Slide from presentation, *M/V Aquinnah*, *M/V Barnstable*, *M/V Monomoy* Financial Snapshot, dated January 6, 2026.

20. Slide from presentation, *M/V Aquinnah*, *M/V Barnstable*, *M/V Monomoy* Financial Snapshot, dated January 20, 2026.
21. Slide from presentation, *M/V Aquinnah*, *M/V Barnstable*, *M/V Monomoy* Financial Snapshot, dated February 3, 2026.
22. Slide from presentation, *M/V Aquinnah*, *M/V Barnstable*, *M/V Monomoy* Financial Snapshot, dated February 17, 2026.
23. Capital Expenditure Status Report, dated March 13, 2026.
24. Slide from presentation, *M/V Monomoy* repair highlights, dated, April 7, 2026.
25. Letter to Terence Kenneally from Sakiko Isomichi, Climate Resilience Planner, Martha's Vineyard Commission, re: Request for License: Air Monitor Installation, dated April 29, 2026.
26. Vineyard Haven Harbor Sea Level Sensor Monitoring Project Request for SSA Licensing Agreement, undated.