

MINUTES
OF THE
IT EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE
OF THE
WOODS HOLE, MARTHA'S VINEYARD AND NANTUCKET STEAMSHIP AUTHORITY
November 17, 2025
VIRTUAL MEETING ONLY

Attendees:

- Peter Jeffrey (subcommittee member)
- John Cahill (subcommittee member)
- Stephen Colman
- Mark Amundsen
- Sean Driscoll
- Tom Innis
- Ourania Siabanis
- Lizzy Freeman (minute-taker)

Video and Audio Recording of Today's Meeting:

- It was announced that Sean Driscoll was making an audio and video recording of the meeting.

Statement Regarding Remote Participation:

- It was announced that, pursuant to Section 20 of Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, as amended, all IT Steering Committee members are participating in the meeting remotely because their physical presence would be unreasonably difficult. All IT Steering Committee members participating in the meeting by Zoom videoconferencing app and all members will be clearly audible to each other.

1. Public Comment

- None
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2. Minutes

- John made a motion to table approval of the minutes until the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Peter. With no further discussion, the motion passed and the minutes were tabled to the next meeting.
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3. Contract Update

- Contract with E-Dea was finalized.
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4. E-DEA Project Update

- Setup analysis has been finalized, providing the baseline for next-phase work.
- Reviewed components include business decisions, the website project, preseason planning, portal processes, freight commodity updates, and pricing.
- John reported that upcoming key activities include finalizing customization requirements, noting that more detail is still needed to clearly define what development work is required.
- Tom noted that the project dashboard currently shows a yellow status, with planned delivery at risk.
 - Setup workshops have been completed, but deeper work is required on special SSA programs.
 - Need to map all SSA programs to E-Dea system functionality, including excursion, preferred programs, discounts, and space availability.
 - Many SSA programs require clearer definitions so E-Dea can understand them and configure the system appropriately.
 - SSA will also internally evaluate existing programs, how they developed, whether they still meet their original purpose, and how they should be integrated.
 - Continued effort is needed to determine which items can be handled through configuration and which may require custom development.
 - All work remains aligned with the original RFP, but further refinement is necessary before finalizing customization needs.
- Peter asked for examples of programs that can be addressed through configuration and others that may require customization.
- Tom provided examples:
 - Excursion program: Can likely be translated into a subscription model within the system. Follows the same application and verification process as today,

with customers becoming part of a defined subscription group. Naming conventions and user communication still need to be determined.

- Headstart program: Involves reservations being transferred to another person. May require either revising SSA's business rules or asking E-Dea for customization to limit transfers (e.g., only one transfer allowed).
 - Peter expressed support for the ongoing evaluation of whether each program should continue and what benefits it provides.
 - Suggested raising these questions at public town halls to gather feedback and help determine whether customization is necessary for certain programs.
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5. Policy Update

- Tom reported that work is proceeding in parallel on solution design, with the team finalizing the full list of needed customizations.
- In November and December, the team will review where policies and programs need updates.
 - Planned approach is to bring proposed changes to Town Hall meetings in December, followed by continued discussions and adjustments in January and February.
 - All items that may go to the Board will first be brought to Town Hall sessions to review tradeoffs, impacts, and stakeholder feedback.
- A consolidated project plan is being developed alongside the solution design process.
 - This plan will include firm dates for rollout and implementation once solution elements are confirmed.
 - Key areas under review include allocation methods, inventory management, product definitions, pricing rules, and points where pricing changes may be required.
 - The preseason process for shippers is being evaluated to create a more transparent, streamlined, and better-aligned workflow supported by the system.
 - The waitlist process is also under examination, including how it works today and how it should function in the new system.
- John asked about customer requirements related to key documents (e.g., street address validation, documentation for becoming an excursion customer).

- He asked whether these requirements could become more automated from a policy standpoint.
- Tom confirmed automation is being explored.
 - Planning to allow users to upload documents electronically, with SSA staff able to review them on the backend.
 - Determining what needs to be included in initial rollout versus what can move to Phase 2 based on critical-path needs.
 - E-Dea's document-upload functionality will be leveraged to eliminate paper handling.
 - Excursion program enrollment will still involve manual backend steps initially, with future improvements planned for more seamless matching and processing.
- Peter asked about how internal stakeholders are being engaged to provide input on policy decisions.
 - Highlighted the importance of ensuring the right data is being used to shape policies.
 - Asked whether operational issues (e.g., no-shows, freight trucks arriving at incorrect size or commodity classification) are being paired with customer service procedures, enforcement processes, and implementation planning.
- Tom responded that these efforts are happening in parallel, which is stretching internal teams as they consider multiple policy variables at once.
 - Work includes shaping policies that enable customers to book reservations with certainty while retaining flexibility.
 - The team is determining how pricing and fees need to be structured to support this future model and how those prices and fees will differ from today.
- Peter asked whether responsibility for policies is being clearly assigned and noted the possible impacts on staff roles and required skillsets.
 - Questions included whether reservation office and customer service teams will take on new responsibilities and how terminal managers and agents will enforce freight-related policies (e.g., oversized or misclassified trucks).
- Mark noted that this is one of the most significant projects the SSA has taken on, affecting every level of the organization, and that change management will be essential moving forward.
- Tom added that more information will be shared as policy options are identified.
 - The team is pushing the limits of current data collection to understand program volumes, waitlist usage, and the scale of potential changes.

- Data will help determine whether certain changes affect large customer groups or only small segments.
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6. Procurement Update

- Work is ongoing to procure components that fall outside the core E-Dea system.
 - Legal review has been completed and a contract has been signed with the vendor.
 - Focus has now shifted to the ancillary systems required to support the full solution.
- Current efforts include coordinating internal and external infrastructure needs, website components, the preseason portal, and integrations with SSA's various backend systems.
 - These areas require extensive cross-team discussions to ensure alignment and to keep the overall project on schedule.
- Tom and Steve confirmed that the project remains on track.
 - External infrastructure procurement is out to bid.
 - Evaluations are underway for the terminal hardware, including handheld devices for ticket scanning and updates to pedestal scanners.
 - Coordination with E-Dea is required to ensure all selected devices are compatible with their system.
 - A Wi-Fi assessment is being performed at terminals to confirm that connectivity will support the new devices.
- Peter asked whether frontline staff have been consulted on their hardware preferences.
 - Suggested obtaining mockups of handheld devices and testing them in real conditions, particularly cold and windy weather.
 - Also raised concerns about usability with gloves, especially for touchscreens.
- Mark confirmed that the plan includes trying out the new scanners once they arrive.
- Tom added that usability testing should consider both peak summer conditions and harsh off-season environments, recommending that devices be brought onsite during cold, windy days.
- Peter asked whether the procurement plan will be ready for presentation next month.
- Tom confirmed that it will.

- Numerous discussions have already taken place, which is why a partial update is being provided at this meeting, with a more detailed and comprehensive update planned for the next meeting.
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7. Town Halls

- A series of town hall meetings will be held on the islands and mainland to gather public input, provide project updates, share progress, and discuss tradeoffs and decisions.
 - Purpose is to give the public visibility into the project, allow them to express concerns, understand benefits, and share excitement.
 - Meetings scheduled for the first and second week of December:
 - Nantucket: Public Safety Building Training Room: Tuesday, December 2, 4:00 pm - 5:45 pm
 - Martha's Vineyard: Tisbury Emergency Services Facility Training/Community Room: Thursday, December 4, 4:00 pm - 5:45 pm
 - Mainland: SSA Admin Offices (Palmer): Monday, December 8, 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm
- John asked whether a working version of the website would be available for the 12/4 meeting.
 - Tom explained that a fully developed version will not be ready due to ongoing customization work.
 - SSA recently received access to the sandbox environment, which is still being configured.
 - Plans are to share examples of other ferry systems using similar E-Dea functionality to give the public an initial look and feel.
 - The December view will not reflect SSA-specific configurations.
- John asked what “whitelabel” means.
 - Tom explained that whitelabeling is similar to store-brand products: the base system is already developed and tested, and SSA will apply its own branding, naming, routes, and styling.
 - One of the major advantages of E-Dea is that its backend functionality is already in use by other operators, so SSA starts with proven components and customizes from there.
- John asked whether there will be enough material on 12/2, 12/4, and 12/8 to excite the public.
 - Tom feels confident there will be.

- The plan is to introduce the vendor, timeline, goals, and benefits of the new system, and highlight where public input is needed.
- Engagement strategy is to involve the public early and repeatedly, starting with these first sessions.
- Beta testing groups are being formed and will be discussed at the town halls so users can help ensure configurations and customizations are working as intended.
- These town halls will be the first in a series, not a one-time event.
- Peter asked whether the system itself would be previewed at the meetings and whether the public could see what the reservation experience might look like.
 - Tom said the whitelabel version of the website will be shared for general look-and-feel, but the sandbox will not yet be configured for SSA in December.
 - Internal screens will not be ready for public demonstration.
- Peter asked whether SSA can show the same type of demo that E-Dea presented during vendor selection.
 - Tom said they will ask E-Dea to provide mockups of what the whitelabel site could look like once SSA branding is applied.
 - Peter noted that earlier mockups included specific routes; Tom said they will see what E-Dea can deliver in the coming weeks.
- John asked whether they could prepare 3–5 exciting features that could be mocked up to help the public understand how the system will improve their experience.
 - Tom agreed and identified major highlights, including:
 - A unified, consistent mobile and web experience (unlike today's multiple disparate sites).
 - Enhanced notifications and communication tools, allowing multiple phone numbers and emails for travel updates.
 - Much improved ability for families to receive updates without workarounds.
 - Overall modernization of user experience, which was a major factor in vendor selection.
- John suggested bringing in a handheld device to demonstrate what terminal agents will use in the future, mocking up a screen or two to show how it will improve check-in and boarding.
 - Tom noted that improvements in terminal workflows, boarding processes, and self-service options will be emphasized.
 - Goal is to show which parts of the process will become more convenient for customers, while still preserving the human touch where needed.

- Tom emphasized the importance of promoting the town halls and encouraging participation.
 - Communications department is helping spread the word.
 - Customers can send comments or feedback via email or customer service channels.
 - Any feedback mechanism is welcomed.
 - Peter asked whether the True North email address has been set up.
 - Tom said it has not yet been created.
 - Current flyers direct customers to Tom's SSA email address.
 - Steve added that improved customer service at terminals should also be highlighted.
 - The new reservation system, combined with upgraded terminal buildings, will significantly improve responsiveness, ease of use, and customer experience.
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8. Public Comment

- Margaret Hannemann thanked Peter for allowing public comment at both the beginning and end of the meeting.
- Margaret asked whether the E-Dea contract, which she heard was finalized, had officially been signed.
 - Tom confirmed that the contract has been signed by both parties.
 - Margaret clarified whether that included Bob Davis; Tom confirmed yes.
- Margaret asked whether SSA, as a state organization, has access to the Massachusetts motor vehicle database to verify license plates and related information.
 - She noted that such access could eliminate the need for customers to send copies or scans of documents, at least for Massachusetts residents.
 - Tom explained that SSA has explored this type of integration in other state projects, but it is a complex and difficult process.
 - Integration is not directly with RMV but must go through the Executive Office of Public Safety first, which then connects to RMV systems.
 - These systems are highly protected and restrictive.
 - SSA is exploring the possibility, but the process is challenging and may take time.
- Margaret emphasized that if SSA is able to work through this integration, it would create major efficiencies for both customers and SSA customer service.

- She also expressed concern about how town hall meetings are being advertised.
 - Noted that the Dukes County Commission website is not commonly visited, so SSA should ensure broader outreach, including local newspapers.
 - She advised SSA to be very clear about the purpose of the town halls, what information SSA is seeking, and what is not yet finalized, so the public does not become confused or frustrated.
 - Margaret referenced Steve’s earlier comment about improved customer service with the new system, asking whether that meant fewer agents selling tickets inside terminals, and more reliance on kiosks.
 - Steve clarified that terminal improvements will enhance customer service overall, but did not specifically commit to kiosks replacing ticket agents.
 - Sean added that ads for the newspapers were being worked on during the meeting, and this is part of the communications plan for public outreach.
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Motion to Adjourn:

- It was voted upon a motion by Mr. Jeffrey, seconded by Mr. Cahill, to approve the motion to adjourn of the IT Executive Steering Committee, meeting in public session.
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Meeting Duration

1:00 pm – 2:04 pm, EST

Documents Distributed:

- SSA_Project_Subcommittee_Steering_Subcommittee_11.17.25
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Next Meeting:

- Date: TBD
 - Time: TBD
 - Location: SSA Admin Offices (228 Palmer Ave, Falmouth MA) Virtual and In-Person
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Action Items:

Action Item	Owner	Due Date
Approve Sept, Oct, Nov IT Steering minutes	IT Steering Committee	Next meeting
Send John the Sept, Oct meeting minutes	Gibbous	Next meeting
Advertise Town Halls in the newspaper	SSA Communications	November 21