

MINUTES
OF THE
IT EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE
OF THE
WOODS HOLE, MARTHA'S VINEYARD AND NANTUCKET STEAMSHIP AUTHORITY

May 20, 2025

Virtual & In-Person Meeting

First Floor Conference Room

Steamship Authority Headquarters

228 Palmer Avenue, Falmouth, MA

Attendees (in person):

- Peter Jeffrey (subcommittee member)
- Eric Dawicki (subcommittee member)
- Stephen Colman
- Mark Amundsen
- Mark Rozum
- Sean Driscoll

Attendees (virtual)

- John Cahill (subcommittee member)
- Tom Innis
- Ourania Siabanis
- Monika
- Margaret Hannemann
- Suzanne Kuffler
- Lizzy Freeman (minute-taker)

Video and Audio Recording of Today's Meeting:

- It was announced that Mr. Driscoll and Falmouth Community Television were 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, Mr. Cahill and Mr. Innis were participating in the meeting remotely because his physical presence would be unreasonably difficult. Mr. Cahill and Mr. Innis 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. RFR Update

- The project is in the due diligence phase: validating vendor submissions, reviewing company background, financials, and verifying information via reference checks.
 - Aiming to complete reference interviews (15 total) by May 27 to inform the evaluation team.
 - Vendors provided varying background structures and software specializations; confirming these through both vendor discussions and references.
 - Following the procurement process outlined in the RFR, based on vendor-submitted data rather than a fixed rubric.
 - Although no universal rubric was used, around 750 specific evaluation criteria were assessed by committee members, with categorical scoring determining who advanced to demonstrations.
 - Eric raised concerns about transparency, due diligence standards, public engagement, and alignment with best practices in government procurement.
 - Peter suggested including a blank rubric in the meeting minutes to address transparency.
 - Evaluation committee includes cross-departmental SSA staff; members are restricted from external influence until the final decision.
 - Eric noted a communication gap prior to the last meeting and emphasized the need for metrics and public involvement.
 - Tom and Peter highlighted that this is more than a software change; it's a significant operational transformation for SSA.
 - Project next steps: complete due diligence, finalize recommendation, assess fit with SSA operations, and develop a communication plan for internal and public stakeholders.
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3. Shipper Meetings

- Meetings with shippers are scheduled as part of the preseason planning and to gather input on upcoming changes.
 - In parallel with the reservation system, a preseason (bulk bookings) application is being developed to mirror current practices but feed into the new system.
 - Goal: Allow shippers to self-manage trip preferences prior to public bookings, improving flexibility and efficiency.
 - Meetings will review current preseason processes and gather feedback on proposed changes, including how trips are booked and how vessels are loaded (e.g., truck dimensions: length, width, height, weight).
 - SSA is planning a shift from space-based scheduling to linear feet, aiming to better utilize vessel capacity. Shipper input is key to this transition.
 - Eric and John to be invited to the shipper meetings (John is away but has long-standing involvement with shippers).
 - Shipper meetings are held annually, typically involving the GM, truck department, and terminal managers (not vessel crew typically).
 - Mark A noted this is a significant operational shift: truckers will eventually book online independently, easing pressure on reservation staff and improving system efficiency.
 - Eric asked about vessel stability calculations in the software; Mark A confirmed they are part of SSA's draft plan, aligned with vessel stability letters.
 - Mark R added that the team is delving deeply into new processes like overbooking, waitlisting, and other reservation mechanics.
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4. Infrastructure Update

- The final deliverable for the infrastructure review is not yet complete but was discussed in the previous meeting.
 - The team is currently working to prioritize blockers identified during the preliminary review and assess opportunities to address them.
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5. Bulks Platform

- The team viewed a minimum viable product (MVP) demonstration yesterday.
- A follow-up review is planned to assess the functionality demonstrated.

- Screenshots or previews of the system will be shared at upcoming shipper meetings to give insight into the development and gather feedback.
 - The system is an internal platform with external-facing components for shipper use.
 - Demos will also be scheduled for committee members.
 - Gibbous is available to meet offline with anyone who wants to discuss the RFP process in more detail or ask specific questions.
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6. Public Engagement

- Engagement sessions will differ from shipper meetings, involving focus groups followed by larger community meetings.
 - Focus groups are targeted for June, with broader community discussions planned for the summer.
 - The team is exploring effective outreach methods (e.g., holding sessions on the boats) to encourage participation and feedback.
 - Emphasis on ensuring that internal stakeholders are also recognized and included in the engagement process.
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7. Branding Updates

- The team is exploring branding options to help the public recognize this as a broader transformation effort, encompassing scheduling, shipper interactions, public travel, the website, and the app.
 - Goal: Differentiate the larger initiative from routine summer operations.
 - Board approval is not required for branding; it will be voted on by the executive steering committee.
 - Sean will distribute branding materials for feedback, with a vote planned for the next meeting.
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8. Public Comment

- Suzanne Kuffler expressed concern that SSA's current definition of "engagement" has not met community expectations. She urged Gibbous to adopt a more proactive and respectful approach to involving the community.

- She emphasized that the island community is its own lifeline, with a distinct way of life that deserves recognition in planning and engagement, not just a focus on shippers and passengers.
 - Suzanne called for more responsive, serious attitudes from SSA leadership toward community concerns, noting that past engagement has fallen short, but improvement is possible.
 - Peter noted this is an opportunity to review and adapt business rules, aiming to reduce traffic impacts in port communities through better reservation timing and loading efficiency, guided by community feedback.
 - Eric acknowledged Suzanne's feedback, emphasizing that SSA must be a supportive neighbor and steward, and that stronger, more meaningful engagement with the community is essential moving forward.
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Motion to Adjourn:

- It was voted upon a motion by Mr. Jeffery, 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 – 2:15 pm, EST

Documents Distributed:

- SSA Project Subcommittee Steering Slides 5.20.25
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Next Meeting:

- Date: TBD
 - Time: TBD
 - Location: TBD
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Action Items:

Action Item	Owner	Due Date
Share RFR scoring rubric	Reservation System Project Steering Committee	Next meeting
Set up bulks demo for the next steering committee meeting	Gibbous	Next meeting
Vote on branding	Reservation System Project Steering Committee	Next meeting
Include Public Engagement as agenda item in next meeting	Reservation System Project Steering Committee	Next meeting
Continue due diligence	Gibbous	May 27
Complete final vendor evaluation	Evaluation Committee	May 30
Attend shipper meetings	Commercial Experience Subteam	May 29
Approve minutes from this meeting and last meeting	Reservation System Project Steering Committee	Next meeting