

**MINUTES
OF THE
WOODS HOLE/FALMOUTH NOISE & TRAFFIC MITIGATION WORKING GROUP
OF THE
WOODS HOLE, MARTHA’S VINEYARD
AND NANTUCKET STEAMSHIP AUTHORITY**

March 10, 2021

Via the Zoom Video Conferencing App
First Floor Meeting Room (Room 103)
The SSA’s Administrative Offices
228 Palmer Avenue, Falmouth, Massachusetts

<u>Working Group Member</u>	<u>Appointing Authority</u>	<u>Present/Absent</u>
Stephen Araujo	Tisbury Select Board	Present
John Cahill	Dukes County Commissioners	Present
Alison Fletcher	Steamship Authority	Present
Doug Jones	Falmouth Select Board	Present
Mike Mauro	Martha’s Vineyard Commission	Present
Michael Santoro	Oak Bluffs Board of Selectmen	Present
Steven Sayers	Steamship Authority	Present
Nathaniel Trumbull	Falmouth Select Board	Present

Also Participating:

Steven Tupper, Cape Cod Commission Transportation Program Manager
Ed DeWitt, Falmouth Transportation Management Committee Chair

1. Mr. Sayers began the meeting at approximately 4:00 p.m. by announcing that the Steamship Authority (SSA) was making an audio and video recording of the meeting, and he asked whether anyone else was making a recording as well. When no one responded, Mr. Sayers stated that he assumed no one else was making a recording of the meeting.

2. Mr. Sayers then announced that, in response to Governor Baker’s executive orders concerning the necessity to conduct public meetings in line with social distancing guidelines during the current state of emergency involving the COVID-19 pandemic, all Working Group members that day were participating remotely in the meeting because their physical attendances that day would be unreasonably difficult. Mr. Sayers also stated that all Working Group members were participating in the meeting by the Zoom video conferencing app and that all members will be clearly audible to each other.

**Proposal to Approach MassDOT to Post
Additional No Speeding Signs on Woods Hole Road**

3. Mr. Sayers noted that the first item on the agenda was a proposal to approach MassDOT to provide additional no speeding or similar signs on Woods Hole Road, and that the Working Group had asked Ed DeWitt, Chair of the Falmouth Transportation Management Committee, and Steven Tupper, the Cape Cod Commission (CCC) Transportation Program Manager, to participate in today's meeting to try to assist the Working Group in this endeavor. Mr. Sayers then asked Mr. Trumbull whether he would like to start the discussion, since this was his proposal.

In response, Mr. Trumbull stated that he thought the goal was simple to state, namely, that the Working Group is interested in more frequent posting on Woods Hole Road of the speed limit. Mr. Trumbull further stated that there was also interest in having the speed limit lowered in places, if it seemed possible. For example, Mr. Trumbull said, he has heard Woods Hole residents say that the 35-mile-per-hour speed limit for vehicles traveling south at the end of the golf course is too fast, and that he agreed with that assessment; but Mr. Trumbull repeated that the Working Group's first goal was to have more frequent signage of the existing speed limits on Woods Hole Road.

4. Mr. Sayers then advised Mr. Tupper that Mr. Mauro had suggested the Working Group contact him because there are procedures that would have to be followed in trying to get more signs or even to lower the speed limit on Woods Hole Road. Mr. Sayers then shared his computer screen with the other participants in the meeting, which had successive photographs of the speed limit signs on Woods Hole Road traveling south from Quissett Harbor Road. Mr. Sayers observed that, as vehicles travel south on Woods Hole Road, one particularly problematic situation was the 40-mile-per-hour speed limit as the vehicles approach the golf course, which then drops to 35-miles-per-hour just as the road gets past the golf course when it starts to go downhill. Mr. Sayers noted that the Working Group has had numerous and incessant complaints about trucks having to either use their Jake brakes or shift down as they go down this hill, and he asked whether anything could be done in terms of more signage or even earlier signage to lower the speed limit earlier, or to have a No Jake brake sign there or something along that line that can get people to slow down earlier before they go down that hill so they don't interrupt everyone on both sides of the road. In this regard, Mr. Sayers noted that, by the time drivers see the 35-mile-per-hour speed limit at the end of the golf course, it is too late for them to slow down without shifting down or making a lot of noise with their engines. After Mr. Sayers repeated that this was where the SSA receives the most complaints about truck noise on Woods Hole Road, Mr. Trumbull agreed that Mr. Sayers had described the problem, saying that was exactly what he had meant.

Mr. Santoro then asked Mr. Araujo, as a truck driver, whether it would matter if the speed limit were slower as he approaches that hill on Woods Hole Road or whether, even if the speed limit were lower, he would still have to brake because he is going down a hill. In response, Mr. Araujo stated that he would still have to brake because the weight of the truck's load is going to push the truck down the hill right around the curve. Mr. Araujo

also noted that this is where there are side roads that come out to Woods Hole Road and that people who are getting onto Woods Hole Road from those side roads, after looking left and right, often forget to look left again up the hill when trucks are coming down the hill, which Mr. Araujo said happens more than the Working Group members know and is one of the reasons the truck drivers have to use their Jake brakes and jam on their brakes. Accordingly, Mr. Araujo stated that he did not believe the speed limit is a factor and that the situation is just the result of the way the road turns where there are a couple of side streets and people fail to pay attention when they pull out of those side streets.

Mr. Trumbull disagreed, observing that if a truck driver were starting down that hill at a lower speed, he would need to brake less. But Mr. Araujo stated that the truck driver will need to brake anyway because the road is downhill there and he needs to reduce his speed to 20 miles an hour, which becomes the speed limit a little farther down the road. In response, Mr. Trumbull asked whether that would still be the case if the speed limit at the top of the hill by the golf course were lowered from 35 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour. After Mr. Araujo stated that he would still have to brake down the hill, Mr. Trumbull acknowledged that Mr. Araujo cannot go down the hill without braking, but he observed that, if Mr. Araujo were to start down the hill more slowly because he sees a sign about an approaching hill, he would not have to brake as much.

Mr. Araujo then recounted how he drives on Woods Hole Road four times a day, twice from Woods Hole and twice coming back to Woods Hole, making one round trip in the morning and one round trip in the afternoon, and that all of the truck drivers are trying to be respectful. Mr. Araujo also noted that Woods Hole Road is a state road, not a little back road, and that there are many parameters a truck driver has to think about when driving down that hill. Further, Mr. Araujo said, even if the speed limit were lowered to 20 miles per hour on that part of Woods Hole Road so that trucks crawl down the road, they will still make noise.

5. Mr. Sayers then asked Mr. Tupper if he could weigh in on what the Working Group would like to be done and what possibly can be done. In response, Mr. Tupper stated that, in addition to hearing some of the real specific concerns today, he previously had touched base with Mr. Mauro and had reviewed the minutes of the Working Group's previous meeting. Mr. Tupper then prefaced his comments by saying that he understood the concerns with speed and that the process to do any changes in terms of speed limit signage is challenging. Accordingly, Mr. Tupper said, he did not want the Working Group to take all of the steps he was going to outline as discouragement because, if there are issues with speed on Woods Hole Road, he wants to make certain that MassDOT does what it can to address those issues. In this regard, Mr. Tupper noted that, because Woods Hole Road is a state highway, the Working Group was on the right track in approaching MassDOT for any changes they would like to be made.

Mr. Tupper also noted that the Falmouth Department of Public Works (DPW) certainly has a good working relationship with MassDOT and making changes on state and municipal roadways is typically most successful when the Falmouth DPW is directly involved in the conversations with MassDOT. Therefore, Mr. Tupper said, he wanted to make sure that

he highlights that because, given that it is quite a process to make some changes, it is important to follow the process in a very careful way.

In terms of what specifically can be done, Mr. Tupper stated that most of what the Working Group is discussing requires some real engineering work before some changes can be made in terms of signage. In this regard, Mr. Tupper noted that the different speed limit signs on Woods Hole Road are all lawfully posted speed limits, so there are a number of steps to go through to change them. Mr. Tupper also stated that there is one process for changing speed limits, but that there is a slightly different process that could be used to address a couple of the conditions on Woods Hole Road that had been noted by the Working Group.

Mr. Tupper advised the Working Group that, if they want to change speed limits on Woods Hole Road, a formal speed study will need to be done by an engineer and, depending on the length of the corridor, that could take a good amount of effort. But Mr. Tupper noted that would be required to change the actual regulatory speed limit on the roadway, and he observed that a couple of things the Working Group noted seem to be more related to some conditions on the roadway that may be unexpected to drivers. In this regard, Mr. Tupper observed that the signs with black lettering on white backgrounds are regulatory speed limits, but the Working Group could consider some advisory speed limit signs that would indicate a need for drivers to slow down due to a curve ahead or alerting drivers to the fact that there is a reduced speed limit ahead.

Mr. Tupper stated that whether or not those advisory signs are appropriate depends on the specifics of the location, but they were something that certainly could be considered. In this regard, Mr. Tupper observed that typically advisory signs are used for conditions that drivers might not expect and, while they don't legally change the speed that drivers are allowed to drive, the signs let them know that there is a condition coming up which they should be anticipating. Therefore, Mr. Tupper suggested that the Working Group may want to look at some sort of advisory signs as a way to make potential changes on Woods Hole Road.

Mr. Tupper then noted that there is a procedure for setting speed limits and that the character of the roadway most determines how fast someone goes. Mr. Tupper also stated that unreasonably lowering a speed limit is not going to have a lot of effect on the drivers and that, if the Working Group is looking to reduce speeds on Woods Hole Road, he wanted to be certain that they think about what is going on out there currently and, just as advising drivers of a condition is certainly important, making certain that the speed limits are reasonable is also important. Therefore, Mr. Tupper said, in these scenarios he typically advises people to really get a good handle on what is going on on the roadway because, if they do go to MassDOT and formally request a speed zoning analysis of the corridor, MassDOT could come back with recommendations in either direction, including keeping the speed limit the same, or increasing or decreasing them. For this reason, Mr. Tupper stated that he typically thinks it is advisable to do some spot speed measurements first, which is what the CCC has done in some other communities, just to give some numbers to some of the concerns to make certain everyone understands what the true differentials are. In this regard, Mr. Tupper observed that in some of these cases it sounds like the speeding

that is of concern is not necessarily speeding in excess of the posted speed limit, but just a challenge at a particular location, so he advised the Working Group to make certain they have as much data as they can before they start down a particular path.

Mr. Tupper then noted that the CCC certainly requests this type of data regularly across the 15 towns on Cape Cod, and that, in this specific instance, the only thing he was asking is the involvement of DPW for a request for the CCC to go out to do a count, and that's really just coming from the CCC's perspective because it receives these types of requests from 15 towns. Mr. Tupper stated that he wants to make sure that there is a process because, if there are more requests than the CCC can handle, the CCC has to make sure that there is some formal process for those requests.

6. Mr. Jones then asked if there is a typical guideline for speed limits by fire stations, saying that he was surprised that the speed limit on Woods Hole Road by the Woods Hole Fire Station is 40 miles per hour. In response, Mr. Tupper stated that Mr. Jones had asked a good question, and that there are a number of conditions that would warrant taking a look at a reduced speed limit in a specific location. But Mr. Tupper said that, off the top of his head, he could not give Mr. Jones an answer on the fire station specifically, although he noted that generally there is a good amount of signage to alert drivers about a fire station, while having something that tells them they need to stop from 40 miles per hour is pretty abrupt. Accordingly, Mr. Tupper stated that he could take a look at that issue.

Mr. Jones noted that reducing the speed limit by the Woods Hole Fire Station would actually address the issue of vehicles traveling too fast as they go down the hill towards Woods Hole village because, due to where the station is, if the speed limit were lowered at that location it would prepare drivers for the slower speed ahead. Mr. Jones observed that, because the fire station is in exactly the right location, he thought lowering the speed limit there would answer some of the concerns for the community.

Mr. Tupper agreed that Mr. Jones had a great point, and said that this was something he could look into, even though he could not think of a lot of instances where MassDOT has lowered the speed limit in an entire area.

7. Mr. Jones then stated that he thought Mr. Tupper's idea about erecting advisory signs along Woods Hole Road would be good for the first-time drivers, but he observed that many of the drivers already know the road and know what's coming up. Therefore, Mr. Jones said, while regular drivers on the road already know that they need to be careful as they approach Harbor Hill, an advisory sign would still be nice for first-time drivers. Mr. Trumbull agreed, saying that there are drivers who only occasionally travel on Woods Hole Road and may be surprised as anyone by that hill.
8. Mr. Sayers noted that Mr. Tupper had stated that a formal speed study would be needed to try to lower the speed limit on Woods Hole Road and that, even then, MassDOT may come back with increasing the limit. But Mr. Sayers asked Mr. Tupper what would be required in order to request the advisory signs that he had mentioned. In response, Mr. Tupper stated that there are some specific conditions that would warrant the installation of such a

sign, although he would have to be an engineer to determine whether those conditions are met. For example, Mr. Tupper said, if the speed limit drops more than 10 miles per hour in a relatively short distance, there typically would be a sign there to alert people that they need to reduce their speed; but such signs are not typical where the speed limit is going down from 40 to 35 miles per hour. Mr. Tupper observed that it thus depends on what condition is present, and then how long before drivers go to that next condition. Similarly, Mr. Tupper said, with respect to an advisory sign about a curve, it depends upon the actual curvature of the roadway, and someone needs take a look at that particular situation to see if such signage would be warranted. In response to a question from Mr. Jones, Mr. Tupper confirmed that this was something that a town engineer typically takes a look at as a first step, although there will be a little more process on the backend due to the fact that Woods Hole Road is a MassDOT road.

9. Mr. Araujo then asked if anyone knows how many speeding tickets have been given out in that area. In response, Mr. Jones observed that it is a terrible location to position a police officer because there is no place to pull anyone over. Mr. Tupper agreed, saying that while engineering solutions are part of addressing these issues and enforcement is also important to ensure that people abide by the signs, Mr. Jones was right in observing that it is really difficult to actually station police officers along that corridor, which may result in artificially low numbers of violations just because it is difficult to park there or to safely pull someone over. Indeed, Mr. Tupper said, he could understand why there may be some logistical challenges to enforcement along a curvy road such as Woods Hole Road because no one wants a police officer to try to pull someone over on that road.
10. Mr. Sayers then asked Mr. DeWitt if he had anything to suggest. In response, Mr. DeWitt provided the Working Group with the following overview of what the Falmouth Transportation Management Committee's interest is in all of this and their thinking and perspective, as he thought it was germane to their discussion that day. Mr. DeWitt stated:
 - The Falmouth Select Board re-established the Committee in 2020 to advise it on all things related to transportation, but because of COVID, the Committee was delayed in its initial meeting and did not meet until the summer of 2020.
 - The Committee identified three areas of interest. One was complete streets, which was the policy that the Falmouth Select Board had adopted earlier in 2020, and the other two were based on citizens' concerns and complaints. One of them was downtown parking and congestion, traffic associated with the downtown, and the second was the SSA's freight operations.
 - With respect to the SSA's freight operations, specifically, the attendant truck traffic through Falmouth, the complaints have centered on what the Committee is calling the three S's, the first of which is speed – excessive speed, especially in lower speeds zones – the second is sound – braking, mufflers, illegal idling, backup alarms – and the third is smell, primarily trash but other things.
 - If one looks at how the speed limit changes on Woods Holes Road and Locust Street, there is no consistent speed limit on that state road. Instead it goes up and down, up and down.

- During its investigation, the Committee also identified three specific additional areas of transportation concerns associated with the SSA's freight operations. Watson Corner, which is the intersection of Locust Street and North Main Street, is a 90-degree turn where there is not enough swing for trucks to make it around the corner without crossing over into oncoming traffic.
- Overweight trucks, largely based on anecdotal information primarily from SSA employees; and through-traffic violations on Falmouth's Main Street, as most of the transportation apps will take trucks through Main Street if they're heading east even though it is posted for no-through trucks. (This was identified in the Committee's investigation of traffic in the downtown.)
- Regarding overweight trucks, it only takes one overweight truck to cause damage; it is not a repetitive type of problem. Overweight trucks are more likely to be in an accident and a more serious accident. Ironically, the next most likely truck to be in an accident is an empty truck. It has to do with some of the physics and road contact and braking and those kinds of things, as well as cross-winds. According to physics reported by the General Administration Office (GAO), one 18-wheeler puts the equivalent force of 9,600 cars on pavement and bridges. If one compares the force of a truck carrying 1,500 pounds per axle to one carrying 3000 pounds per axle, the difference is not twice as much, it is 16 times as much.
- The Committee found that the SSA's freight operation as it relates to roads is a 1921 approach in design, it is not a 2021 design. Of course, in 1921, there was no interstate highway system, trucks were smaller, rail played a bigger role in freight, and two-lane paved roads were not still that common. The world has changed a lot in the last hundred years for transportation. The current system relies on two-lane roads through residential streets, the system serves truck traffic that is often empty or less than full, and the impacts on residents' quality of life from speed, smell, and sound can be reduced with better enforcement.
- Although the State Police truck squad spends a fair amount of time on Cape Cod, especially during the summer, the Committee has never seen them present on Woods Hole Road or in the vicinity of the SSA. They are the experts on truck safety, truck enforcement, overweight trucks, and those sorts of things.
- The Committee also has found in its analysis that if there is not a fair, consistent, and predictable enforcement, it doesn't matter what kind of signs are put up because the signs will have no meaning. If one sign is put up along Woods Hole Road that is strictly enforced, it is probably the best sign; but, again, it is meaningless unless the sign is enforced.
- How freight is moved is another issue altogether. The federal government's Department of Transportation sees the best way to move freight with a marine component or element to be a direct link between the interstate highway system with the Marine Highway System. Mr. DeWitt was involved in the 2000 New Bedford freight experiment, which he stated was designed to fail no matter how it was looked at. The experiment's schedule, vessel, use, rules, restrictions, and accounting all set up that project for failure.

- The Committee has recommended that the SSA look at what it would take to prepare a 2021 freight system to the islands, and the Committee thinks that the first step in doing so is to get available federal grants to look at what is the best way to move freight instead of taking this sort-of piecemeal approach and looking at how one gets goods and services to the islands as opposed to trying to make a 1921 design work optimally, which Mr. DeWitt thinks the SSA is never going to attain.
 - With respect to other anomalies in speed control on the route, on Locust Street the speed is 25 miles per hour in one direction and 35 miles per hour in the other direction, and Mr. DeWitt is not exactly sure why speed limits on a two-lane road are not the same in both directions.
 - The Committee thinks that there is a lot to be done, there is a lot of impact and probably, if one were starting from scratch, this is not the way one would design a system; rather, one would look at some other ways to do it.
11. In response to a question from Ms. Fletcher, Mr. DeWitt stated that he had obtained his information about overweight trucks being carried on the SSA from people who work for the SSA, that it was all anecdotal, and that he did not have any way of confirming it. But Mr. DeWitt noted that when the SSA changed from charging by weight to charging by length, the SSA lost any way of measuring the weight of trucks carried on its ferries.
 12. In response to another question from Ms. Fletcher, Mr. DeWitt stated that the Committee had sent its preliminary recommendations to the Falmouth Select Board to send on to the SSA, and that Mr. Sayers has a copy of that initial report. In this regard, Mr. DeWitt stated that the Committee thinks it is time to look from scratch at how the SSA moves freight, as opposed to trying to fix something that is really an archaic design that is not working. For example, Mr. DeWitt said, one of the models for moving freight on a short-haul seabed is to use stackable containers that are compatible with a small truck and a frame, a Ford F150 type frame. By contrast, Mr. DeWitt said, a Kenworth tractor is almost 20 feet long and, while some freight can be carried on that, it is just wasted space; and all of the air space underneath the tractor-trailer is not carrying any freight. Mr. DeWitt stated that by using a hybrid system with stackable small containers, more freight can be carried in the same space and the SSA can actually carry more freight, particularly if it is stackable. In addition, Mr. DeWitt noted that there are a lot of options out there and that the Committee was not saying that its recommendation was the way to do it. Instead, Mr. DeWitt said, the Committee was saying that it thinks the SSA needs to bring some intellectual engineering policy and types of perspective into how it would design a system today if it were starting from scratch, not necessarily trying to tighten some nuts and bolts.
 13. Mr. Sayers then observed that what Mr. DeWitt was talking about went well beyond the limits of this agenda item today, and that he thought those issues were more appropriate for discussion with the SSA's Long-Range Vineyard Transportation Task Force. In fact, Mr. Sayers said, the SSA has invited Mr. DeWitt to present the Committee's proposal to the Task Force at their next meeting the following week along with the idea of potentially obtaining grant money from the federal government to do a study. But Mr. Sayers stated that, at this point, looking at the agenda regarding signs on Woods Hole Road, he thought the Working Group should consider trying to get practical things done in the short term.

In this regard, Mr. Sayers noted that one issue that has come up is the enforcement of the existing signs, which certainly may be more effective than anything else the Working Group can do for this summer, that he assumed that such enforcement is a matter for either the State Police or the Falmouth Police, and that he thought the SSA would support the enforcement of all of the existing traffic regulations on that road and would try to assist that in any way possible.

Mr. Sayers also observed that the SSA has the same interest as Falmouth does in making certain that the trucks that go on its boats are not overweight. In this regard, Mr. Sayers noted that he thought a truck's weight limit was 86,000 pounds, although there are some instances when they can obtain special permits for heavier loads. Mr. Sayers also noted that the SSA's policies require trucks that are carrying heavier loads with such a permit to inform the SSA so that the SSA can make certain that its transfer bridges can sustain the weight of the trucks that are going across.

Mr. Sayers noted that Mr. Trumbull had placed on the agenda for discussion later in today's meeting the subject of appealing to MassDOT to conduct spot check weighing of trucks carried on the SSA's boats, although Mr. Sayers observed that the appeal possibly should be made to the State Police instead of MassDOT. But Mr. Sayers stated that, based upon Mr. Tupper's suggestion that the Working Group look at how the traffic is flowing now on Woods Hole Road, perhaps they should start by approaching the engineering department at the Falmouth DPW to see what appropriate measures can be taken as a practical matter, while another prong of this approach may be to try to get enforcement of what is there at the moment. Accordingly, Mr. Sayers asked Mr. Tupper whether it was his recommendation that the Working Group talk to the Falmouth DPW engineering people to see what they think might be appropriate.

In response, Mr. Tupper stated that he thought it would be certainly important to engage with the that department because they may have some insights. Mr. Tupper noted that, even though Woods Hole Road is not a road that is under their jurisdiction, they do coordinate on these roadways, so they will likely have some advice as to what can be done or what the next steps will be if there is a request to MassDOT. Mr. Tupper also noted that, if there is a desire for some speed measurements in the future to provide some data for any next steps, the CCC would be happy to coordinate with the Falmouth DPW and do what it can in terms of doing some measurements over the course of the summer when it has additional staff who are out in the field doing that sort of work.

In response to a question from Mr. Sayers, Mr. Tupper stated that such measurements should be the subject of a request from Falmouth DPW to the CCC and he informed the Working Group that each spring at one of the CCC's Joint Transportation Committee meetings attended by all of the DPW directors from the 15 towns on Cape Cod, the CCC puts out a request for the towns' traffic counting needs over the course of the next summer. Mr. Tupper stated that the DPW directors all send in those requests and the CCC determines if it can meet all of them, which it typically can, but that this process ensures that the CCC is able to equally distribute its effort across the 15 towns.

Mr. Jones observed that, for Falmouth, he hoped the starting point would be the Transportation Management Committee quickly making a report to the Select Board saying that this is something the Committee would like the Select Board to look into with the DPW and the local police, as opposed to himself as a Select Board member stepping past the Committee. In this regard, Mr. Sayers noted that, at their last meeting, the island representatives on the Working Group wanted to support what Falmouth wants to do in managing the state highway that goes through Falmouth, but that it was up to Falmouth to decide how it wants to proceed. Mr. Sayers also recounted how Mr. Santoro had expressed his concern that some of these measures may be opposed by Woods Hole residents. But Mr. Sayers observed that the idea of having the engineering department of the Falmouth DPW see what additional measures can be taken to correct any traffic problems on Woods Hole Road, as well as enforcement of the measures that already exist, appeared to be very practical suggestions.

Mr. Jones then stated that, if Mr. DeWitt would like him to go directly to the Select Board, he would be happy to do so. In response, Mr. DeWitt agreed that it would be much faster for Mr. Jones to go ahead, and that he would advise the Committee of what is transpiring. Mr. DeWitt also observed that he did not think these suggestions were controversial and that they were consistent with everything else the Committee has said about this operation, so he would leave it to Mr. Jones to take this right to the Select Board. Mr. DeWitt further observed that getting something before the CCC's transportation group would be the best thing that can happen, although he also thought there will have to be a request to the State Police truck squad for more spot weight checks of trucks and he was not sure whether such a request would have to go through a State Representative or State Senator or whether Falmouth Chief of Police Edward Dunne could make the request to the State Police. In response to a question from Mr. Sayers, Mr. Tupper stated that he did not have any insight regarding how the State Police can be asked to spot-check truck weights, although he thought the Working Group was heading in the direction of talking to the right people.

14. Mr. Araujo then stated that MassDOT is already out there checking weights of trucks, that they were at the Bourne Rotary that day, and that most of the trucks that come to Woods Hole have to go around the Bourne Rotary. Mr. Araujo noted that the State Police see these trucks, they know these trucks, and the truck drivers go by them every day; it is not like the truck drivers are avoiding them or trying to break the law. While Mr. Araujo acknowledged that trucks are bigger and heavier, he observed that is their purpose and the truck drivers are not trying to ruin the road or the neighborhood.

In addition, Mr. Araujo said, he did not think the SSA had anything to do with the sound of trucks or the speed of trucks, but rather that those were enforcement issues. Mr. Araujo also stated that there are other options, and that he thought truck drivers were getting unfairly picked on right now because of the situation. After declaring that he has done everything he can and that he has a quiet truck, Mr. Araujo observed that these issues were just part of the business and that they were not limited to Woods Hole. Rather, Mr. Araujo said, these issues arise all over Cape Cod and the Islands and, when everyone who loves to come to the Cape is there, they need the supplies that these trucks bring. Mr. Araujo noted that, without trucks, no one is going to get anything, no one is going to get their coffee,

their cheese, their milk, their gas, or just about anything because everything people need every day is brought by truck.

Mr. Sayers stated that he was glad to know that the State Police are spot checking trucks at the Bourne Rotary because the SSA wants to make certain that its freight customers are compliant with all of the rules, and that the Working Group appeared to be reaching agreement that this is an enforcement issue as much as anything else. After Mr. Araujo stated that the State Police have been down in Woods Hole and that they had even checked his truck, Mr. Sayers suggested that the Working Group might ask the State Police where they have been checking truck weights so that they have some information as to what spot-checking of trucks they are conducting and where they are doing the spot checks.

15. Mr. Santoro then asked Mr. DeWitt whether he was suggesting that some of the trucks going to the SSA's Woods Hole terminal were not traveling directly down the highway but were instead driving on side roads through Falmouth. After Mr. DeWitt stated that he was not suggesting that, Mr. Santoro asked why the state road was Falmouth's concern, as the state maintains that road. In response, Mr. DeWitt stated that the town was concerned about all of the roads in Falmouth and that, if the town has to deal with MassDOT to have certain roads repaired, then that is the path the town will go. Mr. DeWitt also observed that the roads are a hodgepodge with sections of town road within the layout, that this was one of the most confusing issues the town has to deal with where part of the layout is town road and part of the layout is a state highway, and that while the layout is mostly state highway, there are pieces of town road within it. Mr. DeWitt also observed that, overall, the town is concerned about the transportation system within Falmouth, regardless of who has control, just as the SSA is part of the transportation system in Falmouth and has an impact on Falmouth. In this regard, Mr. DeWitt noted that the town might look one way if it were to just look at the SSA's marine operations, but it has to look at the SSA as part of a system where everything works together.
16. Mr. Trumbull then asked if the SSA could reach out to the State Police truck squad and ask them to visit the SSA's Woods Hole terminal or provide a letter supporting such a request. In response, Ms. Fletcher stated that the SSA could not approach the State Police to ask them to come down to the terminal with their inspection teams. In addition, Mr. Fletcher said, she thought the request for the signs had to be made by the town. But Mr. Trumbull stated that he was not suggesting that the SSA install the signs, only that it would be logical for the SSA to send a letter of support in the spirit of this Working Group. In response, Mr. Sayers stated that he did not see any problem with having the State Police conduct spot checks of the weight of trucks that are going on the SSA's boats, although he did not know whether those checks could be held at the SSA's terminal because of the space that is currently required for the terminal reconstruction project. But Mr. Sayers observed that, generally, encouraging enforcement of traffic regulations is something that everyone is in favor of and that he would be disappointed if the SSA were not. Mr. Sayers also recounted how the SSA, along with Messrs. Jones and Trumbull, had talked about this last year with Falmouth Chief of Police Dunne, and that the idea was that Chief Dunne was going to be talking to the State Police about it because it is a State Police issue. Therefore, Mr. Sayers

said, he did not think it was a controversial issue; rather, it was just a question of finding out what the State Police are doing.

But Mr. Jones expressed his concern that Ms. Fletcher had stated that the SSA could not send a letter to MassDOT asking for the State Police to conduct spot checks of truck weights at the SSA's terminal, and he asked her why the SSA could not send that letter. In response, Ms. Fletcher stated that she thought the purpose was to catch trucks that are overweight before they arrive at the Woods Hole terminal, that space was limited at the terminal, and that the SSA already has State Police details there. Ms. Fletcher also suggested that a better place for the State Police to conduct such spot checks would be at one of the pull-outs on Woods Hole Road. Mr. Jones then observed that this was exactly the type of response that frustrates the Woods Hole community and that Ms. Fletcher's answer was really unfortunate. Mr. Trumbull also noted that he thought, from a safety perspective, the SSA would be as interested in overweight trucks as much as Falmouth residents are. Mr. DeWitt further observed that, once truck drivers know that they are going to get caught for overweight loads, they are not going to haul overweight loads.

17. Mr. DeWitt then recounted how, in an earlier life, he had the privilege of attending the Connecticut state fire apparatus drivers training school, and that one of the points they had driven home was that driving an emergency truck which is going at a constant steady speed travels to places faster than a truck which accelerates and slows down and accelerates and slows down. In addition, Mr. DeWitt said, the truck that accelerates and slows down uses more fuel and is harder on its brakes. Therefore, Mr. DeWitt suggested that having a consistent speed through the length of Woods Hole Road may be in everyone's interest instead of having small increments of higher and lower speed limits.
18. Mr. Sayers then asked Mr. Jones whether he was going to bring this subject up to the Falmouth Select Board and, if so, whether he wanted the SSA to be involved in talking with the engineers at the Falmouth DPW. In response, Mr. Jones stated that he did not want the SSA to be involved and that the engineers will reach out to the SSA if needed. But Mr. Jones stated he would be asking the Select Board to support getting MassDOT to conduct spot checks of truck weights, and that he wished the SSA thought that was important enough to do also. In response, Mr. Araujo stated that he had no problem with MassDOT coming down and checking truck weights, as he would rather have his truck be safe than not.

But Mr. Araujo observed that the Messrs. Jones and Trumbull were forgetting that these trucks are not traveling just the seven miles down Woods Hole Road; rather, they are coming from all across the state and all across the country where there are check points everywhere. Mr. Araujo also stated that these truck drivers do not want to drive all of those miles overweight, because if they get caught being overweight in some places, they have to take the weight off and get to their regulatory weight before they can even move their trucks without being towed. Mr. Santoro agreed, noting that he owns the Net Result fish market in Vineyard Haven and his large truck the previous summer had been pulled over six times driving out of Boston Seaport before it even reached the highway. As a result,

Mr. Santoro said, he can assure them that in certain areas the State Police are constantly checking.

Mr. Sayers again stated that he did not think this was a controversial subject and that everyone appeared to agree that Mr. Jones was going to ask the Falmouth Select Board to approve a request to MassDOT for additional signage and changes on Woods Hole Road, and that the engineers in the Falmouth DPW will contact the SSA if they want any assistance from the SSA. Mr. Cahill then asked Mr. Tupper how long the process normally takes after a town asks MassDOT for proposed changes. In response, Mr. Tupper stated that it depends on the scale of the change, but that in terms of general timing, once a request is made, MassDOT is fairly responsive in getting a letter back to let the town know what needs to be done. In addition, Mr. Tupper said, MassDOT will likely ask for some engineering work and, if there are any speed changes proposed, a speed study, which will take several months to conduct. As a result, Mr. Tupper stated that he had not seen one of these requests go through all of the steps and be fully effectuated in less than a year, particularly where it involves requests for permanent changes of speed and signage on a longer road. Mr. Tupper then informed the Working Group that he had just checked the timing of the CCC's traffic counting activities and that it was going to be asking for requests during the first week of April 2021.

19. Mr. Santoro then acknowledged that Mr. Jones was disappointed because he was looking for an answer regarding the SSA's support for these changes that day, but he stated that he did not think the Working Group could commit the SSA to writing a letter of support without first asking the SSA's Board. In addition, Mr. Sayers stated that the Working Group did clearly support the enforcement of truck weight restrictions, as the enforcement of those restrictions was in the SSA's own interest and the SSA wants both those weight restrictions and speed limits to be enforced correctly. Mr. Sayers also noted that, while those subjects are not controversial, what he thought the SSA could not support was requesting the State Police to conduct spot weight checks at the Woods Hole terminal itself because there is not sufficient space to conduct them there with the SSA's operations, especially during the summer. But Mr. Sayers stated that the SSA certainly can support the continued enforcement of spot-checking trucks for weight restrictions on the approach roads to the Woods Hole terminal, including the Bourne Rotary, the bridges, and all the way down to Woods Hole. Mr. Sayers declared that the SSA does support that, and that he could not believe that, as a public agency, the SSA would not support it; but he noted that the correct approach would be to go to the SSA's Board and ask for that letter of support. In response to a question from Mr. Trumbull as to whether that would be done, Mr. Sayers stated that Ms. Fletcher and he would discuss this with SSA General Manager Robert Davis and, that, while they will need to know the particulars of the request, that was something they could talk about further; but Mr. Sayers again emphasized that he did not think this was a controversial subject.
20. Mr. Araujo then observed that the Working Group has no way to enforce any of these restrictions and that the Town of Falmouth has to direct its police officers to be out on that road. Mr. Araujo further observed that the SSA's charter is to provide ferry service and that, while he supports quiet trucks, speed limits and truck weight restrictions, he did not

believe the SSA has any say in enforcing those measures and that the responsibility for doing so falls with the Falmouth Police or the State Police. In this regard, Mr. Santoro also recounted how many times, when he was an Oak Bluffs Selectman and served on the town's Roads and Byways Committee, they had pressed their Chief of Police regarding enforcement issues because, without enforcement, things will continue to stay the same. Mr. Santoro also noted that this was why he had asked whether the Falmouth Police can enforcement traffic regulations on Woods Hole Road. In response, Mr. Jones stated that, while the Falmouth Police can enforce speed limits, they cannot enforce weight restrictions because they cannot weigh the trucks, which was why he and Mr. Trumbull were suggesting that the SSA send a letter asking MassDOT to come down and perform spot checks. In response, Mr. Santoro stated that he agreed with Mr. Sayers and would support all enforcement that can be done along that corridor, which Mr. Jones said was fantastic.

Approval of the Minutes of the Working Group's January 27, 2021 Meeting

21. Mr. Sayers then noted that the next item on the agenda was the approval of the minutes of the Working Group's January 27, 2021 meeting and informed the Working Group members that Mr. Trumbull had asked that his PowerPoint presentation showing the shares of traffic on Woods Hole Road that he had estimated were attributable to the SSA's operations be added as an exhibit to the minutes. Mr. Sayers stated that, while it was not normal to attach presentations to minutes of meetings, it is done from time and time and he did not have a problem with it. After the other Working Group members agreed, they then **voted** (with Messrs. Araujo, Cahill, Jones, Mauro, Santoro and Trumbull voting in favor) to approve the minutes of the Working Group's January 27, 2021 meeting in public session.

Enforcement of the SSA's Policy against Early Arrivals at the Woods Hole Terminal and Its Other Noise Mitigation Policies

22. Mr. Sayers noted that he had provided the Working Group members with a chart of the emails that Ms. Fletcher had sent out to freight shippers whose trucks had arrived at the Woods Hole terminal in the early morning before their allowed times, and he shared that chart on the Zoom screen. Mr. Sayers noted that the chart covered the period from January 21, 2021 through February 21, 2021, and that he previously had provided the Working Group with similar charts for periods before January 21, 2021. Mr. Sayers also noted that this chart has some more information, namely, not only how many trucks are arriving early and how early the trucks are actually arriving, but also the percentage of freight customers who traveled on those early morning trips and arrived in compliance with the SSA's policy.

Mr. Sayers observed that the SSA's freight customers who traveled on the 6:00 a.m. and 6:30 a.m. trips were doing pretty well, but that the SSA had to improve the performance of its customers who travel on the 7:00 a.m. trip. In this regard, Mr. Sayers stated that, this past week, the SSA discovered that one of the reasons why some trucks on the 7:00 a.m. trip were arriving early may be that they were trying to get on the 6:30 a.m. trip. As a result, Mr. Sayers stated that the SSA has had a conversation with those customers and that

he expects their performance to improve beginning this week. Mr. Sayers also observed that, for the most part, those trucks that did arrive early did so by only a few minutes.

Mr. Sayers also reported that one truck driver who had arrived at 5:11 a.m. for 6:00 a.m. trip was quite loud and had not been cooperative. As a result, Mr. Sayers, the SSA forfeited that customer's reservation and he was not allowed to travel that day, which will hopefully discourage him from being early again. Accordingly, Mr. Sayers noted that the SSA was enforcing its early arrival policy and trying to make certain that trucks do not arrive earlier than they are allowed for the early morning trips.

23. Mr. Trumbull then asked if the SSA was going to be sending out a new letter to its freight customers about these arrival times so that everyone is clear about them, especially as the schedules change. In response, Mr. Sayers noted that the SSA usually sends out those letters when its schedules change and that the SSA would probably send out a new version of the letter when it next changes its schedules at the end of the month. Mr. Sayers also noted that, whenever any freight customer arrives early, it receives another copy of that letter to make certain it knows about the SSA's policies.
24. Mr. Araujo then stated that he thought the SSA was going overboard by telling its freight customers that they cannot be early even by a minute or two, observing that whether someone is early by that small amount of time could be attributable to whether the traffic light is red or green when they get to Quissett Harbor Road after having driven 150 miles to get there. Mr. Araujo also noted that when people arrive early at an airport or hospital, they are not required to turn around and leave and, while he understood what the SSA is trying to do, he thought the SSA was a little bit nitpicking by maintaining that hard line.

But Mr. Sayers disagreed, noting that the SSA actually was providing its freight customers with an allowance of one minute before recording them as having arrived early. Further, Mr. Sayers stated that the SSA does not turn away those customers who are early by just a small amount of time because, if the SSA were to turn them away and they come back to get on a boat, the SSA would just be creating more traffic. Mr. Sayers also noted that allowing a larger grace period would simply encourage creepage of the arrival deadline, which is no earlier than 30 minutes before a customer's reserved trip. Mr. Sayers stated that the SSA was sticking by that policy and that it was working out pretty well with only one bad incident so far.

Mr. Araujo then asked Mr. Sayers if the SSA's freight customers were waiting somewhere else in Falmouth so that they do not arrive early at the Woods Hole terminal. In response, Mr. Sayers stated that he did not know, but that the SSA had not received any complaints of that occurring. In addition, Mr. Sayers stated that if the SSA were to receive complaints of its freight customers' trucks piling up elsewhere in Falmouth, it would have to try to deal with that as well. But Mr. Sayers observed that, as far as he knew, the SSA's enforcement of its early arrival policy was working out pretty well and trucks are not arriving as early in Woods Hole, which was the whole purpose of the policy and is addressing one of the biggest complaints the SSA had received about its early morning operations.

25. Mr. Sayers then asked Mr. Trumbull if he had any complaints about truck backup alarms from the Woods Hole terminal. When Mr. Trumbull stated that he had heard backup alarms from the terminal, Mr. Sayers asked if he could report them when they happen so that the SSA could try to address the problem. However, Mr. Sayers said, trucks being loaded onto the 6:30 a.m. freight boat do need to use their backup alarms when backing onto that boat, so the backup alarms the SSA was trying to eliminate were those occurring when trucks are being staged before 6:00 a.m.

Mr. Araujo observed that there are other trucks with backup alarms in Woods Hole that are not going on the SSA's ferries, including delivery trucks and trash trucks picking up trash, which are making noise when they lift dumpsters as well. Accordingly, Mr. Araujo said, just because someone hears a backup alarm does not mean it is coming from the SSA's terminal; it could be coming from anywhere within a mile away. But Mr. Trumbull noted that he frequently goes to the SSA's terminal and more often than not the backup alarms are from the trucks there. Regardless, Mr. Sayers said, if someone hears a backup alarm before 6:00 a.m., it is important to let the SSA know so it can check and see whether it was from the SSA's operations or from someone else, so that, if it was generated before 6:00 a.m. by the SSA's staging of trucks at the terminal, it can improve its operations.

Emails Received by the SSA's whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com Email Address

26. Mr. Sayers then reported that the SSA's whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com email address had not received any emails since the Working Group's last meeting and that, because the SSA was able to send out a postcard to Woods Hole and Falmouth residents at a lower cost than anticipated, it probably was time to think about sending out another postcard at the beginning of the spring season to remind people about that email address. Mr. Trumbull agreed, noting that, since the previous postcard had been sent out in November 2020, new families will be arriving in the community. Accordingly, Mr. Sayers said, he thought another postcard that is sent out in April or May would generate another round of good comments.

The SSA's Visits to Problem Noise Areas Along Woods Hole Road

27. Ms. Fletcher then reported that she had reached out to a few of the SSA's Woods Hole neighbors about visiting them to observe problem noise areas along Woods Hole Road, and that all of them have been fairly receptive. But unfortunately, Ms. Fletcher said, either due to the COVID pandemic or the fact that they are not in their homes right now, she has had to go out and stand on Woods Hole Road alone with her sound monitor app, and she will be going back out to listen and check the noise levels again. Mr. Trumbull stated that he would be very interested in hearing what results she was finding in terms of decibel levels. In response, Ms. Fletcher stated that all of the decibel levels were pretty much the same for both cars and trucks. For example, Ms. Fletcher said, she was standing at the Treehouse Lodge one morning when the boat was unloading and the decibel readings were

around 80 to 85 decibels for both cars and trucks going up the hill, although obviously the readings were higher when more vehicles were going by. But Ms. Fletcher stated that there really did not seem to be much of a difference between the decibel readings for cars or trucks. In response, Mr. Trumbull stated that they needed to compare notes because he had found that trucks are louder than cars.

Noise of Bruno's Trash Trucks and Septage Waste Trucks

28. With respect to the noise of Bruno's trash trucks and septage waste trucks going up Woods Hole Road, Ms. Fletcher reported that she had spoken with both companies personally, as well as with their drivers, that she had informed them that they need to refrain from speeding on Woods Hole Road and be more courteous to their neighbors, and that they were both extremely receptive to addressing these issues.

Traffic Backups on Woods Hole Road

29. With respect to the issue of traffic backups on Woods Hole Road when the standby line at the Woods Hole terminal is closed, Ms. Fletcher reported that at this time of year the SSA does not have a large volume of standby customers arriving at the terminal around the same time. But Ms. Fletcher stated that, when the standby line is closed in the future because the SSA cannot stage any more customers in the line, it was definitely looking at staggering the times for those standby customers who are turned away to be able to return to the terminal after the standby line is reopened. Ms. Fletcher also reported that she had reached out to the SSA's terminal managers and asked them for their thoughts and ideas about how the SSA's standby policies work for Hyannis and Nantucket, and that she was waiting for feedback from those terminal managers before considering whether it would be feasible to have an online standby system for Woods Hole.

Ms. Fletcher noted that the SSA was also now keeping track in the Woods Hole terminal turnover notes of when the standby line is closed during the day, when it is reopened during the day, and how many vehicles are being left behind every day.

Stephen Araujo's Invitation to Ride with Him in His Truck on Woods Hole Road

30. Mr. Sayers then asked Mr. Araujo if he had been able to find out whether other Working Group members can join him while he is driving his truck on Woods Hole Road. In response, Mr. Araujo stated that, because of COVID-19 safety concerns for Mr. Araujo and any passengers he may have in his truck, John Keene wanted to wait before other Working Group members join him in his truck; but Mr. Araujo expressed his hope that he will soon be on the list to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and that he will be able to extend this invitation again within the next few months.

The SSA's Truck Check-in System

31. Mr. Sayers then asked Mr. Trumbull to discuss the SSA's truck check-in system and how it could be made electronic, which he had asked to be placed on the meeting's agenda that day. In response, Mr. Trumbull stated that it was his understanding that all or many of the truck drivers arriving at the Woods Hole terminal need to leave their cabs, physically walk into the ticket office, wait in line (if there is a line), and have their reservation processed that way. Mr. Trumbull observed that, to him, this seems like a 50-year-old system and he suggested that the SSA could process those reservations by using barcodes and scanners. In this regard, Mr. Trumbull noted that those devices are used to process car reservations on the Washington State Ferries system, although he actually did not know whether they are used to process truck reservations.

Mr. Trumbull also stated that, earlier today, he had seen a truck heavily loaded with a lot of trees going back towards Falmouth when a ferry trip had been cancelled, that he suspected the driver had driven to Woods Hole without knowing that his trip already had been cancelled, and that this seemed to him to be a perfect use of a nice application. In this regard, Mr. Trumbull noted that the SSA has a \$2,000,000 budget allocation for a new website, and that it seemed to him the SSA could get a nice app so that truck drivers no longer need to get out of their cabs and go into the terminal building. Mr. Trumbull stated that the current process slows down everything and that he also has seen cabs idling without their drivers.

Mr. Sayers suggested that the SSA look into this subject and give a report on the truck check-in policy at a subsequent Working Group meeting, saying that he understood that one of the issues is that trucks often arrive at different lengths than what they have reservations for and that the changes have to be made at the terminal. But Mr. Sayers stated that the SSA could provide the Working Group with a report on its current check-in policy and what improvements it thinks can be made to it. Mr. Araujo agreed that truck drivers have to go into the ticket office if the lengths of their trucks differ from the lengths stated on their reservations, and he added that they also may have to pay for their passengers or just use the bathroom.

Contents of www.woodshole.net

32. Mr. Trumbull stated that he wanted to make the Working Group aware of the resources that are posted on www.woodshole.net, including video, which are being added to continuously. Mr. Trumbull stated that, in the absence of a noise monitoring program, the only solution he had found is shooting video and audio as one way to measure sound and exhaust and that, while he does not get decibel readings, viewers do get a pretty good idea of just how noisy these trucks are. Accordingly, Mr. Trumbull said, he will be shooting more video and posting it on this website, and he encouraged the Working Group members and others to watch it because it seems to be some of the only evidence. Mr. Trumbull also noted that, although posting the videos is somewhat labor-intensive, people will have a better sense of what Woods Hole residents are experiencing after viewing and listening to

them. Mr. Trumbull further stated that he tries to include the dates and times of the videos, and noted that they have the advantage of being able to show people exactly whose trucks are making the noise.

Later in the meeting, in response to a question from Mr. Araujo, Mr. Trumbull confirmed that all of the videos at the top of the website had been taken at the intersection of Woods Hole Road and Church Street. Mr. Araujo then observed that every truck coming from Woods Hole is pulling the hill right at that location and accelerating to get up that hill, which is the reason for the noise. Mr. Trumbull agreed, noting that is especially the case when the trucks are loaded. But Mr. Trumbull stated that he was still trying to understand why some trucks are quieter than others, observing that the range is amazing. In response, Mr. Araujo stated some trucks just have different exhaust systems and mufflers and that they are just like cars, where older cars with mufflers are louder than newer cars with new emissions.

New Outreach Initiatives to the Community

33. Mr. Sayers then asked if any of the Working Group members had any suggestions for new outreach initiatives to the community. In response, Mr. Trumbull stated that he would recommend that the SSA repeat its direct mailing of a postcard to the community.

Scheduling the Working Group's Next Meeting

34. The Working Group then agreed that their next meeting would take place by Zoom at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 28, 2021.

At approximately 5:25 p.m., the Working Group unanimously **voted** (with Messrs. Araujo, Cahill, Jones, Santoro and Trumbull voting in favor) to adjourn their meeting that day.

A TRUE RECORD

Steven M. Sayers
Approved by the Working Group at their
meeting on April 28, 2021

Documents and Exhibits Used at the Working Group's March 10, 2021 Meeting

1. Meeting Notice for the Working Group's March 10, 2021 Meeting (posted March 8, 2021).
2. Photographs of Speed Limit Signs Going Southbound on Woods Hole Road between Quissett Harbor Road and Woods Hole village.
3. Draft Minutes of the Working Group's January 27, 2021 Meeting, dated March 5, 2021.
4. Chart of the number of email reminders the SSA sent to freight shippers for early arrivals at the Woods Hole terminal from January 21, 2021 through February 21, 2021.