

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

April 28, 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    | Absent                |
| 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 | Absent                |
| Steven Sayers               | Steamship Authority           | Present               |
| Nathaniel Trumbull          | Falmouth Select Board         | Present               |

1. Mr. Sayers began the meeting at approximately 4:00 p.m. by announcing that the Steamship Authority (SSA) and Steve Baty of MVTV were making audio and video recordings 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.
3. Mr. Sayers then stated that he was sorry that Mr. Jones was not running for reelection to the Falmouth Select Board, as it had been a pleasure working and discussing issues with him over the years. Mr. Sayers declared that Mr. Jones has been a terrific advocate for the Town of Falmouth and that he knew the Falmouth Select Board will miss him. Although Mr. Sayers also stated that he hoped Mr. Jones would be staying on as a member of the

Working Group, Mr. Jones stated that he was not sure about that because he was not certain whether his position on the Working Group was as a representative of the Select Board.

#### **Approval of the Minutes of the Working Group's March 10, 2021 Meeting**

4. The Working Group members then **voted** (with Messrs. Araujo, Jones, Mauro and Trumbull voting in favor) to approve the minutes of the Working Group's March 10, 2021 meeting in public session.

#### **Falmouth Transportation Management Committee**

5. Mr. Sayers then reported on the Falmouth Transportation Management Committee's meeting on April 22, 2021, including the status of the Committee's recommendation to the Falmouth Select Board on the posting and enforcement regarding no truck traffic on Crane Street and Cowdry Road from 10:00 PM to 6:00 AM, or something similar. Mr. Sayers stated that he had placed this item on the agenda only to let Working Group members who were not at the meeting know what transpired, noting that he and Messrs. Jones and Trumbull had been at the meeting.

Essentially, Mr. Sayers said, at their next meeting, which he thought will be on May 13, 2021, the Committee be voting on whether to recommend to the Falmouth Select Board whether to support Senator Susan Moran's recent legislation, and that he anticipated that the Committee will vote to make that recommendation. Mr. Sayers also reported that the Committee will likely vote to recommend that the SSA seek grant opportunities in order to improve its freight operation, but he did not know whether they will also recommend that the Town of Falmouth should place a no truck traffic restriction on Cowdry Road and Crane Street from 10:00 PM to 6:00 AM or something like that.

Mr. Sayers further reported that the Committee has asked the SSA to consider alternative schedules for its 2022 Summer Operating Schedules, including one that has been proposed by Mr. Trumbull which would eliminate the 5:30 AM freight trip and make up for that trip by adding an available trip with the M/V Sankaty in the afternoon. Mr. Sayers noted that another suggestion, which he thought Mr. Jones had made, was to simply shift all of the scheduled trips one-half hour later in the day, which would result in everyone getting to and from the island one-half hour later than they would under the SSA's current schedules. Mr. Sayers reported that he had advised the Committee that the SSA will consider both of those alternatives, although the upcoming hearing on the SSA's proposed 2022 operating schedules will be about the ones that have been advertised.

Mr. Jones noted that the Committee also had asked the SSA to consider changing its operating schedules this summer and not waiting until 2022. Mr. Sayers agreed, noting that they did so after the meeting in a follow-up email to him. But Mr. Sayers also recounted how he had told the Committee at their meeting that there would be chaos if the SSA were to attempt to make any changes this year, and he stated that he was in the process

of providing the Committee with more information on why making any changes now would be very problematic.

Mr. Sayers declared that he thought the Working Group had done a great deal of good work over the past few months, including continuing the monitoring of early truck arrivals at the Woods Hole terminal, sending out another postcard to Woods Hole and Falmouth residents telling them about the SSA's dedicated email address to make complaints, and making changes to the SSA's website to make it easier for people to submit complaints there as well. In addition, Mr. Sayers said, the SSA has started to address the traffic backups on Woods Hole Road when large numbers of standby customers arrive at the Woods Hole terminal, and Ms. Fletcher has been able to respond to many of Mr. Trumbull's complaints about traffic and noise incidents on Woods Hole Road.

But Mr. Sayers stated that one of the more important things the Working Group had done, at Mr. Mauro's suggestion, was to bring in Steven Tupper from the Cape Cod Commission to advise the Working Group on how it can get MassDOT to review the traffic regulations, speed limits and signage on Woods Hole Road, which led to the Falmouth Select Board earlier this month sending a letter to MassDOT requesting that review and the SSA sending another letter strongly supporting that request. Accordingly, Mr. Sayers said, he hoped the Working Group will be able to stay focused on what it has been trying to do for the last several months and continue its efforts going forward on a cooperative basis.

Mr. Trumbull then observed that there was some ambiguity about whether the Committee was considering recommending a ban on trucks between 10:00 PM and 5:30 AM or between 10:00 PM and 6:00 AM. Mr. Sayers agreed, noting that Mr. Trumbull's original request was for a ban from 10:00 PM to 5:30 AM, which is how it appeared on the agenda of the initial Falmouth Traffic Advisory Committee meeting, but that it changed on the agenda for the subsequent Falmouth Transportation Management Committee to 10:00 PM to 6:00 AM "or something similar." Accordingly, Mr. Sayers said, he thought a potential expansion of that proposed truck restriction was now under consideration, although the principal focus clearly was on the 5:30 AM freight trip.

**Request for MassDOT to Post  
Additional No Speeding Signs on Woods Hole Road**

6. Mr. Sayers then shared on his computer screen the April 5, 2021 letter from Falmouth Town Manager Julian M. Suso to MassDOT, District 5, requesting assistance on Woods Hole Road, which had been unanimously approved by the Falmouth Select Board and reflected the discussion that the Working Group had during its March 10, 2021 meeting on all of the subjects described in the letter. Mr. Sayers then also shared on his computer screen the April 12, 2021 letter from SSA General Manager Robert B. Davis to MassDOT, District 5, strongly supporting the Town's request.

Mr. Mauro observed that Falmouth Public Works Director Peter McConarty had been copied on Mr. Suso's letter to MassDOT, and he noted that Mr. McConarty is also the Town of Falmouth's representative on the Joint Transportation Committee for the Cape Cod Commission. Mr. Mauro asked whether Mr. McConarty was discussing this request with the Cape Cod Commission at the meetings of the Joint Transportation Committee, which ordinarily would be involved in any decision by MassDOT regarding the request. In response, Mr. Sayers stated that he did not know whether Mr. McConarty was raising this request at those meetings, but that Mr. Davis had sent copies of his and Mr. Suso's letters to Steven Tupper of the Cape Cod Commission to make certain that Mr. Tupper is aware of the request.

Mr. Jones stated that, if the Town of Falmouth receives a response from MassDOT, he will pass it on to the other Working Group members. Mr. Sayers then asked Mr. Jones to confirm that, if the Town wants the SSA to do anything else with respect to the request, someone from the Town will contact the SSA. Mr. Jones agreed and noted that Mr. Davis's letter supported everything the Town had requested.

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

7. 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 from January 1, 2021 through March 31, 2021, and he shared that chart on the Zoom screen. Mr. Sayers noted that, during this time period, the most compliant truck drivers were those traveling on the first trip in the morning (6:00 a.m.), and they were 97.5% compliant; 95.5% of the truck drivers traveling on the 6:30 a.m. trip were compliant; and 90.1% of the truck drivers traveling on later trips in the morning were compliant. Mr. Sayers also noted that, for the most part, the truck drivers who were early were early by only a few minutes and that the vast majority of them were early by five minutes or less. Mr. Sayers observed that, as Mr. Araujo had pointed out at their previous meeting, that difference is probably due to whether they hit a red light or a green light at Quissett Harbor Road. But Mr. Sayers noted that there were a few truck drivers who had arrived much too early and that one driver had forfeited his reservation because he had not been cooperative.

Mr. Sayers also observed that none of the SSA's freight customers were huge repeat offenders, and that the drivers who had arrived early were usually people who don't travel with SSA very often or were only one or two minutes early. In addition, Mr. Sayers said, when the SSA has contacted customers about their drivers arriving early, they all have been extremely cooperative and want to correct it.

However, Mr. Araujo stated that he thought the truck drivers were piling up in different parts of town in order to avoid being early because they get dispatched at a certain time and have no place to go. Accordingly, Mr. Araujo asked whether the SSA could open up space in its Palmer Ave parking lot so the drivers don't have to wait at the gas station or

turn off on Woods Hole Road. In response, however, Mr. Sayers stated that the SSA has not received any complaints about trucks waiting elsewhere before their allowed arrival times at the Woods Hole terminal.

Mr. Trumbull then asked Mr. Araujo whether the truck drivers could be dispatched a little later. In response, Mr. Araujo stated that drivers do not want to be dispatched too late because of the possibility of an accident or other traffic problems on the road, and that they would rather have too much time than too little time.

Mr. Trumbull then asked Ms. Fletcher how the SSA knows which trip a truck has a reservation for when it arrives at the Woods Hole terminal. In response, Ms. Fletcher stated that she reviews a list of truck arrival times (which includes the company name on each truck) and then, if necessary, checks their reservations to see when they are supposed to arrive. In response to another question from Mr. Trumbull, Ms. Fletcher stated that it is not really in the SSA's benefit to prohibit trucks from arriving earlier in the morning, as the Woods Hole terminal has space at that time of day for the trucks that do arrive and sometimes it is nice to have some trucks there early to take the spaces of other trucks with reservations that do not show up. In this regard, Ms. Fletcher stated that the SSA's regular freight customers rarely fail to show up for their reservations and, if they have an issue, they almost always call ahead to let the SSA know. Rather, Ms. Fletcher said, it is usually the smaller shippers who don't show up when they are on the waitlist and don't know that they received their waitlist match. Indeed, Ms. Fletcher said, this can happen with one or two waitlisted shippers each morning who are not regular SSA freight customers and then, when they show up later that day, they wait in standby until the SSA has space for them to get onto a ferry.

In response to questions from Mr. Jones, Ms. Fletcher stated that the number of trucks that don't show up at all for their reservations is low, and that most of the trucks that miss their reservations show up later in the day. Mr. Sayers then observed that, on those occasions when trucks are late for their reservations, other trucks waiting at the terminal can take their spaces, which then opens up more space for those delayed trucks to travel when they do arrive at the terminal later in the day. Mr. Jones then observed that it sounded as if the SSA's policy prohibiting trucks from arriving early was not creating a problem for the SSA and that things were working. Mr. Sayers agreed, noting that the current allowed arrival times for freight trucks was working well enough for the SSA and represented a balance of all of the competing interests. However, he noted that those times do change during the SSA's peak summer operating schedules when the SSA has more early morning freight trips.

8. Mr. Sayers then reported that, since the last Working Group meeting, the SSA had sent out a new version of its letter to its freight shippers that is similar to the prior version of the letter except that, based upon the Working Group's discussion, it now includes a paragraph about the SSA's vehicle weight limitations that tracks the language in the SSA's Customer Handbook. In response to a question from Mr. Trumbull, Ms. Fletcher stated that there should be copies of the letter in check-in booth at the Woods Hole terminal so that they can be given to trucks drivers who may not have seen the letter.

Mr. Jones then asked what the purpose was of the last sentence in the new paragraph that reads “Vehicles in excess of the above weights may be accepted for travel only if the customer complies with all conditions as may be required by the SSA for such travel,” noting that the SSA’s conditions are already stated in the paragraph’s first sentence. In response, Mr. Sayers that it was meant to alert customers that, if their vehicles are in excess of certain weights, they may have to comply with conditions required by a Truck Coordinator or Terminal Agent in order to travel, but he stated that he would see about getting that language revised.

### **Emails Received by the SSA’s [whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com](mailto:whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com) Email Address**

9. Mr. Sayers then reported that the SSA’s [whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com](mailto:whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com) email address had received an email from David Martin on April 22, 2021, and that Ms. Fletcher had responded to the issue that same day by contacting the customer, who in turn stated that the issue would be addressed. Mr. Trumbull noted that Mr. Martin had put in writing what he hears from a half dozen of people each day, and he stated that the more the SSA can do to elicit these comments the better.
10. Mr. Sayers then shared on his computer screen the version of the postcard that the SSA previously had sent to Woods Hole and Falmouth residents regarding its dedicated email address for Woods Hole traffic complaints, and he asked whether anyone had any suggested revisions to it before it is sent out again. In response, Mr. Jones stated that he would love it if there were a way people could go to the home page of the SSA’s website and click on something to send an email to the SSA because, while the home page of the SSA’s website has a “Contact” button, people have to click on that and then go through several steps in order to submit a complaint without ever getting to the email address. In response, Mr. Sayers stated that he would see if the email address can be added to the list of contacts on the “Contact Us” webpage so that it is only a two-step process for people to submit a complaint. Mr. Sayers also noted that the SSA was currently in the process of completely redesigning its website, so that this was something that can be placed on the list of things to do.

### **Traffic Backups on Woods Hole Road**

11. With respect to the issue of traffic backups on Woods Hole Road when the standby line at the Woods Hole terminal is closed, Ms. Sayers reported that Ms. Fletcher was still talking with the Hyannis and Nantucket Terminal Managers to find out what their experiences have been with their new standby systems and that meanwhile, when the Woods Hole standby line is closed because the SSA cannot stage any more customers in the line, the SSA would stagger the times for those standby customers who are turned away to be able to return to the terminal after the standby line is reopened.

Mr. Sayers then shared on his computer screen the April 2021 version of the “Pass to Get into the Standby Line (if Open) at the Steamship Authority’s Woods Hole Terminal,” observing that terminal employees will be able to simply fill in the blanks on that form to stagger the times that people return when the standby line is open so they don't all show up at the same time and have the line go all the way up to the Dome again. But Mr. Sayers noted that the form was an interim measure until the SSA is able to look at the issue and possibly implement something that is more efficient and customer-friendly on its website.

In response to a question from Mr. Trumbull, Mr. Sayers and Ms. Fletcher stated that at the time the Terminal Agent closes the standby line, he or she makes a judgment as to when the standby line will be reopened, and that time depends upon the particular situation that day, including how many reservations there are, what the weather and traffic conditions are, and whether there is a vessel mechanical breakdown. Mr. Sayers noted that the Terminal Agent can then have the first standby customer come back at that time and then have subsequent standby customers arrive later in increments of 10 or 15 minutes.

In response to a question from Mr. Jones, Mr. Sayers stated that the standby customers will receive the form in hand when they check in at the terminal’s check-in booth, and that this was not the time when there is a long line of cars going onto Woods Hole Road. Rather, Ms. Fletcher noted, the long line happens when all of the standby customers come rushing back at the same time when the standby line is reopened, and now they will be arriving back at staggered times. However, Mr. Araujo stated that one of the problems will be that people will arrive back earlier than their allowed times and say they never received the form. Mr. Sayers agreed that enforcement will always be a challenge, but that the SSA will find out whether it works.

Mr. Trumbull then stated that he wished the SSA could notify its customers before they arrive in Falmouth as to whether the standby line is open. In this regard, Mr. Trumbull also noted that one of the biggest complaints he had heard from SSA customers is that, when there is a vessel mechanical breakdown, no one knows how long they will be waiting and no information is given to them. Accordingly, Mr. Trumbull suggested that the SSA’s new website should have a nice app that alerts everyone in real time. But Mr. Araujo and Ms. Fletcher observed that often no one knows how long a standby customer’s wait will be, that sometimes it may take only five minutes to fix a breakdown while other times it may take five hours, and that the SSA can only do the best it can and hope for the best.

12. Mr. Sayers then asked if he could address the concern that Mr. Trumbull previously had raised about the Blue Line’s possible contribution to the traffic backup situation, and stated that he was pretty confident that the Blue Line does not contribute to backups on Woods Hole Road. Ms. Fletcher agreed, observing that the Blue Line is in operation only on reservation-only days, so island residents are the only ones coming down to the terminal looking to travel without a reservation, and that all of the reported traffic backup problems have occurred on standby days. Mr. Sayers recounted how the Blue Line had been established as a safety valve for a small number of island residents to get back to the island without reservations on reservation-only days, and that it is limited to 15 residents who are eligible to travel on preferred spaces. Mr. Sayers stated that the maximum number of cars

that can use the Blue Line may be only 15 on any reservation-only day, although the Terminal Agent has the discretion to increase that number if there is additional space available.

Mr. Jones then asked why the SSA's Customer Handbook provides that a "minimum" of 15 vehicles will be accepted in the Blue Line on a reservation-only day, instead of providing that 15 is the "maximum" number of vehicles. In response, Mr. Sayers stated that his recollection was that the policies surrounding the Blue Line were the result of a negotiated process where the island residents wanted to be assured that there would always be at least 15 Blue Line spaces each day. After more discussion, Mr. Sayers suggested that perhaps the Customer Handbook should simply say 15 vehicles without saying that the number is a "minimum," and Mr. Jones agreed.

Observing that a large percentage of the SSA's customers are eligible for the Blue Line, Mr. Trumbull questioned why it would not contribute to a traffic backup on reservation-only days. In response, Ms. Fletcher stated that, because island residents know that the number of Blue Line spaces may be limited to 15 a day, more of them make reservations to travel on reservation-only days and will call during the day to change their reservations. Ms. Fletcher also noted that, in order to wait in the Blue Line, customers also have to surrender their reservations and get into the Blue Line with no guarantee of getting on an earlier boat, which also deters people from using the Blue Line. Ms. Fletcher stated that, as a result, the Blue Line is mostly used by people who have not planned to travel due to an emergency situation or other reason.

In response to a question from Mr. Trumbull, Ms. Fletcher stated although terminal agents have the discretion to allow more than 15 cars to use the Blue Line on a reservation-only day, they don't usually allow very many more because they generally can't load more than two or three Blue Line vehicles on any given trip. Indeed, Ms. Fletcher said, she has never seen as many as 50 cars being allowed to use the Blue Line on a reservation-only day.

### **Noise of Bruno's Trash Trucks and Septage Waste Trucks**

13. With respect to the noise of Bruno's trash trucks and septage waste trucks going up Woods Hole Road, Mr. Sayers stated that he understood that Greg Carroll and Mr. Trumbull have talked about that subject since the Working Group's last meeting. Mr. Trumbull then stated that his meeting with Mr. Carroll was a bit of a non-event and that no trucks had gone by them while they were meeting on Woods Hole Road that day. But Mr. Trumbull stated that he tried to learn more about why some cabs are so much noisier than others, and that it appears that age is a big factor.

Mr. Araujo stated that, in his opinion, Mr. Trumbull should be reaching out to MassDOT and the police to address his complaints about truck noise, not the Working Group or the SSA because they have no way to tell if a truck is too loud. In response, Mr. Trumbull noted that this was a learning process for him and he wondered whether truck owners are able to comply with the emissions inspecting process by self-inspecting. Mr. Araujo stated

that truck owners are not allowed to self-inspect; rather, they have to go to an authorized MassDOT inspection place just as car owners have to go to authorized inspection places to get their inspection stickers. In response to a question from Mr. Trumbull about how many inspection places there are on Martha's Vineyard, Mr. Araujo stated that he did not know because John Keene has a mobile inspector inspect all of his trucks at the same time on video to ensure that the process is properly followed.

Mr. Araujo again stated that he did not believe the noise of trucks on Woods Hole Road was something the SSA has control over and that Mr. Trumbull should call the Falmouth Police or the Massachusetts State Police because they are the only ones who can stop a truck and give it a ticket. Mr. Araujo also confirmed Mr. Sayers's understanding that trucks are manufactured to meet certain noise limitations and that, if a truck is manufactured correctly and inspected correctly, it then should be in compliance with the noise limitations under federal law, although Mr. Araujo noted some truck owners might install aftermarket equipment on their trucks.

Mr. Mauro agreed, observing that the noise of trucks on Woods Hole Road was an issue for the Town of Falmouth and that perhaps the Town's DPW Director, who is on the Joint Transportation Committee, can bring this issue up to the Cape Cod Commission. But both Messrs. Mauro and Sayers emphasized that they supported the Town's efforts to get this issue addressed.

Observing that Mr. Trumbull has taken decibel readings of the noise of trucks traveling on Woods Hole Road, Mr. Araujo asked Mr. Trumbull what the results of those readings have been. In response, Mr. Trumbull noted that Ms. Fletcher had been there with him and asked her to respond to Mr. Araujo's question. Ms. Fletcher then stated that she thought the cars and trucks were basically making the same amount of noise and that the readings from Mr. Trumbull's device were around ten decibels lower than the readings from her handheld sound meter because her sound meter had not been properly calibrated.

Mr. Trumbull stated that the discrepancy between the decibel readings of his and Ms. Fletcher's devices spoke to the need of having the right equipment. Mr. Trumbull also differed with Ms. Fletcher by saying that, while there were some cars that were noisier than trucks, there was no doubt that in general trucks are what Woods Hole residents hear in their homes.

Mr. Araujo observed that the problem was probably due to the fact that they were taking decibel readings right alongside the road, where all they were going to hear is tire noise, especially if the road is wet. Mr. Araujo stated that they have to step back from the road to get the true noise of a car or a truck. Mr. Mauro then suggested that Mr. Trumbull reach out to the Town of Falmouth's Department of Public Works, Highway Superintendent or Planning Department.

But Mr. Jones asked why the noise of the trucks was not a concern for both Falmouth and Martha's Vineyard, as the same trucks are traveling in both communities, and he speculated that it may be because the trucks were not traveling as fast as 45 miles per hour on the

roads on Martha's Vineyard. In this regard, Mr. Mauro noted that the infrastructure of the island is much more antiquated than Woods Hole Road and that the Cape Cod Commission's pavement analysis of Woods Hole Road actually shows that road to be in fair to more than good condition. In addition, Mr. Mauro said, the road has 12-foot travel lanes and there was nothing wrong with its functionality at all while, in contrast, all of the ancillary roads that are locally owned are in poor or complete disrepair.

Mr. Mauro also emphasized that he was trying to direct the Town of Falmouth to the right channels for addressing these traffic mitigation issues on Woods Hole Road, and that the Town's Highway Superintendent or Planning Department should be involved and speak to the Cape Cod Commission as well. Mr. Mauro observed that they will be more than happy to support the Town in these efforts, whereas there was nothing more the Working Group can do except direct the Town to these channels because the Working Group cannot change the speed limit on the road or change or update the highway's signage. Mr. Mauro noted that there are processes that have to be followed in order to make these changes and there have to be supporting data for such things.

Mr. Jones then expressed his frustration because it seemed to him that the Working Group was providing nothing more than lip service. But Mr. Sayers disagreed, saying that the Working Group already had identified specific problem areas on Woods Hole Road – in particular, the hill coming down from the golf course to the village – and that he hoped Peter McConarty, the Cape Cod Commission and MassDOT can figure out a way to alleviate those problem areas. Mr. Sayers observed that, while the Working Group has identified what it thinks are the reasons for the increased noise at those locations, the SSA does not have control over Woods Hole Road. Mr. Sayers also recounted how it had been Mr. Mauro's suggestion to invited Mr. Tupper to advise the Working Group on these issues, which Mr. Tupper has done, and that he felt the Working Group was working in the right direction. Meanwhile, Mr. Sayers said, the SSA is continuing to receive reports of fast or discourteous driving and, when it receives those reports, it contacts its customers to reduce the number of such incidents.

But Mr. Jones observed that when Mr. Trumbull has asked for help from the SSA in collecting data, given that a lot of the traffic is being created by the SSA, the SSA responds by saying it cannot afford it. But Messrs. Sayers and Mauro disagreed, observing that the data needed to make the changes on Woods Hole Road have to come from the Town's engineers or the Cape Cod Commission and that it is going to be a long process.

Mr. Sayers then asked whether the Working Group members wanted to consider inviting Mr. Tupper to participate in another meeting to ask him what can be done, particularly with respect to noise from vehicles driving on Woods Hole Road up and down the hill from the golf course to the village. But Mr. Jones observed that the Working Group needs to have some data first, as without the data there was nothing much that can be done. After Mr. Sayers noted that Mr. Tupper still might be able to tell the Working Group what data the Cape Cod Commission needs from the Town's engineers, Mr. Jones agreed that it could not hurt to invite him back. Ms. Fletcher then suggested that the Working Group also invite Mr. McConarty, and Mr. Jones agreed.

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

14. With respect to the SSA's visits with its Woods Hole neighbors to observe problem noise areas along Woods Hole Road, Ms. Fletcher reported that, unfortunately, most of the SSA's neighbors are reluctant to meet at this time due to the COVID pandemic. But Ms. Fletcher stated that she still had gone out with Mr. Trumbull on a few occasions and was responding to emails sent by Woods Hole residents regarding specific situations.

Mr. Araujo then asked whether there were any other problematic locations on Woods Hole Road than the hill between the golf course and the village. In response, Mr. Sayers stated that the SSA had received complaints about noise along the stretch of the road by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and also about trucks traveling too fast northbound where the road leads into Falmouth, close to where the Shining Sea Bike Path is and coming onto Locust Street.

Mr. Trumbull declared that, while he and Ms. Fletcher have gone out and observed conditions a few times, it is almost futile because they have no way of measuring what they hear and there needs to be some monitoring with actual equipment. After Ms. Fletcher stated that Mr. Trumbull's monitor seemed to be a pretty good one, Mr. Trumbull declared that he could not trust its accuracy. Mr. Araujo then asked whether the Cape Cod Commission or the Town of Falmouth might have any sound monitoring equipment. In response, Mr. Sayers stated that the Working Group could ask Messrs. Tupper and McConarty, and he recounted that the Town of Falmouth's engineer may have to conduct the monitoring for the Cape Cod Commission the same way the Town's engineer is required to do the analysis for speed regulations and signage.

Mr. Araujo then asked whether the Falmouth Police have patrolled Woods Hole Road for speeding or excessive noise. In response, Mr. Sayers stated that he thought the issue was that Woods Hole Road is a difficult road to police because there are not many good places to pull someone off or park along the side. Mr. Jones agreed, observing that, if a car or truck is speeding past the golf course towards the village, there is no place to pull it over safely. But Mr. Araujo noted that, if a speeding truck is going to Woods Hole, the police can follow it and stop the driver when the truck gets to the SSA's property.

Mr. Araujo also stated that there are other places on Woods Hole Road where speeding drivers can be pulled over, and that it would make a difference if the police just placed a patrol car next to the road. Ms. Fletcher agreed, noting that she personally slows down whenever she sees a police car along the highway even if no one is inside it. Accordingly, Mr. Araujo suggested that the Working Group start by asking the Falmouth Police Department to have an officer sit by the road for a little while at different times of the day, observing that even if the officer does not pull anyone over, it will still result in drivers slowing down. In response, Mr. Jones stated that the Working Group could check with the Police Department, but that unfortunately he would have to agree with what he expects will be the Police Chief's response that it is just not high enough priority compared to everything else the Police Department is dealing with right now.

## **Modifications to the Transition Plate of the Woods Hole Terminal's Slip No. 2**

15. Mr. Sayers then reported that the modifications to the transition plate on the transfer bridge of the Woods Hole terminal's Slip 2 had been completed and that, as a result, there should not be any more banging from that transition plate when the M/V Island Home docks there at low tide. Ms. Fletcher further reported that when the transition plate had been tested, it made a small noise when it was at its lowest possible position, but that it would never be that low when a boat is in the slip.

## **The SSA's Truck Check-in System**

16. With respect to the SSA's truck check-in system and how it can be improved, Mr. Sayers reported that he had discovered that the issues are more complicated than he had thought. Specifically, Mr. Sayers said, he had thought that truck drivers are required to go into the terminal building only when their trucks are different lengths than the trucks for which they have reservations, and also to buy additional passenger tickets; but that the SSA has a different computer system servicing the check-in booths than the system which is used when customers pay for their trips. As a result, Mr. Sayers said, truck drivers that need to pay for their trips have to use the computer system that is only available inside the terminal building and, further, those payments need to be processed by the SSA's ticket sellers. In addition, Mr. Sayers stated that, even when freight shippers have a charge account with the SSA, it appears that their truck drivers still have to go into the terminal building to sign their names, as only the computer system in the terminal building has the list of approved drivers for each SSA customer so that they can be authenticated.

Accordingly, Mr. Sayers again stated that the issues were more complicated than he thought and that the SSA will have to continue working on them, after which he would report back. In response, Mr. Trumbull stated that he hoped the issues could be resolved sooner rather than later, because it is a systemic problem to require truck drivers to leave their cabs and spend time in a building, especially during the pandemic. Mr. Trumbull also noted that it would be interesting to find out whether any other ferry lines operate the same way as the SSA, which sounds as if it is essentially with paper ledgers.

## **Proposed Purchase of Noise Monitoring Equipment**

17. Mr. Sayers then noted that the Working Group members were going to talk with Messrs. Tupper and McConarty about Mr. Trumbull's request for the SSA to purchase noise monitoring equipment purchase for installation near the Woods Hole terminal and/or on Woods Hole Road. In this regard, Mr. Trumbull noted that he had provided the SSA with a new price quotation for the equipment. Mr. Sayers stated that he thought the new price proposal was higher than the previous price proposal that Mr. Trumbull had provided, but Mr. Trumbull stated that he thought it was lower, as it included alternative options whose prices were not to be added together.

Mr. Trumbull then asked Mr. Sayers what the SSA's position was with respect to this monitoring equipment and whether it was futile to obtain price proposals because they will always be too much for the SSA. In response, Mr. Sayers stated that he thought the Working Group should first hear from Messrs. Tupper and McConarty about what the Cape Cod Commission and the Town of Falmouth would require to address this issue and how they believe the issue can best be addressed. Further, Mr. Sayers stated that he did not think for their purposes that the Working Group needs sophisticated equipment to make a determination as to whether one truck is louder than another. Mr. Trumbull disagreed, noting that he and Ms. Fletcher have disagreed about which truck is louder when they have observed them beside Woods Hole Road. But Mr. Sayers stated that whether there is a difference of two or five decibels is not going to make that much of a difference in the solution that the SSA or the Cape Cod Commission or MassDOT may come up with to address the issue; rather, the issue was whether there can be a lower noise level generally at those locations and how can it be obtained.

Ms. Fletcher then asked who would be tasked with properly reading and interpreting the readings from the noise monitoring equipment if it is purchased and installed. In response, Mr. Trumbull stated that he assumed a citizens group could do that, and he noted that this systematic approach would be better than having random people calling the SSA when they happen to see or hear something. In addition, Mr. Trumbull said, the truck drivers might slow down on their own if they know there is some monitoring going on.

Mr. Araujo then stated that he thought the Working Group had discussed that the Cape Cod Commission should be asked whether it has any noise monitoring equipment because it would not make sense to buy any equipment if the Cape Cod Commission already has the equipment that is needed, and Mr. Trumbull agreed.

### **Spot Checking the Weight of Trucks Carried on the SSA**

18. Mr. Sayers noted that the next item on the agenda at Mr. Trumbull's request was how trucks carried on the SSA can be spot checked for being overweight, as he continues to hear about overweight trucks. In response to Mr. Sayers' comment that he had not heard of any issues of overweight trucks being carried by the SSA, Mr. Trumbull stated that different SSA employees had told him that the SSA carries overweight trucks, although he did not know who those employees are. But Mr. Araujo questioned whether, without a scale at the terminal, an SSA employee can know whether a truck is overweight, observing that he cannot tell someone what a truck weighs even though he drives a truck every day.

Mr. Sayers noted that this issue was one of the subjects in Mr. Suso's April 5, 2021 letter to MassDOT and that hopefully MassDot will respond by saying it will increase the spot checking of trucks for their weights. In response to a question from Mr. Jones, Mr. Sayers stated that the SSA does have an interest in not having overweight trucks on its boats, but that he has not heard of it being an issue. After Ms. Fletcher agreed, Mr. Jones asked how the SSA would know whether it was carrying any overweight trucks. Ms. Fletcher stated

that the truck drivers tell the SSA what the weights of their trucks are, and trucks carrying stone and gravel are weighed before they travel to the Woods Hole terminal.

Mr. Jones then questioned whether any truck driver would tell the SSA that his or her truck is overweight, but Ms. Fletcher again stated that the SSA generally has not had that issue. Mr. Sayers further observed that, in his experience, most truck drivers are honest and, in any event, they would not want to be banned from traveling on the SSA's ferries as a result of not telling the SSA the truth. But Mr. Sayers acknowledged that the SSA itself does not have any way of confirming a truck's weight, and Mr. Jones observed that, as a result, the SSA has no way of enforcing its own weight limitation policies.

Ms. Fletcher then asked Mr. Araujo what was considered overweight for his 44-foot dump truck. In response, Mr. Araujo stated that he was registered for 99,000 pounds. Mr. Jones then observed that the SSA's weight limit was 86,000 pounds, but Mr. Sayers noted that was without the permission of either an SSA Truck Coordinator or Terminal Agent and Mr. Araujo stated that he reports the weight of his truck when he makes his reservation requests.

Mr. Trumbull asked how the weight limit was established at 86,000 pounds. In response, Mr. Sayers stated that he believes that limit had been established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for vehicles traveling on State roads unless they receive a special permit for a greater weight. In response to a question from Mr. Jones, Ms. Fletcher and Mr. Araujo stated that a number of trucks do have such special permits based upon what they carry, which prompted Mr. Trumbull to ask what the SSA's ceiling is on vehicle weights. In response, Mr. Sayers stated he did not know, noting that whether a particularly heavy truck would be prohibited from traveling on the SSA's boats would depend on a number of factors, including whether the truck might be too heavy for the SSA's transfer bridges, which is why the Terminal Agent is involved. Mr. Sayers also noted that the truck's weight cannot affect the trim of the boat, which is why the boat's Pilot or Boatswain is informed of the truck's weight so that the boat can be loaded properly.

Mr. Jones then observed that there is no possibility of having an overweight truck on an SSA ferry because there is no SSA limit on the weight of a truck carried on its ferries; rather, there is just a State limit on the weight of trucks traveling on State roads. Mr. Sayers agreed that there is no regulatory weight limit for vehicles on the SSA's ferries, but he observed that an overweight vehicle on a boat would be a problem for the trim of the boat as well as a problem for the SSA's transfer bridges if they are unable to sustain the weight of the vehicle. Mr. Jones then stated that he thought it would make sense for the SSA to establish a maximum weight limit for trucks, both for its transfer bridges and for the safety of its ferries. In response, Mr. Sayers noted that the weight limit depends on the location of the transfer bridge, observing that the SSA has a lower weight limit for Oak Bluffs, which Ms. Fletcher stated is 86,000 pounds. As a result, Ms. Fletcher said, Mr. Araujo cannot travel to Oak Bluffs with his truck loaded, although he can leave from Oak Bluffs with his truck empty.

Mr. Trumbull then observed that, from the SSA's perspective, it sounded like there is no reason to monitor the weight of trucks carefully because they are all perfectly legal on the boat. But Mr. Sayers and Ms. Fletcher stated that if a truck is not legal on State roads, it cannot legally be on the SSA's ferries. Nevertheless, Mr. Jones noted that he now realized that the SSA has no real reason to want to weigh a truck and that, accordingly, it does not make sense for the SSA to have the ability to do so. Mr. Sayers agreed, saying that the SSA, whether reasonably or not, relies on its customers to follow the law and the regulations that they are required to comply with on State roads pursuant to their licenses.

### **Sharing of Complaints from Working Group Members**

19. Mr. Sayers noted that the next item on the agenda was Mr. Trumbull's question about how observations and complaints from Working Group members can be shared more effectively. Mr. Trumbull stated that the issue arises when he forwards to the SSA emails he receives from Woods Hole residents and, as a result, those emails do not become part of the SSA's [whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com](mailto:whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com) records. Mr. Trumbull acknowledged that the issue was related to the Open Meeting Law, but he asked whether there could be another solution to ensure that those complaints become public.

In response, Mr. Sayers stated that he cannot provide many of those emails to the other Working Group members before their meetings because they usually have Mr. Trumbull's opinions in them, but that they could become part of the record by having the Working Group review them at each meeting and having those emails documented by sharing them on a computer screen, which would be more of a formalized process. Mr. Trumbull asked that the SSA at least keep a count of his emails because listing only the ones from other people that are sent to [whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com](mailto:whtraffic@steamshipauthority.com) seems to misrepresent the number of complaints being made.

Ms. Fletcher then asked Mr. Trumbull how those other Woods Hole resident contact him, saying that it would be helpful if she had their names and ways to contact them so that she can follow up with them directly and personally talk with them if she has more questions. Ms. Fletcher observed that she was trying to build a relationship with the Woods Hole community and that it does not help when she does not know to whom she is responding. In response, Mr. Trumbull stated that he would try to pass on their contact information to Ms. Fletcher and to copy the SSA on his emails, although he would have to ask them first. Mr. Sayers then stated that the Working Group can still address Mr. Trumbull's emails at each of their meetings and keep track of them and the SSA's responses that way.

### **Venting Sewage to Neighbors at the Woods Hole Terminal**

20. Mr. Sayers noted that the next item on the agenda at Mr. Trumbull's request was venting sewage to neighbors of the Woods Hole terminal, but he stated that he did not think that was a noise or traffic issue. Nevertheless, Mr. Sayers asked Ms. Fletcher if the venting of sewage was still an issue. In response, Ms. Fletcher stated that she had talked with the

SSA's Maintenance Department as well as with the neighbor who is directly involved with this and that the issue should be resolved.

### **Update on the SSA's Purchase of Electric Buses**

21. Ms. Fletcher reported that the SSA had ordered new electric buses that were then being designed and will be going into construction shortly. As a result, Ms. Fletcher said, the SSA should receive those buses in March or April of 2022. Mr. Trumbull then observed that the SSA's old school buses are really noisy, but Ms. Fletcher stated that all of the SSA's Blue Bird buses were then operating in Hyannis and none were providing shuttle service for the Woods Hole terminal. Ms. Fletcher further reported that the SSA also had applied for a grant for additional electric buses, as it was looking at slowly converting its entire fleet to be electric buses, but that it will take a while for them to be built so they can replace the SSA's current buses.

In response to a question from Mr. Araujo, Ms. Fletcher stated that the cost of an electric bus was around \$900,000, while a diesel bus costs around \$600,000, but the grant money the SSA receives for buying electric buses pays for the difference in cost. Accordingly, Ms. Fletcher agreed with Mr. Jones' observation that, as a result of the grant money, the cost to the SSA for its new electric buses is the same as what the cost would be for new diesel buses. In addition, Mr. Trumbull said, in the long run the electric buses will need less maintenance than diesel buses, so the SSA will save money in maintenance as well. Mr. Araujo then commented that if a diesel bus costs \$300,000 less than an electric bus, that difference could pay for a lot of maintenance. But Mr. Sayers observed that the federal government was subsidizing that additional cost and that sometimes it is worth it to pay more money to help the environment. Mr. Araujo agreed, but he stated that the reason the SSA should be buying electric buses is not to save money on maintenance, but to make a positive difference to the earth's environment.

### **Scheduling the Working Group's Next Meeting**

22. The Working Group then agreed that their next meeting would take place by Zoom at 4:00 p.m. on either Wednesday, June 2, 2021, or Wednesday, June 16, 2021, depending upon the availability of Messrs. Tupper and McConarty.

### **Public Comment**

23. With respect to public comment, Mr. Sayers noted that David Eisenberg had said in the chat box that Mr. Sayers had not responded to something about New Bedford, and that was because the Working Group has not been talking about New Bedford. Rather, Mr. Sayers said, the SSA's Martha's Vineyard Long-Range Vineyard Transportation Task Force is exploring ways to address the island's freight needs on a long-term basis.

At approximately 5:20 p.m., the Working Group unanimously **voted** (with Messrs. Araujo, Jones, Mauro 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 July 28, 2021

Documents and Exhibits Used at the Working Group's April 28, 2021 Meeting

1. Meeting Notice for the Working Group's April 28, 2021 Meeting (posted April 26, 2021).
2. Draft Minutes of the Working Group's March 10, 2021 Meeting, dated April 23, 2021.
3. April 5, 2021 Letter from Falmouth Town Manager Julian M. Suso to MassDOT, District 5 Highway Director Mary-Jo Perry.
4. April 12, 2021 Letter from SSA General Manager Robert B. Davis to MassDOT, District 5 Highway Director Mary-Jo Perry.
5. Chart of the number of email reminders the SSA sent to freight shippers for early arrivals at the Woods Hole terminal from January 1, 2021 through March 31, 2021.
6. March 17, 2021 Letter from SSA Director of Shoreside Operations Alison Fletcher to the SSA's Valued Freight Carriers.
7. April 22, 2021 Email Exchange among Woods Hole Resident David Martin, SSA Director of Shoreside Operations Alison Fletcher, SSA Counsel Steven Sayers and Maciel and Sons.
8. Pass to Get Into the Standby Line (If Open) at the Steamship Authority's Woods Hole Terminal (version last revised April 2021).
9. Provisions of the SSA's Customer Handbook, Section 5 of Part A, regarding Vehicle Standby Travel (last revised July 30, 2020).