

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

January 6, 2021

First-Floor Meeting Room (Room 103)  
Steamship Authority Administrative Offices  
228 Palmer Avenue, Falmouth, Massachusetts

Port Council Members present: Chairman Edward C. Anthes-Washburn of New Bedford;; Secretary Robert S.C. Munier of Falmouth; Mark H. Rees of Fairhaven (who joined the meeting following the announcement regarding remote participation); Nathaniel E. Lowell of Nantucket; Joseph E. Sollitto Jr. of Oak Bluffs; and John Cahill of Tisbury (all of whom participated via Zoom videoconferencing).

Port Council Members absent: Vice Chairman Eric W. Shufelt of Barnstable.

Authority Board Members present: Chair Kathryn Wilson of Falmouth; and members Robert R. Jones of Barnstable and James M. Malkin of Dukes County (all of whom observed the meeting via Zoom videoconferencing).

Authority Management present: General Manager Robert B. Davis; Treasurer/Comptroller Mark K. Rozum; General Counsel Terence G. Kenneally; Communications Director Sean F. Driscoll; Director of Marine Operations Mark H. Amundsen; Woods Hole Reconstruction Project Manager William J. Cloutier; Director of Security Todd Falvey; Director of Shoreside Operations Alison A. Fletcher; Director of Human Resources Janice L. Kennefick; and Health, Safety, Quality, and Environmental Manager Angela M. Sampson.

1. Mr. Anthes-Washburn called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

2. Mr. Anthes-Washburn announced Mr. Driscoll was making a video and audio recording of today's meeting.
3. Mr. Anthes-Washburn announced that, in response to Gov. Charlie 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 of the Port Council members were participating remotely in the day's meeting because their physical attendance would be unreasonably difficult. All the members were participating via Zoom videoconferencing and were clearly audible to one another. As a result of the members' remote participation, all votes taken were to be by roll call vote.
4. Mr. Anthes-Washburn welcomed Messrs. Sollitto and Cahill to the Port Council. The members then introduced themselves to each other. During this process, Mr. Anthes-Washburn's connection to the meeting was interrupted; it was reestablished at approximately 9:16 a.m.
5. Upon a motion by Mr. Lowell and a second by Mr. Munier, the Port Council **voted** 4-0 to approve the minutes of their meeting in public session on December 2, 2020. (Messrs. Sollitto and Cahill abstained from voting on the motion.)
6. Mr. Davis provided an update on the Authority's activities and performance regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, including the following:
  - The Authority has continued its cleaning and sanitization efforts, including the use of electrostatic sprayers along with backpack foggers on a daily basis to dispense hospital-grade disinfectant, along with a prolonged antimicrobial agent for longer protection.
  - Since Gov. Baker's COVID order requiring masks, even when social distancing is possible, an overall improvement with compliance has been observed, although mask wearing compliance remains a challenge and reports persist of individuals who have removed their mask for whatever reasons.
  - Authority personnel continue to reinforce the need to wear a mask, as signs have been posted on the buses, at the terminals, and onboard the vessels. Additionally, PA announcements have been made at the terminals, the vessels are making multiple announcements and crews have been instructed to make additional rounds.
  - As of January 4, 2021, the Authority has been running its originally approved operating schedules on all routes.
  - With COVID cases in general on the rise these past two weeks, the Authority has not been immune. Thus far, substitute crews have been able to be identified in cases where a crewmember has tested positive for COVID-19 in order to maintain service levels. However, should the number of cases continue to rise, schedule modifications may need to be considered.
  - Vessel crews, before the beginning of their watch, are given a wellness screening by a trained medical professional.

- Shoreside personnel are given the wellness questionnaire, which they need to complete and provide to their supervisor in order to be given clearance to report to work or be sent home.
- Employees have been told that under no circumstances should they be coming to work while they are sick, for their own safety, the safety of their fellow crewmembers and for the safety of passengers. If any employee comes to work sick, they will be sent home – period.
- The Authority has created a dedicated landing page on its website for coronavirus updates ([www.steamshipauthority.com/2019coronavirus](http://www.steamshipauthority.com/2019coronavirus)), as well as its Facebook and Twitter pages, its eNews and local media outlets. Mr. Davis noted that, since its inception, the landing page had seen nearly 129,000 visits, with approximately 3,800 visits in the last thirty (30) days and more than 1,000 visits in the past seven (7) days.

Mr. Rozum then reviewed advanced reservation figures by month, a seven-day moving average of traffic, and credit card receipts by date versus 2019 to further illustrate the Authority's performance. Regarding the previous day's Headstart opening, Mr. Rozum said reservations were down from 2020 by approximately 7.7%, but up 10% compared to reservations from 2019. Mr. Davis said staff had not yet had a chance to delve into the data to determine if there was an island-specific trend in the numbers or if the decrease was relatively the same for each route.

Mr. Munier asked if the data might indicate that people are becoming more comfortable traveling, and Mr. Rozum said the trend in 2020 was that people were booking much closer to their traveling date than was typical because of the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19.

Mr. Munier asked about protocols regarding the COVID-19 vaccine and how the Authority would manage distribution to its employees. Mr. Davis said he was seeking information from the state and federal governments on that front and had not discovered as of yet where the Authority would fall in the distribution schedule. Mr. Munier asked if it would be mandatory for staff to receive the vaccine; Mr. Davis said Mr. Kenneally had examined that and determined it would likely be voluntary.

7. Mr. Rozum then reviewed the November 2020 business summary, which showed that the Authority carried fewer passengers (down 20.9%) and automobiles (down 0.2%) but more trucks (up 1.4%) than it did in November 2019.

In November 2020, the Authority had approximately \$6,179,000 in income and \$9,748,000 in expenses for a net operating loss of \$3,570,000, which was \$1,432,000 more than budgeted. Through the first eleven (11) months of the year, the Authority has a net operating loss of approximately \$5,536,000, which is approximately \$15,800,000 more than anticipated in the 2020 Operating Budget.

In November 2020, the Authority's vessels made a combined 1,787 trips, of which six (6) were canceled for mechanical reasons on the Vineyard route and one (1) was canceled for mechanical reasons on the Nantucket route.

Mr. Munier asked about the concessions sales and under what criteria they were now closed and when they could open. Mr. Davis said they were closed now under agreement with the Authority's concessionaire, Centerplate, due to both lower traffic and increased risk to their personnel. In light of current mandates regarding mask usage, Mr. Davis said it did not seem appropriate to open the concession areas and encourage customers to buy food, which they would then have to remove their masks to eat.

8. Mr. Davis provided an update on the Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project, noting that, since the Port Council last met, the barge crew from marine contractor Jay Cashman Inc. continued preparing the equipment they needed to drive the large 96-inch monopiles. During the first week of December 2020, the Cashman landside crew started driving the 16-inch piles for the south passenger pier. They also pulled the remaining H-piles out of the water with the landside crane for disposal. Cashman was delayed with setting the monopiles because of high winds .

Mr. Davis said Cashman continued driving the 16-inch piles for the south passenger pier and, by the middle of the month, they had completed 15 of the 38 piles for the pier, filled them with concrete and welded on the steel caps. They also set the first set of precast concrete pile caps. At the same time, the barge crew started driving the 96-inch monopiles. Cashman also has a crew working on demolition of the old sheet pile cap north of Slip No. 3 to complete the new sheet pile bulkhead in that area. Lawrence Lynch Corp. was also on site filling in the horseshoe-shaped area where the old transfer bridge was at Slip No. 1.

Shortly before Christmas, Cashman had driven the first five (5) monopiles, initially using the vibratory hammer, but the impact hammer was needed to drive the monopiles to the design depth of -100 feet. By the holiday, Cashman's crews had driven 29 of the 38 sixteen inch piles that support the southern pier. Then between the holidays, Cashman was able to drive two (2) additional monopiles to approximately 50 feet, he said.

Mr. Davis said the Authority has sent out 128 community emails updates for the project.

Mr. Cloutier then shared a PowerPoint presentation of recent activity from the Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project.

Mr. Anthes-Washburn asked what material made up the fendering in the slip, and Mr. Cloutier said rubber cylinders had, over the years, been found to perform better than other options.

Mr. Anthes-Washburn asked for an update on the project's timeline, and Mr. Cloutier said the goal was to be finished by mid-May. Right now the project is basically on schedule, although he said he was concerned about the driving of the 18-inch piles. After Slip No. 1 is complete, the marine portion of the project will be complete and the next phases will be the constructions of the terminal building and utility building. To that end, Mr. Davis said BIA.studio would have a presentation on the progress of the terminal building at the Port Council's next meeting.

Mr. Munier asked about the project's expenses, and Mr. Davis said more than \$6,000,000 in change orders had been filed thus far.

9. Mr. Amundsen then shared a PowerPoint presentation on the dry dock of the *M/V Eagle* at Thames Shipyard in New London, Connecticut, the recent highlights of which include installation of a new anchor windlass, overhaul of bow and stern freight doors, installation of a new diesel oil purifier system, and overhaul of the propeller and rudder. The total project cost, including credits and change orders, is \$1,987,497. Mr. Amundsen noted that the *M/V Woods Hole* would be the next vessel going into dry dock.
10. Mr. Davis said the repairs to the Oak Bluffs terminal by Coastal Marine Construction LLC of Canton, Massachusetts, ended on schedule and on budget and was demobilized shortly before Christmas. He said Coastal Marine removed additional decking at the Authority's request to allow stormy seas to egress through the pier instead of damaging the boards. Mr. Sollitto asked if buses and trucks would once again be able to use the pier, and Mr. Davis said it would be back to its normal working conditions, which include weight limitations for the heaviest trucks.
11. Regarding the Safety Quality Management System ("SQMS") project, Mr. Davis said the management plan was revised to account for the extended delay of implementation of Phase 2 and Phase 3 deliverables, including the SQMS Guide and Vessel Operations Manual, while being mindful of maintaining the planned certification deadline June 30, 2021.

Implementation of Phase 2 and Phase 3 deliverables and documentation continues, although at a slower pace than was initially hoped as logistical challenges in training in a COVID-19 environment are addressed, Mr. Davis said.

The project's Phase 4 has begun, although it was expanded to complete the Federal Transit Administration's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) for Board review and approval. Mr. Davis said he anticipates that the related project phase will be accomplished on time.

12. Mr. Davis said that, for the past nine (9) years, the Authority has offered a 20% discount on the sale of high-speed passenger ticket books for a short period prior to the return to service of the *M/V Iyanough*. More than 45% of the yearly ticket book sales for the *M/V Iyanough* have traditionally occurred during the promotional period.

Mr. Davis said staff is proposing that the Steamship Authority continue to offer a 20% discount on the sale of electronic ticket books for the high-speed ferry during the period from Sunday, March 21, 2021 through Saturday, April 3, 2021. The discount would apply solely to electronic ticket books for adults, seniors and children.

In 2020, the Authority held two (2) rounds of the pre-season sale, as the first attempt at the sale coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent delay of the resumption of the high-speed service between Hyannis and Nantucket. Given the uncertainty of the Authority's future operations in light of COVID-19, Mr. Davis said staff is additionally requesting that the Board authorize the general manager to either delay the pre-season sale dates proposed as appropriate, or hold a second pre-season sale that would coincide with a delayed resumption of the high-speed service to Nantucket.

Mr. Munier asked if there was an unusual amount of ticket books left over from last year's sale, and Mr. Davis said typically 80% of the books are used each year, but he could provide updated numbers.

Then, upon a motion by Mr. Lowell and a second by Mr. Sollitto, the Port Council **voted** 6-0 to recommend approval of the pre-season sale to the Board.

13. Mr. Rozum then presented the Authority's investment policy for renewal, noting that the policy formally establishes the types of permitted investments that can be made with the Authority's funds. The policy is required to be approved every two (2) years and no revisions to the policy are proposed.

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

14. Mr. Cahill asked about recent news reports concerning the Authority's policy regarding transport of hay, and Mr. Davis said hay was a dangerous, but not hazardous, substance. Hay is required to be tarped and must be transported by freight boat because of the nature of the material. Mr. Cahill asked about comments in the press from Mr. Driscoll stating it was at the captain's discretion, and Mr. Driscoll clarified that his comments were concerning past travel on board closed ferries, but the policy had not changed.
15. In response to Mr. Anthes-Washburn's call for public comment, Mr. Saltzberg asked if there was any signage that would indicate to truck drivers that certain loads are not allowed in covered ferries. He also asked what the difference was between carrying hay and other goods, such as toilet paper. Mr. Amundsen said the Authority follows the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code, which clearly supports the Authority's policy of transporting hay on open-decked boats only. Mr. Amundsen further said captains should not be making exceptions to this policy and that it was a safety matter. Mr. Davis further stated that there had been no recent change in policy.

Then, at approximately 10:37 a.m., upon a motion from Mr. Sollitto and a second from Mr. Lowell, the Port Council **voted** 6-0 to adjourn their meeting.

A TRUE RECORD

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Robert S.C. Munier, Secretary

Documents and Exhibits Used at the Port Council’s January 6, 2021 Meeting

1. Agenda for the Port Council’s January 6, 2021 Meeting, posted January 4, 2021.
2. Minutes of the Port Council’s December 2, 2020 Meeting in Public Session (draft dated December 11, 2020).
3. Business Summary, November 2020 (draft).
4. PowerPoint presentation, Woods Hole Terminal Reconstruction Project, dated January 6, 2021.
5. PowerPoint presentation, M/V Eagle dry dock, undated.
6. Staff Summary #COMM-2021-1, Approval of Pre-Season Promotion for High-Speed Ticket Books, undated (draft).
7. Staff Summary #A-658, Reauthorization of the Steamship Authority’s Investment Policy, undated (draft).