

Maine State Ferry Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 19, 2023
10:30 AM via ZOOM and In-Person

1. Roll Call

Islands: Phil Crossman/Vinalhaven, Jon Emerson/North Haven, John King/Islesboro, Sonny Sprague/Swan's Island, Kathy Clark/Swans Island, Eva Murray/Matinicus, Duncan Bond/Frenchboro. Dennis.

MDOT: Bill Pulver, Robert (Henry) McFerren, Greg Goggin, Melissa Goocher, Mark Higgins, Joel Perry, Abby Baker.

Mainland: Hank Berg/Casco Bay Lines. Dennis Dammon.

2. Introduction of Visitors

Alex Ziparo/Island Institute

3. Approval of the Minutes

Chair Jon Emerson- asked to Approve Minutes from meeting on November 17, 2022. (*Need clarification on who was first and second to approve minutes*).

John King/ Islesboro- Noted that he was not at the past Advisory Board Meeting in November but was appreciative of the YouTube Link and the Meeting Minutes. John stated again that it'd be nice to sustain protocols for meeting with the USCG and come to an agreement of the issues with having to call Life flight if the ferry was unavailable with the cost being \$15,000 to \$20,000.

Jon Emerson, asked again with the approval of the minutes. Four Votes in Favor of Meeting minutes. John King, abstained his vote because he was not at the meeting.

4. Communications

a) To or by the Board

Nothing to report.

b) To or by the MSFS/MDOT

Nothing too report.

- **Frenchboro Letter**

Nothing to report currently- will discuss later in meeting notes.

c) Financial Subcommittee

John King-

Much to their surprise a \$1 Million dollar Cares Act was added, Highway fund less contributed than last year / Was it due too Covid/Pandemic (Payroll or Fuel)

Happy to see everything had seemed to balance out.

Expenditure side- surprising there was no great surprise. Benefit Costs were up?

Concerns over Unfunded Liability, currently stands at 4.5 billion dollars a year, could go up upwards of 11 billion dollars in the next few years.

Fuel costs- so surprise. Comment was made about electrical.

Repair costs- stated that possibility of the timing issue of receiving financial reports.

Gregg Goggin/MaineDOT Finances- Replied with the below...

The extra \$1 million in the Highway Fund was decided not to transfer to the MSFS account- not to say it can't be transferred, but necessarily when the cash balance is currently at \$2 million of the \$6.3 million of the yearly MSFS budget.

The Cares Act- Federal funded \$1 million (last one too Gregg's knowledge).

The Cares Act- Federal funded as follows over the last fiscal years in the following increments, \$2-\$1-\$1 million deposits.

Bill Pulver- Stated The Cares Act- was set aside for MSFS in case it was needed – MaineDOT decided to allocate to the MSFS reducing the demand on the Highway Fund for operations.

Gregg Goggin- Explained the 'Expenditure/ Personal'. Benefit premiums normally paid by employees were given too employees for 2/3 months.

Unfunded Liability- is Legislative Mandated, State Level Budget. It is spread across all Personal Services budgets, ultimately associated by the number of employees.

Professional Services- Legislative note \$8,000 remove it out of the budget.

In the future, we can remove it- we get this directly from the budget FY2024 Work Programs.

Melissa Goocher- Stated that everything must be placed in the report.

Gregg Goggin- Asked if we could combine the Financial Reporting on the agenda going forward- this would make the discussions more efficient. Bill Pulver and Jon Emerson agree with Gregg Goggin, and the financial report will be put together.

d) Legislative Review

Nothing new to report.

Bill Pulver/ Dennis- mention Cares Money

Put on Pause/ Hold and we'll check back in a couple months.

Dennis- Asked if there were any Ferry Service Bills submitted to the Legislature.

Bill Pulver- Nothing too his knowledge yet, we are just starting to go through the Bill titles.

Dennis- Asked about 'Bills' coming through be disseminated to the Advisory Board Members- Saying it was a little scary if not aware. Bill replied that he'd see what he could do.

5. Reports of the Board

Nothing new to report.

6. Reports of the Ferry Service

a) Vessel Status Report

Mark Higgins- Explains the report... Goes through the report (see attachment). Adds that with the **M/V RG Spear**, that all though most of the work W&D had done for warranty work, there's still a few items on the list, that aren't completed due to waiting on parts.

Smith Replacement- Adds these three things with the vessel being all electrical.

1. Redundancies for lost power, ex. Ice storm, having a backup diesel.
2. Shipyards and their ability to work on a vessel like this.
3. Peak Rates- Foreseeable at certain times of the day.

Expected delivery date is late 2027, early 2028; Bill said the delivery dates depend on whether we get the low emission grant.

Mark Higgins- Explained, CMP's possible infrastructure delays, Casco Bay issues. Does have a CMP Consultant, mentioned different rate structures.

Phil Crossman- states that CMP is not a great provider.

Mark Higgins- Infrastructure upgrades to be charging.

This will be a double-ended vessel, 40 car Ferry. Is very happy with the current deck designs.

Jon Emerson- Asked about the location of the build for the M/V Almer Dinsmore.

Mark Higgins- It was being built in North Kingston, RI, and possibly be done by October 2023. But also mentioned a possible delays.

Jon Emerson- Asked about electrical ferry for North Haven or Vinalhaven, and the cable that runs to and between the islands.

Bill Pulver- Answered we need to get more information about the most practical and effective way to charge the ferry.

Mark Higgins- Shoreside 100-200 AMPS and charging overnight isn't the issue. It's the fast charging that was being referred too.

b) Staffing Report

Mark Higgins- gives the following.

(2) A/B Positions have been filled and awaiting Urinalysis prior to starting

Captain Interviews for Abe Baggins Position (IS)- Two internal Candidates applied. (which will leave two A/B positions to backfill)

HR Specialist

Engineer Position

Lincolnvile Supervisor position- interviews were held last week.

Islesboro CSR Position (Part-time).
Rockland CSR Position (Full-time).

c) **Financial Reports**

Gregg Goggin- Nothing additional to report.

7. **Island Specific Issues**

Jon Emerson- brought up the next subject. **Duncan**- nothing to present.

- **Frenchboro Service**

Mark Higgins- Brought up the FB Letter which was addressed directly to (Mark), and he replied with the following.

~Lunch breaks for crews are contractually mandated.

~Not removing the “Gott Boat” from services.

~Sundays Schedule- ?? Will be looked at further.

~Tickets regarding the uncompleted trips. Will reach out too the supervisors at each terminal for follow up.

~Will investigate the make-up trips for uncompleted scheduled trips.

Dennis- was curious about more information on the letter. **Mark** explains above.

8. **New Business**

Jon Emerson- Brought the meeting to this point.

- **Construction and Design updates**

Eva Murray- Brought up the naming of the ‘Libby Replacement’

- **Libby replacement Name**

Eva Murray- said it could be named ‘The Matinicus’ boat, no particular person name suggestions, did mention Norris Young, or ?X? Bunker. Mentioned bringing it up ‘A Name’, **Eva**, would forward the name ‘The Matinicus’.

Eva Murray-Move forward and pick a name. “Drop a deadline” For suggestions from the Matinicus Community.

Mark Higgins- Suggested having a name picked out for the Advisory Board Meeting in March, for the ‘Naming of the Vessel’.

Eva Murray- Agreed that was fair. And stating that a vessel does not belong too a particular island. And that the ‘Libby Replacement’ could end up being used as the spare or the rental boat for special trips. Weddings, Etc.

9. **Old Business**

Jon Emerson- immediately brings up the next point.

- **Emergency Trips**

Mark Higgins- replied that he had spoken to **Fred Porter**, with the following.

~Revising the 302 Policy

~All Captains in the fleet have received Cell Phones

~Clinics are on North Haven and Vinalhaven Islands.

To clarify, a way to get into contact with Captains. Captains should always get the phone call.

To Islesboro, 4 out of the 5 crew, live on the island.

Phil Crossman- Huge thanks for the work with the above and moving forward.

Kathy Clark- Asking about the problem of not going, and not answering the phone?

Mark Higgins- It has been resolved.

John King- referenced the USCG Letter in May 2018, stating “What should people be doing?” “What is the protocol for this?”

~Small Things-Nonemergency Calls

~Life Flight Costs

~Needs something definitive.

Mark Higgins- Reached to the USCG- Belfast Lieutenant I. Gove (***)Missed First Name***) and has yet to receive word back.

John King- If that’s the issue we need to know.

Mark Higgins- Will reach back out.

John King- Needs to know. Doesn’t mind joining the meeting.

Mark Higgins- Explains the complete turnover of the staff in the Portland USCG. It took over 5 months in 2018 for the reply to that letter, for the USCG. Will reach back out with it.

John King- The seriousness should determine the severity for it.

Mark Higgins- Will reach out too Jim G (retired USCG- now civilian) has over 20 years’ familiarity.

John King- States that plenty of times decisions are made by those that aren’t directly affected by their decisions.

~Not out to change it.

John King- Not a burning issue- but should be resolved (annual issue).

Eva Murray- Wants to State.... Just to call ‘Life Flight’ Back track it to life-threatening issue.

~Having discussions, taking it out of service. While someone else might need it. Life Flight is a hospital on wings versus just a ride.

~ Stop thinking of the price tag versus, the moral and ethics, of such.

John King- Agrees with the Eva.

Mark Higgins- That was the way the USCG letter was across the board. It should be a necessity and medical required, weather permitting.

Jon Emerson- Some say can’t be about money, but it should be... and it is.

- **Rockland Line-Up**

(Last time this was brought up was in Spring of 2021)

Mark Higgins- Wants to start the topic of the Rockland Line-Up, objective is to start having conversations.

Jon Emerson- Who would have the conversations?

Bill Pulver-Mark Higgins, Kyle, Henry, Etc.

~Wants to have a productive conversation about safety.

~Studies, safety triangle, making certain accommodations...

Jon Emerson- Wants to have knowledge of the conversations.

Mark Higgins- We’re speaking to a consultant that is looking at all possibilities.

- **Rates**

Bill Pulver- Mentioned Rates and how it’s been four years since they’ve been discussed. New updates with costs and projections. “Time to look at Rates-Costs are up..” Looking for recommendations from board or islanders.

Jon Emerson- is there anything else?

Alex (Island Institute)- after a focus group, Island Institute TBD on the next steps. Work plan appreciation. But will be the Ferry Point Person at the Island Institute going forward.

Eva Murray- Asked regarding the Rockland Parking- If Tom from the city of Rockland had been involved.

Mark Higgins- Confirms he talks to Tom (Rockland), about upcoming changes to the Rockland Parking. Ex. Infrastructure, Peak, Directors of Ferry's (Hank).

10. Next Meeting/Adjournment

Jon Emerson- asked everyone was in agreed to move too next meeting.

Next Meeting will be: Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 10:30 am