Casco Bay Lines Serving the Islands of Casco Bay from Portland, Maine

CASCO BAY ISLAND TRANSIT DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING OF
Thursday, August 28th, 2025
56 Commercial Street, Portland, ME
In Person/Video Conference/Phone
*Video of entire meeting is online here.
https://vimeo.com/showcase/11470098?share=copy

Attendance

Directors:

	Webex	In Person	Phone	Absent
Lavanture (Pres)		X		
Donovan (1st VP)		X		
Pizey (2nd VP)	X	X(arrived 7:53)		
Hoffman (Treasurer)		X		
Luedke (Clerk)		X		
Higgins (Asst. Clrk)		X		
Cooper		X		
Belesca		X		
Cohen		X		
Crowley		X		
Murray		X		
Geary				X

Staff:

	Webex	In Person	Phone	Absent
C. Gildart		X		
Mavodones				X
Pottle	X			
Bowie		X		
Bryand		X		
Bishop				X
Charette		X		

Public:

	Webex	In Person	Phone	Absent
Sneyd				X
Heinemann	X			
Call In User 1			X	
Rogus	X			
Call in User 2			X	
Kelsey	X			

1. Call to Order
    a. President Lavanture called the meeting to order at 7:45 AM.
    b. It was noted the meeting is being recorded.
    c. Gildart did roll call.

2. Approval of meeting minutes from July 24, 2025. Hoffman clarifies language pertaining to financials: July financials referenced, but should be financials through month of May. Gildart confirms update will be made. Crowley moved to approve minutes, Higgins seconded.
    a. Cohen and Luedke refrained. All others approved.
3. Old Business
4. New Business
    a. Consideration and action to adopt 2025/2026 winter sailing schedule
        i. Donovan introduced discussion that began in May, with goals of improving efficiency and reduce operational costs. Challenges included: customer impact & crew schedules. Decision made to not consider changes to Peaks schedule at this time. First recommended change: elimination of weekend 8am boat under consideration, but to impact Chebeague and Cliff, inbound will have gap in service between approximately 6:30am until noontime, but ridership low; not unanimous. Elimination of 1:00pm inner bay boat was unanimous. Low ridership combined with low impact. Another recommended change is 3:00pm down bay boat to 3:15pm to allow more children to make ferry. Some potential for 5:45pm down bay to run late. Last recommended change is to replicate last year and operate winter schedule through the week before Memorial Day. Asks Gildart for reminder on combined savings - $128k for weekend Saturday elimination; $170k for 1pm elimination, $40,045 for continuation of winter schedule. Asks committee for questions.
        ii. Higgins commends operations for attention to needs of children.
        iii. Hoffman moves to accept recommended changes to winter schedule as presented by Operations Committee. Luedke seconds.
        iv. Donovan amends motions to consider each schedule change individually, as opposed to a package. Belesca seconds.
            1. Lavanture asks for public comment on the amendment. No public comment.
            2. Lavanture asks for director comment on the amendment.
                a. Luedke advocates for package vote based on lengthy discussions at Operations Committee meeting.
                b. Crowley asks that they be voted on individually.
            3. Lavanture asks for roll call vote on whether winter schedule items to be brought before the committee individually. Higgins -N, Hoffman -N, Donovan-Y, Pizey-N, Belesca-Y, Cohen-Y, Crowley- Y, Luedke-N, Cooper-Y, Murray-Y, Lavanture –N. 6 yes, 5 no. Motion passes. Schedule to be considered individually.
        v. 8am boat elimination on weekends only discussion.
            1. Lavanture asks for public comment. No public comment.
            2. Lavanture asks for director comment.

a. Crowley reiterates comments from prior discussion: down bay being most negatively affected. Prefers full schedule overhaul and less running of multiple boats on the bay at the same time.
b. Cooper asks for clarification on multiple boats vs one boat running all islands as it pertains to down bay. Donovan reminds of findings from Operations Committee: turnaround time for vessels both outbound and inbound; significant savings that doesn't negatively affect other boat schedules and staffing, and ridership supports. Public comment was primarily against weekday 8am, not as much for weekend cuts. Supports as of this meeting, voted against previously.
c. Hoffman acknowledges as islands-at-large representative, schedule cuts are not perfect. Agrees a schedule overhaul would be ideal, but after many Operations discussions, the savings are necessary and supports. Important first step.
d. Cohen does not support. Sees as temporary fix.
e. Lavanture in favor of improved efficiency, looking at combining inner bay boats, but there is a clear goal for this years budget and this gets the District closer to that goal. Supports but agrees schedule changes should be looked at on a regular basis.
f. Higgins mentions that while he was in favor of Peaks discussion being currently tabled, should be in future discussions.
g. Luedke recognizes inherent difficulties to any changes to down bay schedule, but directive was to save money and elimination of this boat is a savings of 128k with limited ridership impact. Supports.

3. Vote on elimination of 8am on weekends: Pizey-Y, Higgins-Y, Hoffman-Y, Donovan-Y, Belesca-N, Cohen-N, Crowley-N, Luedke-Y, Cooper-Y, Murray-N, Lavanture-Y. Passes 7-4.

vi. Elimination of 1pm.
1. Lavanture asks for public comment.
    a. Kelsey asks for island reps to speak to whether their constituents are aware of schedule change discussion. Donovan says, Long Island has had many discussions and posted many places. Several examples cited.
    b. Hoffman reminds committee members and public of role of representing constituents.
2. Lavanture asks for director comments. None.
3. Roll call vote on elimination of 1pm:
Pizey-Y, Higgins-Y, Hoffman-Y, Donovan-Y, Belesca-Y, Cohen-N, Crowley-N, Luedke-Y, Cooper-Y, Murray-Y, Lavanture-Y. Passes 9-2

vii. Changing of the 3:00 to 3:15.
1. No public comment.
2. No committee comment.
3. Vote on change of 3:00 to 3:15: Unanimous approval from Board.

viii. Continuing the winter schedule through Friday 5/22/26.
1. Public comment:
    a. Kelsey questions winter schedule continuing later, but peak rates still starting 2 months prior and if there will be confusion. Would prefer more car ferry runs to increase with rate change.

b. Lavanture explains both potential confusion and the impact of one less car ferry was discussed and thought about when considered extension of winter schedule this year, but in the end, decided to implement successfully.
c. Donovan confirms that it was discussed and impact to ridership historically has been low, but weather could affect that.

2. Committee comment:
    a. Hoffman reminds of Board's commitment to reduction of deficit.
    b. Crowley agrees that rate changes necessary financially.
    c. Cohen would like to see more public surveys in the future.
3. Vote to continue winter schedule: Pizey-Y, Higgins-Y, Hoffman-Y, Donovan-Y, Belesca-Y, Cohen-N, Crowley-Y, Luedke-Y, Cooper-Y, Murray-Y, Lavanture-Y. Passes 10-1.

ix. Lavanture asks to move 4.b. to end of meeting in the interest of public participation.

5. Workshops – none
6. General Information Reports
    a. Committee Reports
    b. Staff Reports
        i. Hoffman introduces finance report: still discussing "commercial" rates being changed to "large vehicles". Invites public to participate. Next meeting in September will include that discussion but primarily the budget for fiscal year 2026.
        ii. Bowie comments on YTD expenses flat compared to prior fiscal year but accomplishment in itself during a year with Machigonne dry dock and large expenses in barge subcontracting.
        iii. Hoffman adds preliminary data from Rocketres and ridership in relation to vehicle rate changes was discussed at Finance Committee, but full vehicle rate economic contribution will not be available until summer of 2026. Vehicle eligible pass sales are way up and program being accepted.
        iv. Donovan: four items from Operations, not actionable today, but under discussion. Freight handling during summer and utilization of carts; communication to riders, especially as it pertains to timing and utilization of new texting function; electronic ticketing;
        v. Donovan comments on Vessel Advisory Committee: propulsion evaluation underway. Will come back to Board as preliminary design and require quick resolution as it impacts many things including, maps, schedule, and budget. Many matrixes to consider to find perfect fit for District that will last 30-40 years and be efficient.
            1. Cooper: Asks for process on getting boat operational and staff trained and for written process that is well considered for efficiency.
        vi. Personnel: Lavanture holds updates as all Personnel Committee meetings pertained to item 4.b. and holds discussion until that item is raised.
7. General Announcements
    a. Establish next meeting dates (all meetings at 7:45 AM unless indicated otherwise):
        i. Executive Committee: Thursday, September 4, 2025
        ii. Finance Committee: Wednesday, September 10, 2025

iii. Operations Committee: Thursday, September 11, 2025
iv. Board of Directors: Thursday, September 25, 2025
v. Pension Committee: Thursday, October 2, 2025

4. Lavanture reintroduces item 4.b. with plan to enter executive session and upon coming out of executive session, consider item. Following consideration of 4.b., items 8. And 9., will be considered. Public to be notified following exit of executive session.
   b. Personnel Committee is recommending to the Board to extend an offer of employment for the position of General Manager of the District to a strong candidate. Need to authorize the Board President and Personnel Committee Chair to finalize the offer letter and terms of employment and confirm consensus.
      1. Lavanture asks for motion for executive session pursuant to MRSA 405(6)(a) to discuss a personnel matter. Higgins moved. Crowley seconds.
      2. Public comment: no public comment.
      3. Director discussion: none.
      4. Gildart conducts roll call. Unanimous.
      5. Committee enters executive session at 8:55 a.m. and meeting is locked.
      6. Out of Executive Session at 9:51.
      7. Hoffman asks Board to authorize Lavanture to provide offer to candidate Ben Dinsmore for position of GM within terms discussed in executive session. Belesca seconds.
      8. Public comment: no comment.
      9. Director comment:
         a. Crowley commends committee on hard work.
      10. Gildart conducts roll call: Unanimous of all present. Luedke not present.

8. Public comment on any items not on the agenda

9. Directors comment on any items not on the agenda
   a. Cohen would like analog clock at Peaks.

10. Adjournment. Motion to adjourn. Donovan moves to adjourn, Crowley seconds. Gildart conducts roll call. Motion is unanimously approved by all present.

Respectfully submitted by: ______

James Luedke, Clerk