



**Casco Bay Island Transit District
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 18, 2025 at 7:45 AM**

This meeting will be an **in-person** meeting with remote participation option available
The public is invited to participate: Video Conference Link and Call-in number are available at:

<https://www.cascobaylines.com/about-us/board/>

Attendance

Webex	In Person	Phone	Absent
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Directors:

Jen Lavanture (Pres)		X		
Joe Donovan (1 st VP)		X		
Max Pizey (2 nd VP)	X			
Jean Hoffman (Treasurer)		X		
James Luedke (Clerk)				X
Bud Higgins (Asst. Clrk)		X		
Nate Cooper				X
Paul Belesca		X		
Erik Winchester		X		
Dave Crowley	X			
Mike Murray				X
Bill Geary		X		

Staff:

C. Gildart		X		
Mavodones		X		
Pottle	X			
Bowie		X		
Bryand		X		
Bishop		X		
Charette		X		

Public:

Sneyd		X		
Heinemann	X			
Call In User 1			X	
Call In User 2			X	
Cohen	X (7:57am)			

1. Call to Order
 - a. President Lavanture called the meeting to order at 7:48 a.m.
 - b. It was noted the meeting was being recorded.
 - c. Charette did roll call.



- d. Lavanture notes that the City has appointed Heather Moretti as new Waterfront Director and will serve as appointed member on CBITD Board, replacing Mike Murray, who was filling in on an interim basis once Bill Needelman stepped down.
- 2. Approval of meeting minutes from November 20, 2025
 - a. Higgins moves to approve, Hoffman seconds. Charette did roll call. Approved by all present.
- 3. Old Business – no old business
- 4. New Business
 - A. Public hearing
 - a. Consideration and action to adopt a change to the vehicle rate structure for large (historically commercial) vehicles. Lavanture reminds of deliberations at Finance Committee and summary presented to the Board. Current public hearing has been appropriately noticed as required by PUC. Notes any rate change would need to go into effect no sooner than 30 days from now. Turns topic over to Hoffman and Dinsmore for further presentation, to be followed by public comment, Director discussion, and a motion.
 - b. Hoffman reminds of process leading up to current discussion. Vehicle rates have been under discussion at Finance Committee for long period of time. “Commercial” vehicle rate consideration was temporarily paused to effectively accommodate large number of public comments relating to personal vehicles and also to give staff time to fully consider the Operational impacts of vehicles traveling on Casco Bay Lines. Rate change for personal vehicles was implemented June 21st and rates regarding “large” vehicles, replacing “commercial” vehicles, were discussed beginning with July Finance Committee meeting. Notes few negative comments have been received. Majority of public comments center on large/commercial vehicles being important to islanders for the services they provide. Board attempted to be sensitive to those issues and while space-based rate increases may apply, weight-based rates can be expected to go down for some; give several examples including firewood. Overall support has been high and most recognize rates need to increase and that structure needs to change to space-based. Noticed meetings appropriately in multiple ways. Personally reached out for public feedback and comment on Peaks.
 - c. Dinsmore presents slides detailing most recent large vehicle rate structure. Updates include passholder rate now valid until 21 feet. Updated rate schedule includes rate for 20-21' including surcharge. 20' standard still stands for non-passholders. Further information on pricing for width in response to customer feedback. Staff reports that occurrences are estimated to have been 3-4 vehicles in last 5-6 years, but plan in place for such vehicles, including additional 50% surcharge. Opens floor to Directors for any questions.
 - i. Higgins asks if staff engagement is major aspect of process and if staff is well-equipped to handle new system routinely.
 - 1. Dinsmore confirms that it should be similar to current process for staff and that the transparency of viewing length, as opposed to not being able to view weight, should allow staff to become familiar with specific vehicle lengths, especially of more regular users of ferry service.
 - 2. Higgins asks how a passholder is associated with a vehicle. Dinsmore and Lavanture clarify passholder must be within vehicle. Hoffman reminds it is only for vehicles 21 feet and below, so a box truck for instance, likely would not apply.
 - 3. Higgins suggests protrusions and trailers attached to a vehicle that extend it beyond length for accepted passholder rate may cause some frustration early in process and whether staff is prepared. Lavanture reminds that current system of separate rate for trailers and those with trailers are required to have a vehicle ticket and a trailer ticket. New policy will no longer require two tickets and will charge on aggregate length of vehicle and trailer. Acknowledges Higgins'



point that large bike rack or protruding lumber could cause frustration but stresses importance of Board and staff posting regular updates on new policy.

d. Lavanture clarifies current meeting procedure is for Directors present to ask only any clarifying questions on material presented. Otherwise, will open floor to public comment and return to Directors for broader discussion. No further Director clarifying questions, Lavanture asks opens floor for public comment.

- i. Cohen voices several rhetorical questions in relation to rates. Questions rate shock.

e. No further public comment. Director discussion.

- i. Belesca asks if reservation system associated with “commercial” vehicle will continue. Dinsmore confirms that reservation system has not changed as part of current proposal and will continue to be available. Belesca relays anecdotes of vehicles arriving at Peaks on non-CBL vessels and lining up to take CBL ferries for returns and asks if considerations have been made for some sort of validation showing initial transportation was booked through CBL. Dinsmore responds not as part of current proposal.
- ii. Gildart notes that currently reservation system allows for 2 weekend reservation categories, in which charges are based on Gross Vehicle Weight. Will need to be addressed at some point.
- iii. Hoffman notes that complaints related to large vehicles only taking CBL return ferries that Belesca mentioned were relayed to her as well, and asks Bryant for personal experience with matter. Bryant responds it was sporadic, but when it could be caught, staff would make said vehicles pay at freight shed when they returned to Portland. Typically those with reservations on the barge have accounted for both directions.
- iv. Donovan supports current proposal. Had previous concerns of allowing for special rates past 20 foot mark, but now that proposal shows it to be strictly for passholders, it solves some of those issues. Asks since Peaks Island News article came out, if Hannagan's has had any other further comments or if islanders have had any input.
 1. Dinsmore clarifies timeline. Article in question was based on an email sent to Board on November 11th. Notes he (Dinsmore) has spoken with the Hannagans twice since then and they are supportive of changes.
 - v. Donovan suggests reservation system will be easy to adapt to length-based and supports proposal overall.
 - vi. Pizey supports.

f. Hoffman moves to approve Large Vehicle rate increase proposed, as recommended by the Finance Committee and as presented by GM Dinsmore. Belesca seconds.

g. Lavanture notes that prior to discussion on motion, implementation and timing of Large Vehicle rate change still needs to be discussed. Implementation will need to be at least 30 days from current meeting, also holiday season and CBITD will need to make submission to PUC. Suggests earliest timeframe as February 1st.

h. Hoffman withdraws previous motion and moves to approve Large Vehicle rate increase as of December 18th, 2026 as recommended by the Finance Committee and as presented by GM Dinsmore and to include language for submission to the PUC and target implantation by end of February, 2026. Belesca seconds.

- i. Lavanture asks for public comment on the motion. There is none.
- j. Lavanture asks for Director comment on the motion.
 - i. Higgins stresses importance of implementation from outset. Feels hashmarks are a large part of public understanding. Unlikely this can be accomplished in the winter. Not comfortable implementing until that can be accomplished.
 - ii. Hoffman trusts Dinsmore and Gildart to accomplish goal.



- iii. Dinsmore reminds that an estimated 85% of vehicles and almost all of regular passenger vehicles will be under 20' and this measuring will not apply. The same for most trucks.
- iv. Crowley relays personal experience with marking for construction year-round and that it can be accomplished in the winter easily. May need to be redone before spring, but no concerns about accomplishing it during the winter.
- v. Winchester supports Crowley's comments on painting lines in the winter and fully supports Dinsmore and comments. Stresses communication being key aspect for both islanders and tradespeople, and especially as spring arrives and traffic flow increases.
- vi. Lavanture notes that end of February, early March is the least busy time of the season and is an ideal time to trial process and for staff to learn and work on any issues.
- vii. Donovan agrees with all Director comments and moves to accept.
- viii. Charette does roll call. Motion passes. Unanimous of all present.
 - 1. Lavanture thanks Directors and also Finance Committee for work on proposal.
 - 2. Hoffman thanks all on behalf of Finance Committee, including Board members who participated in meetings.

5. Workshops

6. General Information Reports

- a. Committee Reports –
 - i. Finance – Hoffman mentions large vehicle rate discussion that was just voted on. Asks Bowie to comment on correction to latest finance report that was recently sent out.
 - 1. Bowie mentions that in attempt for a clean year-end cut-off, Accounts Payable is extended to account for everything in September. Invoices continue to come in for September in October and November. October was not reversed and October expense was overstated by 17k. Board received corrected version in their packet and was notified for full disclosure. Largest part of 17k was a 9k legal bill that could have been factored into October but was in fact billed to September.
 - 2. Hoffman commends Bowie on her handling of the issue.
 - ii. Operations –
 - 1. Donovan reiterates items from Operations that were to be brought before the Board. Board members need to provide goals to staff on what is to be accomplished by any schedule changes for summer. Would like those submitted for next Operations committee meeting.
 - 2. Other item from Operations was a petition from Cliff Island on reversal of weekend winter down bay boat cancellation. Staff compiled list of pros and cons. Cons of making change now would be difficult and were determined to have even further repercussions. Negative impacts would be on operations and also to overall process. Notes many previous meetings were held and appreciate feedback that came out of petition, but making changes after the process has ended sets a bad precedent. Asks for Board input on both issues.
 - a. Higgins asks Crowley to comment on why particular down bay run is important to Cliff Island residents. Crowley comments that Cliff island residents felt there was another boat that could have been canceled as a better alternative.
 - b. Hoffman raises point of order that item being discussed was not on agenda.
 - c. Lavanture notes that report came out of Operations Committee not for action required, but for Board information, and request for input for clarification of intent. Regarding summer schedule changes, currently at the end of December, it is late and not feasible for major schedule changes.



Suggests that in establishing 2026 goals for GM Dinsmore, Board should consider how, when, and where comprehensive schedule changes are made. Schedule adjustments may need to be made for optimization, but no wholesale changes should happen for upcoming 2026 summer schedule for any islands or routes.

- d. Donovan supports Lavanture's comments that report on petition is for information, but is happy to accept any feedback and put it back on January Operations Committee meeting for further discussion.
- e. Higgins relays he has had frequent informal questions from constituents about overall schedule changes and would like it brought up to Board level more regularly.
- f. Lavanture supports Higgins' comments. Almost 10 years since KPFF study and Board should be reviewing on a regular 5-10 year basis. Regarding current issue of reinstating weekend down bay ferry, unless it is put forth again by Operations Committee, does not warrant further discussion at Board level at this time.

b. Staff Reports -Dinsmore gives updates.

- i. Recent service disruption on Machigonne. Shaft saber issue on drive line and staff was able to replace quickly.
- ii. Wabanaki dry dock continuing and progressing as planned. Maquoit II set to go into dry dock first week of February.
- iii. Has been uptick in terminal security issues. Dinsmore reached out to City of Portland for ideas on collaborative, multi-resourced effort on solutions to security issues that have come up at terminal and public restrooms. Meeting with security provider to look at potential options for improvement as well.
- iv. Freight process evaluation underway with survey having been distributed to staff for feedback on potential improvements.
- v. Had recent mandatory sexual harassment prevention training as required.
- vi. Battery Steele newest estimated delivery is scheduled for May.
 - 1. Hoffman relays there are many public questions on timeline and asks that when Dinsmore gives updated delivery date, that he also remind of potential in-service date, as it relates.
 - a. Dinsmore reiterates plan after delivery. 3-4 weeks of crew training on vessel handling, safety, and systems with time allowed for fine-tuning of systems. After all involved are comfortable with boat to serve its duty, plan is for phased approach. Battery Steele and Machigonne to initially split runs to make sure Battery Steele is functioning as designed. After estimated 6 weeks of said testing, Battery Steele in full service and Machigonne nearby on standby.
 - b. Hoffman clarifies that timeline mentioned by Dinsmore is approximately a month after delivery before vessel is on some public runs. Dinsmore agrees.
 - 2. Belesca asks if liquidated damages are still accruing. Dinsmore confirms. Belesca asks if there is an identified point in time at which accruing liquidated damages will exceed what is due at final payment.
 - a. Pottle responds that if vessel is delivered in May, CBITD will have approximately 500-550k withheld in payment still due to shipyard and liquidated damages expected to be approximately 250k at that point. Could go another 250 days or almost 8 months before those numbers collide.



Shipyard is tracking much better on schedule currently than previously and expectation is that vessel will be delivered before this becomes an issue.

- vii. Geary cautions that from personal experience, that USCG inspection should also be considered a major factor in overall timing and that 4 weeks from vessel delivery to in-service may not be sufficient, especially with vessel's electrical capabilities. Relays MDOT vessel they received was fully diesel in design and took 3 months to get approved by local Coast Guard.
- viii. Crowley comments on previous discussion of scheduling. Would like to look at Summer and Winter schedules for 2027 so there is time to make significant changes.
- ix. Donovan asks how many barge runs were done while Machigonne was down. Dinsmore responds 4 barge runs were done. Donovan prefers that barge runs are done only for emergency purposes so as to not pay associated fees.
- x. Belesca follows up on Geary's statement about putting the Battery Steele in service and USCG inspection. Asks if shipyard contract allows for vessel to be delivered already with a valid Certificate of Inspection, fully documented and ready for service.
 - 1. Pottle clarifies that contract calls for shipyard to have temporary COI for delivery and a permanent COI is received locally once staff has been vetted on vessel.
 - 2. Geary explains process further. Temporary COI only for delivery. Training without passengers can also be conducted with the temporary COI, but prior to vessel being put into service, must pass local UCSG inspection at which point staff will be required to perform all drills and functionality on vessel, which is where delays can occur.
- xi. Dinsmore updates that MDOT is planning to finish on Chebeague by the end of the year and will then move to Great Diamond Island, and finally Cliff Island.
- xii. Dinsmore notes changes in organizational chart contained in Board packet. Gildart's position has changed to Director of Customer Operations. Proposed new position of Manager of Digital Systems and Technology. If implemented, duties of position could include: any Board priorities around technology, E-ticketing, a possible online reservation system, a safety management system, ideas around better connection between vessels and shoreside for passenger reporting which is currently being recorded manually.
- xiii. Operations staff transition has been going smoothly.
- xiv. Lavanture recommends Personnel Committee meeting in January for performance against goals comparison for short period of time that Dinsmore has been with CBITD, and for goals for 2026.
- xv. Geary notes that Director of Finance position is not on org chart and questions whether that is still being considered as open position to be filled. Dinsmore comments it is not under current consideration.
- c. Special Reports: Discussion on down bay vessel PDR. Lavanture notes VAC brought PDR before the Board at November meeting. After lengthy discussion, Lavanture felt it was best to revisit at Board level at January or February meetings to give Board sufficient time to review; notes Donovan would like speak to issue as chair of VAC.
 - i. Donovan reminds of timeframe up to current meeting. VAC met on November 4th and recommended presentation of PDR to Board which was done at November 20th Board meeting. Decision at end of that meeting was Lavanture requested delay to gather more information, reiterates several reasons given including revenue comparison and GM formal comment on PDR. Executive Committee was to come up with scheduling recommendations and would have preferred vote on PDR at current meeting but was recommended to be on agenda as discussion only. Intends to request VAC meeting in January with all Board members requested to attend so PDR can be voted on. Does not



want to wait until February due to financial risks. PDR is still preliminary and changes can still be made but must move expeditiously to secure funding.

- ii. Lavanture reiterates opening comments that bringing before the Board in January is feasible unless VAC has need for further discussion. Notes that Board first viewed PDR previous month and with it being a major decision, wanted to give Board time to process. Executive Committee decision was to give adequate time for Board discussion on vehicle rate change. PDR vote can be discussed at Executive Committee but intent is for January, provided work from VAC is complete.
- iii. Hoffman admits inexperience with both down bay freight vessel-related complexities, but costs, alternatives, and analysis still need to be further addressed for Board's Fiduciary responsibility and to make the correct decision. Would also like to see the future of freight operations discussed further.
- iv. Lavanture notes timing will be discussed at Executive Committee meeting.

7. General Announcements

- a. Lavanture reminds of recent discussions that frequency of meetings is now for bi-monthly meetings, with exceptions for special occurrences. Reason for January Finance being currently scheduled for February.
- b. Donovan asks Lavanture for explanation on Sales and Marketing committee and Sustainability committee meetings. Lavanture notes historically those committees had been in place, but not convened recently. Decision was made at Executive Committee to disband those committees as they were not meeting regularly enough, but to bring issues specific to those as appropriate to Operations or Finance committee meetings. Also to recognize sustainability overall as a priority to keep in mind as goals for GM are being set.
- c. Establish next meeting dates (all meetings at 7:45 AM unless indicated otherwise):
 - i. Executive Committee: Thursday, January 8, 2026
 - ii. Finance Committee: Following month: February
 - iii. Operations Committee: Thursday, January 15, 2026
 - iv. Board of Directors: Thursday, January 22, 2026
 - v. Personnel Committee: TBD
 - vi. Sales & Marketing Committee: TBD
 - vii. Government Relations Committee: TBD
 - viii. Pension Committee: TBD
 - ix. Nominating Committee: TBD

8. Public comment on any items not on the agenda

- a. Cohen asks for update from PUC meeting on rates and if residential passholders can access a passholder rate.
 - i. Lavanture reminds that Board in May approved vehicle rate change. Primarily for passenger vehicles but also included a 23% stopgap increase for commercial vehicles, which has now been addressed through process. Any Rates changes must go through process with Maine PUC. Requires providing notice. Following Board approval in May, notice was provided to PUC. Standard process by PUC is a comment period and during comment period, 2 petitions were received that met the 50 rate payers signature threshold. Petitions asked PUC to suspend rates and also to open a formal investigation. In June, PUC allowed rates to go into affect and opens only a summary investigation, not formal. Most recently, after many filings and a proceeding on November 9th in which Lavanture, Hoffman and Dinsmore were present, final order was issued on November 15th. PUC has declined to open formal complaint and noted CBITD was compliant with all procedural requirements, operating loss and need for rate increases, and locally elected Board. PUC raised concern for rate shock on low-income, year round residents and requested follow-up items in relation to this. Given until May to respond to potential plan to respond. Will work



Casco Bay Lines

Serving the Islands of Casco Bay from Portland, Maine

with Hoffman and Dinsmore on plan to respond to specific requests. Rates remain in affect during this time.

- ii. Lavanture clarifies that the resident pass is strictly for priority boarding and is an operational metric and parameter and not fare-related. Notes memos in public record received from district counsel on the ability to provide pricing and rate structure tied to residency.
- 9. Directors comment on any items not on the agenda
 - a. Donovan commends Gildart and staff on use of Bay Mist for holiday events and income provided.
- 10. Lavanture asks for motion to adjourn. Donovan moves to adjourn, Winchester seconds. Meeting adjourned at 9:31 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

James Luedke, Clerk