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

Casco Bay Island Transit District
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 27, 2026 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
Directors:				
Jen Lavanture		X		
Joe Donovan		X		
Max Pizey		X		
Jean Hoffman		X		
James Luedke		X		
Bud Higgins				X
Nate Cooper				X
Paul Belesca		X		
Erik Winchester		X		
Dave Crowley	X(7:51)			
Heather Moretti		X		
Bill Geary		X		
Staff:				
C. Gildart		X		
P. Donovan				X
Dinsmore		X		
Bryand		X		
Charette				X
Bowie		X		
Pottle	X			
Public:				
Lynn Heinnmann	X			
Ross Sneyd		X		
Michele Alves		X		
Call-in User 1			X (7:48)	
Call-in User 2			X (7:50)	
Call-in User 3			X (8:01)	

1. Call to Order
    a. Lavanture calls meeting to order at 7:47 a.m.

b. Gildart conducts roll call.

2. Approval of meeting minutes from June 25, and July 9, 2026.
    a. Lavanture asks for motion to accept minutes. Hoffman moves to accept minutes, Donovan seconds.
    b. No public comment.
    c. No director comment.
    d. Gildart conducts roll call vote on minutes. Unanimous of all present. Motion passes.
3. Old Business
4. New Business
    a. Consideration and action to adopt 2026/2027 winter sailing schedule.
        i. Lavanture notes there was some discussion at Operations Committee regarding preliminary substantive changes, but now that season is in August, committee came to conclusion that it wasn't feasible to do that level of schedule overhaul due to public process and being so close to winter schedule. At last week's Operations Committee meeting, there was an informal consensus to recommend last year's winter schedule and that a larger comprehensive schedule analysis project should be undertaken. The one point of discussion currently is the timing for implementation of the winter schedule. Last year, winter schedule ran through close to Memorial Day. As chair of Operations, Donovan proposed ending winter sailing schedule earlier. Turns discussion over to Donovan.
        ii. Donovan notes challenges with timing and how little time there was to implement any major changes. Staff had good recommendations. Board was not fully clear on guardrails for Dinsmore and staff. Reminds last year there were comments brought forward by Chebeague and Cliff islands due to unforeseen effects of winter schedule changes. In March, Board voted on stopping the winter season in late April when the new rates went into effect. Good discussion at that time, but vote ultimately failed due to lack of time to implement. As down bay rep, would like Board to reconsider, so that winter schedule would start at same time as last season, but would end in mid-April rather than continue through Memorial Day weekend. Discussion at last Operations meeting centered around what that would cost and what would be the differences. Dinsmore's presentation that was sent out prior to current meeting notes a $21k difference as noted last March. Major changes would include getting the 8am weekend boat back, the one Peaks Island morning boat, and the 1pm boat. Hoping Board will consider.
            1. Belesca asks whether it was discussed at Operations Committee that these changes be considered individually by run or by island.
            2. Donovan confirms they were brought forward as a package. Agrees that going forward, all potential changes should be looked at.
        iii. Hoffman asks that schedule associated with motion be stated and whether it includes the cost of running the spring schedule earlier or not.
        iv. Lavanture reads Donovan's motion as Hoffman suggests. Donovan is moving to adopt the winter sailing schedule as currently displayed under the winter schedule tab for respective islands on the Casco Bay Lines website, with an effective date of October 13th through April 16th, 2027 and that all of proposed changes as presented in Dinsmore's summary schedule, with associated incremental costs, be implemented for the period April 17th through the beginning of the spring schedule. Lavanture clarifies she is rewording motion as requested, but not making motion.
    b. Donovan moves that winter schedule for 2026/2027 will commence on October 13th, 2026, with the exception of the 1pm inner bay boat, which will run through November 1st, and ending on April 17th, 2027. The result will be additional cost, as presented by staff, to not extend schedule through May, 2027. Luedke seconds.
        i. Lavanture opens floor to public comment.

1. Alves clarifies it should be April 16th.

ii. Lavanture asks for director comment.
   1. Hoffman comments as treasurer that she is against any schedule adjustments that result in additional costs, without corresponding cuts to find savings. Commitment has been made to reduce the deficit and have been working towards that goal and towards sustainability of CBL. Acknowledges that incremental cost as presented is not a large amount of money, but is an example of how schedule creep has happened at Casco Bay Lines, which has led to expenses creeping up as well. Cites example of KPFF study that was done, versus current schedule with additional runs both to Peaks and down bay. Need to remain disciplined and if there is a proposal to add, there should be a corresponding cost savings proposal.
   2. Geary asks if there has been any analysis done on potential revenue gained by going to the spring schedule earlier. Likely additional ridership.
      a. Dinsmore agrees on potential additional riders but that analysis has not been done currently.
      b. Lavanture responds that residents likely adjust their schedule based on boat departures and it is unlikely there will be a large change in ridership.
      c. Hoffman notes that part of initial reason for considering this schedule adjustment was that there was not peak demand for riders.

iii. Lavanture proposes amendment to motion. Moves to amend the motion such that the winter schedule continues through the 21st of May and that the spring sailing schedule is adopted from May 22nd through scheduled start of summer sailing schedule. Hoffman seconds.
   1. Lavanture asks for public comment on the amendment. There is none.
   2. Director comment on the motion.
      a. Donovan acknowledges that changes made last year were based on fiscal responsibility, but caused undue hardship for down bay island residents. Residents brought their concerns forward and nothing was done at that time. One attempt was made in March to fix, but failed by one vote. Peaks Island has thus far refused to consider schedule changes to their island. Gives several examples of down bay residents' scheduling issues that occur prior to Memorial Day, such as increases in school and sports activities. 20k not a lot of money comparatively to other CBL expenses and agrees with Hoffman that it would be prudent to find offsetting costs, whether schedule or otherwise, but does not support amendment. Last March the sentiment was that it was too late to make this change, but it is not too late to make it currently.
      b. Belesca supports Lavanture's comment that ridership adapts to the schedule. The postal service issue was unanticipated, but they adapted and the community was still served. Chebeague was ultimately not impacted, but recognizes issues brought forward by Crowley on Cliff and Donovan on Long as concerns.
      c. Luedke comments that with children getting out of school at 2:00 or 3:00, if parents have to get their children, they have to take the noon boat. The addition of the 1pm boat was very helpful to not have such a large gap in time.
         i. Lavanture clarifies the 1pm is not in the wording of the amendment being commented on.
         ii. Dinsmore clarifies that a 1pm boat added if the spring schedule were to move up earlier should be in his analysis.

d. Lavanture acknowledges Luedke's comment. Agrees with Hoffman that any cost incurred should be offset, with both legislative mandate and intent with deficit reduction and what has been agreed upon by this Board. All agreed to undertake reducing deficit over 3-year period. Some of the unintended consequences can be avoided through all directors working with their constituents to make sure they understand the changes, but part of Board commitment is making unpopular decisions. No formal recommendation from Operations Committee and understanding revenue trade off and cost trade off, was not fully taken up as a committee. Reminds that in terms of adequacy of service, that down bay service has increased 44% since 2019. Acknowledges that when a comprehensive schedule process that Peaks needs to be on the table, but the proposal at Operations would have shredded Peaks Island winter schedule with little room for constituents to be brought along, being introduced in July. Understands some of the needs, such as the 1pm boat as Luedke mentioned, but the offsetting costs were not found or presented.
e. Luedke responds that there were many complaints about the adequacy of the schedule prior to 2019 and was part of KPFF study and part of reason for additional down bay runs.
f. Donovan mentions there were also many comments this past winter from down bay pertaining to when the spring schedule would start, including a signed petition. Recalls one contractor that mentioned issues with freight not being able to go down bay to Chebeague on weekends.
g. Hoffman reminds that previous schedule discussion went through long process with many meetings that were open to the public and a higher level of data than was previously available. Through that data on ridership and cuts were determined to be carrying few people. Few people had comments at the time. After action was taken, various people did write in or talk to their representatives, which is welcome, but was after process. Supports any boats that better serves children and their ability to get to and from school.
h. Moretti notes mixed feedback on if islanders are being heard should be a priority for larger comprehensive schedule overhaul and in favor of moving towards that.

iv. Gildart conducts roll call on amendment. Motion fails 7-2.
v. Donovan's motion of winter sailing schedule ending on April 16th back on the floor.
   a. Geary asks if amendment has 1pm boat that Donovan had mentioned and if the issue was that it was just not in the cost analysis presented.
      i. Dinsmore confirms and presents new cost analysis slide including the cost for adding the 1pm boat to starting the spring schedule earlier. Anticipated $10,512 in extra cost, bringing the total to $31,997.
      ii. Lavanture asks Dinsmore if these are direct costs.
      iii. Dinsmore confirms they are, fuel and labor.
      iv. Lavanture notes with indirect costs it would be more.
   b. Director comment.
   c. Lavanture speaks to frustration that additional costs are being found now just before vote is to take place and is not enough time for proper consideration. Acknowledges that a winter schedule needs to be in place

but not comfortable voting on something that has not been fully considered. Undoing good work that was done last year.

d. Public comment – Alves comments that she has personal experience having children in school as an island resident. Schools do not make their schedules based around islanders. Sometimes it is necessary to adapt and wait for a boat.
e. Hoffman reminds that a full schedule overhaul will be coming for 2027 and it is not easy to adapt to schedule but must do what is necessary and this is a step in the wrong direction.

vi. Gildart conducts roll call on original motion. 5-5. Motion fails as result of tie. As a result there is no winter schedule in place.
   a. Lavanture suggests she will meet with Dinsmore, and Board members can expect special meeting on how to proceed with winter schedule in coming days.

5. General Information Reports
   a. Committee Reports
      i. Hoffman comments that Finance committee did not meet. Hoffman mentions that there was not an August meeting, but there will be a September meeting, which will be the third meeting on freight rates. Freight rate analysis put forth by Dinsmore and encourages other directors to read it.
      ii. Donovan mentions that Operations will meet as scheduled in September. Previous meeting was on timeliness and directors should have received spreadsheet. Maquoit was deemed a challenge due to freight but overall CBL does a good job staying on time. Corey from Bristol Harbor Group are moving ahead with final drawings for the down bay replacement vessel, but have been slowed down due to BHG currently still working on problems with Battery Steele, specifically tonnage issue. Next official VAC meeting likely not until October. Responses to the RFP for the integrator have been received. Staff will be assessing those, six in total. September 11th is the schedule date and it is being reviewed by Nick Bishop.
         1. Lavanture asks if integrator is being looked at by Vessel Advisory Committee or members of staff. Donovan and Dinsmore confirm it is being looked at by Bishop and other members of the staff, which is essentially a sub committee of VAC, which is by design. Dinsmore mentions that he is intentionally not on that committee but can serve as a tie breaker.
         2. Hoffman comments that Battery Steele is the most expensive project CBL has undertaken and important to Peaks residents and continues to be frustrated by lack of information that has been distributed thus far. Would like more information, even if from a perspective of under promising and over delivering: not sure of dates, but issues are getting solved, etc. Need regular flow of information, such as weekly reports.
      iii. Gildart notes that Crowley submitted a comment in the chat that he wants on the record: reason for his vote no on schedule change is that Board needs to look at wholesale schedule change in order to allow Dinsmore to find the fiscal savings that the Board wishes.
   b. Staff Reports
      i. Dinsmore received comments on freight performance and reliability. Have been some issues with freight and delays, things going to the wrong island. Some of the issues are a wrong label or freight does not go on intended boat, sometimes it is also staff communication issues. Always looking for ways to improve that. White boards with 100

different items on it where messages can get lost, so looking into technology that can help improve system.

ii. Trash issues at Peaks Island usually gets mentioned after they has gone through several communication channels. Encourages all to email him or CBL directly for a quicker solution.

iii. Website updates: there is now a community hub page that has several helpful resources, including issues that are frequently asked for, such as Board minutes, presentations, and a dedicated Battery Steele page, where weekly updates can go. Also a finance committee page that has materials from meetings dating back three years. Happy to take recommendations on what constituents might want to see on there.

iv. Peaks Island tax and energy assistance new pass assistance program is now active, which offers assistance to those in need. CBL is administering a separate program funded through the Peaks Island Council that also offers assistance. Encourages anyone that knows someone that might benefit from either program to contact PITA.

v. Belesca mentions that having received presentation on freight at previous meeting, did his best to distribute through the municipality, through social media, and through freight handlers on island and could not manage to solicit a single comment. Personal comments as someone from with a boatyard on the island, would like to see freight looked at from a global aspect of the systems in place within the district to handle that activity. Notes there was a time in the past when certain freight agents, deckhands, and captains went far above and beyond what was required to make freight needs happen for down bay islands. Currently, would like to look at how it should be done and implement the rules, protocols, and tools so that everyone does things the same way. Comments that the invoices received every month are grossly inaccurate. Gives example of being grossly undercharged the previous month after going through invoice. Advocates for recording systems in place and potential inaccuracies before adjustments are made. As a down bay island rep, often hears that the boat is running late and that they cannot help with freight on the day of request. Gives example of reaching out to CBL to proactively advise of a large freight shipment and the manner in which it should be handled, but when boat arrives, no effort or acknowledgement is made of handling and is dumped on dock, because of car needing attention and this is often the case. Processes of handling and crane lifts need to be better defined by CBL. Asks for others to monitor similar issues and track for improvement of system. Revenue can be captured by doing a better job.

vi. Hoffman supports Belesca's comments and has heard from a Peaks resident dealing with large amounts of freight that their invoices are consistently wrong.

6. General Announcements
   a. Establish next meeting dates, with all meetings at 7:45 AM unless indicated otherwise.

i.	Executive Committee:	Thursday, September 3, 2026
ii.	Finance Committee:	Wednesday, September 16, 2026
iii.	Operations Committee:	Thursday, September 17, 2026
iv.	Board of Directors:	Thursday, September 24, 2026
v.	Personnel Committee:	TBD
vi.	Government Relations Committee:	TBD
vii.	Pension Committee:	TBD

7. Public comment on any items not on the agenda – No public comment.
8. Directors comment on any items not on the agenda.
   a. Donovan asks for motion to reconsider the previous vote on the winter schedule. Notes that he cannot personally make that motion, must come from someone on the failing side. Reasons for

reconsideration are that Crowley's earlier comment suggested he was voting on a comprehensive schedule overhaul, rather than winter schedule, and the fail of the vote on the motion resulted in no current winter schedule for coming season.

b. Belesca recognizes Donovan's request and as a director who voted no on original motion, moves to reconsider. Donovan seconds.
   i. Lavanture asks for public comment on the motion. No public comment.
   ii. Lavanture asks for director comment on the motion.
      1. Hoffman surprised by motion and prefers another meeting over accepting current motion, for proper consideration.
      2. Luedke comments that while the winter schedule needs to be looked at more thoroughly, and appreciates Crowley's comments, but need to approve current winter schedule first.
      3. Lavanture mentions that should a secondary meeting on winter schedule be necessary, Board has her full commitment to talking to Dinsmore, getting all pertinent information that was brought up at current meeting to directors, and to do quickly so that a winter schedule can still be implemented for current season. Would prefer the additional time to review minutes and materials from previous year to fully understand actions that were taken.
      4. Donovan supports finalizing winter schedule now so that it can be published, but if for any reason this needs to be reconsidered in the future, Board does have the ability to do, as was done the previous year. Encourages all to vote yes to amendment and to get schedule approved.
      5. Lavanture clarifies standing rules, that reconsideration can only be done once on the same question. Once a motion is acted upon, cannot receive it again in same or substantially similar form until next annual meeting, which is typically the meeting following the election.
      6. Hoffman notes some current directors were not present for the prior schedule discussion and it is important to provide fully loaded costs and show ridership data that was presented at the time, that showed low ridership.
      7. Moretti comments that schedule should not be published and retracted for any reason as that will not be received well from the public. Supports waiting a few more days for proper consideration.
   iii. Lavanture reiterates that motion on the floor is for reconsideration. A vote yes would put the winter schedule back on the floor and a vote no would not put it on the floor for current meeting.
   iv. Gildart conducts roll call vote on motion. Motion fails 8-2.

9. Adjournment
   a. Lavanture asks for motion to adjourn. Pizey moves to adjourn, Hoffman seconds. Meeting adjourned at 9:13 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by: _____

James Luedke, Clerk