



DRAFT Minutes

CASCO BAY ISLAND TRANSIT DISTRICT MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING OF Thursday, October 23rd, 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>

	Webex	<u>Attendance</u> In Person	Phone	Absent
<i>Directors:</i>				
Lavanture (Pres)		X		
Donovan (1 st VP)		X		
Pizey (2 nd VP)	X			
Hoffman (Treasurer)		X		
Luedke (Clerk)		X		
Higgins (Asst. Clrk)		X		
Cooper		X		
Belesca		X		
Cohen		X		
Crowley		X		
Murray		X		
Geary		X		

<i>Staff:</i>				
C. Gildart		X		
Mavodones		X		
Pottle	X			
Bowie		X		
Bryand		X		
Bishop		X		
Charette		X		

<i>Public:</i>				
Sneyd	X			
Heinemann	X			
Call In User 1			X	
Call In User 2			X	
Rogus		X		

1. Call to Order
 - a. President Lavanture called the meeting to order at 7:49 a.m.
 - b. It was noted the meeting was being recorded.
 - c. Gildart did roll call.
2. Approval of meeting minutes from September 25, 2025
 - a. Lavanture asked to move to accept minutes from September 25th. Donovan moved to accept minutes, Higgins seconded. Cohen abstained, all others approved, 11-1.
3. Old Business
4. New Business
 - a. Selection of Nominating Committee to bring forth a recommendation for a slate of Officers at the November 20, 2025 Board meeting.
 - i. Lavanture explains nominating committee selection process.
 - ii. Selection ballot handed out to Board members by Gildart for vote. Gildart collects ballots and she and Charette leave room to tally. Board moves to Item 4.b Tally to be revisited after 4.b.
 - iii. Committee is Donovan, Higgins, and Pizey.
 - b. Consideration and action to approve the FY 2026 Operating Budget as recommended by the Finance Committee
 - i. Bowie introduces discussion. Notes there have been two Finance Committee meetings with deep analysis. Presentation today to be highlights of those discussions and materials, being 6-page detail, and the assumptions. Discussions begins with revenues.
 1. 2026 revenue budget includes small, unidentified, fare increase that would go through PUC approval, but could be achieved in multiple ways.
 2. Inclusive of new passenger vehicle rates from June as well as input on unit count through September.
 3. 23% increase to Commercial vehicles voted on in June also included.
 4. Does not factor in a change to Commercial/large vehicles being measured by length rather than weight.
 5. Notes it has been 17 years since a freight tariff increase and will be looked at. Conservatively have projected a 15% increase. Rate of inflation during that time period would be 46%, which is likely not feasible in one year, but shows that an increase is overdue. No timeline at this point.
 6. Tour and charter pricing changes would equate to 13% increase in revenue.
 7. Expenses largely driven by personnel costs. Factors include additional wage amounts (7% wage increase in March 2026, second half of 9% increase from March of 2025) and additional positions (Financial Planning and Analysis and Maintenance Technician).
 8. Presentation now shows savings for spring and winter schedule changes that were approved at previous Board meetings (only direct costs considered). Shows data and reminds of extreme variability of FTE (full time employees) during a CBL calendar year. Details breakdown of savings from schedule changes, overall savings 91k. Payroll changes at 19% increase. Major factors: CBA, additional people, additional insurance, increase in insurance costs.

9. Vessel expenses shown in presentation: new expenses based on Battery Steele, fuel adjustments based on schedule changes, docking fees for Machigonne from the City, vessel insurance including Battery Steele, and dry docks planned for 2026.
 10. Estimated crew training for Battery Steele important factor with a new vessel with new systems, i.e. charger. 40 hours estimated for charger training + 32 hours for general practice, 101k. Significant investment. 355k of new expense for Battery Steele.
 11. Other expenses detailed are Operations, Terminal, Sales. Total operating loss in 2026 estimated to be 2.7 million versus 2.39 million this year.
 12. Grants in place to cover operating loss and also a surplus of 874k.
- ii. Hoffman commends Bowie on budget review and presentation. Both thoughtful and conservative. Praises Dinsmore's contributions and while cost was ultimately added to budget, it helps understand longer term costs of Battery Steele. Notes freight increase of 15% is basic assumption and should be expected to be larger percentage, but will take time to implement for many reasons. Asks Bowie to comment on changes between maintenance and depreciation with Battery Steele vs. Machigonne.
 1. Important to recognize that with multiple older boats and their initial acquisition costs also being lower, depreciation is currently much lower than can be expected with Battery Steele. 20+million vessel depreciation over 30 years could equate to as much depreciation as all other assets combined. Savings will come from lack of dry dock expenses for hopefully years. Depreciation does not show in operating expense, it shows as non cash expense at audit. Highlighted so it's not a surprise. Asks for any comment.
 2. Cooper asks for dry dock expense versus capitalization. Laurie reminds that any dry dock expenses factored for the 2-year cycle are expenses, but anything that lasts past one dry dock cycle (6 year, 10 year, etc) would be capitalized. I.e. rebuilding engines. Whereas something that occurs every cycle like painting would be expensed.
 - iii. Cooper comments on budget overall. Important to consider carrying costs of all vessels over several years will help inform what is best for the fleet and budget. Questions specific risks; feels falling short of a million in revenue is a possibility. Also questions whether 30k in maintenance for Battery Steele is enough in expense due to new technology. Bowie mentions warranty coverage from partners and a good overall coverage level for unknowns.
 - iv. Higgins commends Bowie on breakdown of complex budget. Bowie mentions support of team.
 - v. Cohen comments on several budget percentages, questions tours and charters.
 1. Dinsmore comments that financial review is underway for upcoming charters.
 2. Lavanture reminds that tours and charters are different in that tours are part of regularly scheduled service, charters also serve a purpose of income. Both can be an important source of local match as it pertains to grant funding.
 3. Bowie notes that tours are part of regularly schedule service and plan is to establish regular cadence of modest price increases to all ticket prices, with inclusion of PUC as part of process.
 - vi. Cohen asks for identification specific legal fees that pertain to PUC process.

1. Lavanture commends consideration of legal budget in draft because of multiple factors, and also supports future breakdowns of such costs. Due to rate increases not for 15-20 years, PUC legal funds were rarely accounted for, but should likely be normal operating procedure moving forward.
 2. Cooper and Hoffman mention that legal fees accounted for less than 1% of budget.
 - vii. Hoffman moves that the Board approve the budget as presented on October 23rd, 2025, Showing revenue 8.5 million, total expenses of 11.3 million, and operating deficit of 2.8 million for approval. Donovan seconds. Lavanture asks for public comment.
 - viii. Public comment:
 1. Kelsey provides own breakdown of rate change for discussion, based on her own model.
 2. Lavanture comments that passenger rate changes and vehicle rate changes have been routinely discussed at Finance Committee meetings. Pre-purchased tickets were an impact but assumptions are tracking well against the model, which led to Bowie showing actuals as well as forward looking projections into budget as recommended.
 3. Rogus asks about salary increase percentage and whether CBA was based on strictly inflation or competitive wages and market or what was benchmark. Bowie comments that comparison to the market was considered. Rogus recommendation is for mandate or suggestions to the staff to build in a budget reduction that shows downward movement.
 4. Bowie references CBA thought process. Mavodones follows with explanation of process and how most recent decision was made. Research was done and brought to Board for recommendation. After discussion with Union, it was decided rates were lower than many other public ferry operations and needed to come up. Were able to bargain within range provided by the Board.
 - ix. Lavanture asks for show of hands from all Board members present for passing of budget. 11-1 in favor, Cohen abstained. Approved. 8:35 a.m.
 - x. Lavanture returns to outcome of Item 4a, nominating committee. Nominating committee confirmed as Donovan, Higgins, and Pizey. Nominating committee meeting should take place between election and November Board meeting. Date can be decided upon during Executive Committee meeting.
- c. Consideration and action to approve the General Manager's goals for the remainder of 2025
- i. Lavanture introduces. Notes that within draft goal presentation, there is a short timeframe left in 2025 and will be focusing on most important, but many will be continued into 2026. Thanks Dinsmore for collaboration and input.
 - ii. Dinsmore goes through goals individually.
 1. Evaluation of CBL organizational structure. Upcoming, planned retirements will require succession planning and making sure everyone is in the correct positions.
 2. Meeting with Union leadership to understand priorities.
 3. Employee survey underway with over 50% participation thus far.
 4. Reviewing FY2026 budget, which has now passed.
 5. Evaluating current Commercial vehicle rate structure and potentially switching to length-based rather than weight.

6. Interacting with community.
7. AVL live vessel tracking app.
8. Internal, preliminary evaluation of freight and customer service and what freight might look like in the future.
9. Asks for questions.
 - a. Hoffman supports current goals and commends Dinsmore for focus and for already starting the process on several. Asks for advance notice on long-term goals whenever possible. Hoffman moves that the Board vote to approve GMs goals as presented. Lavanture seconds.
10. Public comment:
 - a. Kelsey thanks Dinsmore for attending Peaks to meet the candidates.
 - b. Higgins asks for first impressions of position. Dinsmore responds with praise for feedback from community members and welcome received, as well as from CBL management and team.
 - c. Belesca asks to incorporate fixed, hard date for open staffing positions.
 - d. Cohen agrees with Kelsey and thanks Dinsmore for meeting with Peaks residents.
 - e. Donovan supports Dinsmore's goals as well as Belesca's position. Mentions that online realtime (AVL) map has been well received by those down bay.
11. Lavanture asks for show of hands on the approval of GM goals. Unanimous of all those present, 12-0. Approved 8:46 a.m.

5. Workshops

6. General Information Reports

- a. Committee Reports – Pension, Finance, and Operations.
 - i. Pension update by Hoffman. Recent Pension Committee meeting with discussion on voluntary contributions. There was no quorum, but also no vote. Discussion included individuals setting up their own IRAs versus amending the current plan. Decision was not made.
 - ii. Finance – primary focus was on budget, also preliminary data on passengers and vehicles from summer, and what might be learned from vehicle rates to Peaks. August a positive month for revenue which supports CBL year round and all islands.
 - iii. Donovan comments on VAC workshop that was on initial Board agenda. It was pushed back until Bristol Harbor Group can present Preliminary Design Report. Should be ready in near future.
 - iv. Dinsmore gives Operations Update. Accepted Portland Shipyard's bid on Wabanaki going to dry dock in early December. Battery Steele work continues, but even with increased manpower, date has slipped to late March. Carefully monitoring, some chance date could slip into busy season. Bryant to replace Mavodones. Interviews underway for Assistant Director of Marine Operations. Stenmann pre-commissioning work was a success and CBL engineering staff were able to get familiarized. Concrete repairs continue on Peaks then eventually to Chebeague for 4-5 weeks. Maine DOT looking into repainting the Peaks Island transfer bridge tower and refurbishing electrical systems. Also looking into complete replacement of Cliff Island pier.
 - v. Bryant updates that Peaks service will be operating a barge 5 times on coming Monday.

1. Belesca asks for point of contact moving forward for DOT as it pertains to pier and wharf work. Comments on messes and equipment left behind and the need for better design. Mavodones says he will provide the contact person. Belesca suggests public comment will be needed to facilitate a pier that meets the needs of residents and mentions that it ties into next downbay vessel as well. Crowley agrees with comments and mentions Cliff island residents would like a point of contact as well.
- b. Staff Reports
 - i. Dinsmore mentions plans to attend Long Island soup lunch.
 - ii. Dinsmore has been building relationships with regulatory staff. Met with Peter Butler the regional administrator for Federal Transportation on funding. Also NEPRA/Downeaster, and PAX which is local administrator of FTA funds. Grants important to CBL.
7. General Announcements
 - a. Establish next meeting dates (all meetings at 7:45 AM unless indicated otherwise):
 - i. Executive Committee: Thursday, November 6, 2025
 - ii. Finance Committee: Wednesday, November 12, 2025
 - iii. Operations Committee: Thursday, November 13, 2025
 - iv. Board of Directors: Thursday, November 20, 2025
 - 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
9. Directors comment on any items not on the agenda
 - a. Crowley relays dissatisfaction from Cliff Island about lack of weekend mail due to lack of weekend boat as winter schedule as well as reduced service in general.
 - i. Belesca mentions Chebeague community has also been affected and have had many resident complaints.
 - ii. Gildart notes that the Chebeague Island contract has the mail going over on the 10am boat and contract was reviewed prior to vote on the schedule change.
 - iii. Belesca says Post Office has tried to make changes to accommodate later delivery, but logistics issues persist.
 - iv. Luedke and Belesca discuss mail delivery on Chebeague and logistics. Asks Gildart to confirm that contractually, mail is to go out on 10am boat. Gildart confirms. Mavodones says contract has always dictated 10am boat and that timeframe has not been renegotiated at any point.
 - v. Luedke suggests item is taken up at Operations for longer discussion.
10. Adjournment
 - a. Luedke motions to adjourn, Lavanture seconds. All in favor. Meeting adjourned 9:13 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by: _____

James Luedke, Clerk