

Casco Bay Island Transit District Board of Directors Meeting Minutes -Draft Tuesday, March 31, 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/>

	Webex	Attendance In Person	Phone	Absent
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 (8:05)			
Paul Belesca				X
Erik Winchester		X		
Dave Crowley		X		
Heather Moretti		X		
Bill Geary		X		

Staff:				
C. Gildart		X		
Pottle	X			
Dinsmore		X		
Bryant		X (7:50)		
Charette		X		
Bowie		X		

Public:				
Ross Sneyd		X		
Sharoan Cohen	X (7:46)			
Margaret Kelsey	X (8:02)			
Brian	X (8:12)			
Call In User 1			X (7:49)	
Call In User 2			X (7:52)	
Call In User 3			X (8:04)	
Call In User 4			X (8:39)	
Call In User 5			X (8:45)	



1. Call to Order
 - a. Lavanture calls meeting to order
 - b. Charette does roll call
2. Approval of meeting minutes from February 26th, 2026
 - a. Lavanture notes minor edit from previously sent.
 - b. Donovan notes several corrections in section 9, directors' comment, paragraph b: minutes mention Long Island complaints and were verbally phrased as comments; April 21st date mentioned should be May 21st; Minutes mention Donovan referencing mistake, was not phrased that way at meeting.
 - c. Motion to approve with proposed amendment from Donovan. Donovan moves to approve, Luedke seconds. No public comment. Charette conducts roll call. Geary abstains as he was not present, all others approve.
3. Old Business – no old business.
4. New Business
 - a. Consideration and action to amend the August 25, 2025 adoption of the 2025/2026 winter sailing schedule to reinstate the 8am Down Bay weekend ferry run, effective no later than April 18, 2026.
 - i. Lavanture mentions item was added at the request of Donovan and seconded by Belesca by request to the Executive Committee. Gives background: a range of options regarding schedule amendments were first proposed to the Operations Committee in May, 2025. Intent was operational efficiency improvements and reduction of the operating deficit, achieved through both revenue increase and expense reduction. Several options were deliberated over months at Operations Committee and eventual slate was brought to Board for review at October meeting. Of the several changes that were implemented, raised currently is the 8am down bay weekend ferry run. Slate of changes were implemented in October and as of now are set to be reinstated as of Memorial Day weekend when summer schedule begins. Have been in effect for approximately 5 months and looking at a proposed revision for last 5-6 weeks of the winter sailing schedule.
 - ii. Donovan mentions workshops did happen prior to delivering to Board in August for the beginning of winter schedule. Changes in schedule were voted on individually. Specific to the weekend boat only, island residents began to be affected in several ways. It eliminated the inbound mid-morning boat on weekends, specifically for Long Island, the 10:05, and for Great diamond the 10:20. Ridership numbers at the time didn't indicate they were heavily used further down the bay at Cliff and Chebeague. That was a consideration, though cost savings was the major driver. If boat is reinstated now, there would be a reduction in savings of \$20,800. References receiving multiple requests, including a written petition that was submitted in December for that boat to be reinstated. Issues included outbound disruptions, such as mail and freight deliveries on Saturdays, and residents of the outer islands could not get back to town between 6:00am and just before noon, which is a long amount of time. Notes that at time of passing, cost savings was the primary driver and rightfully so as all Board members have duty and responsibility to constituents, but also a duty to Board and the fiscal year and fiscal responsibility that comes with operating costs. As weather improved, more comments began to come in regarding that weekend boat. Discussed with Belesca the mail issue on Saturdays and contractors not being able to get freight on Saturday mornings. Passengers from inner islands working at the Commons on Chebeague not able to get to work on time. Initially brought up issues at December Operations Committee to make directors aware of concerns. There was a discussion about the petition and points raised; decision was made by Donovan to bring the issue back to the January Operations Committee meeting to gather



any input from Board members or anyone else. Wanted to get in front of the Board in March but inadvertently neglected to raise at Executive Committee so it did not make March Board meeting. Likewise, with March Operations Committee meeting, was only discussed briefly due to governance and process. This led to Donovan and Belesca requesting a vote be brought before the Board on this particular section of what was voted on previously in 2025. Reminds Board along with the financial implications of decisions made, any changes to schedule, whether down bay or Peaks Island, will impact someone. In this case, it impacted more than initially thought of at the time. Has submitted any written comments he received to Casco Bay Lines. Asks Dinsmore if there is a count of how many have been received.

1. Dinsmore responds many were received over the weekend and offers to provide a summary of them. Approximately 20 were received, all in favor of reinstatement.
- iii. Donovan notes that he voted against elimination of the boat at the Operations level in August, but then at Board level, ultimately voted in favor of eliminating due to financial implications provided. When discussed again in December, pushed to January to further analyze effects and again, due to financial implications. At this point, focused on down bay islanders. Reasonable request from them and have spoken in favor of getting the boat back on the schedule as soon as possible. Date submitted in amendment is April 18th, which has been understood to give staff enough time to make adjustments and fulfill personnel and also coincides with peak season rates for a familiar date. Asks for questions.
- iv. Luedke notes more than one comment received as well, which is unusual. References as a good example of how incredibly difficult it is to make changes to the down bay schedule when the removal of one weekend boat can affect many residents; keep in mind as part of intended thorough schedule review for 2027. Asks Dinsmore how adding the boat back now will affect staff internally.
 1. Dinsmore responds that as noted in GM notes, staff just recently picked their schedules for next 2-3 months, which is picked by seniority. To implement reinstatement, would have to go through that process again, effectively starting from scratch and reselecting their routes. Also the possibility that in doing that, due to already scheduled time off, overtime could be needed to cover all shifts.
- v. Pizey asks for clarification on how long boat has been out of schedule rotation at this point. Lavanture responds it began in October, so approximately 80-85% of schedule is done.
- vi. Lavanture asks for motion to for public comment and then Board deliberation. Crowley moves to accept public comment and then deliberate as Board.
 1. Cohen comments that Board decisions are not always representative of island communities. Suggests cross subsidization can divide communities. Cites personal examples of difficulty in getting tickets.
 2. Kelsey asks for explanation of what is currently on the floor for public comment. Lavanture responds by quoting the motion on the floor. Kelsey supports reinstatement of boat for sustainability of island communities.
- vii. Lavanture asks for director comment.
 1. Higgins asks for clarification on amendment, whether intent is for reinstating 8am boat just for remainder of winter schedule, or whether it is to be for year-round service. Donovan responds amendment is based on current winter schedule, as was voted on previously. Lavanture agrees, amendment does not pertain to winter schedule for 2026-2027.
 2. Moretti asks, as a new Board member who was not present for previous vote, if there was islander comment regarding potential problems received when vote was initially taken in August.



- a. Donovan responds that there was very limited public comments when workshops began in May, but representatives from outer islands, including Crowley, made strong arguments against elimination of boat as reps for their constituents. Recalls only one written comment received during summer from a Long Island resident related to mail at Chebeague. Since then, many more public comments.
 - b. Lavanture notes there was ample opportunity for public comment as it was workshoped at Operations Committee May-August.
 - c. Crowley reminds he was against elimination of boat from very beginning as were residents of Cliff Island. Residents of Cliff Island believe that as their representative, he voiced their concerns as opposed to writing-in, so that is why they did not write letters. Uneasy about supporting the reinstatement of boat at this time because he is a direct beneficiary. References petition that came from Cliff with support from entire island that noted hardships caused, including loss of weekend mail, and Board chose at that time, December, not to make changes. Ultimately supports now, but hardships were raised previously to Board.
3. Lavanture agrees with statement by Crowley that he and Belesca were strong advocates for perceived impacts that could occur to their respective islands as a result of removing this boat. Despite petition and letter from Cliff, Operations and Board chose not to make changes and CBITD is now 80-85% through implementation. As representative for islands at large, why now as opposed to when previously raised. Board as a whole needs to make difficult decisions. Acknowledges Luedke's comments that changing the schedule affects islanders, but that changing the rate structure also affects islanders. Variables to reduce the operating deficit include raising revenue and to decrease operating expenses. During last 2-3 years, larger focus has been on raising revenue, and to a lesser extent, focusing on operating expenses. Recognizes that changes made to winter schedule, including the 1pm down bay boat also affecting Great Diamond Island and the 8am weekend boat were major changes. Decisions will never be easy and never likely to please everyone. Notes Dinsmore's GM Report data shows that combined ridership across full 6 weeks would equate to 227 riders; Dinsmore corrects with inbound/outbound combined it is 351.
- a. Crowley notes that if compared to populations of those islands, it is a large percentage of populations.
 - b. Luedke questions which islands are included, Dinsmore responds Long, Cliff, and Chebeague were included, not Great Diamond.
 - c. Donovan mentions he has had comments from Great Diamond residents who are affected by 7:45 or 10:20 boat. Residents mentioned their intent to write letters. Dinsmore confirms letters were received from Diamond residents.
4. Luedke responds to Lavanture's previous comments that while changing the prices of passes does impact those down bay, schedule changes are far more impactful because it affects residents' ability to make it to work.
5. Pizey notes that with schedule change having already been in effect for most of winter, residents' routines have likely changed.
6. Luedke mentions that chasing smaller dollar numbers while impacting the schedule, may not be the most effective way to reduce the budget deficit.
7. Lavanture notes Finance Chair Hoffman's current technical difficulties in potential inability to participate in discussion. \$128k saved is not a small amount. Between



the change on the 1pm boat and this weekend boat, savings looked comparable to what had been targeted from increase to vehicle rates, so a substantial effort was made. Only so many levers can be utilized for savings. Biggest cost drivers are Personnel, vessels, and fuel, which is schedule. Does not personally feel that raising revenue continually is sustainable solution. Board has obligation to protecting affordability, and way out of operating deficit cannot be continually raising revenue.

8. Higgins asks about 20k figure and what timeframe that is based on, Bowie notes that is a 20k less savings for 5 week period.
9. Geary recognizes that any changes to schedule have large implications on staffing and crew. Asks Dinsmore for staff decision. Dinsmore responds that staff decision would be to stick with original decision and not reinstate at this time. Geary agrees and suggests this issue should be brought up prior to next winter schedule discussion with workshops and more public input.
10. Winchester understands concerns of down bay islanders. Suggests an automatic review at Board meeting following a schedule change to evaluate. Staff considerations as presented by Dinsmore led to realization that staff will be affected by another change. Also recognizes that now it is a small length of time before it becomes a non-issue.
11. Donovan appreciates crew schedule issue raised by Dinsmore in GM report, but can be addressed. Regarding cons mentioned in GM report, one was signaling to islands they did not need to advocate during public meetings. Donovan supports comments from Crowley that as island representatives they advocate on behalf of their residents. Report mentions that Cliff and Chebeague did not raise concerns during public process but they did through their representatives. Petition was also dismissed as informal. Does not agree with Dinsmore comments that decision making process will not be upheld by changing decision now. Reminds of extending the spring season to later in May when it had previously been in April, which has also had effects on island population. At Operations meetings, consistency was repeatedly mentioned as it pertained to issues such as priority boarding frequency. System allows for changes after the fact, when secondary consequences are not readily available and show up later. Board should be able to identify problems and fix as needed. This change has been advocated for by the people that have responded with comments.
12. Lavanture responds that the point of consistency also applies to consistency in decision making process. Schedule change has now been implemented for 80% of the time it was scheduled for, consistency of keeping it as currently scheduled for expectations of staff and constituents. Speaks to unintended consequences that have been mentioned today and notes that, aside from mail issues, that potential impacts were taken into account. Any schedule or rate changes comes with impacts. Current impacts are in line with expectations and consistent with aims and objectives that were known when the Board passed this in October.
13. Higgins notes discussion and decision making leading to initial vote was extensive and done correctly. Does not fault process or decision that was initially made. Despite extensive preparation, does not mean Board will always get decision right. Regardless of decision today, commends Donovan for bringing up for future discussion, but a plan was put in place that has almost reached its end and is not in favor of going back to change initial decision for one month. Open to more discussion moving forward on any schedule changes.



14. Pizey asks about urgency of reinstatement now, versus fall with new schedule. Comments about re-adjusting schedule should likely have been addressed within 5 months that boat has been out of service. Crowley responds that islanders are making it work but are getting home 2-3 hours later than they would have. People will adjust as needed to schedule changes, but it still makes their lives more difficult.
 15. Crowley suggests that current schedule has a large amount of redundancies that are inefficient. Boats leaving 15 minutes apart are a better target for saving substantial money. Next summer and winter schedules need to be looked at for how boats can run more efficiently.
 - b. Charette conducts roll call vote on amendment: Consideration and action to amend the August 25, 2025 adoption of the 2025/2026 winter sailing schedule to reinstate the 8am Down Bay weekend ferry run, effective no later than April 18, 2026.
 - i. Vote: Pizey Yes, Luedke Yes, Higgins No, Donovan Yes, Hoffman No, Cooper No, Crowley Yes, Geary No, Winchester No, Lavanture No, Moretti Yes. Motion fails, 6-5.
5. Workshops – no workshops
 6. General Information Reports
 - a. Committee Reports
 - i. Lavanture mentions Hoffman has asked her to present on behalf of Finance Committee. Finance Committee continuing to hold workshops on the proposed passenger rate adjustment. First of what is intended to be regular cadence of reviews. Fare proposal being workshopped increases annual passes 0.7%, 90 day passes by small amount, and increases single tickets in peak season to market rates in line with CTC/Chebeague Ferry and Maine State Ferry, by \$3/ticket. Proposal also included, responding to long standing feedback from Peaks Islanders about the cost of single tickets for family members, a friends and family discount ticket. Proposed tickets would be available to all annual passholders for all islands. Each passholder can purchase up to 12 tickets at off-peak rates, which is equivalent to half price. Special Finance Committee, Wednesday, April 8th for 3rd workshop on items with planned action to vote on a recommendation. Regularly scheduled Finance Committee meeting will be April 15th with plan to review draft audit for fiscal year 2025. Berry Dunn will present audit to the full Board during May meeting; Bowie confirms. Board will vote at that meeting whether to accept the audit.
 - ii. Donovan Operations Committee discussed residential boarding pass, including presentation from GM with data on usage, data concerning different boats. No motions came out of meeting to be brought before the Board. Encourages staff to continue to monitor it and the same for Peaks Island representatives; should there be a need for further discussion, bring before the Committee. Another example of a policy put into place that needs occasional review to see if it being helpful to the organization. There will be an Operations Committee meeting in April.
 - b. Staff Reports
 - i. Dinsmore mentions that Maquoit came out of dry dock, was sea trialed, and is back in service. 3 new deckhands that completed their designated senior deckhand training. Encourages all to read the documents that are posted online regarding rate change and welcomes any feedback. New peak season ticket policy to take effect, no longer accepting blue tickets; refunded or exchanged towards peak season tickets. Communicating that message as much as possible via posters, website, but asks Board members to mention to their constituents. Presentation is on website or take a photo of poster in terminal.



- ii. Met with operations manager of janitorial staff as it pertains to bathrooms in terminal. Occasional comment on Facebook regarding uncleanliness. Doing best to mitigate, but cannot keep perfect without 18-24 hour coverage.
- iii. Dinsmore notes that Battery Steele is still scheduled to be floated off of dry dock as of Friday. Small contingent going down for launching ceremony.
- iv. Down bay boat is moving forward. Received final design from Bristol Harbor Group and staff has recommended advancing project into design phase. Expecting that to be another 9-12 month process with discussions and meetings that Donovan will lead.
- v. Maine DOT will be working on the Peaks ramp in the fall or possibly early 2027. Will involve it being out of service for weeks to 30 days. Likely will use Lionel Plante Associates (LPA) to provide vehicle service during that time. More detail to come but making the Board and public aware.
- vi. Bryant provides update on Peaks transfer bridge. A bad circuit needs to be replaced but had to find part, which was overnighted. Plan is for fixing today with the intent of being back online for 12:15 to Peaks.
- vii. Donovan asks Dinsmore to research barge costs, specifically what is due to the Machigonne and what is due to the bridge. If DOT is responsible for bridge, are they financially responsible for any of this lack of service. Likewise, when bridge is down next winter, will financial implications be to DOT or will CBITD shoulder the full responsibility for that.
 1. Dinsmore responds that any planned work by DOT has a component factoring in barge service. Current budget for upcoming Peaks Island project allows for 100k towards barge service fees. CBITD has been attempting to negotiate that number higher so as to maintain current service levels, but was not accomplished. Dinsmore notes he raised issue today so that prior to project beginning, Board can decide if CBITD wants to continue uninterrupted service, providing every trip, or instead accept a reduced service level to keep the funding and cost of the project within the State's allocated funds. Suggests researching how many times the ferry ramp is malfunctioning and CBITD pays for that service. Proposes matrix to identify when it to provide uninterrupted with LPA versus when to interrupt service to resolve an unexpected issue.
- viii. Lavanture suggests comparing barge subcontracting in a non-dry dock year, versus a dry dock year as dry docks tend to be a major driver of subcontracting expenses. Also notes that CMP can cause interruptions, not just bridge and boat. Welcomes matrix concept Dinsmore mentioned.

7. General Announcements

a. Establish next meeting dates (all meetings at 7:45 AM unless indicated otherwise):

- i. Executive Committee: Thursday, April 2, 2026
- ii. Finance Committee: Wednesday, April 8th *
Wednesday, April 15, 2026 *
- iii. Operations Committee: Thursday, April 9, 2026
- iv. Board of Directors: Thursday, April 23, 2026
- v. Personnel Committee: TBD
- vi. Government Relations Committee: TBD
- vii. Pension Committee: TBD

* Rate discussion only item on the agenda for April 8th meeting to allow time for discussion. April 15th will be normally scheduled Finance committee with primary topic being audit draft presentation. 15th will be meeting in which monthly financials are discussed and other items can be added to the agenda.



8. Public comment on any items not on the agenda
 - a. Kelsey asks about progress on response to the PUC directive for May 15th.
 - i. Lavanture responds that the team is continuing to conduct analysis as directed by the PUC in support of a timely response to the May 15th timeline. Kelsey asks if CBITD has been obtaining information from the public. Lavanture confirms.
9. Directors comment on any items not on the agenda
 - a. Donovan asks when Board will be updated on PUC directive progress. Lavanture responds that the plan is for it to be discussed at Executive Committee
10. Adjournment
 - a. Lavanture asks for motion to adjourn. Crowley moves to adjourn, Higgins seconds. Charette conducts roll call. Unanimous of all present. Meeting adjourned at 9:06 a.m.

DRAFT