

**CASCO BAY ISLAND TRANSIT DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING OF**

May 16, 2025

56 Commercial Street, Portland, ME

In Person/Video Conference/Phone

*Video of entire meeting is online [here](https://vimeo.com/showcase/11470098/video/1091280828).

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

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

<i>Public:</i>				
Ross Sneyd		X		
Barring Coughlin			X	
Michelle Winchester		X		
Anne Coughlin			X	
Bill Hall			X	
Mark Rogus			X	
Mary Lou Wendell			X	
Keith Hults		X		
Julia Nord			X	
Margaret Kelsey		X		
Alex Weber			X	
Dick Newcomb		X		
Steve Anderson			X	

Ann Foster		X		
Call In User 1			X	
Call In User 2			X	
Call In User 3			X	
Call In User 4			X	
Call In User 5			X	
Call In User 6			X	
Call In User 7			X	
Call In User 8			X	
Call In User 9			X	
Call In User 10			X	
Call In User 11			X	
Call In User 12			X	
Call In User 13			X	
Call in User 14			X	

1. Call to Order
 - a. President Lavanture called the meeting to order at 7:46 AM.
 - b. It was noted the meeting is being recorded
2. Business
 - a. Lavanture thanked everyone for being in attendance and noted that this meeting is a continuation of the public hearing from May 9, 2025. This is part of a multi-phase approach to address operating loss via revenue increase and expense reduction. The vehicle fares have not been raised in 17 years. There have been five public workshops to get to this point. Board has done robust analysis around analyzing data, inflation, and comparable research. Entered May 16th public hearing with two proposals, there was an original proposal and alternate scenario proposal (as a result of Finance Committee deliberation). The May 16th meeting ended with a motion on the floor which is to increase the bottom rates for commercial vehicles to align with lower passenger vehicle rates and adjust the rest of the vehicle rates accordingly using proposal two (\$170 peak season general rate ticket).
 - b. Lavanture asked for public comment with consideration to commercial rates
 - c. Belesca – understands motions and amendments were confusing, would like to not place additional burden on staff. From parliamentary perspective, he would like to reconsider last action of the Board.
 - d. Belesca moved, seconded by Pizey to reconsider the Donovan amendment to increase the bottom rates for commercial vehicles to align with lower passenger vehicle rates and adjust the rest of the vehicle rates

accordingly using proposal two (\$170 peak season general rate ticket). The motion passed 10-2 (Murray, Belesca, Crowley, Hoffman, Pizey, Cohen, Higgins, Cooper, Geary, and Lavanture voted in favor; Donovan and Luedke voted against)

- e. Higgins – looks at the process this has required and by all measures has been thoughtful, responsible and analytical. Process has looked at how to decrease the impact of rates changes on islanders and it has accomplished that goal. Make sure this incredible service to the island remains financially viable and sustainable, once again back at original proposal.
- f. Hoffman – Remains with Higgins and of course have played a leading role in discussing, modifying and listening to islander feedback. However, understands the value of compromise and believe the alternate proposal was offered in good faith. Would like to see commercial rates split out and hear/consider whether to move on the Donovan amendment, which has not gone through a full public process.
- g. Cohen – couldn't disagree more with Higgins. Petition has 170 signatures in opposition of this proposal.
- h. Luedke – amendment was well intentioned. Received a lot of public feedback about commercial rates. Still thinks original intent stands. Has serious reservations about massive increase and how that will impact the bottom line, thinks it is disingenuous. Casco Bay Lines is funded by federal dollars, every tax payer in Country and State of Maine is subsidizing island residents. To put more of a burden on visitors is wrong and urges board to consider that in their next action.
- i. Donovan – completely agrees with Luedke. Proposal one single vehicle rates are outrageously high. Not fair to seasonal residents or visitors. Process since October of last year, input has been good all along. In current proposal, commercial pays less than regular cars and didn't think that was right, amendment addressed that.
- j. Murray – has staff been able to quantify proposed commercial rate increase.
- k. Lavanture – wants to be clear about position, coming in to the hearing last week very much wanted to give the \$190 scenario a fair hearing, thinks it is best interest of District in terms of fiduciary obligation. Respects Luedke's point about tax payers and thinks intent of this proposal is to reduce reliance on operating subsidies. Have heard public comment and Directors comment about the magnitude of increase in year one and can be supportive of alternate scenario for passenger vehicle rate. Values process and rigor and uncomfortable supporting something that hasn't

been fully evaluated or modeled with respect to Donovan's amendment for commercial rates. We need to do work to fix it but we need to do it right. Remain not supportive of Donovan amendment but can support alternate scenario.

- l. Luedke – point out how we got here. Wants Board to remember we already voted on alternate proposal and it was voted down.
- m. Hoffman – In response to Luedke, would support reconsideration. Pass holder rates are considered to be reasonable and use higher rates on single tickets to in accordance with law to help support (counsel even used subsidized) fairer rates for people to be able to afford to live and work on the island. We do need to increase rates regularly and hopefully those percentage will be reasonable, modest and incremental. Doesn't necessarily disagree with Donovan's rates but with process. Commercial rates are stop gap and just for a short period of time.
- n. Cohen – So many problems with this proposal. Not everyone can buy a pass. We need to start fresh. What are we facing with petition heading to PUC. We need to deal with expenses. Finds process frustrating and futile, over 170 signatures say this isn't ok.
- o. Crowley – Speaking on the Donovan amendment, it is not ideal but it is a compromise. This does not take Finance Committee out of still addressing commercial rates, this puts in a stop gap measure. Would support Donovan amendment because of that, not everything he wanted but that is the way life is.
- p. Higgins – although prior comments stand in support of proposal one, wants all to know he is open to compromised position between proposal one and alternate proposal. Commercial vehicle rates on Peaks are very complex. Got to be due diligence before we make a decision.
- q. Geary – Clarifying commercial rates
- r. Cooper – Commercial piece first, initial reaction was quite supportive but will say process wise, would like to see this go through the vetting process we have gone through with the other pieces. Thinks we need to be looking at size and utilization of space and work with staff on constraints. On the other side of vehicle rates, most supportive of second amendment that came out of Finance Committee, good discussion came out of Finance. Wishes we had better pass data. Focus on raising revenue over last year, timely and supportive of that. Focus on expense and taking a hard look at cost drivers (seeing improvement on fuel).
- s. Lavanture moved, Pizey seconded, to divide the question, address first non-commercial vehicle rates and then commercial rates. Lavanture withdrew the motion.

- t. The Donovan amendment (from 5/9 meeting) failed 7-5 (Belesca, Luedke, Donovan, Geary, Crowley voted in favor; Murray, Cohen, Hoffman, Higgins, Pizey, Lavanture and Cooper voted against)
- u. Lavanture moved reconsideration of Luedke amendment (alternate proposal two or \$170 peak season general ticket), Hoffman seconded. The vote passed 11-1 (Lavanture, Hoffman, Murray, Higgins, Cooper, Geary, Luedke, Donovan, Crowley, Belesca, Pizey voted in favor; Cohen voted against)
- v. Vote on Luedke Amendment. The vote passed 8-4 (Lavanture, Hoffman, Murray, Higgins, Cooper, Geary, Belesca, Pizey voted in favor; Cohen, Donovan, Crowley, Luedke voted against)
- w. Public Comment
 - i. Mark Rogus – Peaks Island
 - ii. Mary Lou Wendell – Peaks Island
 - iii. Steve Anderson – Peaks Island
 - iv. Barbara Carter- Peaks Island
 - v. Ann Foster – Peaks Island
 - vi. Michelle Winchester – Peaks Island
 - vii. Keith Hults – Peaks Island
 - viii. Margaret Kelsey – Peaks Island
- x. Public Comment was closed at 9:18
- y. Directors Comment
 - i. Cohen – appreciate all the input and couldn't agree more with M. Kelsey. Hopes proposal doesn't pass. Need a whole new approach to raising revenue and start again.
 - ii. Hoffman – Appreciate all of the public comments circulating and have many comments and discussion with people. Very large percentage of islanders have passes. Many islanders' opinions and guidance made a difference. We have something less than perfect but a good plan on which to move forward in pursuit of goals of maintaining affordability and also being responsible to the financial needs of the District.
 - iii. Donovan – Can't supports Hoffman's comments, no data on affordability. Without supporting data it is not a fair statement to say who can afford passes.
 - iv. Lavanture – thank both fellow Directors for thoughtful consideration and deliberation and appreciate robustness of debate. Similarly want to thank members of public who have given thoughtful comments and feedback.

- z. Lavanture moved, Pizey seconded, to adopt proposal on a pilot basis. The vote failed 8-4 (Murray, Pizey, Cohen, Belesca, Crowley, Donovan, Geary Luedke voted against; Hoffman, Higgins, Cooper, Lavanture voted in favor)
 - i. Public Comment on amendment
 - 1. Margaret Kelsey – Peaks Island
 - 2. Barbara Carter – Peaks Island
 - 3. Mark Rogus – Peaks Island
- aa. Lavanture presented the main motion (Main motion w/ Luedke amendment adopts alternate scenario and 23% stop gap increase to commercial vehicle rates relative to current tariff). The vote passed 8-4 (Murray, Pizey, Belesca, Hoffman, Higgins, Geary, Cooper, Lavanture voted in favor; Cohen, Crowley, Donovan, Luedke voted against)
- bb. Margaret Kelsey wanted the record to show there was only 30 minutes for public sentiment at a public hearing.
- cc. Adjourn
 - i. Luedke moved to adjourn at 9:40; Lavanture seconded. The vote was unanimous of all present.