

Maine State Ferry Advisory Board

Thursday 11/30/23 10:30 AM via ZOOM

1. Roll Call

Islands: Jon Emerson/North Haven, Alan Barker/Vinalhaven, John King/Islesboro, Duncan Bond/Frenchboro, Eva Murray/Matinicus, Denis Damon/Bass Harbor, Kathy Clark, Sonny Sprague/Swan's Island, and Hank Berg, Casco Bay Lines.

MDOT: Bill Pulver, Henry McFerren, Melissa Goocher, Bill Geary, Derek Dostie, Matt Higgins, and Joel Perry.

2. Introduction of Visitors

Peter Drury, Bill Banks, Alex Zipparo, Marjorie Stratton, and Representative Lydia Crafts.

Jon Emerson- Want to congratulate Hank on his retirement and thank him for his years on the Advisory Board. I have felt as your contributions as a sister ferry system down in Casco Bay that we have benefited from your experience, and we appreciate what you have given to this board.

I think that almost everyone knows that Phil Crossman is going off the Advisory Board as of the year of the year as that I understood. Although I think he stepped aside for zoom members to be on now and officially on. Alan, from Vinalhaven, who has worked in the ticket office down there and has probably more experience on how things work and Jenn Freezor who is not here today, who will also be a good member. I think now Vinalhaven is up to full speed in term of advisory and back up. I also want to say a few words about Phil. I feel like in the last few years I've gotten to know him better. I've always known him somewhat through his writing and it's hard to escape hearing from Phil even living on North Haven. We all get the Wind, which is the Vinalhvaen newspaper which he writes in there. I have gotten to know him better recently as Vinalhaven's long standing Advisory member, not only serving himself a long time but his family had a lot to do with the ferry service. His family had a historical bloodline which made a good match. I have definitely admired him, and he is someone who can get under your skin maybe, but I admired that he knew what was worth pushing and learned from him a mentor and I know I am going to miss him, and I hope he is going to remain in contact and will share his opinions.

Those are the 2 announcements I wanted to make.

3. Approval of the Minutes

Jon Emerson- Is there a motion to approve the minutes?

Alan Barker- Motion to approve.

Eva Murray- I second

Jon Emerson- Thank you. The minutes have been moved and seconded. Any discussion? I don't see anyone wanting to speak. All in favor? Any opposed? The minutes pass unanimously from September 21, 2023, meeting.

4. **Communications**

a) **To or by the Board**

Jon Emerson- I don't know of any in particular. Any from any other board?

b) **To or by the MSFS/MDOT**

Bill Geary- I did receive some official communication, but before we get into that, I would like to say a few things about Phil Crossman. Being relatively new to Maine State Ferry as the Director just hitting my 6-month mark just a few days again, more specifically, I know Phil personally being from Vinalhaven. I know that he has been a long standing member of the Advisory Board and while my time might be short working with Phil I know his impact working here has been very big and his interest for Vinalhaven and all the islands has been very impactful and he will be missed here at the Advisory Board and I know that Vinalhaven certainly appreciates everything he has done and he has been looking out for all of the islands and I appreciate that. He had been very welcoming to me when I came onboard, personally welcoming me and congratulating me and that really meant a lot to me, and I wish him nothing but the best.

- **Official Communication:** Letter from the North Haven Select Board, regarding the upcoming tariff to the commissioner. Thanking him for coming down the recent Advisory Board meeting and discussing the proposed models of the 60/40 and truck model. However, in the end of the day, concerns with the truck model and concerns with increases and we have received this letter. At this point our final tariff recommendation has been sent out that Bill Pulver sent out to everyone on the Advisory Board yesterday that we will through the official process. But everyone here was able to get a look at this. I think this is a good compromise of the 60/40 and truck model and we certainly can talk about that now if anyone would like to. Bill P did a great job outlining the changes. We scaled back the truck per foot and looking at 60/40 for the off-peak rate and passenger rate while keeping with need to get to 18% increase in the fare. That was our intent was to listen to what the Advisory board had to say, take the input, and find good common ground and optimistic that the model and will go through proper channels and comment period.

Marjorie Stratton: Would like a copy of the proposal that was sent yesterday. I am not on the advisory board but would like a copy of that.

Bill Geary: Yes, we can do that.

Alex Zipparo: Can I also get a copy of that as well?

Eva Murray- Is now an appropriate time for feedback or comments?

Jon Emerson- Why not now?

Eva Murray- Would like to re-state officially must do things differently for different islands if possible. We in Matinicus, would still like to be on the truck model, and have all the increase on the vehicles. Where we are such a small part of the whole system that shouldn't impact anyone else. This would be a great thing to say that to our passengers that there is no increase for walk aboard passengers. As I am most of the truck freight I could say in good conscious, there will not be rioting in the streets if its unevenly distributed that way. If doesn't work out that way, we understand that too but that is our preference.

John King- I got the model, and I sent it to the Selectboard on Islesboro, for feedback, no response yet. I do want to thank those making decisions, regarding the process. MDOT

and MSFS have been far more superior than in the past, very much appreciated. We don't have any feedback yet and will reserve the right to do so in the future. The one immediate reaction I have is if \$37.50 Peak Season Vehicle ticket is \$37.50, we better get our nose to the grindstone and getting parking in Lincolnville, is because I think people will start walk on a lot more often than they do now. The parking in Lincolnville is scary in the summer, it is scary now. Bill Geary, perhaps we can discuss this offline, an ounce of prevention may be worth a pound of cure 6 months down the road.

Jon Emerson- Anyone in the room or zoom, have any comments or questions?

Bill Pulver- I want to thank John King for that sentiment. I think this process, the way we followed it, is the way we think it should happen. The collaboration and the efforts of the Advisory Board members to go back to their governing bodies, select boards has to over the various scenarios. We welcome the collaboration as it is very helpful. The Commissioner supports our latest Tariff proposal. We will take a look at Matinicus, Eva. I would like to say John with the parking that we have some new news this morning.

- McLaughlin's Seafood in Lincolnville is for sale, and maybe a benefit to the ferry service. This morning we executed a purchase and sale of this property. We do have to do our due diligence period to make sure it works for our needs. Not a done deal but we have taken that step as we have started a study for that space.
- Additionally, we are looking at a parking deck in Rockland, so engineers are looking at the feasibility and cost associated with this.

John King- That is great news Bill.

Jon Emerson- Regarding getting McLaughlin's, that's about the quickest response to an offer, I've heard of that happening. Echoing John King, this process might have been a little harder on the front end getting to as good of a compromise as we can be, but it will be much easier on the back end, I am guessing. The hearings, I would say would have that much of an issue, I think the hard work has been done. I want to thank the collaborate nature of this round. I'm not a fan of the increase but to have it work out where we hope the best we can.

Are there any additional Tariff related questions?

c) **Legislative Review**

Jon Emerson- Glad this point is on here. Just a check in, is there anything additional that needs to be discussed? Would that be you, Bill Pulver?

Bill Pulver- Nothing, new to report, this is the same as last meetings. A lot of things have been changing since Covid, have some opportunities with the federal bipartisan infrastructure law to get some funding. Picture is dynamic but nothing new to report.

Jon Emerson- Lydia Crafts, as being on the Transportation Committee, this may interest you, anything from you.

Lydia Crafts- Is this in regard to federal money coming into the State?

Jon Emerson – More to do with the ferry system and how they are budgeted and paid for. Bill P, you could probably explain this better than I can.

Bill Pulver- I would add Representative Crafts that the Transportation Committee as the Commissioner to take a look at the governors around the funding and what other options there are and a letter that was sent.

Lydia Crafts: Yes, I am aware of that.

5. **Reports of the Board**

Jon Emerson- Time to get together and have a little report from each island. Then the harder part is to put those together into one report and Phil Crossman would do this, but since he is no longer with us, so I would like a volunteer. I really don't want to have to appoint anyone. But these individual reports, would be collected from each island and put into one report. I really hope someone will volunteer. This is important that this goes to the Commissioner and is legislative that this report is done and to make recommendations. I hope that someone sees this as an opportunity to help out.

John King- I thought Phil Crossman did put out the report for this year.

Jon Emerson – I spoke with him this morning and he said he was good to take over in the future. It's big shoes to fill and will promise to help.

Jon King: If Phil gives me a hand with this year's report, I will reluctantly agree as every primary island gives me their part.

Eva Murray- I think that is all goes well you are put compiling the reports. Am I right though that previous years before Phil got involved, this was a formality and very brief and minimal.

John King – I don't think it was done by the Advisory Board; I think Mark Higgins wrote this for the Advisory Board.

Eva Murray – sometimes there's a lot to say and sometimes there isn't.

Jon Emerson – this is the formal report, and it is on the record as I understand this from Phil.

Allen Barker – Do you have a copy of last years?

Eva Murray – I don't

Allen Barker – Phil sent me a copy and it looks like it was sent in of August of last year.

Jon Emerson – We have not always been on time. That's why I am starting the discussion now.

Eva Murray – So are you talking about the one that is due in June or the that was due previously.

John King- Did Phil Crossman put something together for June 2023?

Jon Emerson – I think so and this will give us time to think what needs to be put into and thank you John for volunteering for this additional duty as he already has a lot on his plate.

Dennis Damon- It Seems to me, that priority status of the annual report letter was higher when Phil than it is with the rest of the committee. We do have a statutory obligation to do such a report and I remember and perhaps others as well do, and Phil wanted comments from other islands on what wanted to be in the letter. He also has cited on occasion the statute title to do that as I recall it is an update of what we are going and a look forward of what we should be doing and alerting the Commissioner to that. I will say and have shared this with Phil, so it is not speaking out of turn, one of these early attempts maybe his first was way to eservice in my way of looking at things and I submitted rewritten portions in an effort to calm the rhetoric, and in some portions, he did but not all of them. I would submit as I did to him, it is a lot easier to get favorable attention of whoever is in the position of Commissioner of Transportation to get action with honey rather than vinegar. I would ask us to keep that in mind. If there are needs that need to be address, they ought to be and should be but not in the form of damnations. Just a point.

Jon Emerson- Thank you Denis. I see this an example of us continuing to move forward in the spirit of collaboration that is happening these days.

Allan Barker- I have the email from Phil the bylaw is state in Title 23, section 4304. Looks like it was done on June 1st of 2023, so this year is done. It states does an annual report describing the present and future needs of the ferry service. Phil included the portion from the Finance Subcommittee and then from each island.

Dennis Damon – That seems to be very appropriate and well done.

Jon Emerson- Anything additional?

6. **Reports of the Ferry Service**

a) **Ridership**

Joel Perry- For the month of October comparing year over year up 2,000 riders and November we were actual down about a hundred riders due to missed trips due to weather. I didn't print these because not everyone is here and it is hard to see on the screen, but at any time if you want copies, or have questions about ridership, please reach out. I'd be happy to get what you need.

Alex Zipparo – I can attest to that; you are amazing at getting us that data.

John king- Regarding Ridership Data, we need more information for truck traffic, would be great.

Joel Perry – I should be able to, I just have to dig in a little deeper. This is what we are currently working with RocketRez on is streamlining the data in a better format for us to use.

Hank Berg- I can share since we also use RocketRez that their reporting system is really poor, but they have recently made some investments to improve that.

Joel Perry – we had a meeting with them a month ago and they shared that same information and have hired more people into this category.

b) **Vessel Status Report**

Derek Dostie- I'll take this.

- Richard G Spear- extensive dry dock with the grounding. Mid November after a lot of work repairs were completed. Delays with fabrication of rudders and some other components. Sea trials were successful on 11/21 and returned her to service immediately and able to alleviate the holiday rush.
- Charles Philbrook- With the Spear being at Rockland Marine – this delayed the scheduled dry docking of the Philbrook. Will be over there for a while for the required maintenance and preservation work.
- Almer Dinsmore, continuing the build at Senseco Marine in RI., Work progressing well with wiring and internal systems and next will be placement of engines and generators. Most of the coating have been completed. Anticipate delivery for late spring or early summer.
- Charles Norman Shay- In Bayou La Batre, Alabama at Steiner. Most of the hull coatings are complete. Representatives from MSFS/MDOT visited in early November her progress.
- Operations update: The South Ramp/Rockland Terminal- is finally back in business and repairs completed yesterday.
- Ramp Bridge/ Bass Harbor- the storm earlier this week sheered the cable and manually operating the ramp right now. Working with Prock Marine to get repaired soon and hopefully in the next day.

All other vessels are operating well.

Jon Emerson- Is that in electronic form?

Derek Dostie – Can send that to after the meeting.

Eva Murray- What is the estimated date of delivery for the Charles Norman Shay?

Derek Dostie- April 2024

Dennis Damon- Is there a launching date for the Almer Dinsmore, has it been set?

Derek Dostie- No there isn't yet. It is still up on the rail.

Dennis Damon – I am assuming there will be a christening of the vessel when it is launched?

Bill Geary- Yes, there will be a christening of the vessel, when launched from the dry dock to the water in Rhode Island. I've been in contact with Mr. Dinsmore via letters and email and I know that he wants to be involved in that with family down there. We will also be doing an official ceremony here in Rockland as well and as we get closer to those dates, I will let the Advisory committee know. Same procedure with the Shay down in Alabama.

Jon Emerson- Anything additional with the vessels?

c) Staffing Report

Matt Higgins- I am the Human Resource Manager for DOT/MSFS. Currently we are in the process of interviews for some Relief A/B's and made some offers to 2 candidates.

- CSR- North Haven- Full Time and Intermittent positions are posted with an interview tomorrow. Recently hired an intermittent position with start date 12/4/23.
- Assistant Port Engineer- Rockland- Closed and scheduling interviews upcoming week.
- Ferry Captain- North Haven- Full Time which is posted.

John King- Are Lincolnville and Islesboro Terminals fully staffed.

Matt Higgins- Yes, they are.

Peter Drury- How many new Full Time permanent have been created in the last 18 months?

Matt Higgins – I don't have that information for you.

Bill Geary- I don't have the official number off the top of my head, but I'll get you that number. You asked for how many full-time positions have been created in the past 18 months.

Peter Drury- Yes, part of my curiosity is also the budgeting part of that and also the fully burdened cost of these positions. We have been talking about an 18% cost increase over the next 4 years and wondering if this is relevant to the conversation of the fare increase.

Jon Emerson- I can add that we are really glad to have our North Haven terminal inching towards being fully staffed. Having one person serve there for months if not years has been tough. Tracy Ames has come over a few days a week to fill in and that was a really good idea to give Beth a relief.

Is there anything additional for the staffing reports?

d) Financial Reports/Financial Subcommittee Report

Melissa Goocher- only a few things to report from the financial subcommittee minutes to stand out to me:

- The repairs there are a little bit of timing difference. The reports show where the work for the Thompson and Spear starting to come through.
- Personal Services- those are what they are really.
- Professional Services- This is when contract payments are coded, they go to a generic code and we don't budget to the generic code but budget to a category such as cleaning, repairs to building or vessels. If you want to see this, I can change this until the beginning of the fiscal year.

- Revenues are leveling out and nothing that really stands out unless anyone has any questions?

Jon Emerson- Anyone have any questions? I will say it was hard for me to pick everything out.

John King- So the Sub Committee, met on Nov 29th, and it's just a continuation of what we talked about last meeting:

Revenues reasonable robust but getting into off peak season.

- Expenses are pretty much in keeping.
- Long discussion on the unfunded liability – Thank you Bill Pulver for sending the link for a call in and a light at the end of the tunnel that may satisfy this in the next few years.
- The IT expenses and the reservation and if spending that much money they should be working on a more robust system.

Jon Emerson- Do you see that if you can scan a paper ticket you can see the uses in the near future?

Joel Perry – I wouldn't say near future. Online reservations we are going to get there. Bill G and I spoke this morning about our next meeting with them shortly and moving in the right direction.

Jon Emerson – At least on North Haven right now with making a reservation 30 days ahead and show up at 9:30am in person and have priority over those calling in. How will that work with online reservations?

Joel Perry – that was discussed with Rocketrez and controls with IP address and other technical limits to online. However, we are not there yet unfortunately.

Peter Drury- As you are talking about it is it possible to increase the number of reservations?

Bill Geary- We're looking at several possibilities in the future with the capabilities of RocketRez and how can we do thing differently to make a better streamlined system. Where we do this now with one way on North Haven, another way on Vinalhaven, another way on Islesboro, and every island has their own way. Our goal is to work with RocketRez to streamline this and make this a better system than what we currently have.

Peter Drury- Is there a way to look at this that with RocketRez to see what the demand is on specific islands and taking an attempt measure demand and use the ridership at any given trip or time of day. Significant demand, pending what the island needs are? Perhaps adjusting the ridership accordingly.

Bill Geary- All valid. We're looking at all of these outcomes and use the data available to us to make these decisions.

Jon Emerson- Would you be reaching out to all the islands, and before changing the number of reservations? I would have to say I am a little nervous about all islands being treated the same. We aren't the same and our systems work overtime and despite needing to wait for the seconds tick down for the reservation, we are all on the same footing.

Joel Perry- I don't want to speak out of turn on this but the grand scheme of RocketRez won't be fully reservation but more of that the reservation is your ticket. Like a seat map for the boat. Our goal is to make this easier and better than it is now.

Allen Barker – I want to play devils advocate on that for a minute. You have your reservation a month out for the Spear, and they pull the vessel out and you have the Libby sorry how do you prioritize who is on first?

Joel Perry – Those are the items we are working through now and figuring those pieces out now.

Eva Murray- This is a lesson in being thankful for the troubles you don't have.

Eva Murray- For other islands, can you buy tickets online for passengers or just vehicles?

Joel Perry- Yes, for both. RocketRez, can actually send out SMS messages, to customers who've made accounts online by creating an account it can make everything easier. You will need to create an account to put your phone number in.

John King- Can I create an account today? I have had some issues with this.

Joel Perry – Yes you can. Let me look into that for you.

Jon Emerson – I think when we have the ticket on my phone and knowing how many uses, I have will be better.

Derek Dostie – Etickets are the way of the future, and the way things are going. If look at ordering coffee and paying for it is all on the cell phone.

Jon Emerson: Anyone online have any questions?

Bill Banks: Does RocketRez allow Apple Pay?

Joel Perry: They are working on that. They do have Google Pay but need to make an agreement with Apple.

7. **Island Specific Issues:**

Kathy Clark – We have 2 issues. 1 we had our schedule changed to match the school kids and its not working. They are getting to school late, and I think got to school on time one day. I would like to go to the regular schedule we had before maybe January 1st. Is that a possibility?

Bill Geary – I certainly can look at this. I know that the Superintendent informed me about this once, but I have not heard this was an issue. Can you fill me in on more specifics? I know with the ramp issues we have had that has an impact.

Kathy Clark – This was before the ramp issue. I spoke with some of the parents, and they said the kids were getting there late 5 minutes, most of the kids don't like it. The information we got it would be helpful for the kids, its not, its not helpful. Not getting breakfast and just not working.

Bill Banks – I would like to weigh in on that as well. Moving the 15 minutes earlier and it is not giving the kids enough time and there are construction issues and no snow yet and will be late every time unless go back to 6:45am. It is widespread from terminal agents, parents, members of the public and change this from 6:45 to 6:30 has thrown everything off.

Bill Geary – We certainly can look into this. We did this at the request of Swan's Island, to move the earlier boat from the principal and will talk with her again. If we adjust this, it will also impact Frenchboro as well so need to look at that piece as well.

Kathy Clark – Are you talking about Mimi?

Bill Geary – Yes

Bill Banks – She isn't a principal for the high school, she is for the lower school.

Jon Emerson: Bill G do you have what you need for this?

Bill Geary – I think so, I can speak more with the Advisory Board with Swan's. I think if it is not working, we did this specifically at the request, so it is not, then to change that.

Kathy Clark – Thank you we appreciate that.

Sonny Sprague – Can the gentleman who spoke about the ramps say it again, I couldn't hear what he said as far as repair?

Derek Dostie – the ramp is under repair and estimated to be a couple of days. Original estimate was 48 hours which will be tomorrow. If it isn't we are working on contingency plans with fuel and sewage. Right now, our crew are having to crawl up to the top and use the drill to continue operations and have limits on weight capacities as some of the safety mechanics are full operational in that manual way. We are working with them to hopefully get this fixed tomorrow.

Sonny Sprague – Thank you. Winter before last we had a ramp problem on Swan's Island. Basically, poor engineering, and now same thing in Bass Harbor. Hopefully got it right. It took us 2 weeks 2 years ago and this is temporary fix and when weather is better getting more permanent fix. Thank you. I think you answered the question on trucks and the weight limit. I also want to agree with Denis about the report going into the Commissioner.

Bill Banks: I'd like to follow up on this process. This isn't a new problem. I appreciate the new management and the new direction. There seems to be a loss. 20 years ago, when I was on the Advisory Board, they hired a Port Captain who would be there in the event if a captain fell ill or an assistant to the manager. At least that way there was a contact person, I think Prock Marine does the maintenance and subcontract the electrical to Donny Lee. Our ramp went out Monday afternoon. So, from 3pm on no one showed up. Sometime Tuesday morning someone showed up after the first boat sailed. We have new captains, and they knew who to call, but it should be the port captain responsibility. We have dialysis patients, cancer treatments, this is serious and here we are Thursday afternoon, and it went out Monday and not sure when the wiring is going to be repaired. If I understand the Swan's Island wiring is a temp fix and is the same issue that Bass Harbor is having. Then we had a winch issue and had to rob a winch piece from Rockland. People's lives are at stake when we are out of business like this. Right now, Bill G is working on a plan to get fuel out here for Friday and thank goodness we are working on a plan if it doesn't get back up and running. I just don't know who is on first and who is on second. It just doesn't seem that the urgency here to fix this is the same to proper people. I can't image that if you have a bridge out in Augusta and we will get someone out there Monday morning. Something needs to change on how this gets repaired and process.

Jon Emerson – Bill Pulver you and I spoke about this the other day. I for a long time that the responsibility for these bridges fall in a different category and it does seem like or a better system to get things to happen a little quicker. I remember Mark Higgins having the feeling he couldn't call in the electricians since it had to get into a level. Maybe that is what Swan's Island is talking about.

Bill Pulver- Before I say anything I know if Bill Geary has learned anything since, we spoke yesterday or with Henry McFerren, who is the Asst Director of Maintenance and Operations this whole umbrella fits under him and Kyle Hall as far as getting this done. I can explain how its set up and why it is set up this way. I think there is some speculation going on as to there was no sense of urgency conveyed. You don't know that. I don't personally know what happened and who was notified? Bill Geary, do you know anymore or the process or how to get it improved?

Bill Geary- I did not get a chance to talk to Henry yesterday. Prock Marine is the overall contractor to do mechanical and preventive work on all MSFS bridges. Within their contract it states that they must respond within a certain amount of time, to emergencies/ We hold them accountable to that. The biggest issue we have with the transfer bridges right now is with supply chain issues. It's not that they don't want to fix it, they just don't have the parts when they go down. So Prock Marine has had to refurbish and refabricate and that is why

some of the delays are longer. That is the information I am getting from Prock Maine. Everyone at the Ferry service has the numbers to Prock Marine, Dan, Derek and me. We call as soon as a ramp goes down. The sense of urgency is there. As soon as a ramp goes down, I know the island is impacted the boat is impacted but our people at Ferry are not trained to repair the ramps. There are some people within Maintenance and Operations that can work on the transfer bridges, but it is basic repairs and maintenance. Prock is the experts and that is where the contracts come in. I am getting more with Henry and DOT contracts in Bridge with Joe Prescott and speak daily when these are down to get an update. I try to speak with the advisory members when a bridge is down on where we at are, what do I know, to at least give an update.

Derek Dostie- In this situation as soon as are ferry personnel discovered the issues, they made notification directly to us and we immediately called Prock Marine. That was almost seamless. They then dispatched someone to assess it and the tools to fix it. With regards to communication of issue within the Maine State Ferry it couldn't have gone any faster. To echo Mr. Geary's comments on supply chain, that is for some of the delays with the Spear. As soon as we know what's going on, or an issue, and notifications are made, and Prock is called immediately. Captain in this instance was quick to notify us. But again, this is a supply chain issue, and everything is slow. Unfortunately, that is the reality of it.

Jon Emerson- Does Prock do the repairs on Bass Harbor and Swan's as well?

Bill Geary- They do.

Bill Banks – Ferry service has been very good about it. Bill, Dan are on it. Harland the new captain is a breath of fresh air, he is great. It wasn't evaluated the day it happened and the next day. This issue is a wiring issue, I don't understand why it is not fixed. I am not criticizing the ferry system at all, I am grateful for the new direction and the feeling that we matter and the new Director and managers and positive for us, but that Prock is in Rockland and we are way up here is and it makes a difference and appreciate everything everyone is doing.

Sonny Sprague – Last year during the storm when this happened, Prock ended taking over and got rid of Bud Lee. Bud Lee maybe can't do some of the things Prock can't, but he is an electrician and maybe the DOT can use him for this and fix.

Bill Banks – I thought Bud Lee was working with him.

Sonny Sprague – He was but got rid of him when they got Prock. The other thing about informing Advisory board member and I asked Kathy, and she didn't hear from the ferry service this year or last year. I tried to talk a little but was told to stay out of it because the ferry service didn't know what they were talking about. I appreciate the service and don't know what we would do without it.

Sonny Sprague- Last year during a storm, maybe it can be done with the electrical problems. I do appreciate the service. I can Say Kathy, was never notified, about the breakdown.

Bill Pulver-What was the second thing you mentioned? About Kathy not being notified?

Sonny Sprague – About the breakdowns she wasn't called.

Bill Pulver - What I heard was Prock was notified immediately. They don't have people waiting on ferry service calls, so it takes time to get people there or need to sub this out. There was a time when DOT, had our own electricians, carpenters, and have some of these people and had had to go the on-call contract like Prock. We have to those out to bid and do our piece and if deal with company who responds. Prock has been responsive I haven't heard any issues with that. Joe Prescott is our State Bridge superintendent, he is our expert on transfer bridge not just ferry service but also Casco Bay Lines. He is one of the most

responsive and accountable people I know at DOT. It looks like we are trying to put blame on somebody here, but doing everything as fast as we can here. Bill will be talking to Henry to see if there is a different way to do that, but I think people are mobilizing as quickly as they can as far as I know today. I am a little frustrated with that tone, but we will look at it. Sounds like we called Prock directly and what should the response time be when the wright breaks. As far as the electrical improvement projects, its significant capital improvement for both Swan's and Bass Harbor. I think Bill you mentioned this. But we have to fund this and get this engineered and I think this is happening for both Bass and Swan's – Is that right Bill?

Bill Geary – that is what I believe, yes.

Bill Pulver – Okay, expecting that to happen in 2 months or 3 months is unreasonable. We have a ramp down; we are going to get a ramp up. We will get it fixed.

Bill Banks – That's what we are hoping for. It is noted that the problem in Bass Harbor is the same problem we had in Swan's a year ago with the temporary fix and that Bass Harbor is an accident waiting to happen back then. I appreciate the what the ferry service is doing it the contractor not responding as quickly as we would like to have it.

Peter Drury- If I am understanding the issue, its heavy roads on the bridge in Bass Harbor. Unless the systems are different my memory is that manually operate the bridge, there is a mechanism to manually secure the winch, so you could use the transfer bridge for the full 90,000 pounds even though you are moving the bridge manually. Unless there is something at Bass Harbor that is different. Is that something that has changed or am I remembering that wrong?

Bill Geary- I can speak to that, without getting super technical. I've learned a lot about transfer bridges in my time here. With the drill and then engage the paul, that is where you can take up to 90,000 lbs. The issue is that there is no indicator light for the crew to know that this is set when doing this manually. This is what I will be speaking with Bill Banks about tomorrow to get a truck on if not fixed. So, we will be working with Prock Marine tomorrow to be able to manually do this with them to ensure this is engaged and be able to go to the 90,000lbs. But for right now our crews are using the drill and we can only use the break. So, I worked with Prock marine and with only having the brake can only have 30,000 lbs. limit on the ramp, because the paul is not engaged.

Peter Drury- You can manually engage that paul. I thought this was fairly straight forward way with this and do it without the lights. It's a comfort but can physically tell. My understanding is to use the ramp without any electricity at all. That it can be done and deal to a certain extent with the delivery of oil or whatever to Swan's Island.

Jon Emerson- Anymore Island Specific issues?

Duncan Bond- My issue with the Thanksgiving Run, I talked to Bob Lavoie in the Bass Harbor Ticket Office. I asked if there was going to be a Thanksgiving run to Frenchboro. He stated "Oh Yes you only get 3 runs a week and Thursday is your day and you will get a run-on Thanksgiving" I said, okay thank you Bob. Then a week and a half later and realized it didn't happen. Bob has been doing a nice job with communicating the issues. I heard from Jan this morning and people were upset that there wasn't a Thanksgiving boat. I don't know what that is all about. I heard Swan's had 2 boats; North Haven had 2 runs. I just want to know why that decision was made and why I wasn't informed.

Bill Geary- When we put out the Winter Schedules, put out the runs for Thanksgiving and Christmas as well. That could've been an oversight about knowing about going to Frenchboro on Thanksgiving. I didn't know we did; I spoke to Captain Morehouse about

that as well and there no plan not to change what to do on Thanksgiving. Just on are we going to go on Thanksgiving and Christmas and New Years. So that could have just been a miss. I'll make sure that if we do to Frenchboro on Christmas that we do and that could have just been a mistake.

Duncan Bond- I remember years ago, John Anders called me up and asked do what a run-on Thanksgiving. I called around and then I said I guess we do. And he said great. One other comment a guy named Bob an AB who just retired and congratulated him, and he was very friendly, and he always called me by my name. I congratulated him on his state retirement, and he alluded to no state social security, one of 14 states with no social security and get the Maine State retirement. I am from Vermont, and we get both, you should offer both.

Allen Barker State workers and teachers. If they've worked int the regular job market, they will collect social security for what they put in but significantly smaller. If worked whole life as a teacher, your retirement is from the teacher not social security because you never put into social security.

Duncan Bond- Better way to keep people taking more into retirement and social security.

Bill Banks – Follow on holiday schedules for Swan's Island. We went two trips a day for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years and it's been very successful. I lot of times we don't get family member to come visit or go away but most time on the holidays. That is important to keep. Swan's Island has not had the same favorable experience of the Bass Harbor terminal supervisor and just want to make that known, there is a lot of room for improvement. 2 boats on the holiday on all three of the holidays is appreciated and hopefully that continues.

John King- We have a very serious issue, with the Winter Schedule here in Islesboro and part of this I blame myself. We had a road collapse back in the summer, and it's taken a while for the town to put it out to bid. We got it going 3-4 weeks ago, kind of commensurate with the change over from the summer schedule to the winter schedule. It's a big job and resulted in a fair amount of truck traffic and is being done by Farelly here in Rockport. We don't have a gravel pit on the island so everything to fix this thing comes over on the ferry. The truck traffic is high and are besides themselves because they can't get on the boats. If you are trying to get 2 runs a day you might as well forget about it. If your paying people right now your payroll has doubled, because taking 1 run off is 7-8-hour proposition, payroll wise. I spent all day yesterday addressing this problem and it is a very acute problem. Bill I would like to talk with you about this after the meeting. It is really tough with the Maggie, because the truck can only go down the center aisle and not done the side aisles. It's not only the trucks and the sprinter vans, and people are loading ladders and they can only go down the center aisle. It's a real, real problem, and people are reaching their breaking point, and it's not pretty. I'll just note this, so it is in the minutes. I also have one other question with peak to off peak and with fist full of peak tickets and should have some value. The problem is that they should have some value and they went in to turn them in to non-peak and have been told cannot do this.

Joel Perry- Thank is correct. We don't give refunds for tickets. Usually use them the next year

John King- These tickets aren't going to work with the new tariff. How is this going to work?

Bill Geary – It is in the tariff that the old ticket is valid for a period of time.

John King – It would be helpful if the customer service reps know that to hold onto ticket and the tariff.

Alan Barker – If the agent works in the office, they should know the tariff inside and out.

John King- The most issue for Islesboro is getting traffic moving. That's it for me.

Jon Emerson- Anything else for Island Specific Issues?

Allen Barker- I have a question, with the electric vehicles with lithium batteries, being on the ferries. If they catch fire, you can't put them out with water and know fire departments can't use jaws of life. Finland just banned electric vehicles on their ferries. I'm just wondering if you have somebody halfway down one of the little tunnels and the sprinklers go off are you going to electrocute someone? What about the parking garage in Rockland?

John King- I think it's a really good point. What are other ferries doing? I didn't realize Finland had banned these vehicles. I would think this is a training issue as well. Bill and I were up at Maine Maritime Academy about this and maybe they can help?

Bill Geary- So I went to the Passenger Vessel Association Conference in South Carolina, the discussion is there, but the USCG hasn't come out with any official solid answer or guidance about it. The thought process is that there's more danger in a damaged electrical vehicle. At this time/ point, there currently isn't any policy, but we're in the process of still researching it.

Allen Barker- One of the things with damaged one is salt water and coming across the bay in wintertime you have more salt on your car than on the road.

Eva Murray- I know on the solid waste training the emphasis has been on that have been crushed, breached, broken into, some other way physically damaged. There is not a lot of perfectly good ones just spontaneously not that that can't happened, but apparently the higher risk is damaged ones.

Bill Pulver- This issue has come up and did do some research. Heard they've been banned by in Norway or Finland, but what we found through our research that one ferry company banned electric vehicles, not the whole country. And far as whether water can be used put electrical fires out on EVs, the answer was yes, we can it just takes a lot more water. When we did meet with MMA, I remember they did have a training course and looking into that was well.

Jon Emerson- Anything else?

8.

Old Business

Jon Emerson- Well, I do have something, which might be slightly in old business, but it is under safety. Might recall the effort to get the spindle Drunkard replaced and the Monument maintained. That effort may be getting a little boost I hope because the Maine/New Hampshire, Port Safety Forum, is being brought back to life. It is something that has been around a long time. Dennis Damon knows more than I do. There is going to be a meeting on 12/12/2023, and the type of things that'll be discussed. I believe the USCG will be there and one of the topics will be the USCG discontinuing maintaining navigational buoys up and down the coast and how that should be dealt with. I'm hoping to go to that meeting. Dennis, do you have anything to add since you're on the Port Authority

Dennis Damon- Yes, I am and thanks you're your email. I spoke to the Director yesterday and the Port Authority Board Members, are not only invited but are urged to attend on the 12th at the International Maritime Terminal in Portland.

9. **New Business**

Bill Geary- Before we finish this meeting, let's talk about the next tariff. So, with the next tariff most of our conversation has been over rates. But I would like to go over some additional things as well. In the spirit of collaboration and there aren't any surprises with looking at other changes in the tariff and talking through some of those. Some of the specific pieces and some have been brought up by you as well.
priority transportation.

- Priority Transportation for emergency conditions: Current tariff states postal service vehicles. The recommendation is to remove this from the new tariff as this is not an emergency condition. That will then go into a different piece. Recommendation would be to add in Power company. Have DOT emergency vehicles for repairs on there and wanted the Advisory thoughts on broadband if wanted added in.

Eva Murray- Could all of those be included into one category of repair utility vehicles? Any utility repair in the face of an outage is helpful. That way you are not guessing in 5 years what these services could be.

Allen Barker- I know Vinalhaven was the first and only one that had the postal service in there as island specific. We have a lot of mail coming over and the first boat.

Bill Geary- We were going to get to the municipal priorities, in a minute. I feel that is where mail should be moved to is the municipal/town priorities. I don't think that this is an emergency priority.

Jon Emerson- I was a little worried but I know the mail relies on having some sort of priority.

Eva Murray- Well we can't go; it might arrive on this boat... People just need to know.

John King- Clearly, we need some sort of priority, because this is how some get their medicine, but this doesn't need to be considered an emergency.

Peter Drury- Sort of. Typically, the mail arrives by air. In many ways it could become emergent process because that plane cannot fly and phrase it the town is requiring, or the ferry is requiring it. The intent is the same. If they can't fly, then it seems like the town wouldn't have to deal on a basis with in either category and the original way to have it as emergency was if it could go that way.

Allen Barker- the way the tariff reads on the municipal one is there supposed to have so many days advanced notice to let the island people know we have a priority for the town so there is one less spot and its not every day. You may have a point where you don't have a request from the town so you're not getting on this boat. The pilots have to make their call early enough to load the van vs the plane to get it on the boat. I think that might be why it might be put there.

Bill Geary- I guess that makes sense to me then.

Allen Barker- The trash truck or sewer truck is different, and it changed towards that.

Jon Emerson- I think North Haven is having more mail coming in more by ferry and ensure it is reliable to the ferry is important to us.

Bill Geary- Alright the next is more with municipal priorities, with current tariff, some islands are very specific, and some islands don't have any. So, I want to ask the Advisory Board members, to go back the town manager and ask with the current tariff are they still relevant and what updates would you like to make? For example, Frenchboro has none, and I know that they have some. I have gotten some emails that they want priorities for

propane and trash, I believe. So, if it is in the new tariff there is no question on this going forward. Islesboro, you have none.

John King- I'll take care of that. What page are you on Bill?

Bill Geary- So what I am referring to starts on page 11 in the tariff.

Eva Murray- Is there anything for Matinicus other than trash?

Bill Geary – 3 months in advance, recycling 4 months in advance.

Bill Geary- North Haven doesn't have a lot.

Bill Geary- Swan's Island does have a few. Reading tariff, fishing priorities a few for the town. Has to be made 24 hours prior scheduled departure.

Cathy Clark- One for fuel I believe.

Bill Banks – That was approved last year.

Bill Geary- That's not in the tariff.

Cathy Clark- The one for fuel was started around a year ago, I believe and the trash too.

Bill Geary- Vinalhaven priorities are pages.

Allen Barker- We had a situation arise with a freight companies, they wanted a reservation but not bring the freight. That is why we had to get very specific with this.

Peter Drury- Several sort of practices, that are going on, aren't in the tariff. Whether or not MSFS and the towns want to specify, it might be better. I don't know. I do know the tariff is very specific, with the departure in Rockland, with the 27' UPS Truck vs. the commercial trucks, have been getting priorities. There should be a conversation with the potential of subsidizing a public market.

Al Barker- Well I can speak on that.

Peter Drury- Well we can have a conversation, but perhaps, MSFS should. But allowing for profit companies to get priorities, with MSFS subsidizing them.

Eva Murray- I am not specifically asking for the propane to be a priority because it is my business.

Bill Geary – Okay that was the bigger one. For the municipal priorities I am looking for the town manager to get that information to me. Couple other ones:

- Page 19, the special trips for the municipal requests/ authorization, with the increase looking for the 18% projecting over the next 4 years, this will also increase by 18%.
- Same with Emergency trips, item 23, page 20. Emergency trips will increase by 18%.
- Then on page 26, parking we are proposing, to increase parking for Bass Harbor, Lincolnville, and Rockland, all by 18%.

Those are the other tariff changes that I wanted to talk about today.

Jon Emerson- And you wanted us to bring this information back to select board and or our town managers, for feedback? Is that what you are looking for.

Bill Geary- That's fine. We didn't want to surprise anyone when this new tariff comes out. Most of the discussions have been on the rates, but there are going to be other changes looking at and the other rate increases and if makes sense that everything is going up by 18%, we are going to do this with the other rates. What I am really looking for from the towns for the municipal priorities and what was 4 years ago still relevant now and is that they want. Also, not surprising anyone that we are going up 18% across the board on any of the fees that we haven't discussed from the rates.

Cathy Clark- Can we have a list sent, to each town, of what the priorities are and know what is there and go over it.

Bill Geary- I can send the current copy of the current tariff to everyone on the Advisory Board if you don't have it. That is all that I have.

Jon Emerson- Ok. So, unless someone has anything else. Speak now or forever hold your peace.

Peter Drury- One more thing, is the MSFS talking about the reality of the sea level rising. If they are is there, any planning. Going forward? It seems there's already been some problems with waves at Bass Harbor as well as North Haven and Vinalhaven with the hightides, and boats.

Allen Barker- Nice new ramp, already having to turn boat around when it's a full new tide because can't load on the bow of the Thompson.

John King- That's a good thing to have on people's radar. Islesboro has a Sea Level Committee because of the issues were seeing at Grindle point. Which is a town wide level and maybe do this together?

Eva Murray- Maintenance of equipment being underwater is going to cost more.

Peter Drury- Both North Haven and Vinalhaven have had issues with schedule interruptions and will only get worse.

Jon Emerson- I know North Haven has a big island wide effort that the kickoff is tonight from 5- 7 pm. That is going to be the topic on the waterfront and water levels rising. I don't think the ferry service will be in the room tonight but obviously that needs to be part of the discussion. What the town needs are with the sea level rising. MSFS is in the rom tonight, but it'll be a part of the discussion.

Bill Pulver- I just want to say when DOT engineers, have any major improvement project, we are taking sea levels, in to account. We do maintenance activities we take into account the expected life of that improvement. We do it with our bridges and our facilities on the coast. Last I knew we planned for a 4-foot rise over the next 100 years. Don't quote me on that.

I would also like to add that we had a member of the public ask about the number of positions we've added. We added 11 new positions, and I think we described this to the board before, 10 were to help improve recruitment and retention 5 deck hand and 5 more AB positions. Doesn't mean they will be filled at all times but provides a system for someone to come in as a Deckhand and promote up to AB once they can get through their process. We also created at the position of Assistant Director which Derek is in now. That's the 11 positions. I think there might have been a question on whether we considered that in the tariff, and I have explained before that we have. We put that in and when we do the state budgeting system, we have to fully fund those and in our analysis of the expenditures over the next 4 years for the tariff took into consideration would be filled or vacant because they are only turn into real expenditures when they are filled. I just wanted to respond to that before the meeting was over, so we didn't have to chase that one down.

Peter Drury – Bill where do the two full-time relief captain positions fall into that?

Bill Pulver- We also have the ability to scavenge other vacant positions like part time or intermittent and turn them into full-time positions though budgetary procedures and I think that is what we did. Bill Geary, can you confirm that if you were here when that happened? I know at least one of them was done that way.

Bill Geary- Yes that is correct. That is how we were able to create one of the full-time relief Captain.

Peter Drury- Is the budgeting the same from intermittent, to full time permanent position?

Bill Pulver- No. You don't fund a full 2080-hour position with an intermittent position and make an assumption on how many hours that position might be employed. So, that it is from me. Thank you, Jon.,

Jon Emerson- Does anyone else, have anything? In the room, or on Zoom.

10. **Next Meeting/Adjournment**

Jon Emerson- We have the 18th or 25th of January 2024 as the next possible meeting date? What would work best, especially considering the finance committee. Getting the reports in time as well.

John King- The 25th of January would work best for me.

Dennis Damon- I have a conflict, and don't want to be the reason, but I can't attend on that date.

Jon Emerson- Anyone else have any conflicts for the 25th of January? Okay, Dennis we are already missing but we will go with:

Next Meeting is Thursday January 25, 2025 at 10:30 am

Jon Emerson- Meeting Adjourned then. Anyone want to state that?

Duncan Bond- Move to Adjourn

Allen Barker- I second that.

Jon Emerson – Consider us Adjourned.