

Minutes of the
Town of Gosnold
Harbor Management Committee
September 29, 2023

Item 1. (Call to Order) A hybrid meeting of the Town of Gosnold Harbor Management Committee via Zoom teleconference and in person at Town Hall on Cuttyhunk Island was called to order at 10:38am. Present were Harbor Committee Members Ralph Cataldo, Paula DiMare, Seth Garfield, Lexi Lynch, Leo Pierre Roy, Win Sanford, and Lisa Wright, representing the entirety of the Committee. Also present for portions of the meeting were Wharfinger/Harbormaster George Isabel, Mooring Collector/Assistant Harbormaster Dale Lynch, Selectboard Member Gail Blout, Conservation Commission Chair David Warr, Alden Anderson, Rosemary Goettsche, David Jenkins, Paul Lehner, Sarah Lehner, Charlie Lovell, Cheryl Lovell, Peggy Lynch, Carlyn Nunes, Wayne Perrier, George Shaw, Sean Uiterwyk, and Nancy Wilder. Chairman Roy confirmed that the Committee members could hear the discussion and be heard.

Item 2. (Accept Minutes) Seth Garfield moved acceptance of the minutes of the meeting of August 18, 2023 as written and distributed. Lisa Wright noted a typo: Goettsche was misspelled. The amended motion on the corrected minutes was seconded by Paula DiMare. There being no further discussion, the motion to approve the revised minutes passed unanimously.

Item 3. (Review Mail/Bills) There were no mail/bills.

Item 6. (Project Update) This item was taken out of order. Mr. Roy reported that he was still waiting to hear back from Slater Anderson of Landvest on the “Opinion of Value” of the Public Toilets Building. Mr. Roy said that he was looking for a high valuation, so that we could begin what he hoped would be a two-step process for renovating the building, beginning the design process this winter. Ralph Cataldo said that building inspectors sometimes allowed phase two of a project to begin once an occupancy permit was granted for phase one. Selectboard Chair Gail Blout reminded the group that the grant funding expired at the end of June 2024, unless we were granted an extension. Win Sanford asked if we could proceed with roof repair in the meantime. Mr. Roy suggested that we wait until we had a plan. Mr. Garfield recommended that we get architect Will Saltonstall to start looking at the building. Mr. Roy said that he would call him.

Mr. Roy suggested that we discuss the idea of a marina dockage fee increase, thanking Mr. Sanford again for his research on what other marinas along the coast charged. By way of background, Mr. Cataldo said that we have had a good accounting of harbor revenue from 2008 to 2017, when we started taking reservations with Dockwa. He said that we are now using a combination of Dockwa and Quickbooks, and we had lots of ways to bring in money. He said that we last raised rates in 2021, when combined

Marina and Mooring revenue was a record \$640,000. He said that revenue was \$610,000 in 2022, but that gave us an average of \$625,000. He said that if we raised marina dockage fees by 50 cents/foot we could raise an additional \$50,000 a year, depending on the weather. Mr. Sanford said that our rates were next to the lowest in the region, and that we could afford to raise rates. Wharfinger George Isabel agreed, saying that we could raise rates by \$1/foot and that people would still show up. He said the Town could make more money. Peggy Lynch said that they don't hear any complaints about the rate.

Wayne Perrier brought up the issue of electric use. He said that the Marina uses as much power as the rest of the island. He said that the boats weren't blowing fuses anymore, now that he split the Fish Shacks off the feeder to the rest of that dock. Mr. Roy reminded the group that the Town's electrical consultant, PLM Group, has recommended that we run a new higher voltage line from the Powerhouse to the Marina with transformers at both ends. He said that this would improve the quality of power both at the Marina, and across the rest of the island. He said that the report showed that we had adequate generating capacity at the Powerhouse, but that distribution was the problem. He said that the new transmission line was an expensive project, and he felt that it was important that the Marina users paid for it.

Mr. Sanford suggested that we increase the Marina docking fee by \$1/foot to pay for the electrical system upgrades. He asked if we should charge for water or just consider that included in the dockage fee. He noted that some boaters use lots of water, and some none at all. Mr. Roy said that he has heard that the boaters do complain about the voltage fluctuation, which could affect their equipment. Mr. Perrier noted that he has only 500 volts to supply the whole island. Peggy Lynch agreed that good, reliable electrical service was important to many customers, who want their air conditioning and refrigeration. She said that we need better electricity on the dock, and that the bigger boats are the most lucrative for the marina operation. Mr. Garfield said that he had circulated a photo of a high tech boat that was connected to two 50 amp breakers. He said that some boats now draw as much power as two Cuttyhunk houses.

Returning to the question of the fee increase, Ms. DiMare said that she supported a \$1/foot price increase. Mr. Lynch asked if we would consider an increase in the electrical hookup fee as well. He said that the Committee's stated intention was to "break even" on the electrical cost, but we collected about \$28,000 in hookup fees, and our electric bill was about \$36,000. Mr. Roy noted that the Marina's electric bill also included power for the Public Toilets, Wharf Shack, and lighting. Mr. Lynch wondered if it was worth metering the power posts. He said that houses were charged an \$18.50 connection fee, and that perhaps the posts should also be charged. Mr. Sanford asked about a hookup fee increase. Mr. Isabel said that he thought we could go from \$25 to \$30/night for the 30amp, and perhaps to \$50/night for the 50amp service. Nancy Wilder noted that electric rates for the residents went up by 20%, and that electricity shouldn't cost the residents more than the boaters. She said that boats at anchor in our harbor give nothing back to the Town, so we should at least charge them for water. Mr. Sanford said that in Marion there was a coin-operated meter on the water bib that charged 25

cents for each 10 gallons. He said that we might want to install such a machine at the Fuel Dock, but otherwise not charge for water in the Marina. He suggested that we institute a time limit for boat washing. Lisa Wright said that it is commonly accepted that when you rent a marina slip, you get water. Lexi Lynch said that approximately 3 out of 5 boats that come to the Fuel Dock are there just to use the pump out or to get water. She said that people always ask how much the fee is for water, so we could definitely charge for it. Mr. Roy said that he would look into a coin operated machine.

Dale Lynch asked if there should be a two tiered fee structure, as the Marina is the Town's largest user of electricity and water. Mr. Roy noted that the Marina's use was all metered, and that it paid more than its fair share: he said that Harbor paid debt service on the new water tanks, and is paying a portion of the water project debt service, in addition to its water bill. He said that Harbor has a budgeted sum of \$500/year for its metered use of water.

Mr. Garfield noted that we had other sources of income, and wondered if we should raise the temporary tie up fee. As an aside, he said that the Buzzards Bay Coalition did three free pump outs of the Public Toilets for the Town this year, and that we should be all good for the winter. Ms. DiMare asked the Wharfinger if he was still putting large boats on the Ferry Dock or Fuel Dock. Mr. Isabel replied that he was occasionally, but most boaters wanted to be at the dock for more than just overnight. Alden Anderson asked Mr. Sanford if his marina fee research including looking at water and electric charges. Mr. Sanford said that it didn't; that he had just checked fees on Dockwa. He agreed to do that research before our next meeting. Mr. Anderson said that it would be helpful, and would inform the discussion. He said that he agreed with Ms. Wilder that boater electric rates should be increased by at least 20%.

Mr. Roy said that if we're talking about raising rates we should also look at the nightly mooring fee. He said that we last raised the fee about three years ago, and that Mooring Collector Dale Lynch has reported many customers questioning why the mooring fee (with \$5 environmental fee) was \$55, and not \$60. Mr. Sanford noted that we would be on the high end of mooring fees in the area, but that people like the peace of mind of being on a mooring. He asked about the email that Lexi Lynch had circulated regarding whether we were designated a Harbor of Refuge. Mr. Roy said that he didn't received the email, but that it was his understanding that Cuttyhunk Harbor received that designation in 1936. He said that he would look into it.

Mr. Cataldo asked Dale Lynch what he thought about an increase in the transient mooring fee. Mr. Lynch said that he supported the fee increase to \$60 (\$55 plus \$5). He said that over the years the demographics of our mooring customers has changed. He said that there were fewer of what he called the "Mom and Pop" cruisers on their own 30 foot boat, and many more groups, like three couples, on a larger chartered boat. He said that it was nothing for 6 people to split the \$60 fee. We said that we were seeing larger boats, and that he didn't see us losing any customers as a result of a fee increase. He said that he was aware of a few piling owners already charging \$60/night.

Mr. Roy thanked everyone for a robust discussion. He said that we seemed to have a consensus for fee increases, but that we didn't need to make a decision today, as Dockwa reservations for next season didn't open until January 15, 2024. He suggested that we do a little more research, think about what we talked about, and make decisions about our proposed fee increases at our next meeting. The Committee agreed.

4. (Wharfinger Report) Mr. Isabel reported that we had a pretty good season, considering the terrible weekend weather. He said that we had an unusually large number of cancellations this season: 554. He said that most of them were due to bad weather, and most were made more than 24 hours before arrival, so the fees were refunded. He said that about 50 were less than 24 hours and forfeited their deposit. Mr. Isabel said that he agreed that we should increase the cancellation period to at least 48 hours, so they had a better chance of filling vacancies. Mr. Sanford offered to research what other marina cancellation policies were. He said that he knew that at Newport you had to cancel four days in advance.

Mr. Isabel said that there had been a big dip in the fall business, as the weather has again been terrible. He noted that we've had a northeast wind for a week straight. Ms. Wright said that she just looked up Oak Bluffs, and they only provide a refund if you cancel with 7 days' notice. She said that their moorings are \$50/night, and that electric service was \$20/ 30 amp, and \$25/ 50 amp.

Carlyn Nunes asked about the compensation for the Wharfinger, saying that previous dockmasters were paid a 13% commission, and Mr. Isabel was only paid 10%. She said that she heard that was a report recommending that we shift the compensation from commission to salaried, and asked what we were going to do about it. Mr. Roy replied that the commission had been reduced before Mr. Isabel applied for the job, and he knew what the compensation was. He said that while the commission amount had remained the same, Mr. Isabel made more money as the rates increased, which we did every few years. Mr. Roy said that if we raised the dockage fee by \$1/foot, that could mean an almost \$10,000 raise for Mr. Isabel, depending on the weather and marina occupancy. He said that the Selectboard had asked the state Department of Revenue (DOR) to review our Town management, and one of their recommendations was to move all Town employees to salary instead of commission. Mr. Roy said that the Committee had discussed the issue, and decided that we liked having the Wharfinger and Mooring Collector paid by commission, because it encouraged them to collect the most money for the Town, and therefore for themselves. He said that way our interests were well aligned. He said that if the rates were raised, both Mr. Isabel and Mr. Lynch would get an increase. Mr. Garfield said that the Selectboard was discussing increases for several Town positions at the moment.

Mr. Cataldo said that he was uncomfortable with all these salary discussions being made in open meetings, and said that he thought that salary discussions should be between the employer and employee. He said that these two guys do a spectacular job for the Town, and should be paid appropriately. Mr. Sanford agreed with Mr. Cataldo.

Mr. Roy said that this was the case in the private sector, but that unfortunately in the public sector people's salaries were a matter of public record. Dale Lynch said that he would like to offer an historical perspective. He said that he was Dockmaster for a time in the 1980's, before John Rockwell and Don Wilder, and the position was always paid on commission. He said that Town finances were smaller and less complicated then, and the rationale for being paid on commission was that it was a seasonal position, not full time like in some towns. Nancy Wilder said that she just did some math, and that raising the dockage fee \$1/foot would result in 28% raise for Mr. Isabel, but a \$5/night raise in the mooring fee would only be a 10% raise for Mr. Lynch. She said that wasn't fair and that we needed to look at this holistically. Mr. Garfield said that these raises were great, but there was no increase in the workload for either of these guys. Mr. Roy said that this was an apples to oranges comparison, as the two job descriptions were very different.

Mr. Anderson said that he would like to comment on the cancellation policy, saying that he supported changing it to a refund only with a 7 day cancellation. He said that we only have 9 summer weekends, and we need to make the most of them. He said that people book reservations up in January because they know they can always cancel with no penalty.

Item 5. (Mooring Collector Report) Mr. Roy thanked Mr. Lynch for his detailed written report. He said it was very thorough and most helpful. In response to a question about the effect of channel shoaling on the boaters, Mr. Lynch said that it wasn't too big of an impact, and only a few boats had to be helped off at low tide. He said that the weather was a bigger impact this season. Mr. Roy thanked Mr. Lynch for stepping in as Acting Harbormaster, and for getting the word out to mariners about the channel shoaling. He also thanked Mr. Isabel, Peggy Lynch, and Mr. Garfield for their efforts in assisting boaters, and keeping records of the groundings. Ms. Blout said that she had conveyed the information about the groundings to the Army Corps, and that they were planning to put the dredging work out to bid.

Mr. Lynch said that mooring revenues were down about 10% from last year due to the weather, but that he had heard that business was even worse at Oak Bluffs and Vineyard Haven. He reported that the Town boat's engine was working fine, but that it had about 2,000 hours on it, and that we should think about replacing it, perhaps after next season. The Committee agreed. He said that it was used about 180 days a year. He said that he would mention our plan to replace the motor to Dave at FL Tripp, as there may be interest in our used motor.

Ms. Wilder asked why we were distributing garbage bags to the boaters. Mr. Lynch replied that we were changing the \$5/night environmental fee, and that the boaters were therefore entitled to a bag for their trash. Furthermore, he said that it was his understanding that we wanted boater's trash in approved bags, so we could distinguish it from improperly disposed resident waste. Mr. Garfield noted that this was our second season distributing clear and blue bags, but that the Solid Waste Department did not recycle any materials in bags, as recyclables needed to be loose. Ms. Blout asked why

we were accepting boater's recycling if it wasn't being recycled. Mr. Lynch said that he wasn't the trash guy, and he just needed to be told what we wanted him to do. Mr. Anderson said that the Solid Waste Subcommittee was working on a plan, and he suggested that we table this discussion until they had a plan that was approved by the Selectboard. He said that it was an absolute travesty that we were not recycling on the island, in addition to it being a violation of state law.

In response to a question about receipt books, Mr. Lynch suggested that we reuse the old wharf receipt books, since the marina was now on an online reservation system. Mr. Roy said that it was a good idea. Mr. Lynch asked about the training requirements for Harbormasters and Assistant Harbormasters, noting that requirements have been in place for several years. He said that harbormasters have legal authority, but that he was uncomfortable not having the appropriate training. Mr. Roy said that it was easier for towns in which the Harbormaster was a department within the police department, but that wasn't currently the case in Gosnold, and several other small towns. He said that he would look into the training requirements.

Item 6. (Project Update, continued) Mr. Roy reported that we had two interrelated projects going on with Foth: 1) the conceptual redesign of the marina to floating docks, and 2) a dredging plan for the harbor. He said that we would normally do item 1 before item 2, but we had received a Seaport Economic Council grant for the dredging design, and it needed to be completed by June 30, 2024. He reminded the Committee that we had looked at several iterations of marina layouts at our January meeting, and had a very healthy discussion. He said that he would ask Susan Nilson of Foth to prepare the two plans that we discussed, a marina layout of roughly the same size, and one with a modest expansion, for presentation at our next meeting. David Warr said that there was a perceived need to accommodate bigger boats, but he recalled that it would require more dredging of the shallow areas. Mr. Roy said that the Wharfinger had been putting bigger boats at the Fuel Dock, so there was a demand. Mr. Anderson asked if that use could continue. Peggy Lynch replied that they could only put boats there for one night, as the docks needed to be cleared before their morning uses. Mr. Lynch noted that putting boats on the Fuel Dock created a conflict with use of the pump out facility, and Mr. Garfield added "not to mention people swimming off the dock and the late night dock parties".

Item 7. (Treasurer Report) There was no report.

Item 8. (Selectboard Update) Regarding the Fuel Farm project, Selectboard Chair Gail Blout reported that the Fuel Dock has been operating successfully for the past few weeks. She said that there were still a few Punch List items that contractor SRS was working on, including providing the system shutdown and spill response training, which was expected the week of October 9th. She said that there was an erosion issue at the transition point where the pipes go from being underground to being mounted on the pier, but that there was a plan to address it. Conservation Commission Chair David Warr asked if he could see the plan. Ms. Blout suggested that she speak with him following the meeting.

Item 9. (Old Business) Mr. Garfield asked about the condition of the floats, saying that he thought that the Water Taxi float at the Fuel Dock needed attention. Mr. Lynch said that he would look at when it was pulled for the season, and give it the equivalent of a “shave and a haircut”. He said that over the winter he would build the three replacement floats for the Fuel Dock that the Committee had approved. He said that Don Lynch was planning to come back to the island in November, and would attempt to remove those two pilings. Mr. Garfield asked about the old Fuel Dock float that was now on a mooring. Mr. Lynch said that he would haul it and store it for future use. Ms. DiMare asked about the flagpole repair that had been promised by Mr. Garfield. Mr. Garfield said that he and Mr. Perrier would fix it by the end of the year. In response to a question he said that the year would be 2023.

Lexi Lynch said that the Fuel Dock was now open, and that their hours were posted, as required. She said that anyone working under a Town permit should be operating under the rules that applied to them. She said that other vendors in Town did not post their hours, and closed before the date set in the regulations. She said that when Duane Lynch broke the rules, he had to pay a fine. She said that she wanted to know what the Committee was going to do about the early closing of the ice cream shack, which closed August 26, and the hot dog cart which closed even earlier in August. Mr. Roy said that we did in fact have a requirement that vendors in the parking lot stay open through Labor Day with a minimum opening of 20 hours/week. Ms. Blout wondered whether our rules were too stringent. Mr. Garfield said that there was basically no workforce available in late August. Ms. Wright pointed out that if you run a business on Cuttyhunk you are the backup workforce. Mr. Garfield said that the season was over, and that there was no way that the college kids who ran the hot dog stand could stay open through Labor Day. Mr. Roy said that these rules were developed by the Committee with input from the vendors, and approved by our Committee and the Selectboard in public meetings. He said that once we had rules that the community agreed upon, we should enforce them. He said that we were dedicating public space for private commercial use, and if we were granting a vendor location, we wanted that location used for the whole summer.

Ms. Blout again suggested that the rules were too stringent and that there should be some flexibility. She said that if we wanted college kids to try their hand at running a business, we needed to understand their schedule. She said that she thought that it was great to have them there as another food option. Mr. Garfield suggested that we put this on the agenda for our January meeting, and invite all the prospective vendors so the rules were clear to everyone. Lexi Lynch wondered why we needed to wait four months to enforce our existing rules. Ms. DiMare said that people had been asking why the ice cream stand was closed before the end of August, as it is very popular. Mr. Sanford said that the Yacht Club has the same problem keeping its young employees until the end of the season, despite a penalty for leaving early.

Mr. Warr said that there were major challenges of communication on this island, and that we continually needed to remind people of the rules. He said that all the people we're talking about make major contributions to island life, but nevertheless rules should be followed. He said that we needed to come together to solve these issues. Mr. Roy said that he would call Bonnie Veeder and Will Stone to discuss their infraction of the rules and to get their perspective and that he would report back at our next meeting. Mr. Lynch said that we should require attendance by the vendors at a spring meeting to review the rules. Mr. Warr said that it was important that we be consistent in our enforcement of the rules.

Item 10. (New Business) There was no New Business.

Item 11. (To Do List Update) Mr. Roy reviewed the "To Do" List.

Item 12. (Public Comment) Mr. Warr said that he wanted to make a case for water conservation. He said that conservation measures were encouraged for residents, but the boaters could use water freely. He said that we were fortunate to have an adequate supply of water, but that we should encourage conservation by the boaters. The Committee agreed. Ms. Blout noted that the Fuel Dock hours of opening would be changing, and would be posted. Mr. Garfield requested that we add Ferry Dock safety issues to a future agenda. He said that there were too many vehicles on the dock, and too many vehicles stored long term in the parking lot. He said that it was time for a cleanup. Mr. Warr said that he counted 28 vehicles in long term parking. Mr. Roy asked that the Selectboard remind people of the parking rules. Ms. Blout agreed, and noted that work was underway on the Coast Guard Boathouse Visitor's Center. There was no further Public Comment.

Item 13. (Adjournment) After some discussion, Chairman Roy proposed Monday, November 6 for our next meeting, which was agreeable to the group. Mr. Garfield moved to adjourn the meeting, and upon a second by Ms. DiMare, the motion was passed unanimously at 1:06pm.

TO DO LIST:

1. Mr. Roy to write a letter on eelgrass regeneration to the regulatory authorities, once Mr. Garfield and Foth completed the survey.
2. Mr. Roy and Dale Lynch to develop a layout of the mooring grid to create greater spacing between the boats, for review by the Committee.
3. Mr. Garfield to look at the availability of temporary mooring locations in the Yacht Club area to see if we have a spot for Chip Bradish.
4. Mr. Garfield to borrow a lift to repair the flag pole.
5. Ms. Lynch to oversee installation of the bulletin board.
6. Mr. Sanford to work with Dale Lynch on designing a new A-frame for mooring maintenance.
7. Mr. Roy to investigate a coin operated machine for water at the Fuel Dock.

8. Mr. Sanford to research water and electric charges and cancellation policies at other marinas before our next meeting.
9. Mr. Roy to research Cuttyhunk Harbor's designation as a Harbor of Refuge.
10. Mr. Roy to contact Bonnie Veeder and Will Stone to discuss their infraction of the rules.

Respectfully submitted, Leo Pierre Roy

Approved November 6, 2023