



## FERRY COMMITTEE

### MEETING MINUTES

June 12, 2024, 10:00 AM

**A. Call to order:** Hon. Jared Nicholson (Lynn), Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM via Zoom.

**B. Ferry Update:** David Perry, the MBTA's first Director of Ferry Transportation, briefed the committee on his new role, approach, and vision for water transportation in the region. His presentation was followed by questions and a discussion.

- Corey Evans (Cohasset) questioned if there was a breakdown of service recovery trends by each ferry route. D. Perry answered that the F1 (Hingham to Boston), F2H (Hingham/Hull/Logan to Boston), and F5 (Lynn to Boston) services have recovered to reflect new commuter trends with lower ridership on Mondays, high levels of commuters from Tuesday to Thursday, and a greater mix of commuters and leisure riders on Fridays. Additionally, weekend ridership has returned to pre-COVID levels. The F3 (East Boston to Boston), F4 (Charlestown to Boston), and F6 (Winthrop/Quincy/Logan/Seaport) have also experienced strong recovery.
- J. Nicholson thanked D. Perry for the presentation and questioned how the procurement pricing of different ferries is determined, for example for the Schoodic Explorer which is among the more affordable of the vessels. D. Perry answered that in the ferry market, there are a number



of factors that determine what the authority pays. The Schoodic Explorer was a used boat so its value was already depreciated.

Additionally, many ferry services are in the market for greener, hybrid boats which leaves the older technology more affordable for the MBTA which has an immediate need for more boats. The post-pandemic rebound of the maritime industry has also moved slower, so the Schoodic Explorer boat was once a water taxi for cruise ships docking in Maine, but has been repurposed with the MBTA which has a greater need. D. Perry said the MBTA is always actively searching for used boats on the market. The MBTA is advantaged by the wide range of vessel sizes it can make use of with smaller boats needed for the harbor routes and larger boats for the longer routes. He said that the Ferry's current popularity means that boats on some routes are often at capacity or are forced to leave riders at the dock which he worries will worsen with increased ridership during the summer months.

- J. Nicholson also questioned if the MBTA's partnership with vendor Hornblower was impacted by the vendor's recent filing for bankruptcy. D. Perry confirmed that all three of the ferry service's contracts are with Hornblower and that he had been informed about the company's bankruptcy when he started his new position. Hornblower, which is the parent company of Boston Harbor City Cruises, operates in many cities nationwide such as San Francisco and New York. D. Perry answered that this has not impacted Boston Harbor City Cruises and has caused no interruptions to MBTA services. He said that the MBTA has completed thorough analysis and there is no indication that the ferry services are in any kind of jeopardy.
- D. Perry also noted that the coming fiscal year will be the MBTA's final year with Hornblower, and they will begin the bidding process for new contracts on July 1, 2025. He said they are currently deciding how to



structure these contracts and whether they should work with multiple vendors or remain with one.

- C. Evans shared his excitement with D. Perry's new position and the MBTA's commitment to supporting and improving the Ferry system after his community in Lynn worked hard to advocate for its postpandemic return. D. Perry mentioned that when he started his position he was worried about potential threats to the Ferry's existence as it only makes up 1% of ridership. But he said the administration has been very supportive of water transportation and, while it is a small portion of ridership, it still carries around 4,000 a day which helps alleviate the demand on other forms of transit and helps mode-shift people away from cars.
- Brian Kane (Executive Director) encouraged D. Perry to consider thinking strategically about different avenues for improvement and expansion within the ferry service and offered the Advisory Board's support as an organization that has long supported the ferry. D. Perry shared that the Mass DOT will produce an RFP for a water transportation study. D. Perry added that among his own near-term goals is to breakup Quincy and Winthrop's service so that riders can ride directly into Boston from both. He has also had discussions with the Seaport Transit Management Association about their seaport service. He said there is a lot of sorting out and coordination necessary across the many routes and services, but that he is confident in the team.
- B. Kane thanked D. Perry for his presentation and J. requested that the presentation slides be shared with the committee. D. Perry thanked the committee and offered to provide any support necessary and to take any feedback the committee has in the future.



*Note: These minutes were approved by vote of the MBTA Advisory Board at its 12/11/24 meeting.*

### **Attendees**

#### **Committee**

Corey Evans	Cohasset
Frank Tramontozzi	Quincy
Hon. Jared Nicholson	Lynn
Aaron Cluassen	Lynn
Yem Lip	Malden
Brendan Linarydy	Salem
Jim Hoyes	Hanover

#### **Other**

David Perry	MBTA
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**MBTA AB**



Brian Kane

Isabella MacKinnon

Executive Director

Intern