

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Minutes of the Meeting of August 20, 2025. The hybrid meeting took place in person at the Public Safety Facility Community Room at 4 Fairgrounds Road; and, via remote participation using Zoom Webinar. Members of the Commission present were Thomas Dixon and Matt Fee. Dr. Malcolm MacNab arrived later as noted below. Dawn E. Hill and Brooke Mohr were present remotely.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dixon called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM following the Pledge of Allegiance. He noted that Ms. Hill and Ms. Mohr are both participating remotely and all votes will be by roll call.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The County Commission Meeting is Being Audio and Video Recorded.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Megan Perry gave a “demonstration on how a contaminant moves through water” using a large tub of water and other instruments. She cited concerns about Nantucket’s sole source aquifer.

Dr. MacNab joined the meeting at 5:33 PM.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND WARRANTS

Dr. MacNab moved approval of items V. 1-2; seconded by Mr. Fee; by roll call vote: Chair Dixon – Yes; Mr. Fee – Yes; Ms. Hill – Yes; Dr. MacNab – Yes; Ms. Mohr – Yes; so voted.

1. Approval of Minutes of July 23, 2025 at 5:30 PM.

2. Approval of Payroll and Treasury Warrants for August, 2025.

VI. OFFICIAL BUSINESS

1. Discussion Regarding Senate Bill No. 2395 (Proposed Term Limits for Steamship Authority Governing Board); Votes May be Taken. Chair Dixon introduced the item. Robert F. Ranney, Nantucket member of the Steamship Authority (SSA) Board of Governors, read a prepared statement (attached to these minutes) regarding the legislation noting that his remarks are not intended to have any bearing on his position but rather what is best for Nantucket and its representation on the SSA Board. He noted a recently voted position of the Edgartown Select Board to oppose the legislation. He emphasized the need for stability on the SSA Board, which can be difficult to maintain with an increase in turnover of board members. Ms. Mohr expressed strong agreement with Mr. Ranney’s statement and expressed skepticism at the notion that high turnover on the Board will lead to increased collaboration. She said she would support a letter in opposition to the legislation. Ms. Hill concurred and suggested an exemption for Nantucket if the legislation were to be passed. Mr. Fee stated he supports the letter and added that he does have some concerns about on-going issues with the SSA with respect to customer service. Dr. MacNab moved to send a letter in opposition to the legislation and authorize the Chair to sign on behalf of the Commission; seconded by Mr. Fee; by roll call vote: Chair Dixon – Yes; Mr. Fee – Yes; Ms. Hill – Yes; Dr. MacNab – Yes; Ms. Mohr – Yes; so voted. Ms. Mohr encouraged Mr. Ranney and Nat Lowell, Nantucket’s Port Council member, to work on succession planning.

VII. COMMISSIONERS REPORTS/COMMENTS

There were no Commissioners reports or comments.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Fee moved adjournment at 5:43 PM; seconded by Dr. MacNab; by roll call vote: Chair Dixon – Yes; Mr. Fee – Yes; Ms. Hill – Yes; Dr. MacNab – Yes; Ms. Mohr – Yes; so voted.

Approved the 17th day of September 2025.

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AUGUST 20, 2025 – 5:30 PM
PSF COMMUNITY ROOM, 4 FAIRGROUNDS ROAD
AND REMOTE PARTICIPATION VIA ZOOM WEBINAR
NANTUCKET, MASSACHUSETTS**

List of documents used at the meeting:

- V. 1. Draft minutes of 7/23/2025
- VI. 1. Senate Bill No. 2395

Robert Ranney, Nantucket Member, Steamship Authority (SSA) Board of
Governors, prepared statement to County Commissioners, August 20, 2025

Proposed Term Limits Bill

- As outlined in the SSA's Enabling Act Legislation, the appointment for Nantucket's SSA Board Member is on a three-year cycle, with the only limitation being that the individual has to be an island resident. Which means that currently, the County Commissioners can appoint whomever they wish on a three-year rotation. Mandated term limits will take away a measure of control from the County Commissioners who, as a result, may potentially face an unfavorable, and forced, decision at some future point. This is not about me, this is about what is in the best interest for Nantucket, its "Life-Line" to the mainland, and how Nantucket is represented. But it is also about trusting the duly elected County Commissioners to make the right choice as they see fit. The decision on who to appoint to represent Nantucket on the SSA Board, for all things Steamship Authority

related, should be left fully up to the County Commissioners, who are Nantucket's appointing authority for this position.

- It takes time to learn the role of an SSA Board Member, and to build meaningful diplomatic relationships with the other Board Members, other port communities, our local legislative delegation, other stakeholders, SSA staff, SSA senior management, and so on.
- Chairmanship on the SSA Board rotates between the port communities on a predetermined schedule. It is possible that a brand new board member, appointed after a term-limited member terms out, could immediately be chair of the board in their first year. This may or may not work out well for Nantucket.
- The term limits issue (first put forward in 2022) seems to have resurfaced again after a few years, at the urging of a recently formed 'citizens action group' from Martha's Vineyard, in an apparent effort to push a Vineyard-centric agenda. In a July 29, 2025 article in the Vineyard Gazette, Edgartown Select Board member Art Smadbeck said, "I really don't like the state kind of reaching down and telling us you can only have three terms". He said he's concerned that if the bill passed, a situation could arise where the best person for the job

wouldn't be eligible, putting the island in a tough spot. Beth O'Connor, a member of the 'citizens action group' said in response that, "the island is already in a tough spot because long standing members of the SSA Board representing other municipalities are voting against the Vineyard's best interest." Ms. O'Connor went on to say that, "if the Steamship Authority board could have a more fluid approach, as opposed to some of these people that have been there for a very long time. I think we as Vineyarders would be able to benefit by having people that perhaps would be more open to working together."

- As one of "these people that have been there for a long time", I take issue with Ms. O'Connor's comments and I would suggest that in fact the opposite is true. It is precisely the longer serving board members that actually do work very well together, helping to onboard and acclimate new members, and promoting stability on the board. If it were a contentious board, not much would get accomplished and no community would benefit. I have always said that being an SSA board member is not simply about pushing your own community's interests or agenda, but it's equally about supporting what is in the

best interests of the SSA as a whole. Sometimes, what might benefit the Vineyard most, or Nantucket, or any of the other port communities, is not always what is best for the SSA as a transportation system.

- As we all know, Nantucket faces issues, that other communities might not face, regarding filling volunteer board and committee seats. Why would we want to limit future appointment decisions now?
- Stability on the SSA Board is vital to our lifeline

Thank you