

**TOWN OF JAMESTOWN
HARBOR COMMISSION**

APPROVED: 5/14/25

A meeting of the Jamestown Harbor Commission (JHC) was held on Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers of the Jamestown Town Hall, 93 Narragansett Avenue, Jamestown, Rhode Island.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Vice-Chairman Tom Alexander called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Present:

Tom Alexander, Vice-Chairman
Jessica McCarthy, Commissioner
Sue Romano, Commissioner
Mark Campbell, Commissioner
Jim Archibald, Commissioner
Bob Laman, Commissioner
Paul Sprague, Commissioner

Also in Attendance:

Jim Heagney, Executive Director
Bart Totten, Harbormaster
Joan Rich, Harbor Clerk

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote;

A. January 8, 2025

Commissioner Romano made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 8, 2025, and was seconded by Commissioner Laman. There was no discussion. So voted: Vice-Chairman Alexander, aye; Commissioner McCarthy, aye; Commissioner Romano, aye; Commissioner Campbell, aye; Commissioner Archibald, aye; Commissioner Laman, abstain; Commissioner Sprague, aye. The motion passed.

III. Executive Director's Report – J. Heagney

A. Harbor Plan and Ordinance Update – Executive Director Heagney stated that he met last week with Kevin Cute of CRMC to discuss the Harbor Management Plan and Ordinance, and Mr. Cute stated he would provide feedback within the next week about any changes that may need to be made.

B. Save the Bay Swim – The 2025 Save the Bay Swim will be held on Saturday, July 19 at 8:05 a.m. The Harbor staff will assist in keeping the course across Narragansett Bay open for the swimmers.

Commissioner Romano asked if the Harbor Management Ordinance has had any updates, and Executive Director Heagney stated he has not done any updates to the ordinance yet, he will do so after the Plan is completed. Commissioner Romano also asked what the process is to approve the Harbor Management Plan. It must first be approved by CRMC, then the Harbor Commission must approve it, and then it will be presented to the Town Council for final approval.

IV. Harbormaster's Report – B. Totten

Harbormaster Totten stated things are very quiet right now, but he described the Harbormaster involvement with the Save the Bay swim as coordinating with the Newport Harbormaster and the U.S. Coast Guard to keep boats from entering the swim area. He also discussed the other events the Harbor staff provides support for, such as the Jamestown fireworks and the Fool's Rules Regatta. Harbormaster Totten is also working with Executive Director Heagney on hiring at least one, possibly two interns again this summer. Executive Director Heagney had a meeting recently with Town Administrator Mello, Chief Campbell, and Ray DeFalco of Parks and Rec. to develop a plan and schedule for this year's intern(s). There is debate about whether to hire one full-time intern that would work exclusively for the Harbor department, or whether to hire two interns who would split their time between Harbor and working at Fort Getty for Parks and Rec. Nothing has been finalized yet. There was some discussion, and Commissioner Campbell asked Executive Director Heagney if he would be available as a back-up to assist the Harbormaster, and he stated he would, but he is also going to hire another Assistant Harbormaster to replace himself in that position.

Commissioner Campbell also asked about the mooring wait lists and if there was any movement of the lists. Executive Director Heagney stated that there are eighteen (18) different public mooring fields around the island, some of which have no moorings in them at all. The vast majority of people on the wait list would like to be either in East or West Ferry, and Executive Director Heagney is developing a plan to let the wait list people know that moorings are available in other areas, but there also needs to be parking, etc. available at these other areas. There was discussion about expansion of some of the mooring fields, and the advantage or disadvantage of such expansion. There was also discussion about encouraging the use of elastomeric moorings, which decreases the amount of swing room needed for boats on moorings, thus allowing more moorings in a particular area.

V. Year-to-Date Financial Report

Commissioner Romano stated that current expenditures are running under budget, but they will increase once the season begins and staff returns. The current revenues were not available at this time.

VI. Sub-Committee Reports

A. Budget – S. Romano and T. Alexander – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote;

Commissioner Romano stated that it will be time to meet to begin to work on the FY 2026 budget.

B. Facilities – J. Archibald – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote;

Commissioner Archibald stated the priorities this spring will be to repair the end of the West Ferry pier and re-shore the areas where the ramp and the docks are connected and the projects at East Ferry.

C. Gould Island Restoration – M. Campbell and B. Laman – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote;

Commissioner Campbell stated the next meeting regarding Gould Island will be in June.

VII. Liaison Reports

A. Conservation Commission – B. Laman – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote;

Commissioner Laman stated that a resident came to the Conservation Commission meeting last night and asked that a study be done on the impact to the migratory shore birds using Gould Island by recreational use of the island by humans. The Audubon Society is also concerned about the potential change to the deeded use, and the Conservation Commission agreed to bring the matter to the Town Council to look into it further.

Commissioner Laman also stated that some people have asked the Conservation Commission that the Adopt-A-Right-of-Way program, which was begun last year but then suspended because of some issues, be reimplemented. He has spoken to Town Administrator Mello, who is also in favor of the program, and the Conservation Commission has revised some of the regulations to make enforcement of potential violations and subsequent consequences more effective. The part of the program that would impact the Harbor Department is that enforcement of violations to the right-of-way program could fall on the Harbormaster or the Harbor Director. There was some discussion about enforcement. Commissioner Laman read the proposed language "...the enforcement of the violations shall be carried out by the Harbormaster or other designated town officials at the direction of the Town Administrator." Commissioners Romano and McCarthy took issue with enforcement falling on the Harbormaster, and there was more discussion. Commissioner Laman stated that the language could be changed to omit the Harbormaster and read "...the enforcement of the violations shall be carried out by a designated town official...".

B. Town Council – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote;

There was no representative from the Town Council present.

VIII. Old Business

A. Discounted Kayak/Dinghy Rack Permits for Mooring Permit Holders – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote;

This item was back on the agenda after being passed at the January meeting for discussion only, because the discount cannot take place until next year. The budget for fiscal year 2025 has already been passed by the Town Council and it cannot be amended. Based on the current number of permit holders who use a kayak or dinghy to get to their moorings, the loss of revenue would be \$949.00. There was some discussion.

IX. Correspondence – None at this time;

X. New Business

A-B. Nomination and Selection of New Harbor Commission Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote;

Commissioner Archibald asked that items A and B on the agenda be considered at the same time because they are related, and Vice-Chairman Alexander agreed. Commissioner Archibald made a motion to nominate Tom Alexander as the new Chairman and Mark Campbell as the new Vice-Chairman, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Romano. There was some discussion. Vice-Chairman Alexander is changing his primary residence to Florida, even though he is maintaining his house in Jamestown, but the Town Administrator must review the rules to see if Vice-Chairman Alexander can even stay on the Harbor Commission. Commissioner Romano stated that Commissioner Campbell's experience as a former Harbormaster is beneficial, even though he has not been on the Harbor Commission very long. So voted: Vice-Chairman Alexander, aye; Commissioner McCarthy, aye; Commissioner Romano, aye, Commissioner Campbell, aye; Commissioner Archibald, aye; Commissioner Laman, aye; Commissioner Sprague, aye. The motion passed.

C. Requiring Commercial Mooring Operators to provide proof of insurance to the Town of Jamestown – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote;

Commissioner Romano made a motion to discuss this issue as she did not feel ready to vote on this yet. Commissioner Campbell asked where did this come from and why, and how big of an issue is it? Executive Director Heagney stated that a resident, Marian Falla, brought the issue up after reading an article in Newport This Week "[Newport Council Approves Insurance Requirement for Commercial Moorings](#)". The article and Ms. Falla's accompanying email were entered into correspondence at the December 11, 2024 Harbor Commission meeting, and she asked Executive Director Heagney to further review the matter. He stated that all of the commercial moorings in Jamestown are owned by marinas, and they require their customers to maintain liability insurance on their vessels. It is his understanding that the situation is different in Newport in that the city owns the moorings and some are leased by commercial entities. There was discussion about who is responsible if a vessel breaks free of a mooring, the definition of a "commercial operator", and why doesn't the town require liability insurance on vessels using town permitted moorings.

Marian Falla, of Green Lane, stated that she forwarded the article to the Harbor Commission but her intent was to have the commission discuss whether or not the Town of Jamestown should require liability insurance for its permitted moorings. She also referenced a vessel that broke free of its mooring at Clark Boatyard in 2021 and hit the docks, and there were all sorts of legal issues as a result. There was a lot of discussion. Tony Pinheiro, of Beacon Avenue, stated that his boat broke free of its mooring once and his insurance company did not pay anything for damage. There was more discussion, and it was decided to place the item on next month's agenda.

XI. Open Forum

A. Scheduled Requests to Address – None scheduled at this time.

B. Non-Scheduled Requests to Address

Tony Pinheiro of Beacon Avenue asked why permit holders are required to pay for their permit fees in January? He stated that the commercial fishermen who utilize the Fort Getty pier, outhauls, and moorings do not have a lot of cash coming in during the winter months and it is a hardship to come up with all the required fees in January. He asked if the payments can be made later in the spring. There was some discussion, and it was determined that the it could be an agenda item at a later date. Mr. Pinheiro also stated that, contrary to what the previous Executive Director indicated, Jamestown has the highest commercial rate in the state, even though there are no protected harbors in town, and he believes the commercial rate should be decreased.

XII. Adjournment

There being no further business, Commissioner Romano made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Commissioner Sprague. So voted: Vice-Chairman Alexander, aye; Commissioner McCarthy, aye; Commissioner Romano, aye; Commissioner Campbell, aye, Commissioner Archibald, aye; Commissioner Laman, aye, Commissioner Sprague, aye. The meeting was adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

Attest,


Joan Rich, Harbor Clerk