

Boat Advisory Committee 2020 Annual Meeting Report

The 2020 season began like any other year but certainly evolved into one unique season. The BAC during its late 2019 and early 2020 meetings met with incumbent managing captain Abe Whitaker and collectively planned some minor adjustments to the routine including freight policies, departure times and setting limits to wait for late arriving passengers, policies related to boats tying up at the Bustins public dock as well as people not being on the public dock during arrivals to Bustins. Initial thoughts were to communicate some of these minor changes to the Bustins community as the 2020 season approached. Additionally, Abe's contract was renewed for the 2020 season.

As we prepared to begin the season, the entire Bustins community was forced to deal with the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic. Launch dates were delayed, and the BAC focused on establishing safety protocols for when the Lilly B would begin to transport passengers. Much of the content of the protocols was derived from the Maine Center for Disease Control as well as Executive orders from the State of Maine. Some of the new guidelines were extensive cleaning of the boat in between each transport, emphasis on social distancing and wearing face coverings, limited number of passengers per run, (started at 8 passengers and increased to 10 in August) all luggage handled by passengers, a paperless, hands free reservation system, no freight, and no special trips. The BAC worked in conjunction with the Board of Overseers to finalize and publish these specific guidelines related to the safe operation of the Lilly B and a focus on maintaining staff and passenger safety. The BAC also worked with the Board of Overseers to develop a pay scale for both Captains and Crew members, establishing starting rates for new members and a slightly higher rate for experienced members.

At the time of this writing the season has proceeded as expected. All passengers and staff members have been healthy. The season began on June 19 and will continue as during previous seasons through Columbus Day. Due to the reduced capacity of passengers, revenue will be down for the year. The season started with 5 runs per day but in July was reduced to 4 runs per day. Overall, the Bustins community has been sensitive to the changes and the reasons why this year has been different. We have learned much this year and will consider continuing with the reservation system. We believe we have found a way for islanders to redeem 2019 purchased tickets for credit on our reservation system. We will plan to offer that option prior to the 2021 season.