

MAINE'S FIRST SHIP



MAINE: BATH

Bob Bittner - 2022

ANNUAL REPORT
2022-2023

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INTRODUCTION



It has been said that we are "A Story With a Ship." This year we shared our story with over 11,000* visitors thanks to the remarkable vessel *Virginia*.

- **5,100 in the Jane Stevens Visitor Center**
- **est 5,000 at Launch of Virginia**
- **12 Youth groups / 100 ppl**
- **10 Adult group tours / 250 ppl**
- **30+ MFS Hosted Event / 400 ppl**
- **15 Rentals / 300 ppl**

Maine's First Ship has TWO engaging and inspiring stories to share with every person who steps foot into our spaces OR who invites us to theirs -

First is the nearly forgotten story of the Popham Colony and our region's earliest shipbuilding at the mouth of the Sagadahoc / Kennebec River.

Second is the amazing story of hundreds of volunteers coming together to construct a vessel - by hand for the most part, by donation and the kindness of strangers, under the leadership of a few knowledgeable & committed individuals **all while incurring no debt!**

*numbers from approximations, estimations, tally marks & educated guesses

For the past 25 years, we have been an organization committed to reconstructing the most authentic 17th century pinnace we could while also having the modern amenities to make the vessel certifiable and operable in the Kennebec River. We launched the vessel on June 4, 2022.

What comes next? We transition from constructing to operating a traditional wooden sailing vessel. This includes

- **Equipment, staff, training and practice that will allow us to earn a Cert of Inspection and allow passengers on deck**
- **Engaging Virginia-adjacent programs that allow many ways for folks to engage**
- **Leadership and Board continue to evolve to meet the needs and challenges of operating a vessel**
- **Stable and diverse finances that allow for expansion into next big increase in organizational spending to include materials, staff, insurance and the like.**

Maine's First Ship is a "new" START UP that has been 25 years in the making.

OUR STORY SO FAR



PURPOSE & MISSION

After 25 years Planning & Construction, we will Operate a 17th Century inspired traditional sailing vessel in historic downtown Bath so that we can share the magic of *Virginia* & the nearly forgotten story of Popham Colony with students and visitors.

- **History** – Tell the little known story of the Popham Colony and balance that telling by creating lenses to share the Indigenous experience of early colonial contact.
- **Ingenuity** – Foster a continued spirit of Curious Problem Solving while working to hone and share traditional maritime craft.
- **Community** – Engage talented volunteers, who are masters in their crafts, and curious novices in a maritime themed gathering space / Maker Space in the historic Bath Freight Shed on the shores of the Kennebec River.

Mission: Maine's First Ship strives to use our reconstruction of the 1607 pinnace *Virginia* to immerse the public in an exploration of the region's early history, craftsmanship, and relationships, and their impact on our community and environment today.

Volunteers are the
Heart & Soul of
Maine's First Ship.

VISION & VALUES

Education: We believe we can create and present compelling and equitable educational content and experiences that offer inclusive perspectives for all ages.

Sustainability: We believe that to be a vital and relevant organization, we need to be fiscally accountable and engage in open communication with our team, partners, and community.

Community: We believe that Maine's First Ship is an active community partner that fosters the economic, social, and cultural aspirations of our region.

Resources: We believe that we are creators and stewards of remarkable resources which include the *Virginia*, the Freight Shed, and the expertise and creativity of our volunteers and staff.

Relevance: Remembering our past and looking to our future... We believe we can be safe, have fun together, get stuff done, grow people, and go sailing.

OUR 2022-23 ENGAGEMENT



1

Launch of Virginia

The biggest single day block party in Bath to celebrate the first launch of a traditional wooden vessel in over 100 years. Need we say more?!

We hope you will continue to tell your stories of where you were when we launched *Virginia*.

3



Invitations to Present Outside the Freight Shed

- Presented at Tall Ships America Annual Conference in Newport, RI
- Presented at Teaching With Small Boats Alliance conference in Port Townsend, WA
- Speaking engagements for for Patten Free and Wiscasset Libraries, Camden & Bath Rotary Clubs, Row House and other historical societies, St Andrews and other retirement communities to name a few
- Presented professional development one-day workshop at Midcoast Community Alliance and Co-presented Maine Maritime Museums summer camp - Mariner's Adventure* - and STEAM Box in February 2022 & 2023. *MA again in 2023

2

Exposure in National & Regional Media

We expanded our reach well beyond 27 Commercial Street in Bath - the City of Ships.

National Magazines: *DownEast, WoodenBoat, Soundings, Marlinspike (cover), Sea History, SAIL*

Newspapers: *The Cryer (front page)(14 issue series), Portland Press Herald / Times Record, Lincoln County News, Maine Coastal News, Kennebec Times, Wiscasset Newspaper,*

Social: 2,600 followers on Facebook
435 followers on Instagram
increases of over 300%

4

Accolades & Awards

- Community Project Award, City of Bath
- Legislative Sentiment, Maine Senate
- [Best of the 207](#), Portland Radio Group
- First Place Float, Bath Heritage Day

from
"Bath's Best Kept Secret"
to
["Best of the 207"](#)

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

A local father of 3 children under age 8 who visits often and participated in our December “Shipwright’s Elves” offering for the Old Fashioned Christmas in Bath calendar: “The reason we keep coming back to the Bath Freight Shed and The Virginia is because of the continual welcome of the volunteers. We are always greeted with warm smiles and an eagerness to share the history and knowledge of Maine's First Ship, especially with our kids. It is seldom the case that you can go into a working museum and have your children be encouraged to get hands-on with the history and knowledge of the place. This is something I value immensely as a parent and has happened every time we have visited. All of this makes us feel like we are a part of the incredible undertaking going on at Maine's First Ship and keeps us coming back regularly.”

A longtime supporter: I am fortunate to be able to often arrange my travel plans to coincide with the days that the ship has been available and the volunteers have been on site. Almost every time I stop in, someone recognizes me from my previous frequent visits and long conversations. I get awesome updates and long chats as if I've stopped in to see old friends.

Meaningful giving, esp from First-time donor-members: "Dad loved the water and boats. He joined the Coast Guard at sixteen and then enlisted in the Navy. He was a Seabee who piloted Higgins boats to the beaches of Normandy during D-Day." also "My father was a professor in Dartmouth College's English Dept. He loved sail boats, and would sit at Reid and gaze at passing boats with binoculars." Still other memberships are inspired by and dedicated to our MFS volunteers who work tirelessly to bring the vision of a sailing vessel for education to life.

Bath's City Economic Development Director: Maine's First Ship is an exemplar of the Bath ethos – close-knit community, a love of the river, hands-on work and learning. As such, MFS is an incredible point of pride for the entire community. Particularly since the ships' launch in the Kennebec in 2022, MFS has been a focal point and source of excitement in Bath. The educational programs produced by MSF are unique, innovative, and high-quality. MFS not only offers incredible educational opportunities for those who live locally but is an organization of state-wide and national significance and is gaining recognition as such each day. MFS has quickly become one of the City's signature cultural attractions, attracting visitors from away to learn more about our ship building heritage of past and present.

OUR 2023-24 GOALS



1

Diverse & Dynamic Programs

First and foremost this means *Virginia* will Transition from a vessel underconstruction to a vessel operating on the water and carrying passengers. To do this, we will need to earn a Certificate of Inspection from the USCG - first a Dockside and then for Underway.

As we have always done, we plan to foster traditional skill development & share important history. We will continue our tradition of building community.

3

Financial Stability & Transparency

We have relied on barter, borrow, trade and patience for over a decade. As *Virginia* comes into her own, we must explore operating models, revenue generating & investing strategies, and more that can support and help the vessel rise to their potential. We have matured a great deal, and our budget is better organized to tell our story. But we have more work to do and welcome our business & financial minded members to learn more about the journey - where we've been & where we are going.

2

Board Evolution

There is a natural growth from Founding boards to Governing boards. In our history we've been blessed with community leaders, history aficionados, traditional sailors, business minds, shipwrights, storytellers, educators, and such. As we grow, we will need those talents and more. Transitioning to operations will require experience in Risk Management, Maritime Operations, Fundraising, Experiential Education and the like.

[Come join this leadership community.](#)

4

Increase Membership & Reach

We are a membership organization, and that means something very specific to the state of Maine. Our closest peer in organization is MOFGA.

In 2022 we had 375 donor-members who invested in our mission. That was a small increase over the year before & the year before that. Our members make us possible - and keep us relevant. Our members & volunteers help us set and steer a course into the future.

We are so glad to have you on our crew! Can you help us reach 500 members! ?!

OUR 2023 PROGRAMS



We have a detailed list of scheduled & tentative programs that we can share. Also keep an eye on the EVENTS tile on our website!

The construction of the ship has been our marquee program. Around that core there are "Virginia-adjacent" programs that we have pulled together from the inspiration of our volunteers. They help us offer education to so many people in so many ways, and assure that we live our designation as a 501c3 nonprofit.

We have planned for 3 fundamental types of Virginia-adjacent programs this year:

- **Tuition based Skill Development courses for Adults & Schools**
- **Drop-In Demonstrations, Lectures & Hands-On Learning Opportunities**
- **Community Gathering Events for Fun & Education**
- **Learning to Sail Virginia**

In addition, we will be learning to sail Virginia with the help of talented & knowledgeable sailors from around the traditional sailing vessel community.

PROJECTS	DETAILS	OUTCOME
Learning to Sail Virginia	inviting captains from traditional sailing community to help us learn to sail our 17th century pinnace	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• experience for our crewe / prepare for Col• documentation of operations
Maritime Maker Spaces - Courses & Demostration	adding 4-5 tuition-based courses to our ongoing free demonstrations of traditional maritime crafts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• keep Ingenuity alive and well• engage volunteers and community in new ways
Community Events	celebrations and oportuntites to learn in community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• stay relevant and vibrant• build our community• learn and play together

WHO WE ARE



<p>Maine's First Ship Board of Directors</p>
<p>Officers</p>
<p>ORMAN HINES President Sebasco Estates, ME Food Service Director, retired</p>
<p>JEREMY BLAIKLOCK Vice President Bath, ME Landscape Designer; Shipbuilder</p>
<p>LORI BENSON 2nd Vice President Bath, ME Instructor of Museum Studies</p>
<p>ALLISON L. HEPLER Secretary Woolwich, ME Professor UMaine system, retired; Maine House of Representatives</p>
<p>MICHAEL WALTON Treasurer Bath, ME Vice President, First Federal Savings</p>
<p>Directors</p>
<p>MERRY CHAPIN Phippsburg, ME Educator, retired</p>
<p>DORSEY HARRISON Georgetown, ME Database Marketer, retired</p>
<p>PAUL JOHNSON Bath, ME Head of School and educational consultant, retired</p>
<p>WILL NEILSON Arrowsic, ME Attorney, Business owner</p>
<p>JIM PARMENTIER Brunswick, ME Professor in Health & Medical Sciences, retired</p>
<p>ED ROGERS Bath, ME Owner, JR Maxwell & Co.</p>
<p>DAN SORTWELL Wiscasset, ME Owner, Big Barn Coffee</p>
<p>ROWAN WAGNER Bath, ME Owner, JR Maxwell & Co.</p>

375
Total Individual
Members &
Business Partners

114
New Individual
donor-members

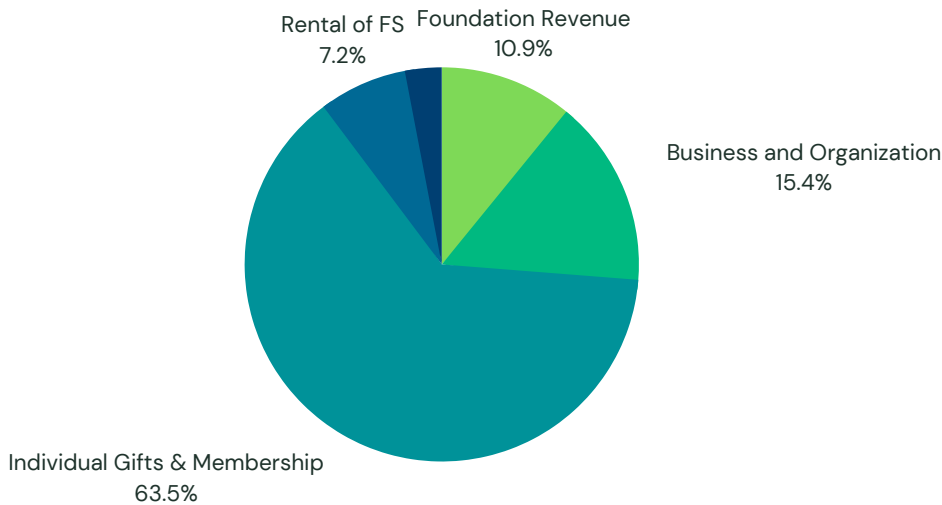
22
New Business
Partners - donors
or sponsors

2,578
Members, Friends
& Acquaintances in
our database

Staff

Kirstie Truluck, Executive Director
Kimberly Madden, Op Coord / Admin

REVENUE IN 2022



\$145,00

Membership & Other Financial Support

Of that \$

\$99,200

Individual Membership, suggested donation & events

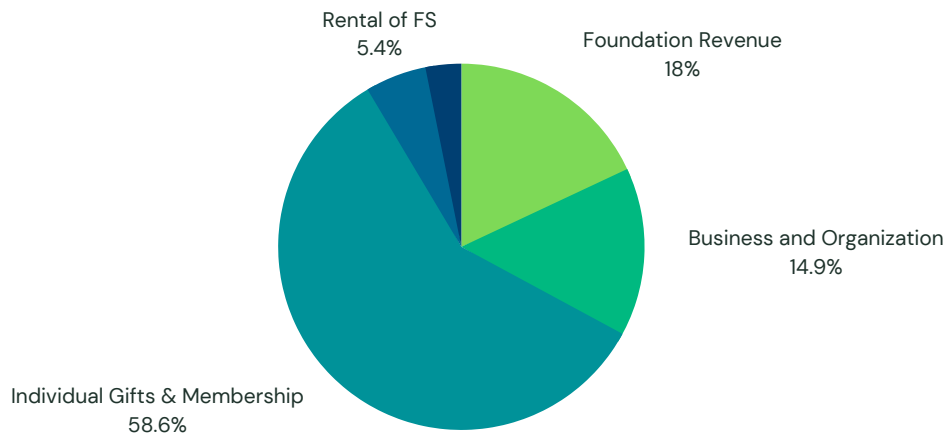
\$17,000 in restricted awards in 2022

In addition to generous Business Partners (listed at our website), we received grant support from the following:

Fisher Charitable Foundation, Maine Community Foundation Community Building, Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust, Alfred M. Senter Fund, Americana Corner, Maine Community Foundation Belvedere Traditional Handcrafts, Charles L. Read Foundation, and James & Betty Jacobs Family Charitable Trust

\$41,000 restricted funds 'carried' from 2021

REVENUE - BUDGET FOR 2023

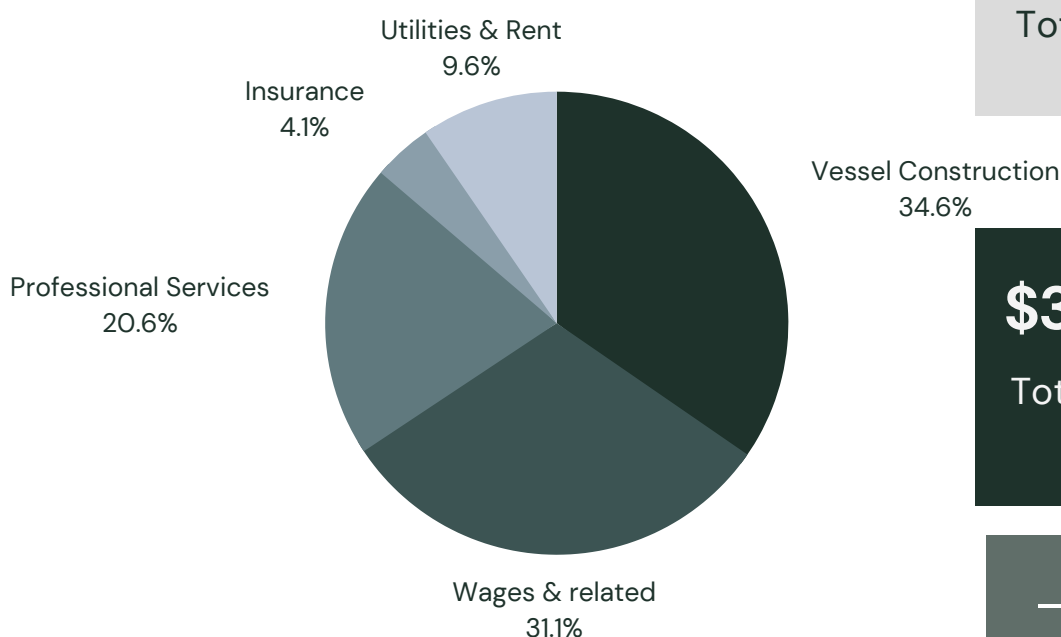


It turns out that when you put a launch deadline on vessel construction, it has a significant impact on expenses. We got through the need for materials in the run-up to launch and the launch event itself because we had a \$100,000 'nest egg' in the bank at the start of 2022. Those dollars had been growing throughout the years of membership growth & grant awards – especially Covid recovery funds – all the while using the classic barter, in-kind donation and patient waiting that had gotten MFS through 11 years of vessel construction. Expenses significantly outpaced Revenue in 2022

EXPENSES IN 2022

\$216,500

Total Revenue
for 2022



Vessel Construction
34.6%

\$326,500

Total Expenses
for 2022

-\$110,00

HOW did we pull it
off?

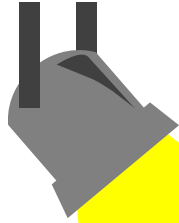
Here are some of the more impactful expenses related to the launch of the vessel but not part of the launch event:

- Fabrication and Galvanizing Pintles & Gudgeons for the Rudder – \$13,000
- Running power to the dock & down to the vessel for bilge pumps
- Bilge pumps installed ahead of the launch

Much of the launch event expenses were offset by business sponsorship. But not all...

- Professional Service – Live Streaming & video capture of the Launch of Virginia – \$6,000
- Professional Service – 2 Keeley Cranes – \$25,000

Though the costs were significant, MFS continued to be blessed with generous in-kind donations of services from members of our community. The skilled labor of our Volunteers serves as the single greatest asset of the organization.

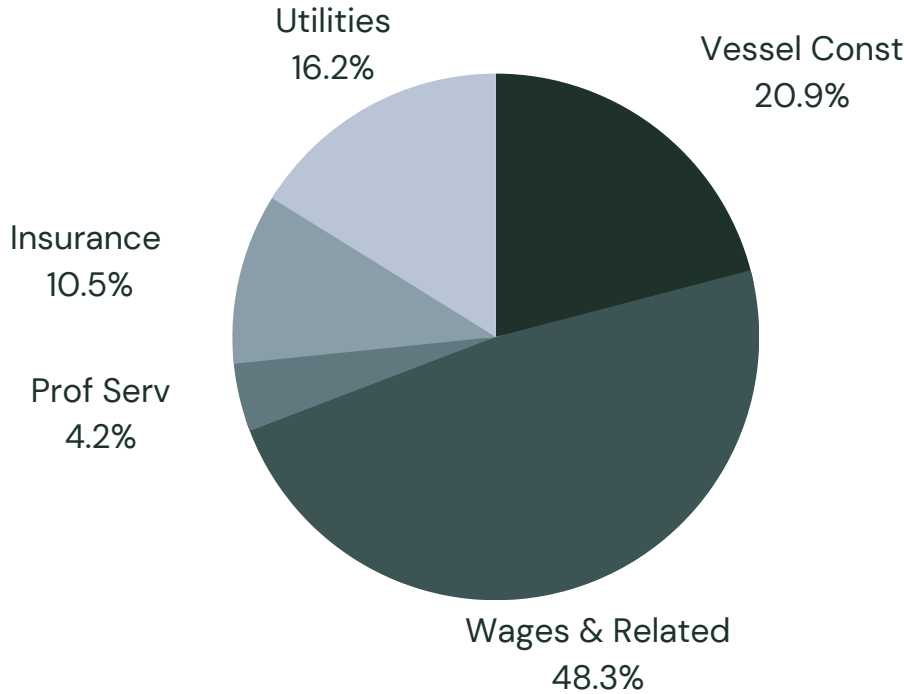


OF NOTE

*values from Independent Sector \$29.99 / hr

**Estimated Value of
Volunteers to MFS
1,075 hours per month
\$32,195 per month
\$386,340 per year**

BUDGET 2023 - EXPENSES



<p>\$244,100 Anticipated 2023 Revenue includes 25% increase in individual donations</p>
<p>\$243,500 Anticipated 2023 Expences + \$30,000 dock repair</p>
<p>Decrease in Construction -</p> <p>Increase in Operations</p>

In the budget for 2023

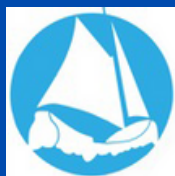
- Haul Out for USCG Certificate of Inspection - est \$5,000
- Increase Insurance for liability under operation - ^ \$10,000
- Outfit with Safety equipment - est \$26,000
- Develop Visitor Center Exhibits & Classes - est \$10,000
- Stewardship of Landside Facilities for Community Access & Engagement - TBD

Not budgeted for yet... some urgent & unexpected; others currently rely on volunteer time now but might change or look ahead to 2024

- Repair & Improve Dock System - \$29,000 (immediate need)
- Development of Shipboard Programs - dockside & underway
- Increase Staffing for Operations - Program Coordination, Administrative Support
- Increase Staffing for Operations - Captain & Crew Training
- Increase Endowed Fund for Vessel Maintenance

Member Call to Action

- Continue or increase your membership support
- Introduce a friend or family member to MFS using our [new documentary](#) and invite them to become a member
- Host your event at the Freight Shed – rental fees are reasonable and some levels of membership earn you a discount
- Volunteer – Docent, mentor-instructor, event host, and more
- Wear & gift MFS merch (and buy more!)
- Follow us on social media & share our posts
- Bring your talents to a Committee or the Board of Directors
- Attend Member events... and celebrate the Member community that makes this possible









WE THANK YOU FOR
YOUR ONGOING
INVESTMENT IN AND
SUPPORT OF
MAINE'S FIRST SHIP

Sincerely,
Executive Director & Board of Directors
of Maine's First Ship



Here's to Members & Volunteers - Huzzah!