

**Denman-Hornby Ferry Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Overview: Denman Island Seniors Hall, May 7, 2015**

**In Attendance:**

Committee: Alex Allen, Daniel Arbour, Elspeth Armstrong, David Critchley (alternate for Laura Busheikin), Jack Forsyth, Frank Frketich, Giff LaRose, April Lewis, George McRae, Rob McCreary, Denise MacKean, Noel Villard

BC Ferries: Corrine Storey- VP Customer Services, David Hendry- Strategic Planning Director, Captain Al de Koninck- Marine Superintendent, Jeff West- Terminal Operations Superintendent, Darin Guenette-Public Affairs Manager

**Meeting Highlights:**

The objective of the meeting was to: discuss previous issues and explore options for addressing issues brought to the FAC from the community.

The next meeting is planned as a WebEx meeting during the fall of 2015, with the FAC members likely to gather in the Sidney area; morning times preferred.

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**Issues Summary and Resolution Plan**

**A. Issue: Chair selection**

**Definition:** Frank Frketich was confirmed as committee Chair, and April Lewis as the Vice-Chair for the new term.

**BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution:** none required.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

**B. Issue: Terms of Reference review**

**Definition:** This being the first meeting of a new, four-year FAC term, the general TOR was discussed. There was general agreement that the new policy of a maximum two-term limit for committee members makes sense.

**BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution:** none required.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date

n/a		
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**C. Issue: 'BCF 101' review**

**Definition:** BC Ferries has developed a document (nicknamed 'BCF 101') to provide high-level information about key aspects of coastal ferry service, including sections on: BC Ferries, the Coastal Ferry Services Contract, the BC Ferry Commission, fares and FACs. The main intent of BCF 101 is to bring all FAC members to a common baseline of understanding, to better facilitate issue discussions during meetings.

The FAC asked for clarity of the role of 'the FAC'.

**BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution:** Provide FAC material that helps clarify role of the FAC/FAC members.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
Send FAC BCF 101 or other relevant material	Darin	When able

**D. Issue: 8 am 'Hornby reservation' discussion**

**Definition:** At the most recent FAC meeting, a lengthy discussion occurred to explore if a reservation could/should be implemented for the 8 am sailing from Denman West terminal for Hornby customers. Much of this discussion focused on 'the number of vehicle spots' that should have access to the sailing and whether this arrangement made sense for both Denman and Hornby Islands.

Since that meeting, BC Ferries terminal and vessel employees analyzed what procedures would need to be implemented to establishing for a 15-vehicle reservation system for this particular sailing. Ultimately, BC Ferries determined that an 'extra employee' would need to be positioned at the terminal to coordinate proper staging of these reserved customers, and they are not prepared to assume the additional costs involved.

Rob suggested that an un-staffed reservation procedure is already happening at Buckley Bay (Lane 1), and asked if BC Ferries could therefore try a similar process at Denman West for this one sailing.

BC Ferries then replied that it may make sense to allow the new traffic flow routines to become established once the cable ferry is in operation, and then discuss if/how to develop a lane loading system that would allow staging for these reserved Hornby customers on the 8 am sailing. Further to this, a meeting sometime in September when the cable ferry should be operating was proposed to figure out how this reservation process may work. Note: traffic stats indicate that an overload for Hornby customers on

that sailing would happen approximately six times a year. BC Ferries has designed a handout explaining how loading will occur once all lanes are opened at Denman West and the cable ferry is operating, and there may be an opportunity to make a ‘special handout’ related to a 8 am reservation process, if it were to happen.

The FAC alternatively suggested implementing an honour system for these reservations at the same time as the cable ferry enters service instead; two lanes (approximately 15/16 spots) could be set aside from Hornby Island customers on that 8 am sailing.

**BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution:** analyze how lineup/loading process works when cable ferry in operation.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
Meet with FAC reps to discuss how/if Hornby customers could be staged for reservations on the 8 am at Denman West	Jeff/AI	After observing how line-ups/loading works during cable ferry operations

**E. Issue: After-hours emergency response (cable ferry)**

**Definition:** BC Ferries explained that the exact same protocol will be in place with the cable ferry as currently exists for emergency call outs. Some basic discussion followed around how BC Ambulance Service requests ferry assistance.

**BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution:** none required.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

**F. Issue: Length of peak season**

**Definition:** The FAC suggests that although the schedules annotate the peak season operating from late-June to Labour Day, the traffic demand for both islands is strong between the May long weekend and Thanksgiving. Then, they suggested the ‘peak schedule season’ reflect when the heavy traffic actually occurs.

**BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution:** Consider how peak season is set and traffic demands through the spring to fall period.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
Review traffic data and explore how to address	BCF	When able

policy decisions around setting peak season.		
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**G. Issue:      Definition of overload/shuttling decision**

**Definition:** BC Ferries clarified that an overload is defined when just a single vehicle is left behind after a full vessel sails, but that shuttling decisions are made considering multiple factors, on a case-by-case situation.

**BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution:** none required.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

**H. Issue:      Afternoon gap in Route 21 schedule**

**Definition:** FAC members from both islands noted hearing problems related to a gap between the morning and afternoon shifts on Route 21, and they suggest it may be a good time soon to review schedule change options with BC Ferries reps. They acknowledge this schedule review may involve balancing ‘the limited number of vehicles that use late sailings’ with ‘the pain for those who are inconvenienced by the gap’.

BC Ferries suggested that, if the FAC would like BC Ferries perspective, they should ask and BC Ferries can engage Scheduling/Traffic sections for data prior to setting up a meeting.

**BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution:** Await possible meeting request from FAC regarding schedule options.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
Contact BC Ferries if FAC wishes to establish a sub-committee for scheduling discussions.	Frank	As appropriate

**I. Issue:      Cable ferry in-service update**

**Definition:** BC Ferries is currently nearing the final stages of constructing the vessel, with a current target to see the vessel moved to the Bayne Sound region end-May/early June. At that time, the cables (already laid) will be fed through the ferry and tensioned.

After that, training and testing is planned for the July/August period prior to determining when to enter the cable ferry into full service.

**BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution:** none required.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

**J. Issue: Side-by-side schedule**

**Definition:** The FAC had suggested that BC Ferries consider displaying both Route 21 and 22 schedules on their website, as Hornby customers would benefit from viewing both schedules in a side-by-side format. BC Ferries replied that there is currently a project underway to align online schedules with the format of printed schedules, but significant changes will likely still be up to two years away.

**BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution:** none required.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

**K. Issue: Size up the Savings**

**Definition:** BC Ferries explained that a promotion that provides a discount for non-commercial over-length customers using Route 1 and 30 will be running again this summer...similar to the one in 2014. Details to be announced soon.

**BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution:** none required.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

**L. Issue: Experience Card update**

**Definition:** When asked if any changes were planned for how the Experience Card provides discounts, BC Ferries explained that they continue to monitor the effect on yield brought on by high usage of the E-Card, but do not have any plans to make any changes.

**BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution:** none required.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

**M. Issue: Cost savings of Service Level Adjustments (SLA)**

**Definition:** David Hendry explained that, because BC Ferries issues bonds, they are subject to securities regulations and currently in a post-fiscal year blackout period for disclosure of financial information; with results available in June. BC Ferries' Board of Directors has requested an analysis of the impact of the service level adjustments made in 2014, including an assessment of whether net savings were realized through these, and the company is working on reports that will fulfill this request. Preliminary analysis indicates that the net savings targeted are being realized at a system-wide level, but there are variations across routes affected.

Additionally, utilization has increased on impacted routes and it appears the estimated traffic/revenue loss from the SLA is less than predicted. BC Ferries will not commit to whether the savings analysis will be made available on a route by route basis and it needs to be recognized that there are other variables impacting this analysis and it is difficult to isolate changes specific to the service level adjustments. The important point is that the net savings are applied system wide and benefit all routes in a cross subsidized fare system.

The FAC requested to receive a summary of route specific savings for Route 21 and 22 if possible. BC Ferries noted that drilling down to the route level is very complex and unlikely.

As for Major routes, BC Ferries conducted extensive analysis on a variety of options for reducing service to achieve the \$4.9 million in net savings, but found that estimated revenue losses exceeded cost savings in all cases. It was pointed out that the Major routes have already had up to eight per cent service reductions between 2008 and 2014 as well.

These reductions came from service that was being provided above CFSC requirements prior to 2012 as well as the recent flexibility in the CFSC (400 round-trips) to further reduce service. As a result of this, it becomes harder to find Major route service reductions without impacting revenue which, in turn, would put further pressure on fares in a cross subsidized system.

The \$4.9 million of net savings still needs to be achieved by BC Ferries in Performance Term-4 to achieve the 1.9% annual price cap but BC Ferries will find these net savings through measures not related to service level reductions. It is important to also recognize that the BC Ferries Commissioner has further tasked BCF to continue the analysis related to longer term and larger measure initiatives related to the Major routes in order to identify large savings (\$100M) in our capital program.

**BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution:** none required.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

**N. Issue: Operations Report**

**Definition:** Capt de Koninck provided a summary of recent and near-future vessel and terminal developments related to Routes 21 and 22, including traffic and on-time performance statistics. Jeff West added that terminal attendants will be trained in traffic control, and there will be two of them in the Gravelley Bay lot during busy periods.

Specific to the cable ferry, he clarified some myths/misunderstandings as follows:

- it will have the same dead-weight capability as the Quinitsa
- its crossing speed will be the same as the Quinitsa
- BC Ferries has no plans to change the ‘nightwatch’ positions
- all crew positions have been offered
- it appears that all crew positions can be filled from Denman-based employees
- two crew members will marshall traffic, not one

**BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution:** none required.

**Action Plan:**

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		