

North and Central Coast Ferry Advisory Committee Meeting

Overview: meeting held at the Fairmont YVR November 3, 2015

In Attendance:

Committee: Bill Beldessi, Ellen Cranston, Barry Cunningham, Ernest Hall, Travis Hall, Mark Schlichting, Angela Smith, Billy Yovanovich

BC Ferries: Mark Collins - VP Strategic Planning and Community Engagement, David Hendry- Strategic Planning Director, Captain Lance Lomax - Marine Superintendent, Jeff West – Superintendent, Terminal Operations, 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 will be planned for May 2016.

Issues Summary and Resolution Plan

A. Issue: Previous summary notes

Definition: The summary of the May meeting was briefly reviewed, with the FAC suggesting BC Ferries keep the previous action item pertaining to ‘investigating Route 11 medical priority travel possibilities from Haida Gwaii active until a result is obtained.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: Continue exploring possibility of ‘medical assured loading’ for Route 11 customers travelling to Prince Rupert.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Check if ‘demand for medical assured loading’ is known, and whether assured loading process may be set up.	Darin	COMPLETED – no process will be est.

B. Issue: Terms of Reference review

Definition: The FAC noted concerns that issues are brought forth at multiple meetings, and they are interested in exploring any ideas to become more effective at closing issues. BC Ferries reminded all that the main role of FACs is an advisory one, built on two-way flow of communications; sometimes issues do linger, but there may be good reasons.

The FAC suggested that the members of all 13 FACs get together once per year to explore issues together and BC Ferries said there would likely be too many logistics barriers (cost, meeting space, time available, etc.) involved in seeing this type of meeting happen. As well, the purpose of BC Ferries already hosting an annual meeting for the FAC Chairs is to address ‘common agenda points’ amongst all 13 committees.

BC Ferries will continue to try to help mitigate the chance of issues being raised that ‘do not pertain to BC Ferries’ operations’, as this may be the cause of repeated points. That is, certain issues are the purview of the Province while others are the responsibility of BC Ferries. Educating FAC members of ‘who has authority/responsibility for what’ will help keep agenda relevant.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: Forward the suggestion of hosting a meeting with all FAC members to senior management for reply.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Forward the ‘all members meeting’ motion to Mike Corrigan for consideration.	Mark	COMPLETED – meeting not feasible

C. Issue: Route 10 tourism update

Definition: Ernest presented a document prepared by the Heiltsuk Tribal Council and the Tourism Industry of BC, noting that a working group has formed to address Central Coast tourism concerns, including how to enhance ferry services. He added a motion to commend the efforts of this group in promoting these initiatives.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: None required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

D. Issue: Route 10S schedule/ridership

Definition 1: Mark Schlichting asked if moving freight on the Nimpkish has affected the rate at which other traffic is being ‘turned away’, and whether these statistics are kept by BC Ferries. BC Ferries noted that there are no ‘turn away’ stats, however statistics can be shared for when sailing were at full capacity.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: Provide stats for ‘full sailings’ on Route 10S.

Definition 2: The FAC also asked if freight shipments could be moved from MacLoughlin Bay to Shearwater on the Nimpkish on Sundays, instead of waiting until Tuesdays, as is the current practice.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: Consider moving freight as requested.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Investigate if/how to move freight between MacLoughlin Bay and Shearwater on Sundays	Lance	End-January

E. Issue: Addition of sailings on Route 10

Definition: Travis asked if one additional mid-week sailing can be added to the Route 10 schedule each month, and BC Ferries replied that there are three options for requesting an increase in service. The first options is for FAC/communities to approach the Province with a request to increase the ‘minimum service levels’ (and appropriate service fees).

The second option is for FAC/community to propose ‘cost neutral solutions’ (i.e. Detailed rationale as to how extra sailings will at least break-even), and the third option is for a community/communities to offer the funding that would be required to cover the costs incurred by adding sailings.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: None required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

F. Issue: All Native Basketball tournament

Definition: Lance explained that the Route 10 schedule has already been adjusted to best allow participants in the 2016 ANB tournament to get to/from Prince Rupert at the beginning and end of the event.

Travis added that the Heiltsuk First Nation is seeking an additional ‘mid-week sailing’ opportunity, as some participants do not need to be there during the entire tournament, and staying in Prince Rupert the entire time means higher hotel and food costs.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: Once Travis can provide an estimate for possible usage of ‘added’ mid-week sailings during the ANBT, analyse the possibility of adding these sailings.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Analyse if/how mid-week ANBT Route 10 sailings could be added for 2016.	Lance/Mark	End-January

G. Issue: Freight services

Definition: Ellen expressed concerns that freight customers are getting overloaded on Route 11, and wondered if there is enough space/frequency of service to move goods effectively. BC Ferries noted they are not aware of freight shipments backing up, but can follow up on any specific freight concerns if they are forwarded by FAC members.

In a related discussion, BC Ferries was asked if palletized goods could be shipped from Port Hardy to Bella Bella, thus saving space for more vehicles. BC Ferries replied that the service provided is only roll-off/roll-on, and they have no capability to handle pallets or other similar freight.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: None required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

H. Issue: Route 3 schedule changes

Definition: The FAC asked how recent sailing changes (additions) were accomplished on Route 3 (Langdale-Horseshoe Bay). BC Ferries noted that eight return trips were added, in the spring/fall shoulder season Sunday of Route 3, as delays and overloads were significantly affecting all three routes that use Horseshoe Bay and adding costs to the system.

Adding these sailings helped improve efficiency and alleviated problems for all three routes...thus reducing costs. Essentially, any costs of adding sailings were offset by cost savings brought about with the system improvements.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: None required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

I. Issue: Website pilot project

Definition: Angela noted that Port Hardy is conducting a pilot project on a website they have set up (bcfac.ca) to help the communities understand the function of the FAC, how to share concerns and learn more about BC Ferries and ferry services.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: None required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

J. Issue: Route 26 schedule adjustments

Definition: Ellen suggested that since there are ‘extra sailings’ scheduled on Dangerous Cargo days, could BC Ferries add those sailings to all other days for use non-commercial customers to access. BC Ferries replied that those DC sailings were added to the schedule and are ‘above the contract minimum’ required from the route. This was done to provide access to the contracted sailings by all customers, and adding any additional sailings would not be covered by service fees from the Province. Therefore, the cost of additional sailings would not be recoverable. Ellen added that it would also help if sailing times could be adjusted to occur ‘on the hour or half-hour’, so the schedule would be easier to memorize.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: None required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

K. Issue: Passenger fare promotion

Definition: BC Ferries clarified that all 50% discounts for the recent passenger fare promotion, as well as an upcoming vehicle fare promotion, are being offered from the published rate, rather than an Experience Card rate. It is still too early to provide any analysis of how the promotion may have encouraged extra ridership and/or whether it ‘broke even’; however in general, there appears to have been an increase in traffic for lower utilized sailings.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: None required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

L. Issue: Operations Presentation

Definition: Lance provided a brief summary of operational information (traffic stats, on-time performance, etc.) and near future terminal or vessel changes planned. The Kwuna will not have a refit scheduled for another three years, the Nimpkish in two years and the Northern Adventure and Expedition will continue their annual maintenance work.

Route 11 sailings were added in the spring shoulder season, and BC Ferries will keep these in future schedules. Finally, Jeff noted that construction of a new trestle at Prince Rupert is planned for fall of 2016.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: None required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

M. Issue: MacLoughlin Bay dock access

Definition: Mark Schlichting asked if a previous practice of seeing water taxi service allow passenger drop-off at MacLoughlin Bay terminal, thus allowing connection to Route 10 sailings, may be re-established in the future. Jeff replied that there are liability and safety restrictions that would not allow passenger drop off at the new dock, but suggested there may be a possible arrangement with the nearby fish plant that the community could explore.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: None required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

N. Issue: Cable ferry update

Definition: Mark provided a summary of the status of the cable ferry due to enter service on the Denman Island-Buckley Bay route soon. At present, Vancouver Shipyards (SeaSpan) still owns the vessel and is conducting trials, and therefore BC Ferries is very limited in what they can communicate about the ferry. In general, there is much misinformation in the community; however the vessel is meeting all technical requirements so far, including:

- speed targets using one engine
- Load capacity (weight)
- Cables are not rusting/deteriorating/too heavy and performing as planned.
- Fuel consumption is as projected or lower.
- Vessel is meeting current schedule requirements.

- Overall project is on budget.

Once BC Ferries takes official ownership, more detailed information and plans (crewing levels, trial, in-service dates, etc.) will be communicated.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: None required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

O. Issue: Queen of Chilliwack

Definition: The former Queen of Chilliwack has been sold to Goundar Shipping of Fiji, and they are working on sailing the ship from Canada in the upcoming weeks.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: None required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

P. Issue: Nimpkish replacement update

Definition: Originally, the Nimpkish was scheduled to be retired in 2017 and replaced by a new vessel. However, the vessel will be maintained in order to allow a replacement in 2019, and BC Ferries is awaiting direction from the Province as to the level of service (i.e. Size/capacity of a replacement vessel) they want on the mid-Coast route. If not clear indication is provided to BC Ferries by the time replacement decisions need to be made, then a ‘like-for-like’ (vessel of comparable capacity) replacement will be assumed.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: None required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

Q. Issue: Salish Class update

Definition: Mark notes that the Salish Class vessels currently under construction are ‘on schedule and budget’. They are being built with a dual-fuel capability, with the intent to operate on LNG full-time, and the fueling process will mirror what currently happens (fuel brought in by truck, fuelling happens during silent hours). He added that they will be wired for wi-fi, but that there are challenges to overcome around access to sufficient

bandwidth and connectivity. Finally, Coast Salish themed artwork is planned for both external and internal surfaces, with an announcement pending due in November from the First Peoples' Cultural Council on the selection of artists to developed this artwork.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: None required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

R. Issue: Vehicle fare promotion

Definition: Darin notified the FAC that BC Ferries would be offering a 50% discount on vehicle fares from November 16 to December 19, following the pattern used in the recent passenger fare promotion (all sailings on Northern routes). The goal of the promotion is to shift traffic from busy sailings to lower demand sailings and to encourage 'incremental (new) traffic'.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: None required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

S. Issue: Customer Satisfaction Survey

Definition: Mark pointed out that some concerns have been raised by Minor route FAC members that the information gathered through the Customer Satisfaction Tracking (CST) survey process may be used to make decisions that affects routes not included in the survey.

He also noted that most of the Minor routes are not part of the CST, and that they have direct avenues for suggestions, feedback, and consultation with BC Ferries management. Having said this, he sought FAC thoughts on the survey and whether they feel being surveyed in some way in the future is important.

The FAC suggested that Route 10S customers need to be asked about satisfaction of service/vessel amenities, particularly as the Nimpkish replacement plan is not set.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: Include FAC input with other FACs and consider if any future survey process makes sense for Minor routes.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date

Analyze FAC input on future survey considerations	Mark	As applicable
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