LUMMI ISLAND FERRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (LiFAC)
Thirteenth Meeting (Work Session)
March 4, 2014

CALL TO ORDER
Committee Chair Mike McKenzie called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Lummi Island Library, Bellingham, Washington.

ROLL CALL
Absent: Open Position

FLAG SALUTE

MINUTES CONSENT
1. Approved minutes of February 19, 2013 LiFAC Meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS / SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Mike McKenzie, Chair –
- Call from James Lee (Interim Ferry Manager) saying that Public Works is activity looking into the Trek as replacement vehicle ferry during dry dock. He did say that the contract for the passenger replacement ferry is in its 3rd renewal or option this summer. Public Works can use the same replacement ferry without going to bid. If they identify a different option (i.e. Trek) they can go out to bid. Public Works is investigating the Trek and if it is an option they can choose to move on it by going out to bid.
- At the next Council Meeting (3/11) the Council will hold a public hearing regarding the convince fees for credit card purchases of ferry tickets. (This was postponed from the previous Council Meeting as the Chief was out of service).
- There was some issue with communication methods uses the day/night of the ferry from island citizens. Clark commented (from his wife) that relying on internet communication solely is a bad move. There are a lot of people who may not use the internet, may not have access to the internet, or simply are not near their computers during the situation. He continued that even if they did have access, he did not consider “Facebook” as the first point of contact to seek information on the status of the Chief. He is also not a “twitter” user. The Whatcom County Public Works Website was not used and the ferry information was posted to Whatcom County Government. So in the interest if ferry users and Public Works there should be a specific point of reference. Antholt commented that they should just call the island store.
  o McKenzie commented on everything he knew that happened:
    ✓ James Lee contacted McKenzie early on asking that the ferry is out indefinitely and can you get work to the residents
    ✓ First call to Paul Davis and he put the information on “brown betty” (Island news source).
PUBLIC COMMENT:

- **Kathy Thurber** (wife of ferry skipper night of outage) commented that her husband was inundated with phone calls from Islanders. She said that when you have three people trying to get the ferry running, the last thing they need to do is to be answering the phone. She stressed that it is important that a system could be developed that didn’t interrupt the ferry crew it would be a good thing. Islanders should not be calling the phone on the ferry. She also commented that if the system was to rely on phone calls that the young folks don’t answer unless they are “texed”. A phone tree would miss half the residents of the island.

- **Jim Dickenson** commented that he was near the computer and thought the initial information was good. He also commented that although the ferry was running at 9:00 pm that KVOS was still telling folks that it was not running. There needs to be better updates to the various organizations reporting on the situation.

- **Jansen Pierce** commented that when his stepdaughter has a snow day they get a reverse 911. The same thing happens if the children get out early a call goes out to all of the parents. All of the schools use this. He was not sure what it would cost.

- **Judy Thomas** commented that the school district does have this service and it is very expensive.

- **Mary Ross** commented that Bill Fox had a posting on the Skagit County Ferry Replacement Plan. She urged all members of LIFAC to read that plan very carefully. It is an example of a county that is working proactively to maintain its boat, think ahead, to have transparent things for its public. Anyone can go on their website and find information easily. You can find out what our county can’t seem to do to figure out the motor vehicle fuel excise tax. In section 2.4 they do a direct comparison between the Guemes Island Ferry and the Lummi Island Ferry. Please read this report. It is totally embarrassing to see service comparisons. She read various comparisons from...
the report to the Committee. Their system is efficient, it is well run and they have commissioned a study to see if it is worthwhile to replace their ferry or to complete some temporary repairs (band aids) and do something in 10 years. The Guemes ferry was built in 1979. The report was written in November 2013.

- **Jim Dickenson** commented that the Washington State Ferry HiYu may be available to us for almost nothing or a very little amount. He has been in touch with the people at the surplus property office at the State Ferries. James Lee is aware of this and we almost had a drive by of this ferry. He felt that they (PW?) would be looking into this and that he would be looking to get the 2004 bottom study at the ferry landings. He thought that the HiYu could operate to something under a 0 tide right now and that the big fans would move the mud out unless there was big rock there. The HiYu is built like a full size ferry. Jim commented that Mr. Lee and Mr. Abart have talked to the property manager. **Brown** commented that current information say that the ferry would not be surplused this year, but in the spring of ’15. **McKenzie** commented that he has asked Jim to put together a list of benefits of the HiYu for the County and to get as much information as possible in writing. If it comes to this committee it needs to come ready for us to take action. **Dickenson** commented that he has spoken to the State Property Officer shortly after Lee and Abart had gotten off the phone with him, and he said the thought the county might be considering engaging the Elliot Bay Design Group do a small study. **McKenzie** commented that he was piecing together a letter to the County Council cc’d to the Exec and PW, asking them to give LIFAC priorities as of this moment we have no orders to peruse a replacement ferry. (Brown continues to point out that this is direct item stated in the organization of the Committee) **Antholt** commented that this might be a good deal and that the Chief is not going away in a year.

- **Bud Lee** informed the Committee that he had about 75#s of former ferry committee “paper”. There is a fair amount of history and if they wanted access to it he would be happy to search for information in the paper.

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. **Draft Letter to Public Works regarding the Lummi Island Ferry** -
   a. **McKenzie** commented that he could not remember what this letter was about. **Brown** responded that he too was losing track of this letter. He commented that it was either about the 55/45 or the replacement ferry Plattsburgh and it had never been resolved. The topic was closed.

2. **Ferry Contingency Planning** (see attached question sheet from Antholt)
   a. **McKenzie** is requesting that **Antholt** take the lead on this. **Antholt** says that to get started he need to find out if it is going to be “welcomed”, who does he work with in PWD, who requests information? **McKenzie** responded that the planning is welcome, information will be requested through the Executive, and that **Antholt** will request the information. **Antholt** then asked if he should from a sub-committee to do this and **McKenzie** said “yes”, he can use committee members, islanders or anyone he chooses or would like to do it. **Antholt** would like to ask the community about possibilities that could happen and how should he do this? After
some discussion the answer was however, but to get a list if issues and then move to solving them. **Antholt** wants to ask Executive Louws if we can work with James Lee or somebody else in Public works and there was no problem with this from the Committee. There was considerable discussion in the Committee to talk about time needed and how long this would take. Extra meetings of a sub-committee, emails, task force data, Plattsburgh data, etc. were addressed and duration could be as much as a year. **Colburn** added that he felt it would be important to include the historical perspective of "what has actually happened", i.e. the breakdown last week. **Antholt** said he felt it would be important to get the ferry crew involved as they are an integral part of the system.

### 3. Ferry Rate Spreadsheet Model

a. **Antholt** said that there had been no progress with this. He and Chris need to meet with Diane to get up to speed with the Model. He sees their job is to make the Model balance the Budget. This will involve trade-offs in fares. After developing some scenarios they could be put out to PLIC, the Grange, etc. for comments – let the Community take a look at it. **Brown** commented that he did not think this would be an overly difficult task with all of the information we have been working on for the Plattsburgh, but that there has still been no effort to get to the actual physical budget line items to determine where the County is spending the money. **Colburn** says they are going to aim for what the implications are within the information they have. **Brown** commented that that is only part of the 55/45. For now, the Committee will accept the County Budget as presented.

b. **Antholt** asked **McKenzie** if he had asked for the missing budget year numbers from the Model. **McKenzie** responded that he felt that Diane had received these number and they would have to check with her.

c. **McKenzie** warned the Committee that the issue with the 55/45 calculation might be coming back this year although we had defeated it last year.

### 4. Ferry Fare Recommendation – Issue w/Beach School Students

a. **Antholt** made a motion that LIFAC support the idea that the County should allow one adult fare to accompany Beach School Children on the ferry to and from school. **Antholt** also has drafted a letter to the Council/Executive (attached) regarding this.

i. **Discussion**: if it is good for the community; symbolically it is right and something we can do; it should be a free fare; easier for the crew loading/unloading; safer for the children, good for the school; good PR for the County; mostly win-win. **McKenzie** commented that there was already a process in place through PLIC (letter attached) for the school district to take some action on this prior to it coming to LIFAC. If LIFAC takes this to County Council and say we are recommending a "paid" fare, then we would be asking the county to accept around
$3,000 in possible lost fare revenue. It was said that this would be a false argument because there is not fare paid now. Colburn had a commented that this confuses public agency responsibility for the budget and that this is asking for the County to assume expense on behalf of the Ferndale School District. He does not believe that this is a clear correct choice. There was also comment from members from the audience that there is a meeting plan with the Linda Quinn from the School District next Tuesday. They brought up the issues of the liability for the children and the issue of providing transportation for transfer students. McKenzie commented that we should first hear the result from the meeting and that in his conversation with the county attorney the ferry does not have any liability. Mary Ross commented that actually the captain of the vessel is ultimately responsible for the safety of the passengers. There was question about a “hold harmless agreement” and its validity. Busch commented that the only other option is that the Master of the vessel can refuse anyone to come aboard. Clark commented that having an adult with the children does not necessarily absolve the Master from any liability. Colburn commented that this in an isolated context. This committee has talked about issues of fare payment and other issues of waiving fares. He has a concern with the total loss of all of the fare waivers that are taking place.

ii. Vote on the motion to allow the fare:

1. Yes: 3
2. No: 2
3. Abstain: 1

b. Motion passes and Antholt to send the letter.

5. Recommendation for Ferry Lines and Loading

a. McKenzie commented that he will send a recommendation later over the approval of LIFAC. The recommendation came out of the public comment concerning the problems with the second line in the queue backing onto the main roadway. We are recommending that:

i. Painting of zebra stripes at the end of the lane
ii. Paint a message on the road surface with working of “no parking beyond this point”, and
iii. A large sign at the start of the queue lanes or further down the road stating “no parking in the left lane beyond this point”.

b. Antholt has drafted a letter and it is attached. McKenzie will update and sent the letter.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Washington State Ferry HIYU

a. Brown asked that this topic be added to next month’s agenda. He commented that James Lee said in a letter that he would like some recommendation coming out of LIFAC before he could take any action even though he was interested. He
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wants to address the County to take action as he does not believe that it is the function of this committee to do all of the work on this issue. LIFAC members can support the work but cannot make the decision for the County. LIFAC does not have time in this case to sit back and get bogged down in all of the specifics. The County needs to start this process as soon as possible to in order to address the Spring ’15 time frame.

OTHER BUSINESS
There was no other business

TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR THE NEXT WORK SESSION
The date for the next meeting is Tuesday April 1st

CALL TO ORDER
ROLL CALL
FLAG SALUTE
MINUTES CONSENT
PRESENTATION
Mike McKenzie – General Update

OLD BUSINESS
Update on Ferry Fares Model
Ferry Contingency Planning
Ferry Lines and Loading
Resolution for Washington State Ferry HIYU

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

The Committee approved these minutes on April 1, 2014

ATTEST:

Michael McKenzie, Committee Chair

Michael McKenzie