

North Coast Ferry Advisory Committee

Date: September 20, 2006

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: Marriott Vancouver Airport Hotel
7571 Westminister Highway, Richmond

Attendees:

<i>Committee</i>	<i>BC Ferries</i>
Steve Smith, Co-Chair	Steve Poole, Marine Superintendent
Larry Greba	Gary Leitch, Manager, Stakeholder Relations
Ian Hetman	Marlane Christensen, Manager, Aboriginal Relations
Carol Kulesha	Steve Anderson, Manager, Scheduling
Kathy Bedard	Arlene Macleod, Administrative Assistant
Earl Newman	Marina Lamb, Secretary
Sharon Cartier	Maury Kask, Director of Marketing
Pete Rauch	Amar Johal, Director of Sales & Community Relations
Harvey Hunchitt	Roberta Chartier, Manager, Customer Care Centre
Hank Bood	Dave McWalter, Manager, Reservations Centre
Eddie Russ, Co-Chair	Jason Bowman, Acting Marine Superintendent
Kathy Nylén (part time by phone)	

1. Call to Order:

09:00 – Gary Leitch, Chair until noon; Steve Smith in Chair for remainder of meeting.

2. Approval of Agenda:

Approved with the addition of:

- a. Transport Canada review of Federal subsidy
- b. Letter of thanks to Brian Roe

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

- a. Minutes of the meeting held on June 2, 2006 were approved and distributed on July 12, 2006.
- b. Review of Action Items:
 - Steve Smith to write letter to the BC Ferry Commission, with copies to the Premier, the Minister of Transportation, and the President of BC Ferries opposing the imposition of further surcharges on the northern routes in light of the decrease in service this year.

Completed

- Brian Roe to continue to work with BC Ferries Marketing Department and will report progress at the next meeting. Will be addressed later in meeting by Maury Kask.

4. Presentations:

a. Public

- none

b. Operations Report

- As Acting Marine Superintendent, Jason Bowman made a report on operations since the last meeting in June (presentation attached). The presentation prompted a number of questions and discussions as follows:
 - The capacity of the Sonia was questioned. BC Ferries indicated that the capacity has been conservatively set at 101 AEQ. It was suggested that using 20ft for an AEQ was not reasonable given that most cars are considerably smaller. BCF indicated that until we have operational experience with the vessel we are not comfortable with a higher rating. S. Smith was concerned that with low bus traffic the ship could be full of vehicles and still have less than 300 passengers onboard.
 - Jason Bowman indicated that with respect to R11 BCF is changing payment policies to reduce the number of 'no-shows'.
 - Concern was expressed with the plan to replicate the 2005 schedule in 2007 (i.e. a return to contracted service). It was felt this was particularly inappropriate for R40; season should be at least changed to start later in June and end later in September.
 - Mayor Bood encouraged BC Ferries to shorten the security check-in period as much as possible.
 - Eddie Russ expressed concern about the capacity of the QPR in view of the expected start up of the new Heritage Centre at Haida Gwaii in June 2007. He requested that the Sonia be assigned to the route 2 weeks before and 2 weeks after the start up of the Centre.
 - C. Kulesha and H. Bood noted that even with new vessels deployed there will not be a replacement vessel in the event of a serious service interruption.
 - The Transportation Safety Board preliminary report is due the end of September (*now end of the year*).

c. Customer Care Centre

- Roberta Chartier made a presentation (attached) on developments in the Reservations and Customer Care Centre. She indicated that a new Operations Centre is being established that will operate 24/7. She also indicated that a number of alternatives are being considered to manage traffic better, including charging a \$25 reservation fee for customers who do not show and do not cancel their reservation. Carol Kulesha asked if it is possible to count the number of customers who choose not to travel to the QCI because they do not want to travel stand by. Roberta indicated she will see if the new reservation system being installed in 2008 will have this capability. The need to integrate the Kwuna schedule (Skidegate-Alliford Bay service) with the Air Canada schedule was raised.

Action: J. Bowman and S. Anderson will investigate and report.

- d. Maury Kask led a discussion on Marketing the North Coast. He indicated that now that a new vessel has been purchased we are now in a position to market aggressively for 2007 and beyond. BC Ferries will be attending the major travel industry shows. He indicated that because of timing constraints on licensing the new vessel that public participation in the naming is unlikely. He indicated the name will represent the geography and/or culture of the service area. H. Bood indicated that the emergency advertising put in place to mitigate the impact of the sinking of the Queen on the North was very successful. S. Smith noted the customer demand for reserved seating and asked whether the new ship will have a reserved lounge. Maury indicated that at the moment a reserved lounge is not planned. Staff will be trained to deal with individuals trying to reserve seating de facto by depositing luggage.

5. Correspondence:

- a. Gary Leitch indicated a letter had been received from Brian Roe who has recently resigned from the committee as he has moved from the Bella Coola valley.

6. New Business:

- a. 2nd Performance Term
- Amar Johal advised (presentation attached) the committee that BC Ferries will file its report on the costs of service in the second performance term with the BC Ferry Commission on 30 September. He advised that BC Ferries would work with the FACs to assist them in determining what interventions they wished to make with respect to future service levels. Critical dates and roles of participants in the process on determining the service levels for the 2nd performance term were outlined.
Action: BC Ferries will meet with all FACs between now and March 31 to assist FACs to articulate their service requirements for the next performance term.
Action: MOT will be invited to FAC meetings to discuss this specific issue.
- b. Replacement vessel for Queen of Chilliwack (Steve Smith in Chair)
- J. Bowman advised that BCF is in discussion with MOT concerning a replacement vessel. These discussions are expected to conclude later this year. It was recommended by the committee that the QPR become the replacement vessel on R40 as soon as it is available and until a permanent replacement vessel is secured.
Action: none
- c. 2007 Schedule for route 40 (Bella Coola – Port Hardy)
- J. Bowman indicated that the 2007 schedule would be the same as the 2005 schedule (i.e. return to normal service as per the contract). The desirability of starting the season later and finishing later (same number of sailings) was discussed.
Action: J. Bowman and K. Nylen to meet and review summer 2006 data.
- d. Ferry advisory committee vacancies
- Vacancies at Ocean Falls and Bella Coola will be filled by BCF and the Central Coast Regional District.
- e. Re-evaluation of OH (over height) and UH (under height) tariff charges
- Some customers object to being charged an over height tariff on vessels with no overhead deck. The tariff is applied system wide and there is no differentiation made between open deck and covered deck ships. C. Kulesha asked for an analysis of the OH and UH traffic to determine the relative amounts of traffic.

- f. Spring promotions with discounts
 - The committee would like to see spring promotions with discounts to stimulate traffic in early May and June.
Action: G. Leitch to discuss with Maury Kask and report to committee.
- g. Transport Canada study on federal subsidy.
 - Steve Smith presented a 2005 Transport Canada study on the federal subsidy for information.
Action: G. Leitch to copy and distribute to committee members. G. Leitch to explain how the federal subsidy is allocated by BC Ferries to individual routes.
- h. Ferry Advisory Committee terms of reference.
 - G. Leitch presented a revised draft terms of reference for the committee for information.
Action: Committee members are to send their comments to the Chair(s) who will consolidate for discussion with BC Ferries.

7. Next Meeting:

March 8, 2007

8. Meeting adjourned:

14:15

Approved:

Jason Bowman, Manager Terminal Operations

Date: March 15, 2007

Steve Smith, Chair

Date: March 15, 2007