

**Meeting Details:**

FAC:	Southern Sunshine Coast Ferry Advisory Committee
Date:	November 26, 2009
Location:	Cedars Inn, 895 Gibsons Way, Gibsons, BC
Time:	9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Attendees:**

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>BC Ferries:</b>
Jakob Knaus, Chair	Rob Clarke – EVP & Chief Financial Officer
Barry Cavens	Captain Dale Phipps – Marine Superintendent
LeeAnn Johnson	Mark Stefanson – Vice President, Public Affairs
Alice Lutes	Jason Bowman – Regional Director, Terminal Operations
David Dick	Grant Bierlmeier – Director, Pricing & Revenue Performance
<b>Absent:</b>	Steve Anderson, Manager, Scheduling & Fleet Deployment
Tom Paul	Sarah Cotton – Manager, Stakeholder Relations
<b>Guests:</b> Joyce Clegg, Gambier - Keats FAC Chair Coast Reporter CKAY Kim Tournat - Representative from Nicholas Simons Office 3 Members of the Public	

- 1. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m.
- 2. Introductions:** Round table introductions were completed.
- 3. Approval of Agenda:** The summer schedule, student fares and appointments to the FAC were moved to the top of the agenda.

**Summer Schedule** - FAC member Barry Cavens has asked for a 5:30 pm sailing every day of the week for the commuters as a 5:30 pm sailing is currently not available on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Steve Anderson outlined three scheduling issues – First, the timing of the commuter sailing in summer season and the issue of it being at 5:50 pm, not 5:30 pm as in the winter. BC Ferries hasn't been able to resolve the traffic flow conflicts. The company may be able to look at On Time Performance statistics and pull back to a 5:45 pm sailing. This is the direction we're headed in. Secondly, the lack of a 5:30 pm sailing on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. We don't operate the Queen of Coquitlam on these sailings so we've tried to identify options. Lastly, the shoulder season on time performance is poor.

Regarding the request to add Tuesday and Wednesday commuter sailings in the peak season, the goal is to keep it cost neutral. BC Ferries is looking at an option to run the Queen of Coquitlam on

Tuesdays and Wednesdays. There is a cost implication which we need to consider as it will put pressure on the tariff, but wouldn't be insurmountable. It appears positive but we would have to look at how the incremental cost would be covered.

Rob Clarke stated that when we started, one of the rules around changing the summer schedule was it had to be cost neutral. We haven't achieved this objective. Rob added that before Steve Anderson takes this to Operations, we need to determine with the Southern Sunshine Coast FAC how this cost will be funded as BCF is not obligated to run the extra 55 sailings per annum. We have 3 options as we see it – if there's an appetite to see small increase in fares, we could jointly meet the commissioner and determine how the fares will be adjusted. Second option - look at other sailings that aren't as important and see if we can remove a sailing somewhere else. BCF reserves the right to adjust the sailings. And the third option - we can walk away and say we tried.

Barry Cavens responded that his concern is that the drop dead date is January for the summer schedule. Rob Clarke replied that we could propose a .5% to 1% percent increase in fares. Barry Cavens agreed to increase the fares by this amount as the community is losing commuters and making it difficult for them to work off coast. He doesn't see a .5% increase as a showstopper and he would hate to see us wait and miss out on the deadline.

Jakob Knaus fully endorses the views of Barry Cavens. He suggests a trial period of one year and proposed that it be reconsidered it at the fall meeting next year.

Leeann Johnson is in agreement and support. She added that the FAC needs the information to discuss with the community and agrees with the trial basis. Census data in 2006 shows the economic development trends continue to decline in forestry and fishing, and increasing higher earners are working as professionals in Vancouver. Two big days for commuters to access the city are Tuesday and Wednesday, as well as Thursday, as heavy traffic days are on Monday and Friday. This is a critical issue, not a peripheral one. Alice Lutes is in agreement - not only is this for workers, but medical appointments are also made midweek.

Rob Clarke stated that BCF needs to lift the revenue to cover the costs, and we need the agreement of the commissioner. **ACTION: Rob Clarke and Jakob Knaus to meet with the commissioner on this proposal.** Rob would be surprised if Commissioner Crilly had a problem with this given the community support behind it.

**Student Fares** – Jakob Knaus stated that the FAC was promised by BC Ferries that by the start of the school year student fares would be looked at. Rob Clarke said to clarify, we said we would do our best but we didn't promise. The best way to make this work was to run this through the school board and we attempted to contact the appropriate person. Grant Bierlmeier added that we are trying to get an understanding of what their needs are. We would like to do this more as an organizational agreement rather than focusing on it as a tariff issue.

Rob suggested that the schools use an Experience Card to receive a savings on fares. Jakob responded that this can be streamlined through BCF and the school board. He added it costs \$50,000 per year to half the rates. The community has agreed that it would absorb the increase. Rob Clarke replied that the issue isn't the fare, or whether we're in agreement to do this. We want to finalize a procedural approach to determine how best to do this. Jakob the FAC is concerned about the principle, not the details. Barry Cavens added that the procedure is one aspect of it, but the FAC wanted students to travel cheaper by Sept 1 of this year and that deadline has been missed. Jakob then asked for a timeline. Grant Bierlmeier replied that he is reluctant to put a date in front of the FAC but BCF is working on it. Alice Lutes suggested that BCF call the School Superintendent as they are always accessible during the summer. Jakob said he has full confidence that Grant will be able to solve the problem within a reasonable time.

**FAC Appointments** – LeeAnn Johnson said that Gibsons Council would like to propose appointment of an additional member to the FAC.

Barry Cavens noted that he and LeeAnn have spoken with commuters regarding representation on the FAC, but it is a challenge for them to attend meetings during the day.

The SSCFAC has operated the last few years in the composition originally demanded by BCF and sees no reason to change it; that is, two reps each from Sechelt, Gibsons, and the Regional District, and one rep from the Sechelt Nation

LeeAnn thought a Monday or Friday meeting might work better for commuters and Rob Clarke responded that we could look at meetings on Monday evenings with a route 13 meeting in the afternoon.

#### **4. Presentations:**

##### **a. Marine Superintendent Operations Report**

Captain Dale Phipps, Marine Superintendent, presented the Marine Operations report with information on safety and security, traffic, on time performance, master planning and financial performance.

**b. Tariff Rationalization** – Grant Bierlmeier led a discussion around tariff rationalization on Route 3 for April 1, 2010.

Guiding Principles:  
Revenue Neutrality  
Simplicity  
Reasonability

Bicycle rates – Grant stated that BCF is looking to charge \$2.00 for bicycles across the fleet. Those customers who use an Experience Card will receive a discount of \$2.00 at the \$75 load level (Subsequently, it was agreed that the \$40 level will also be included).

Oversize Rationalization – The current tariff considers an overweight vehicle to be over 7 feet tall and 7 feet wide. With the proposed changes April 1, 2010, BCF would charge the underheight vehicle rate for the first 20 feet and the commercial per foot rate for extra feet.

Experience Card Buy In Levels – BCF will be increasing the buy-in level for the Experience Card when the fares go up April 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. This will ensure that buy-in levels remain relevant as fares increase. As of April 1, 2010, the \$40 buy-in level will be increased to \$45 and the \$75 buy-in level will be increased to \$85. At the Spring FAC meeting, BCF identified the passenger only buy-in level as potential tariff clutter due to the very low usage. The FACs felt the passenger only buy-in level provides an alternative for those who cannot afford to load their accounts at the passenger and vehicle buy-in level. In the future, BCF will continue to monitor the usage of the passenger only discount accounts.

**ACTION: Grant Bierlmeier to get cash numbers to Alica Lutes as well as the cash to Experience Card usage ratio.**

CirclePac and SailPass – These products are the last two paper based products in the BCF system and have very low utilization. BCF would like to remove these products on April 1, 2010.

## 5. FAC Business:

- Frequent long sailing delays due to the Langdale Terminal repairs – the FAC stated that the on-time performance during this time was lousy. The FAC suggested that when any repairs that are taking place, BCF should inform the community better than last time. Captain Phipps replied that this work impacted service operations much more than we initially thought. Joyce Clegg said that in defense of BC Ferries, the company ran into problems – the weather was bad, the aluminum boat sunk, there were tidal pools, etc. All of these factors extended the project.
- Employment Survey BCI/Rural Futures – Jakob Knaus feels that this commuter survey conducted by BCI/Rural Futures will be valuable to BCF and the community as it provides insight on how valuable the commuter is to the Sunshine Coast. The study should be available in the next month.
- Langdale noise pollution – The FAC reported that in addition to loudspeaker noise, the generator is running all night. BC Ferries replied it is aware of the problem. The company will start with Horseshoe Bay and Departure Bay and will then look at Langdale in 2012 once the power is strengthened. Langdale is currently only at 200 amps.

The loudspeaker noise is usually an operational fix. Captain Phipps said the vessel needs to turn off the outer deck speakers -these speakers are used during drills.

- Present Langdale Terminal Repairs are usually capitalized
- Langdale Dock Issue - Rob Clarke said this has been a longstanding issue around safety and liability, and overlaid on that was security and new regulations from Transport Canada. These regulations are prescriptive rather than descriptive. The Stormaway dock is a community issue, not a ferry issue. Whatever the remedies are shouldn't be paid by ferry users. This community issue should be resolved at the community level. We've been working with the SCRD and we're close to resolving this. Joe Wright has also been a part of this. Rob continued to say that we're working on a concept that might actually reduce the cost of this. Between the movement of this and another opportunity to look at, Rob extended the deadline. If it falls apart and we just have to close the dock, we'll give the public considerable time. Brian Sagman responded that this particular dock is not in the SCRD purview – this would be a new dock and something new for the SCRD.
- Security Fences – Jakob Knaus noted that the new fences are unattractive and access from the south side is now closed. He asked if there is some way to create access to the south. Jason Bowman replied that the fencing is a big change. As far as putting up barbed wire, Transport Canada regulations were prescriptive rather than descriptive so we worked to meet these requirements. The gate was closed initially due to a safety issue. Going forward, we're going to keep company assets stored so we want to keep it secure. We are looking at the tollbooth on the right hand side to put a gate in there. Joyce Clegg asked if there is any change of a foot passenger booth. Rob Clarke replied that there is no specific plan but the company has that in mind.
- Monthly parking fees at Langdale – Through an email to BCF and the FAC, Mayor Janyk noted that the monthly parking fee is more than the daily rate. Jason Bowman responded that fees at Langdale are much more reasonable than at the major terminals. A yearly pass is \$500/year. Responses from the BCF Customer Satisfaction Survey show that Langdale rated 3.9/5 for value for money for parking. The overflow lot is only needed on Sunday afternoons so the company would like to develop a monthly parking pass for the commuters in this space. Jakob Knaus noted that Langdale parking rates have always been sensitive.

- Jakob Knaus said that the FAC has sent BCF a copy of Southern Sunshine Coast Foundation Annual Report. He added that there was a reasonable number of 1200-1500 commuters in this report. Rob Clarke responded that there are a number of factual errors that he would like to bring to the FAC's attention. Rob will take this offline with Jakob.
- Crewing changes - there were some engineering positions available and BCF couldn't recruit crew to relocate from their current residences. Therefore there are a minimal number of crew that BCF is picking up in Horseshoe Bay.

**6. Pending items:** The following issues were tabled: Ultra Short Vehicle - separate tariff item, and safe bicycle storage on board the ferries.

**7. Next meeting:** The next committee meeting is scheduled for Spring 2010.

**8. Correspondence:** No correspondence was presented.

**9. Meeting adjourned:** at 12:08 p.m.

**Approved:**

Captain Dale Phipps, Marine Superintendent  
Jakob Knaus, Chair

Date: approved  
Date: