



Ferry Advisory Committee Action Minutes

Northern Sunshine Coast Ferry Advisory Committee

Date: November 5, 2009

Time: 12:30 p.m.

Location: Town Centre Hotel, Powell River

Attendees:

<i>Committee</i>	<i>BC Ferries</i>
Bill Cripps	Rob Clarke, Executive Vice-President, Finance & Chief Financial Officer
Jim Johnson	Captain Gordon Nettleton, Marine Superintendent, Northern Islands
Jane Cameron	Mark Stefanson, Vice President, Public Affairs
David Moore	Grant Bierlmeier, Director, Pricing & Revenue Performance
Allan Cramb	Parv Bal, Regional Director, Terminal Operations, North Region
Doug Skinner	Elena Corin, Terminal Manager, Northern Sunshine Coast
Kevin Unger	Sarah Cotton, Manager, Stakeholder Relations
Denise Reinhardt	
Media: Paul Galinski Powell River Peak	
Several members of the public were in attendance	

1. The meeting was called to order at 12:39 p.m.

2. Introductions. Roundtable introductions were completed.

3. The agenda was approved with two additions:

a. Update of Island Sky mechanical issues

b. Seating on the Island Sky

4. Presentations:

- a. Public Presentation – Colleen Mudry from the Powell River Youth & Family Services Society spoke to the letter that was written by the society to BC Ferries on September 30, 2009. Four members of the society attended a professional development workshop in Vancouver on September 25, 2009. That evening, they arrived at the Horseshoe Bay Terminal at 4:30 pm in order to catch the next available sailing, but because of delays on the route 3, the ferry did not depart Horseshoe Bay until 8:30 p.m. The group let the Chief Steward on the sailing know that they were travelling on to Powell River so the Chief Steward could request to hold the next vessel as there would be late arrivals. The group stopped to get gas but when they arrived at the terminal the last ferry of the night

was departing. The group then had to pay \$340/night for a hotel room in Egmont. The group requested BC Ferries to cover the expenses related to this incident. Sarah Cotton told Colleen that Customer Relations would cover the cost of the hotel as the circumstances of this situation were definitely beyond the control of the customers.

Bill Cripps noted another incident where a similar situation occurred and requested that proper communications protocol between the ships be implemented.

ACTION: Captain Nettleton to set up a protocol for the masters to communicate and the ship will wait 30 minutes. COMPLETED.

- b. **Operations Report:** Captain Gordon Nettleton presented the Marine Operations report with information on safety, security, traffic, on time performance and financial performance.

Captain Nettleton reported that passenger injuries on the vessel jumped from 2 to 16 possibly due to increased and more accurate recording in the new Operations Centre. BC Ferries has had an 800% increase in reporting, not incidents. Jane Cameron asked if there was some way to verify that this increase is due to better recording, not actual incidents. **ACTION: Captain Nettleton to come to the next meeting with a further explanation of the increase of passenger injuries.**

The action items were reviewed and the NSC FAC asked that details of the community investment items be provided. **ACTION: Sarah Cotton to clarify what the communication protocol is and provide dollar amounts of items donated.**

The NSC FAC noted that there is a problem with a sewage odour in the Pet Area of on the Island Sky. The committee feels there are a number of warranty issues – sewage being one of them. **ACTION: Gordon Nettleton to look into technical problems on the Island Sky. COMPLETED.**

- c. **Tariff Rationalization:** Grant Bierlmeier, Director of Pricing & Revenue Performance, continued the discussion from last spring around the Northern Sunshine Coast routes and tariff rationalization 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. This same rate

would be charged for overlength vehicles. **ACTION: NSC FAC to provide feedback by December 15, 2009 to BCF on length based tariff. COMPLETED.**

Experience Card Buy In Levels – BCF will be increasing the buy-in level for the Experience Card when the fares go up April 1st 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.

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. **ACTION: NSC FAC to provide feedback to BCF on CirclePac and SailPass by December 15, 2009. COMPLETED.**

6. FAC Business Items:

- Bill Cripps provided an FAC Chairs update and discussed the Northern Sunshine Coast strategy. The FAC suggested that public consultation be revisited but noted that Lynda Petruzzelli of MoT hadn't made a decision on consultation. Rob Clarke said that BCF has had discussions with the Ministry of Transportation but they have not been particularly substantive. He added that the replacement vessel for routes 17 does not need to be as large as the Queen of Burnaby. In answer to a question, Rob stated that BCF does not have to make a section 55 application in order to spend capital. This section of the Coastal Ferries Act is there for the protection of the company. Rob Stated that it is normal for BCF to make such an application for large purchases such as new vessels in order to ensure that the Commission agrees that the investment is reasonable.
- License Levels on the Queen of Burnaby – Captain Nettleton said that the Catering Superintendent establishes the license levels since catering staff provides the incremental manning. He added that 93 sailings warranted a B license - out of 93 sailings, 10 were miscalculated. Only 9 sailings were over 400 passengers – only 3 of these sailings needed an A license and BCF crewed one. The sailings typically overload midday – BCF has not left anyone behind at the end of the night. The Queen of Burnaby operates most of the time on a C license – 284 passengers and 18 crew.
- Special events planning has been formalized. The link to access special events can be found at:
http://www.bcferrys.com/travel_planning/Community_Events/Northern_Islands.php At the bottom of this page, customers can click on "Add your own Event" and provide details. This information will go directly to Customer Relations, then the Operations Centre and the license level will be raised if necessary.
- Percentage of deck capacity allocated to reservations on other routes – On average, routes that accept reservations will allow 35-50% of capacity in reservations. The actual level will depend on a variety of factors and is usually driven by the quantity of

commercial traffic. The northern routes (Routes 10, 11, 40) are 100% reservations, but operate under a different reservation process. The Queen of Surrey on route 3 (HB/Langdale) is allocated at 25% due to limitations at the Horseshoe Bay Terminal.

- Assured loading for people with medical travel tickets – the process is set up and a letter must be signed by a doctor. **ACTION: Sarah Cotton to send the FAC information and criteria on Medical Assured Loading. COMPLETED.**
- Reservations on Route 17 – BC Ferries is prepared to go ahead with this. The company suggests 25 underheight vehicles, 5 oversize vehicles, and 3-4 commercial vehicles. Rob Clarke added that the implementation does require some IT work and as BCF are finishing a complete upgrade of our financial systems, we have yet to get a commitment from IT on a date.

The cost of a reservation would be \$17.50 as BCF will use the same system as the other routes. Customers can make a reservation up to 2 hours before the sailing and they must arrive at the terminal at least a half an hour before departure time. The NSC FAC will get back to BCF on this if anything arises from their discussions at their next meeting.

- Policy/Procedure regarding the last sailing on Route 7 if Route 3 is running late – On June 5, 2009 a customer was hoping to get on the 5:30 pm sailing from Horseshoe Bay but the line up had stopped and no tickets were being sold. This customer knew she missed the 5:30 sailing as there was no movement. There was no communication from the terminal as to what was going on. The customer went back to North Vancouver and stayed in a hotel overnight and went back to the terminal the next day. **ACTION: BCF to look into this as there may have been a breakdown of the POS (Point of Sale system) .**
- There are no planned service changes between now and the spring meeting.
- Through trip purchase from Texada Island to Little River – BC Ferries staff are providing this service for elderly or disabled passengers. Staff do use some discretion as they have to control the number of passengers going to the Chief Steward.
- Update on the Queen of Chilliwack as a replacement for the Island Sky– Captain Nettleton said the Island Sky will be taken out of service for a month in October 2010 for its warranty refit and the Queen of Chilliwack will be the replacement vessel.

The Queen of Burnaby will be removed from service for 10 days in April 2010 for regulatory inspections and the Queen of Chilliwack will be the refit relief.

In November and December 2010, the Queen of Burnaby has to relieve the Queen of Nanaimo so BCF will get the Queen of Chilliwack to be the replacement vessel on route 17. This work should be completed by December 17, 2010.

The FAC stated, based on past experience, that they do not believe the Queen of Chilliwack is a practical or acceptable replacement vessel for the Queen of Burnaby.

In spring 2011, the Queen of Burnaby will be going in for 2 months work. BCF has learned from the last experience that with the 10 days turning into 21 days, ~~we~~ they will need to come up with a schedule that is realistic to achieve.

- Future Status of the Island Sky – Captain Nettleton said that in the next fiscal the vessel will be servicing route 7.
- Island Sky access to main cabin from deck ramps – The FAC noted that passengers can only get onto the passenger area through the outside stairway or by walking down the ramp to the main deck and it can be a safety hazard for some individuals. Captain Nettleton replied that it is an open deck ferry and he can't see the company changing it. Jane Cameron added that it is quite difficult in bad weather. Captain Nettleton responded that it is best to keep passengers who are not able bodied on the main deck.
- Update on mechanical difficulties on the Island Sky – Captain Nettleton said the vessel is running on three engines and still keeps its schedule. BCF needs a representative from Japan to check out one engine. There are some electronic difficulties and Captain Nettleton added there are still other warranty issues.
- Seating on the Island Sky – Allan Cramb will discuss this issue via email
- The Urban Futures Demographic Analysis that was commissioned by BC Ferries was tabled to the next meeting.

9. Correspondence: Letter from the Powell River Child, Youth and Family Services Society as addressed earlier.

10. Meeting adjourned: 4:28 p.m.

11. Next Meeting: Spring 2010.

Approved:

Chair, Bill Cripps

Date: April 15, 2010

Captain Gordon Nettleton, BC Ferries

Date: February 12, 2010