

Campbell River-Quadra-Cortes Ferry Advisory Committee Meeting

Overview: Gorge Harbour Marina Resort – May 8, 2015

In Attendance:

Committee: Noba Anderson, Terry Hooper, Bertha Jeffrey, Uschi Koebberling, Rod Lee, Michael Lynch, Vince Martin, Ester Strijbos, Paul Ryan

BC Ferries: Corrine Storey- VP Customer Services, David Hendry- Strategic Planning Director, Captain Al deKoninck - Marine Superintendent, 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 is planned as a WebEx meeting during the fall of 2015.

Issues Summary and Resolution Plan

A. Issue: **Chair selection**

Definition: The committee determined that Paul would continue as Chair.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

B. Issue: **Terms of Reference review**

Definition: This being the first meeting of a new, four-year FAC term, the general TOR was discussed. There was general agreement that the new policy of a maximum two-term limit for committee members makes sense, given there could be discretion to allow members to remain past two terms if committee turnover seemed to great.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

C. Issue: 'BCF 101' review

Definition: BC Ferries has developed a document (nicknamed 'BCF 101') to provide high-level information about key aspects of coastal ferry service, including sections on: BC Ferries, the Coastal Ferry Services Contract, the BC Ferry Commission, fares and FACs. The main intent of BCF 101 is to bring all FAC members to a common baseline of understanding, to better facilitate issue discussions during meetings.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

D. Issue: Tachek noise issues

Definition: Paul noted that noise (generator, upper deck exhaust) from the Tachek operations has increased since it returned from its most recent refit, particularly during landing.

Al explained that the crews have now developed a practice of using a 50% or lower thruster power level, so this should help. As well, the engineering team is researching ideas to alter funnels and minimize exhaust noise. Prior to April 1, the generator was used to help prevent frost build up, and with plans to increase hydro capacity at Whaletown terminal next winter, there should no longer be a requirement to run a generator at night.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: work on minimizing exhaust noise.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Analyse solutions for reducing exhaust noise	Vessel engineering	As able

E. Issue: Night watchman issue

Definition: Although BC Ferries have previously considered removing the nightwatch positions on vessels, they have confirmed that there are currently no plans to make any change in the near future.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

F. Issue: Staffing

Definition: Two recent examples were raised by the FAC; the first was when the Route 23 vessel could not perform an after-hours emergency call out due to lack of crew availability, and the second was when sailings had to be canceled due to crew illness/lack of relief. To this, the FAC suggested the afternoon watch crew be made available for emergency sailings.

Al explained that approximately half the current crew members make themselves available for after-hours call outs. BC Ferries makes ‘best efforts’ to be available for BC Ambulance needs, and they are made aware of crew readiness ahead of time. As for sick crew members, BC Ferries contacts all available crew replacements, but there cannot compel anyone to come in if they cannot/do not want to. As a related manner, Al noted that BC Ferries recently requested a lower crew requirement be allowed for after-hours emergencies, but was denied by Transport Canada.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

G. Issue: Radar breakdown and communications

Definition: The FAC commented that, during recent sailing cancellations when a radar system broke down; Quadra customers were not informed in a timely manner of how long service would be suspended, and Route 24 customers were not told at all that Route 23 was not operating while loading.

BC Ferries reps explained that the initial radar problem appeared to be a ‘quick fix’ ...so there were no communications to Route 24 crew. However, once it became obvious that the radar problem was more persistent, then Route 24 was told, and this may have indeed been too late for customers already heading to Quadra. As for other communications, a Service Notice was issued as early in the situation as possible and Twitter was used for timely operational updates.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

H. Issue: Elimination of Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Definition: BCF confirmed that Route 23 was removed from their Customer Satisfaction Survey process in 2006 after repeated requests from the community, and there is no plan to reverse this.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

I. Issue: Q Cove offloading

Definition: The FAC noted that customers are still experiencing inconsistent offloading at Q Cove, which can cause Cortes customers to miss their connection at Heriot Bay. Al replied that he talked to the Route 23 Senior Master today to reinforce why unloading the ‘entire centre lane first’ does not make sense and may risk Cortes bound customers. As well, the Route 23 Master will now call the Route 24 Master to ask him to hold until all ‘connecting’ traffic arrives.

The FAC suggested that, if Lane 7 at C.River is full, then Cortes traffic should be placed in Lane 8 (as used to happen), so they do not get mixed in with general Quadra traffic.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: Ensure vessel and terminal operations staff are comfortable that everything is being done properly that will avoid Cortes traffic missing a ‘connection’ because of inefficient loading.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Discuss how unloading/communications processes are working for maximizing the connection for Route 23-Route 24 customers	Al/Jeff	As soon as practicable

J. Issue: Availability of stats

Definition: Uschi noted that statistics showing how ‘traffic/overloads are improving/worsening’ would help FAC analysis. David responded that, since the SLA changes, utilization on Route 23 has increased 3.3% and 0.6% on Route 24, with an overall utilization of 45% for both routes.

FAC members noted that, anecdotally, things are much better since the most recent schedule adjustments were made.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

K. Issue: C. River shade trees update

Definition: Jeff summarized that three options to provide shading at Campbell River have been researched; plant trees (not possible due to underground servicing), planters (not practical due to height of trees required), and something near foot passenger area (would not help people in vehicles). The FAC suggested that the last option may still be worth exploring.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: provide FAC info on foot passenger shading option.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Provide FAC details of ‘foot passenger area’ shading option	Jeff	When able

L. Issue: Foot passenger unloading update

Definition:

There have been problems with potential conflict between vehicles and walk-on passengers at Q Cove, and safety concerns have been expressed. Jeff noted that terminal staff have tested various options, with a key issue being cyclists walking off the vessel and congesting the walking area. Thus, cyclists are now allowed to ride off the vessel up until a certain point, at which they need to dismount and walk.

However, the trestle is due to be replaced in the summer, and the new walkway will be widened by up to 18 inches, and this should alleviate congestion and conflicts.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

M. Issue: Q Cove traffic

Definition: FAC reps shared an ongoing problem with people picking up walk-on passengers at Q Cove in the Harbour Authority area and trying to leave the area while vehicles are still unloading, creating a strong accident possibility.

Paul suggests the vehicles who have picked up passengers are made to wait until the vessel has completely unloaded prior to leaving the terminal area; with some sort of ‘red/green light’ system to provide direction.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: Explore options with other authorities.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Discuss best options for a combined solution with MOTI/RCMP reps	Jeff	When able

N. Issue: Size up the Savings

Definition: BC Ferries is once again running a promotion for ‘extra-length, non-commercial vehicles this summer, with a 66% reduction for each foot greater than 20 feet in length.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

O. Issue: \$4.9 million savings from Major route

Definition: For Major routes, BC Ferries conducted extensive analysis on a variety of options for reducing service to achieve the targeted \$4.9 million in net savings, but found that estimated revenue losses exceeded cost savings in all cases. It was pointed out that the Major routes have already had up to eight per cent service reductions between 2008 and 2014 as well.

These reductions came from service that was being provided above CFSC requirements prior to 2012 as well as the recent flexibility in the CFSC (400 round-trips) to further reduce service. As a result of this, it becomes harder to find Major route service reductions without impacting revenue which, in turn, would put further pressure on fares in a cross subsidized system.

The \$4.9 million of net savings still needs to be achieved by BC Ferries in Performance Term-4 to achieve the 1.9% annual price cap but BC Ferries will find these net savings through measures not related to service level reductions. It is important to also recognize that the BC Ferries Commissioner has further tasked BCF to continue the analysis related to longer term and larger measure initiatives related to the Major routes in order to identify large savings (\$100M) in our capital program.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
No action required		

P. Issue: Service level adjustment cost savings

Definition: FAC reps asked if the targeted savings for Route 23 and 24 were achieved with the Provinces’ 2014 service adjustments.

David provided a summary of the cost savings analysis thus far. He explained that, because BC Ferries issues bonds, they are subject to securities regulations and currently in a post-fiscal year blackout period for disclosure of financial information; with results available in June. BC Ferries’ Board of Directors has requested an analysis of the impact of the service level adjustments made in 2014, including an assessment of whether net savings were realized through these, and the company is working on reports that will fulfill this request. Preliminary analysis indicates that the net savings targeted are being realized at a system-wide level, but there are variations across routes affected.

Additionally, utilization has increased on impacted routes and it appears the estimated traffic/revenue loss from the SLA is less than predicted. BC Ferries will not commit to whether the savings analysis will be made available on a route by route basis and it needs to be recognized that there are other variables impacting this analysis and it is difficult to isolate changes specific to the service level adjustments. The important point is that the net savings are applied system wide and benefit all routes in a cross subsidized fare system.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		

Q. Issue: Drinking water fountain on ferries

Definition: Noba noted that there used to be fountains on the ferries, and wondered if they could be reinstated. Al noted that the water on the Tachek is indeed drinkable, so this may be possible. On a related note, it was pointed out that BC Ferries is also researching options for water stations at terminals.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: Research feasibility of fountains on ferries.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
Check with vessel engineering staff if water fountains could be re-installed on ferries	AI	When able

R. Issue: Operations Report

Definition: Capt de Koninck provided a summary of recent and near-future vessel and terminal developments related to Routes 23 and 24 including traffic and on-time performance statistics. Specifically, he noted that traffic volumes appear to be flattening from year-to-year, instead of the steady decrease of recent years.

Also, there is no plan to move the Tachek off of Route 24, with the next refit planned for 2016 (QQII as relief vessel). As for the upcoming Powell River Queen refit (Sept/Oct 2015), the Bowen Queen will perform as the relief vessel.

Terminal wise, a shore power upgrade at Whaletown will include a back-up generator installation (for back-up during outages). Also, no effects on sailings are expected during the trestle upgrade at Q Cove.

BC Ferries Commitment to Resolution: none required.

Action Plan:

Action	Responsible	Date
n/a		