

# **Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee (LIFAC) Meeting**

**June 12, 2019**

Lummi Island Firehall

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Rhayma Blake called the meeting to order at 6:30.

## **ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Charles Bailey, Rhayma Blake, Cris Colburn, Jim Dickinson, Patricia Dunn, Judy Olsen

**Also in Attendance:** Rich Hudson-Senior Master, Bill Lee, Joan Moye, Bill Fox, Mike McKenzie and Beth Louis.

## **FLAG SALUTE**

## **OPEN SESSION**

Bill Lee thanked LIFAC and Public Works for a great ferry system and service.

Pat Dunn congratulated Rich Hudson and Public Works on the first all ferry female crew.

Mike McKenzie appreciates that ferry tickets are \$1 less than the previous fares and haven't gone up. Attributes to LIFAC and County.

## **APPROVAL OF APRIL 10, 2019 MINUTES**

## **LIFAC INTERNAL BUSINESS**

Tomorrow (June 13) there is a Skagit Ferry Committee mtg with KPFF and Public Works regarding their Level of Service. Rhayma will be the only LIFAC member attending.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Update on Operations-Rich Hudson, Senior Master

Roland was unable to attend, but will be at the July and August meetings.

## **JULY AND AUGUST MEETINGS:**

A ferry taxing district (FTD) will be discussed at the July meeting in Bellingham. With a FTD the CRAB can grant \$10m with a match of \$10m (20m total). FTD proceeds would be held in reserve for the next replacement ferry (approximately 2060). Without a FTD CRAB can get \$7.5m max. Beth mentioned that last year's survey had tax district questions and pointed out that 46% supported a county wide FTD and 39% supported a Lummi Island only FTD.

It was discussed that an FTD will not be addressed with the community until financial models and the attorney report (on FTD) are available and examined by LIFAC. Pat moved and Charles 2<sup>nd</sup> a motion to ask the county to provide these reports by July 3 to ensure LIFAC members have enough time to review. Approved by consensus.

Ferry design will be discussed at the August 14 meeting. KPFF and the Senior Engineer

from Elliott Bay Design will attend to discuss design and propulsion attributes (for informational purposes only).

Nancy Ging's letter (attached) stating her reservations about a diesel electric propulsion system will be addressed at this meeting.

Charles requested that cost analysis be provided by August. Rich said this is probable/likely.

Charles moved that the August meeting be changed from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> in Bellingham so all LIFAC members can attend and for the convenience of visitors. Chris 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion. Passed.

Jim asked Rich about a maintenance schedule for new ferry. Rich stated there will be more information in August.

#### DRY DOCK

Dock painting has been postponed so drydock is now scheduled for Saturday Sept 7 thru Tuesday Sept 24. Bids will be opened June 18.

There was a brief discussion of the new dock and Lummi Nation TARO. There is no active property acquisition.

Permits for the new breakwater are taking longer than anticipated. Breakwater funds may be used for one of the dock paint projects, then funds earmarked for the painting will be directed to the breakwater. Rich will provide an updated TIP schedule.

#### AUDIT

Auditors performed a surprise audit of ferry fare collections earlier in the day. Tom Phillips was the purser. Auditors were impressed with Tom's speed and accuracy – he balanced to the penny. The audit passed with flying colors. Kudos to Tom!!

#### OTHER

Rhayma asked about crew name tags. Rich will discuss with crew members.

Rich, Elizabeth, and crew members have visited every vehicle ferry system in the state. Whatcom County has the oldest vessel. This process of discovery and outreach was lauded by committee members.

The systems stated that the biggest mistake/regret with their ferry procurements was that their ferries were underpowered and couldn't handle bad weather. They were designed for normal conditions so ended up being out of service more than expected.

Because the Lummi Nation Paddle to Lummi is July 24, it was requested that the scheduled maintenance and ferry outage for that day be rescheduled so islanders can attend throughout the day.

Meeting was adjourned at 8pm.

Email from Nancy Ging:

## [LIFAC] Diesel Electric Ferry

Fri, May 24, 5:02 PM

**Nancy Ging** nancy@turtlehome.com [via](#) googlegroups.com

to LIFAC, Jon, Rich, Roland, Cassandra, Todd

Hello, all--

Something has been nagging at me since the last LIFAC meeting in Bellingham, and I finally decided I needed to write to you about it.

While I enjoyed most of that meeting, I was very disappointed to hear PW staff talking as if they only intend to pay lip service to build the new ferry as a diesel-electric vessel, which was the clear community preference. It was remarked that there were ways to make a vessel appear "diesel-electric ready" without any significant differences from traditional diesel. The analogy made at the meeting was that you could add to a house nothing but a switch box for connecting to a generator without actually installing a generator and call the house "generator ready." There were also anecdotal comments about past experiences "a few years ago" with batteries catching fire on vessels. Finally, there was a comment about how there was no way at this time to have an adequate shore charging facility on the island and probably never would be. I'd like to respond to some of these comments.

First of all, a diesel-electric ferry, as it was explained to us by the KPFF engineer in their final report, is substantively different from a traditional diesel vessel--i.e., more than just "adding a switch box." It is a vessel that uses electric engines powered by diesel generators. No shore charging station is necessary. The idea was that if and when battery and charging technology improves sufficiently, the generators could easily be replaced **eventually** with batteries and a shore station. Also, though not immediately relevant, if you look at recently developed batteries, such as those being used for electric cars, I think you'll find the fire hazard problems have already been greatly reduced to reasonable levels. That will only improve over the next decade or two.

Secondly, a major point of using diesel-electric was to reduce engine noise. The State Legislature just passed regulations limiting vessel engine noise in Puget Sound in their 2019 session. There are good reasons to believe the regulations will only get more strict over the next 40 years, the expected lifetime of the new ferry, so being proactive and ahead of the requirements seems prudent and advisable.

Thirdly, by using electric engines it was hoped the improved torque would eliminate the need for a fancy (i.e. expensive) maneuvering technology to improve docking control.

To put standard diesel engines as the power source in the new ferry would be to tie down the County and the community for another 40-60 years to one of the dirtiest fuels currently in use, at a time when transportation and climate trends make it clear that cleaner, quieter alternatives are an urgent necessity.

KPFF engineers recommended that diesel-electric was as much of an improvement as was practical to go at this time, though they suggested looking more deeply into all-electric options before final plans were made because the technology is improving so rapidly. (For example, the electrical requirements for a shore charging station are likely not as dramatic as commonly believed.)

Finally, it's worthy of note that Skagit County just got \$1.5 million from the State for their shore charging station--and that appears to be in addition to any CRAB funds they might receive from the State. From their 5/22/19 press release:

"The Governor signed the capital budget on May 21 that included \$1.5 million for shoreside charging infrastructure to support the new, electric Guemes Island Ferry.

"Skagit County Ferry Division Manager, Rachel Rowe, and Public Works Director, Dan Berentson, made a presentation to the House Transportation Committee in January 2019 to raise awareness of the innovative work the county is doing to design and build an electric replacement ferry. Electric propulsion will eliminate consumption of 2 million gallons of diesel fuel over the 40-year life of the vessel and achieve near-zero local air emissions. The project aligns with the goals of the WA State Maritime Blue Strategy for a sustainable maritime industry by 2050."

2050 is well within the lifetime of the new ferry vessel we're planning. Clearly, the State is willing to financially support efforts to advance its sustainable maritime strategy. I believe the diesel-electric ferry represents a significant advance in that direction, and I sincerely hope that Whatcom County will take serious advantage of that opportunity and not just pay lip service. It's the option the community selected, and I strongly believe that's what the community wants.

As you know, I have a great deal of respect for the work you all do. I know you also have respect for the community work that has been done for this project. Please, let's not give up on the results before making a strong and genuine effort to carry them out.

Thank you for your time!

P.S. It looks like Skagit was paying attention to our community work methods and intends to try to replicate them! Congratulations, KPFF, for getting hired to help them, too!

Wishing you all well,  
Nancy Ging