Ferry Advisory Committee Chairs Agenda

**BC** **Ferry** **Advisory** **Committee** **Chairs** **(FACC)** **Meeting** **Wednesday,** **August** **18,** **2021,** **9:30** **a.m.** **-** **4** **p.m.** **Grande** **Pacific** **Hotel,** **Victoria** **–** **South** **Pender** **Room** **Agenda**

**FAC** **Chairs/Co-Chairs**

**FAC Chairs/Co-Chairs**

Bowen Island – Melanie Mason North & Central Coast – Evan Putterill, Reg Moody

Brentwood Bay/Mill Bay - Ian Cameron Northern Sunshine Coast - Kim Barton-Bridges

Campbell River/Quadra/Cortes – Michael Lynch Salt Spring Island - Harold Swierenga

Chemainus/Thetis/Penelakut - Keith Rush Southern Gulf Islands – Mary Greenwood, David Maude

Denman/Hornby Islands – Frank Frketich Karen Ross Southern Sunshine Coast - Diana Mumford

Gabriola Island – Steve Earle Tri-Islands - Melissa Fletcher

Gambier/Keats - Joe Wright

*In* *grey* *-* *FAC* *Chairs* *will* *not* *be* *in* *attendance*

Chair: Diana Mumford

Call to order and welcome

* Focus on subjects that affect all routes, not individual issues.

**Topics for Discussion/FAC discussions:**

Questions for **FAC Chairs written reports** -These reports are to be read, to save agenda time. They were only circulated to the other Chairs, as people “barred their souls”. Not for distribution.

**FACs – Terms of Reference** –

- Discussion regarding length of terms. Many of the existing Chairs are close to being “retired”, if the two- four year terms are enforced. Consternation that a great deal of wisdom would be lost, none of the existing Chairs is willing to give up their seats. Recommendation to not have this enforced.

- Karen’s suggestion that ex-BCF employees be allowed to sit on the FAC’s, was not generally favoured, as “these committees are supposed to represent a wide range of community interests”. Previously experienced problems with ex employees being out of date, and inflexible.

**Communication**

* Communication – communication functions of BC Ferries severely lacking (*David* *Maude,* *Mary* *Greenwood,* *Diana* *Mumford,* *Joe* *Wright,* *Keith* *Rush)*
* oWebsite is not user friendly, often inaccurate, not updated and not used in a timely manner to inform ferry users
* oUnreasonable expectation by BCF that everyone has and can access internet and technology, despite evidence that areas do not. Will not provide information in alternate forms (printed schedules) for those that need it.
* oCommunication and consultation to ferry dependent communities is lacking, especially when proposing significant changes to ferry routes. Have a ‘Consultation Commitment’ on website but is it actually followed?
* oAccurate information outside tollbooths – minimal, if at all and ferry users cannot depend on website info
* oService notices that do not arrive in a timely manner. Receipt of these notices several hours after the sailing is NOT helpful. Notices remain on website when time expired.
* Generally felt that the current complaint process was inadequate and perhaps dissatisfaction is not passed on beyond BCF.
* Major problem with the cancellation of the pilot project for reservations on the Sunshine Coast being cancelled with 20 minutes notice. (note afterwards Mark Collins said he had been advised by the RCMP of serious threats to ferry personnel and cancelled the program promptly for safety of staff).

**Resident priority/medical priority**

* Many communities are hearing this call for residents first. Generally felt that we can’t ask for fares and service based on “these are our highways” and then ask for an exclusive access to the service. Not supported.
* Medical priority system is seen to be working. T.A.P. (Travel Assistance Program) forms do not give priority boarding. Only a letter from the doctor, in conjunction with the TAP form.
  + Comments that the TAP forms are heavily used (and abused sometimes)

**FACs survey results/discussion** – See reports. Customer Service

– Darin Guenette (Carrie is his boss), Carrie McIntosh (works for Brian Anderson)

**Meeting** **with** **B.C.** **Ferry** **Commission** **–** **Eva** **Hage** **&** **Piet** **Langstraat**



*Pursuant* *to* *the* *Coastal* *Ferry* *Act* *of* *2003,* *the* *BC* *Ferries* *Commissioner* *regulates* *British* *Columbia* *Ferry* *Services* *Inc.* *(BC* *Ferries)* *by* *setting* *price* *caps* *on* *fares,* *reviewing* *proposals* *for* *major* *capital* *expenditures* *and* *conducting* *performance* *reviews*.

**From floor:**

**Plans for vessel replacements have been pushed forward due to COVID, and the loss in revenues.**

**Services** **Contract** **-** amending Contract to include sailings over those contracts, which impacts many routes

**Increase** **in** **ferry** **traffic** **and** **impacts** **-** How can the Government and BC Ferries deal more effectively with the overwhelming traffic, sailing delays and late ferries on many routes in the summer and shoulder seasons? *(Frank* *Frketich,* *Joe* *Wright,* *Kim* *Barton-Bridges,* *Diana* *Mumford)*

o“A Vision for Coastal Ferry Services: Phase 2” September 2020 https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2020/09/7707-Coastal-Ferries-Phase-2-Report.pdf

▪(page iii) “Notable findings revealed that the level of satisfaction with the current ferry service is highly dependent on the type of user and their demographic background. Respondents who reported the greatest satisfaction included tourists, those who travel infrequently, and those with high household incomes. Conversely, respondents who reported the least satisfaction included those who travel via ferry for school or to access services, those who live in ferry-dependent regions, and those with lower household incomes”.

• **New** **routes/connectivity** **between** **routes/pilot** **projects** – in order to better serve the ‘public interest’ in ferry use, discussions have happened at the Ministerial level within public consultation, but has there been or will be the next steps required? What is the status for pilot projects that have been suspended, for potential new routes and better connectivity for existing routes?

Document: B.C. Ferries 101, for reference to what BCF does.

**Responses:**

BCF has a 60 year contract to deliver ferry service to Coastal B.C., divided into 4 year “Performance Terms” (P.T.)

Work with a 12 year capital plan.

P.T. 5, price cap in place

Performance Term Six is 2024-28 Need money

Required: Substantial increases in fares or subsidies

Note: item #2, the Service contract. Performance Term 6 starts in April, 2024.

Advice: the best time to lobby for items to do with vessels, fares, service levels, is 18 months in advance of the start of a P.T. That means Sept. 1/21 is the start of a “lobby cycle”.

The Authority is hiring consultants:

1. Dr. David Gillen. (Expect that this is the person: <https://www.sauder.ubc.ca/people/david-gillen>)

* Report on moving forward at BCF
* Smooth price caps over multiple Performance Terms
* Expect a draft report by the end of June

1. Implementing a Performance Review of the Ferry Advisory Committees process.

* T.O.R.: As an engagement tool, is it working? Problems? Mandates? Execution? Local issues?
* Issues that there are no Advisory Committees for the major routes, nor are Tourism Associations represented
* Multi layered
  + i. Current FAC
  + II. Focus groups – private interviews with FACC
  + Iii. Review other models, around the world

Report starting mid Fall. Report by March.

Coastal Advisory Council – wider view, longer term

Karen commented – why was the FREE SENIORS program reinstated? The pain of it being cancelled was already over when that decision was reversed. This was money that could have been offsetting fares already.

Piet: *“If you’ve already got your mind made up, don’t ask for consultation.”*

**Meeting** **with** **B.C.** **Ferries** **Authority** Board



The B.C. Ferry Authority is established and governed by the [Coastal Ferry Act](https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00_03014_01).

The Authority is a corporation without share capital which owns the single issued voting share of BC Ferries, the service provider under contract to the Province of British Columbia responsible for the delivery of ferry service along coastal British Columbia. The Province is the holder of all of the preferred (non-voting) shares of [BC Ferries](https://www.bcferries.com/).

***The*** ***Authority*** ***is*** ***responsible*** ***for*** ***overseeing*** ***the*** ***strategic*** ***direction*** ***of*** ***BC*** ***Ferries*** ***in*** ***support*** ***of*** ***the*** ***public*** ***interest,*** ***appointing*** ***the*** ***Board*** ***of*** ***Directors*** ***of*** ***BC*** ***Ferries*** ***(B.C.Ferries Service Board – appointed by the B.C. Ferries Authority Board - Which establishes*** ***compensation*** ***plans*** ***for*** ***the*** ***Directors*** ***and*** ***Executives*** ***of*** ***BC*** ***Ferries.***

***Vision*** ***-*** *Safe,* *reliable* *and* *affordable* *coastal* *ferry* *service* *in* *British* *Columbia* *and* *a* *service* *that* *meets* *the* *needs* *of* *coastal* *communities* *and* *supports* *the* *public’s* *interest* *in* *environmental,* *economic* *and* *social* *objectives.*

***Mission*** ***-*** *To* *oversee* *the* *strategic* *direction* *of* *BC* *Ferries* *in* *the* *public* *interest.*

The Authority’s Board consists of nine directors.

• Four directors are nominated by coastal regional districts

• One director is nominated by the trade union representing BC Ferries workers and

• Four directors are appointed by the Province

The Chair is selected by the Board

**Lecia** **Stewart** – Chair – *Province*

*(stipend $25K)*

**Jessica** **Bowering** **–** *Province*

**Andrew** **Ross** - *Labour*

**G.** **Wynne** **Powell** – Vice Chair – *Province*

*(stipend $8k, former CFO London Drugs chain)*

**David** **R.** **Levi** **-** *Province*

**J.** **Wayne** **Rowe** **-** *Southern* *Mainland*

**Gary** **Coons** **-** *Northern* *Coastal* *and* *North* *Vancouver* *Island* **Marlene** **G.** **Kowalski** **-** *Southern* *Vancouver* *Island*

**Mark** **Tremblay** **-** *Central* *Vancouver* *Island* *and* *Northern* *Georgia* *Strait (this is the rep. for Hornby and Denman*

***Executive Director: Paid employee: Toby Louie***

***Website: https://www.bcferryauthority.com/***

**From the Floor:**

1. **Increase** **in** **ferry** **traffic** **and** **impacts** **-** How can the Government and BC Ferries deal more effectively with the overwhelming traffic, sailing delays and late ferries on many routes in the summer and shoulder seasons? *(Frank* *Frketich,* *Joe* *Wright,* *Kim* *Barton-Bridges,* *Diana* *Mumford)*

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**Responses:**

Noted that during COVID, while communities were suffering economically, routes were cut, etc. not a single executive at B.C.F. was laid off or lost any compensation.

These salaries are at a level that is being questioned. (Comment from Chair Mumford: Comments that BCF hides behind “we are under contract” when questioned on all service issues. )

The definition of public service, which is required under the Coastal Ferry Act, has now been defined.

Principles of PUBLIC INTEREST. (as opposed to serving a contract)

Has now been defined:



1. **Federal/Provincial** **assistance** **package** - Like to know some of the details of the financial assistance BC Ferries received. Are there any strings attached that affect operations? (*Keith* *Rush*)

**Response:**

Federal/provincial emergency relief during COVID 2020, 50% each of $308 million.

This money was not all needed for COVID response, and some moved forward into 2021.

It actually left BCF with better financials.

Annual Provincial subsidy to BCF is $234 million

**Meeting** **with** **B.C.** **Ferries**



**Thursday,** **August** **19,** **2021,** **7:30** **–** **9:30** **a.m.** **Grande** **Pacific** **Hotel** **–** **Galiano** **Room**

**Introductions:**

**Mark Collins,** President and Chief Executive Officer

**Jill Sharland**, Vice President & Chief Financial Officer

**Brian Anderson** Vice President, Strategy &

Community Engagement

* + **Darin Guenette –** Public Affairs Manager
  + **Corrie McIntosh –** Director of Community Relations

**Note: From the website: Brian Anderson**

A seasoned transportation executive, Brian first joined BC Ferries in 1998 and held leadership positions in Finance, Operations and Customer Experience for 13 years. In 2010, he joined BC Transit serving as Chief Information Officer, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operating Officer. Rejoining BC Ferries in 2019, Brian leads BC Ferries’ strategic planning processes, strengthening relationships and ensuring broad alignment with goals and objectives. He is the key point of contact for the 13 Ferry Advisory Committees and government stakeholders critical to the company’s success. Brian holds a Bachelor of Business degree from the University of Victoria and is a professional accountant.

**Agenda Items, as submitted in advance by the FACC**

**Details:**

• **Vessel** **Replacements** - an overview of vessel replacement projects (SUBMITTED BY: *Mary* *Greenwood)*

• **Increase** **in** **ferry** **traffic** **and** **impacts** **-** How can the Government and BC Ferries deal more effectively with the overwhelming traffic, sailing delays and late ferries on many routes in the summer and shoulder seasons? *(*SUBMITTED BY:*Frank* *Frketich,* *Joe* *Wright,* *Kim* *Barton-Bridges,* *Diana* *Mumford)*

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oNegative impacts to Tourism, limits access for residents to necessary medical services, commercial viability

• **Priority** **loading** **of** **essential** **services.** Over the past year a Provincial Cabinet order prioritized essential traffic. That order was rescinded, but persistent overloads are threatening vital supply chains. The cabinet order identified essential as: “suppliers/purveyors of food and beverages, gas and fuel, pharmaceuticals and medical supplies, and sanitation services.” (SUBMITTED BY: *David* *Maude*)

• **Communication** **–** communication functions of BC Ferries severely lacking (SUBMITTED BY:*David* *Maude,* *Mary* *Greenwood,* *Diana* *Mumford,* *Joe* *Wright,* *Keith* *Rush*)

oWebsite is not user friendly, often inaccurate, not updated and not used in a timely manner to inform ferry users

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Huge traffic jams on the August long weekend at Horseshoe Bay, up to 7 km. line-up on the freeway. People couldn’t get to the ticket booth, for reservations, or to access the Bowen Island and Langdale ferries.

Mark Collins – Horseshoe Bay was never designed for this volume.

Suggestion a few years ago to re-route Nanaimo traffic through southern route similar to Duke Point. The City of Nanaimo objected. This would have left much improved access for Langdale and Bowen Isl.

• **Fare** **structure** - An issue, especially at this time of year with tourists, is the fare charged for any length of a non-commercial vehicle or combination non-commercial vehicle exceeding 20 feet. (SUBMITTED BY:*Harold* *Swierenga)*

• **Resident** **Priority/Medical** **Priority** **–** Had been a Ministerial order during COVID for first 'resident only' then ‘medical priority’. What is appetite for policy about priority on selected sailings during the summer months? Balance with ‘public interest’ and tourism value to economy SUBMITTED BY: *(Michael* *Lynch,* *Diana* *Mumford)*

• **Federal/Provincial** **assistance** **package** - Like to know some of the details of the financial assistance BC Ferries received. Are there any strings attached that affect operations? (SUBMITTED BY:*Keith* *Rush*)

• **BCF** **collection** **of** **detailed** **data** **on** **ferry** **users** **–** to inform improvements to ferry service (SUBMITTED BY: *Kim* *Barton-Bridges)*

**RESPONSES**

**Conversational Speech/Remarks by Mark Collins:**

**CONTRACT**

No good news here, BCF has a contract, and that’s what they operate to.

Not promising any new ferries outside the plans.

Not anticipating any service level changes.

**ENVIRONMENTAL**

“big prize” (quote Mark Collins) would be to have the 5 main ships on the major routes convert to electrical, but it would require 200 megawatt/hour batteries, and the most developed so far is 12 megawatt/hour batteries.

Other fuel: LNG

The 6 new Island Class ferries are fuel/elec. Battery hybrids, they are designed to run on battery, once the land infrastructure is in place to charge them. NB. B.C. Hydro is into this.

**RESERVATIONS:**

Mark believes reservations are the way to handle traffic. What other transportation system is a “just arrive” system?

Right now, he thinks we are in a no man’s land, with part reserved, and part not.

Would like to go to 100% reservations, so people know if they’re on and not creating a huge, hopeful herd, like happened at Horseshoe Bay on the August long weekend.

Currently:

Route 1, Schwartz Bay, Duke Point: 75% of the deck space is reserved

Route 2, Departure Bay to Horseshoe Bay, different percentages, the max. is out of Nanaimo at 75%

Comox to Powell River is 25%

MAX. ON ANY ROUTE IS 75%, CURRENTLY expt. The Southern Gulf Islands, which are 100% (and sometimes this leaves people stranded).

**CANCELLATIONS**

Captains decided when to run, in bad weather, based on a WEATHER MATRIX: wind, tide heights, tide direction, vessel capability, etc.

**FARE STRUCTURE**

suggests that the current structure is historic, and the industry standard would be a charge/foot for deck space. This would be more helpful for encouraging smaller vehicles (green initiative) and help get more cars onto existing deck space. It would also alleviate the anomaly of it being cheaper to disconnect a car being towed, and drive it on separately (some of the longer vehicles pay proportionately more)

**SHIFT THE PEAK**

PRICING INCENTIVES.

Using pricing to shift traffic demand. Fare discounting mechanism to shift traffic, with lower fares, for traditionally lower demand times. (think red eye for air planes).

Note: moving livestock is better in the cooler part of the day.

Transit links – get people out of their cars

Reservations can be used to spread peak loads and reduce congestion.

**LABOUR**

Labour pools are depleted.

Standard at BCF has been to over hire, about 10- 12 %. (This allows for sick time, illness, etc.).

The pool is at the lowest level ever.

100-150 retirements/year

35 engineers short right now

5 training schools in Canada for Mariners.

Global shortage of mariners.

Global shipping is exploding (think Amazon shopping).

Fewer mariners are graduating from schools. Mark’s school in Nfld., when he went had 30 graduates, now about 15. (est. 30 years later).

Transport Canada, currently, mariners must be living in Canada for at least one year, for their credentials to be authorized for employment status in Canada. Makes it difficult to recruit internationally.

Hiring outside of Canada can take up to 2 years.

Also with Transport Canada, reducing crew sizes could be part of the solution. 200 car ferry here needs a min. of 13 staff. In Europe, the same size ship, need 6 or 7. This is NOT A SAFETY ISSUE.

**WEBSITE**

92% of reservations are done online. Call in times have been reduced from 15 minutes to 3 minutes

Website has 350,000 users.

**ROUTES**

Determined in the 2003 contract. This dictates the ports and route configurations.

This was historic, from the ‘90’s.

No plans for new route development.

Passenger only ferries might be part of an overall transit plan.

**VESSEL REPLACEMENTS**

Karen: On Route 22 we currently have a 48 year old boat serving, it is not scheduled to be replaced until 2034. We are facing serious overloads all summer long. Routinely up to 3 or 4 sailing waits, just to get to Denman Island, where we get in line to wait again.

Mark Collins: We operate vessels for 50 to 60 years, until they are scheduled for retirement.

**MANDATORY SHUTTLING**

On routes that it works for.

Based on the # of cars left behind.

Karen: Capt. Al told us if 9 cars were left behind that shuttling would be implemented. This is not the case routinely, especially on Route 21. Does BCF have a policy on this?

Mark: On your route you get regular shuttling. Believes that there are rules for when the ships are told to shuttle. (he then looked at Brian Anderson).

**COASTAL COMMUNITES EVACUATION PLANS?**

Yes, BCF has Emergency Preparedness Plans. In 2017, with the fires in the Chilcotin, they use the Bella Coola ships to take people out.

**FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

* Reservations
* Online schedules
* Utilizing more technology
* Shuttling to use existing vessels more intensely
* Climate change mitigation – converting ships away from petroleum to LNG or elec.

**Meeting** **with** **Minister** **of** **Transportation** **Rob** **Fleming**



Welcome and Introductions

COASTAL M.L. A., FAMILIAR WITH COASTAL COMMUNITIES. Familiar with Coastal communities, used to spend summers on Gambier.

Discussion:

* Need big picture thinking:
* Part of the resolution to alleviate ferry congestion would be an integrated approach of public transit on the land. (Karen’s note: B.C.F. says their business is to run ships, and weren’t interested in supporting bussing on Denman Island.)

The Minister said he has talked to the Ministry of Education around bussing efficiencies. And kids under 12 now ride B.C. Transit for free, in Courtenay, in order to use the transit system.

Service improvement opportunities:

* Expanded hours of service
* Fare incentives for quieter times
* Mandatory shuttling

Ferries will get $692. Million in direct funding over the next few years. Fuel prices going up. Fares.

Likes the reservation system

**Priorities:**

* Resolving community complaints
* Clean B.C. – supporting electrification of vessels
* B.C.F. needs to go to Ottawa together, and partner seeking Federal Funding (most other government groups do this)
* Priority is service, B.C.F. focus on delivery of their contract may not serve the best public interest
* Our ferries are our roads “totally agree”
* Add “public interest” to discussions
* Accountability /responsiveness:
  + FACC
  + Commissioner
  + Ferry Authority
* Planning – “have to support coastal communities”
* Relieve peak congestion and develop better reservation systems
* “respond to travel patterns”
* Consider crew, wages, vessels
* Line ups & frustrations. Major medical services are not located in most ferry dependent communities.
* (Chair Diana Mumford commented, on resident priority – increases prices if commercial vehicles have extended waits)
* “Everybody pays for ferries”

**VISION:**

* + Ship building in B.C.
  + B.C. to be a Global leader in marine battery development/production
  + Reliability of service
* B.C.F. Authority Board recommendations reviewed
  + Team that worked to turn ICBC around, is now working with the Authority Board to turn BCF around,
  + B.C.F has a job to work on relieving congestion at peak times

**Chair Mumford read (again)**

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**B.C. F. A.G.M. (10 a.m. Aug. 19th) Open to Public**

Mark Collins:

* 22 MILLION CUSTOMERS/YEAR
* Incentive pricing has been introduced, to spread peak demand
* Focus on sustainability, with electrification
* 6 hybrid fuel/battery electric ferries coming. Designed for full electric

Connectivity is an economic enabler – contributed to B.C.’s economic & social recovery

Jill Sharland, C.F.O.

30 year ridership graphs. Steady increase.

Current focus:

* Reduce energy consumption.
* Lower fuel costs, to reduce cost and carbon footprint
* Focus on management and controllable costs

Question from the floor:

* Matching increasing service to increasing populations.
* On the Pender Islands, they have provided stat.s by checking # of mail boxes, # of permits for new construction, etc., 3.5% growth in population.
  + No resulting increases from BCF

Answer: Delivering on a contract, which don’t account for population changes, inflation, or increases in demand.

KR Note: For Lobbying: strategies:

* Lobby the Commissioners for increases to our service contract, based on increasing populations, safety issues of over crowding, increases in demand, inflation, lack of vessel capacity, detriment to economic welfare of the Island, environmental impacts of turning cars on and off in long line ups, etc.
* A mass attendance at the AGM is a strategy, it is open to the public, and not many people attend – all the BCF factions are in attendance, as is the Press.
* Ron Emerson expressed interest that he would like to start a petition for improved service.
* Almost every community has a tale of woe, why are we different?