**DRAFT Meeting Minutes**

**Maine State Ferry Advisory Board Meeting**

Thursday, September 16th, 2021, 10:30 AM via ZOOM

1. Roll Call –

Islands: Matinicus – Eva Murray; Islesboro - John King; North Haven – Jon Emerson, Rick Latimer; Vinalhaven – Phil Crossman; Swan’s Island – Sonny Sprague; Frenchboro – Duncan Bond. Mainland: Dennis Damon, Hank Berg.

MaineDOT: Dave Bernhardt, Bill Pulver, Joel Perry.

* Joel Perry was introduced as the new MSFS Business Manager. Among his duties is managing terminal operations across the service. Joel is only a couple weeks on the job and is making his way to the various terminals to meet employees and discuss issues.

1. Introduction of Visitors

Bill Banks – Swan’s Island

1. Approval of the Minutes from the previous meeting

The Board approved the minutes.

1. Communications
   * 1. To or by the Board
     2. To or by MSFS/MaineDOT – Dave/Bill

Denis Damon asked about the status of the Swan’s Island request to allow cement trucks to run their engines on the ferry. He is disappointed that it has taken so long to meet with the Coast Guard. Bill and Dave informed the Board that they had met with new Coast Guard Prevention Commander Drewniak on this issue the day prior to this meeting and that a letter to the new Captain of Sector Northern New England requesting clarification would be sent soon. Dennis asked if cement trucks were running their engines on the ferries to other islands. Dave responded that the ferry service is consistent with enforcement across the ferry service.

1. Reports of the Board
   * 1. Financial Subcommittee – John
        + Update on Subcommittee recommendation to the MSFS from the July meeting

Resolution of the Maine State Ferry Service Advisory Board 9/16/21

John brought forward a motion to support the previously proposed resolutions from the Subcommittee. The resolutions were re-read, and the Board unanimously approved sending the resolutions forward.

1. That the MSFS make every effort, through cooperation with Maine’s congressional delegation and the U.S. Department of Transportation, to obtain federal funds to assist in the funding of and to accelerate the current vessel replacement program;
2. That the MSFS consider and employ hybrid and/or electric propulsion systems in new vessels to address cost issues, climate change issues, and vessel speed issues;
3. That during the design process particular consideration be given to designs that will maximize revenue and minimize cost, particularly personnel costs;
4. That during the design process the MSFS provide the users of the ferry system an open and transparent forum to provide the MSFS with input into the needs of the users of the system to be incorporated in the design of new vessels;
5. That the MSFS, to the extent practicable, take vessel speed into account to accommodate longer runs, primarily to North Haven and Vinalhaven with a view toward exploring the possibility of increased trips per day thereto.
6. Reports of the Ferry Service
7. Vessel Status Report – Dave

Dave summarized the Vessel Report.

The Spear will be coming to Rockland soon and will undergo trials and operations training before being put into service.

MaineDOT has started the process to award the construction contract for the next new diesel/electric hybrid ferry to the Senesco boat yard in Rhode Island. Senesco was the only bidder with a bid $4M over planned cost – Commissioner Van Note has committed to fund the additional cost.

Eva asked about the schedule of the Libby replacement – the current schedule is to be in-service in 2024.

1. Staffing Report – Dave

Dave discussed there are some positions posted to fill, mostly on the customer rep side with only one intermittent AB.

1. Financial Reports – Mike/Bill

Bill gave an overview of the end of August Variance Report –generally speaking revenues are higher and expenditures are lower when compared to the previous year for the first two months of the fiscal year.

For July and August 2021, analysis shows that revenues are slightly higher than what was targeted with the seasonal ticket price model.

1. Ridership Report – Dave

Dave discussed the ridership report – Overall passengers are slightly down, and vehicles are slightly up when compared to pre-Covid ridership levels – though this varies island to island.

Eva highlighted increased ridership for Matinicus.

1. Island Specific Issues

Phil Crossman brought up issues with the Vinalhaven telephone line-up call system was experiencing flaws with wait times, repeated holds, etc. He also mentioned that the terminal was stressed due to staffing. Dave mentioned staff vacancy at the terminal and that it is in the process of being filled.

The new ticketing system implementation has been put off for a couple months to make sure everything is in place and working properly.

Jon Emerson, North Haven, did bring up issues with calling in for reservations and the timing.

Sonny Sprague, Swans Island, brought up when propane is delivered on the days that there is a Frenchboro run it cuts down even more on the number of vehicles able to go to Swans on those days.

1. New Business
2. Old Business
   1. Advisory Board Annual Report – Eva

The Report was unanimously voted on to send to the Commissioner as is, with no discussion on its content. Sonny asked if the Swans Island section was put into the document and the answer was yes.

* 1. Next Vessel Naming

No discussion except a name was brought up by Swans Island, that being Al Densmore a past MSFS Captain who serviced the Island. Those who spoke up were in favor.

* 1. MSFS Funding Review requested by the Transportation Committee - Jon

Discussion around the requested review. Dave let the Board know that it has not yet begun, but that it should be starting very soon. John expressed concerns that the stakeholders of the MSFS, meaning the people who use the system and the communities that are served by the system, have a voice in the process and a place at the table when the process takes place. There is concern what the Transportation Committee might do with such a report and want to make sure the Board is heard. They all agree Denis Damon is the Advisory Board member that should be on the Review Committee. Denis has accepted.

1. Next Meeting/Adjournment

Tentative: November 18th 3rd Thurs of the month

10:30 – 12:30

Next meeting was voted on to be on Nov 18th starting at 10:30

Meeting ended at 12:20