

# **Maine State Ferry Advisory Board**

## **Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, May 18, 2023

10:30 AM via ZOOM and In-Person

### **1. Roll Call [1:35]**

**Islands:** Jon Emerson/North Haven, Kathy Clark/Swans Island, Eva Murray/Matinicus, Duncan Bond/Frenchboro, Jan Keiper/Frenchboro, John King/Islesboro, Phil Crossman

**MaineDOT:** Robert (Henry) McFerren, Greg Goggin, Ravi Sharma, Bill Geary, Joel Perry, Abby Baker.

**Mainland:** Hank Berg/Casco Bay Lines. Dennis Damon/ Bass Harbor.

### **2. Introduction of Visitors [3:45]**

Alex Zipparo/Island Institute, Holly Fields/Islesboro, Peter Drury/Vinalhaven.

#### **a. Bill Geary**

**Bill-** Introduced himself and is very excited to work here, as is familiar with the islands having lived there. Was born and raised on Vinalhaven, and later lived in Rockland. Graduated from MMA (Maine Maritime Academy) with my Unlimited 3<sup>rd</sup> Mate, spent 6 years in the Navy as a ‘Surface Warfare Officer’. Later spent 20 years management in retail within companies such as TJX and Target.

### **3. Approval of the Minutes [5:50]**

**Chair Jon Emerson-** asked to motion to Approve Meeting Minutes from March 23, 2023.

**Phil Crossman-** Approved.

**Duncan Bond-** Second

**Jon Emerson-** All in favor? (No one disagreed)

### **4. Communications [6:52]**

#### **a) To or by the Board**

**Jon Emerson-** Does anyone have anything? -Silence-

(Email in regards to email from Jon Emerson to Bill Pulver?)

## **b) To or by the MSFS/MaineDOT**

**Robert ‘Henry’ McFerren-** brings up the staffing report.

- New MSFS Director Bill Geary starts Monday, May 22. His email will be [William.Geary@maine.gov](mailto:William.Geary@maine.gov) which won't be active till Monday. And he'll receive his state phone Monday as well.
- CRA Positions are posted for the following Terminals; Islesboro Part-time is posted, Islesboro Part-Time (RTF Signed in the morning, to be posted this afternoon), Islesboro Intermittent (RTF Signed in the morning, to be posted this afternoon), North Haven Part-Time Posted, North Haven RTF Signed in the morning, to be posted this afternoon), Rockland Full- time, Rockland Intermittent both are posted, and Bass Harbor Full-Time and Intermittent (RTF Signed in the morning, to be posted this afternoon).

**Jon Emerson-** Asked what an RFT was.

**Robert ‘Henry’ McFerren-** Stated it was also known as a “Request to Fill”, all positions need to be signed off prior to being filled. I sign them, then they go to the executive office to be signed. Once signed they sent to the recruiting office to be posted.

- With a bunch of CRA Positions being open, looking to bring in Transportation Workers (TW) help where need be like what is happening in Islesboro.
- Ravi Sharma and I spoke this morning about reaching out to local superintendents for the extra TW.
- But is struggling to get them there and to some other locations, due too boat schedules and operational needs.
- Asked for assistance in making connections with those that had boats, willing to transport.
- Possibility of staying in crew houses if there's vacant rooms available.
- Increase of pay, referring to an employee that left due to pay. So starting a pay study, Petitioning the HR Office, MSFS incentives, and increase everyone as CRA to Step 7 on the pay scale; are just a few options were looking into.

**Jon Emerson-** Would this be for just some or all regarding island staff?

**Phil Crossman-** How are all CRA's classified?

**Joel Perry-** CRA's work in the office/ ticket counter and on the line.

**Dennis Damon-** just a suggestion, might consider pay increase for those working on the island.

**Jon Emerson-** Stipend, the idea coming out of the North Haven Terminal.

**Dennis Damon-** Stipend, differential, for working and living on island/ justification on it. For those living and working on the island, how could we do that.

**Jon Emerson-** Agrees.

**John King-** Was speaking to the Islesboro Terminal, with the potential of the terminal being closed for the first boat departing on Saturdays and Sundays, due to the lack of people. The Quick Silver doesn't run those days. Which could be frustrating with customers that aren't able to get tickets, ie, Trucks, extensions for trailers, since only regular vehicles and passenger tickets be purchased online, hopefully getting the word out could minimize this.

**Joel Perry-** Wants to remind, that were not in crisis there yet. But aware of the possibility and have talked to Holly about various fixes.

**John King-** Speaking of not being able buy certain types of tickets, or not being aware of possible terminal closure, could lead to fire in brimstones so to speak. The first boat of the morning can be one of the busiest ones, if communications can go out, so people are aware, it could limit the amount of Confusion.

**Joel Perry-** The Office/ Terminal may be closed, but there will still be someone there, scanning tickets. And we are aware it could get crazy.

**Robert "Henry" McFerren-** Looking to get contract in place for the ability to get the Transportation Workers or other workers, to Islesboro in hopes to minimize that. So, if you know anyone that might be interested, let them know, or send them my way.

**John King-** It's already crazy, just trying to minimize the crazy.

**Joel Perry-** Just too reference, parking for Islesboro went on sale yesterday and had \$30,000 worth of parking passes were sold.

**John King-** Just wondering how the fighting for parking this year will be then.

**Jon Emerson-** One person in North Haven worked 80 days straight last summer, during that time, the employee wasn't even able to leave the island.

- The island isn't a bad place to work if the pay was more competitive.
- A few employees have left due to being able to make \$25 per hour elsewhere.
- Jobs could be more targeted for islanders.
- Cost of living on the island is high.
- Don't see a way of people getting too North Haven as easily as Islesboro.
- A little bit more money makes sense.
- Doesn't seem to be stress why people won't stay, just money.

I am curious as to the number of rooms, at the crews' quarters and if that is a possibility of additional workers from the mainland would be able to stay there. Maybe in addition employees get an incentive for working on the island.

That is all I have, does anyone have anything additional.

**Phil Crossman-** Not really any issue here. Worried about stipends being offered. But Vinalhaven seems to be staffed. Worried about stipends attracting people that normally wouldn't be a good fit.

**Kathy Clark-** Swans Island Seems to be staffed as well. Some employees have been going too Bass Harbor to work.

**Jon Emerson-** To Bill Geary and Robert "Henry" McFerren, I hope this information was helpful to you. Especially about the higher wages. As John King was saying it could get to a hard point again.

**Eva Murray-** Asked about reading her letter about the naming of the Libby Replacement now, or at a later point in the meeting.

**Jon Emerson-** Lets save it for later in the meeting, under island specific issues.

### c) Legislative Review

**Jon Emerson-** Anything on the Transportation Review? Can we have a brief update.

**Robert 'Henry' McFerren-** Do you have any notes on that Greg.

**Greg Goggin-** No I don't. I do know the budget has not passed yet. It hasn't made it out of the committee yet.

**Jon Emerson-** This is different. Legislative Review, the standing report, that the committee asked for a year ago.

**Dennis Damon-** Apart of the review, no new action. Looking at some questions, no new questions. Asked the commissioner if he had anything, nothing new.

**Jon Emerson-** That's fine.

**Alex Zipparo-** Wondering about the report. The report KPFF curious of the plan being shared. If the DOT had anything to add or review. Also asked if there was anything the Island institute could do to help.

**Jon Emerson-** Robert 'Henry' McFerren, do you know anything?

**Robert 'Henry' McFerren-** I have seen the report, it hasn't been shared with the transportation committee yet. But will follow-up.

**Alex Zipparo-** would like to have a conversation about it when able and will be happy to help in any way I can.

**5. Reports of the Board [35:29]**

**Jon Emerson-** Does anyone have anything to add?

(no one spoke up)

**6. Reports of the Ferry Service [35:35]**

**a) Vessel Status Report**

**Jon Emerson-** That would be you, Henry.

**Robert ‘Henry’ McFerren-** Took over explanation.

- **M/V RG Spear-** Currently undergoing a COI.
- **M/V Frank Thompson-** Rockland Marine Company, is doing the repower, approximately 6 weeks longer than originally expected. Due too RMC not having an electrician for the repower.
- **Libby Replacement-** Approximately November 3, 2023, is the expected to be pushed into the water.

**Jon Emerson-** What does the completion date of the Libby Replacement mean, for the November date.

**Robert ‘Henry’ McFerren-** Will be going into the water, still anticipate a couple of weeks after that till its able to leave the yard.

- **M/V Almer Dinsmore-**Everyone saw the pictures that were sent out. Wheelhouse is growing taller.
- **Smith Replacement-** Still in the design with Gilbert Associates. No real movement.
- **All Other Vessels-** everything else is in service and running.

**Jon Emerson-** Asked about the engines on the Thompson ‘Lining Up’.

**Robert ‘Henry’ McFerren-** Can’t confirm that but can say an employee left RMC right in the middle of the job, for another job.

**Denis Damon-** Is this vendor at RMC?

**Robert ‘Henry’ McFerren-** The RMC electrician is tied up with other projects at RMC. We’ve reached out too Johnson Controls to see if they can help with status on Thompson. As RMC is not making enough progress on the job as hoped.

**Dennis Damon-** These two issues, with RMC and our fleet, could cause our service to be affected is troublesome. Entails and entitles us to be concerned. How concerned is the Department when people are leaving- walking off the job for other jobs.

**Robert ‘Henry’ McFerren-** Another Vendor will come in and work until the project gets done.

**Dennis Damon-** Curious as to RMC’s willingness to allow an outside vendor in to work on the boat. I would think they would.

**Jon Emerson-** Brings up the issue about going forward, what about the next repower. With RMC reportedly being understaffed, could it affect the Ferry Service? Don’t necessarily want to go with another shipyard, but this is concerning.

**Dennis Damon-** Not a good situation, I think were all in agreement with that.

**Jon Emerson-** Anything additional on the Vessel Status Report?

**Kathy Clark-** What is the completion date for the Almer Dinsmore?

**Robert ‘Henry’ McFerren-** Fall 2023- not set date yet.

**Kathy Clark-** Ok, Thank you.

## **b) Staffing Report/ Staffing Discussions**

**Jon Emerson-** Is there anything additional? - we talked about this earlier.

**Robert ‘Henry’ McFerren-** Nothing additional.

## **c) Financial Reports/Financial Subcommittee Report**

**Jon Emerson-** Greg Goggin, and John King that would be you.

**John King-** Want me to go first?

**Greg Goggin-** Go ahead.

**John King-** The Financial Subcommittee met on May 15, which was basically me, and Jon Emerson. Since we were able to get the report last week.

- Observation of the \$1 million Highway fund. (Cares Act FTA Contribution)
- Qualms about the FTA Contribution.
- Not going to meet the budgeted income.
- One of the takeaways, not enough transparency, and tariff.
- Increase revenue- Senior ticketing, different commuter price, (still would like to know about the number on commuter books sold) Liberalize ticketing.
- Commuter Tickets- Their length of use.
- Trouble of quadrupole
- State agency generating revenue.

- Unfunded Liability-Creating issues for us? Have grave concern about this. Noticed it keeps going up and up.
- Should it even be an operating expense. Being a state agency that generates revenue.
- Diesel prices locked in at \$2.77 vs. \$4.02 per gallon.

**Greg Goggin-** Anon mollies

- Professional Services, \$8000, got directly out of budget- last minute change (probably took right off the top line).
- Knows Bill Pulver has been working on other things.
- Basically, flat year-to-year.
- Initiatives to ask for additional money.
- Working on getting real numbers.
- Bill have been working on getting real numbers for the next two years, of expenditures.

**John King-** Asked about us doing the study.

**Jon Emerson-**How close is the budget is versus tariff being affected of budget.

**Alex Zipparo-** Can we add to the KPFF- for additional pricing structures?

- Study was done in two different pieces. I'll investigate it. DOT – to do as well.
- Variable revenue structure. If there is additional funding to work in that type of work.
- Our budget doesn't currently include the funds to work on this but am very willing to help going forward.

**Greg Goggin-** Bill Pulver, was very interested in that scope of work, can't speak for him. Wants it to be a collaborative effort.

**Alex Zipparo-** Knows that due to public service, just let me know, my door is open.

**Jon Emerson-**Anything . . . . .

**Greg Goggin-** Any more questions, I am willing too answer.

**John King-** Staffing of Vessels?

**Robert 'Henry' McFerren-**

Crew Positions

- Able Bodied Seaman (1)
- Engineer (1)
- Relief Captain (1); RTF was sent in this morning.

**John King-** Have we missed any trips then?

**Robert 'Henry' McFerren-** Not due to crew.

**Jon Emerson-** We can move forward.

**Hank Berg-** Henry, regarding the Cares Funding, to be obligated to the ferry. Heard that unused funding will be taken away. Artha Funding, Congressed approved taking back any funding, not being obligated. I am just putting it out there.

**Jon Emerson-** Are you aware of anything Greg or Henry?

**Greg Goggin-** Not aware of anything. But the last Million we received. Everything we've received has been obligated or used.

## 7. **Island Specific Issues [1:06:30]**

**Jon Emerson-** Eva that might, be you?

**Eva Murray-** Asked if there were other issues that might be shorter. No one spoke up.

As you all know, I've been tasked with the is naming of the Libby Replacement. After much discussion, I, the Town Assessors, Community Taxpayers, and the Historian of Matinicus. Had a meeting in April. We all agreed that the Libby Replacement, shall be named, "Charles Norman Shay".

**\*\*Read Letter to Advisory Board\*\***

Charles Norman Shay is a part of the Penobscot Nation, and lives in Normandy. Shay is a highly decorated war medic. Also, the last living Native American to have served on D- Day.

According to Mr. James Francis, he is fine with this decision.

Has a book as well, which is titled "Project Omah Beach", life and military story as a Native American.

With that, I would like to make a Motion to name the Libby Replacement- to Charles Norman Shay.

**Dennis Damon-** seconded the decision for that name.

**\*\*Unanimous agreement for that name, and to move forward with the meeting. \*\***

**Jon Emerson-** Take a vote on having the "Charles Norman Shay" for the Libby Replacement. To suggest this as a name to the DOT.

Also, would like to suggest having a placard put on this vessel and any vessels built going forward, to explain a little about the name.

**\*\*All those are in favor, no disagreements. \*\***

**Duncan Bond-** Would like to follow-up with a placard on the boat. He has a fascinating story, explaining and sharing it with future generations riding our vessels would be good.

**Eva Murray-** He's not shy but should double check and confirm the name is correct.

**Jon Emerson-** Placard or letter, going forward, having information of boats going forward.

**Dennis Damon-** Follow-up with helpful suggestion for this going forward.

**Jon Emerson-** Motion, for All in favor- lets forward this too Bill Pulver.

Good job Eva for getting this done.

**Eva Murray-** Glad we got this done. And it's a good story, and no one from Matinicus is upset, everyone is satisfied.

**Jon Emerson-** Thank you.

**Kathy Clark-** I was asked by the school to bring this up. I would like to change the first departure from Swan's Island to better accommodate the High Schools start time. The way the schedule is now, the high school students have quite the wait.

**Robert 'Henry' McFerren-** Taking notes.

**Kathy Clark-** Thank you for listening to my question. I realize its early for fall schedules, but I was curious and see if it's a possibility.

**Jon Emerson-** No, I think you brought up a good point. Right Place, right time, thank you. Anyone else for Island Specific Issues?

No one spoke up.

## **8. New Business [1:21:20]**

**Jon Emerson-** Shoreside Parking.

**Robert 'Henry' McFerren-** Yes. I have one. As our Parking Passes are being sold to our busy parking lot, we have noticed there is 31 unregistered and/ or inspected vehicles, that are in direct disagreement with our policies and parking agreements.

**Joel Perry-** As you can see with the sales of \$30,000 at another location.

**Robert 'Henry' McFerren-** Ravi Sharma has reached out with guidance of what too do. So we wanted to bring it up to the board first. Ask for clarification so were on the same page.

**Eva Murray-** Are these cars potentially Line Holders.

**Robert 'Henry' McFerren-** I suspect, but I don't have a sur fire way to do so without having someone out there day and night. So that's why I am asking the board.

**Jon Emerson-** So I am asking. There are approximately 30 vehicles out there without registration and inspection.

**Dennis Damon-** I don't know who's toes I am going to step on, but I am going to say this. But on some islands, law enforcement has overlooked certain registration and inspections, for island cars. But this gray area was never meant to extend to the Rockland lot, or beyond. These vehicles are in straight violation of law, and there is no excuse.

**Robert 'Henry' McFerren-** Again we want to handle this, without hurting anyone. But we need to do the right thing.

**Phil Crossman-** Having been very gracious already. But please I'd be more than willing to contact any vehicle owners that are residents on Vinalhaven Island if I received the names. If every representative did this for their island on the parking, would most likely be solved.

Still curious about the recommendations for new parking, and if there is any more mention of parking garage.

**Robert 'Henry' McFerren-** Understood.

**Jon Emerson-** I agree with Phil. But I can say with law enforcement on North Haven, Perhaps these vehicles having been flying under the radar.

**Phil Crossman-** It's illegal.

**Jon Emerson-** May not save any spots, but they could go get them registered.

## **9. Old Business [1:31:46]**

**Jon Emerson-** Don't see anything specific. Does anyone have anything additional.

No one spoke up.

## **10. Next Meeting/Adjournment [1:32:11]**

**Jon Emerson-** asked everyone agreed to move to next meeting date. And what the date of that meeting would be. **Next meeting will be Thursday, July 20, 2023, at 10:30 am.**

**Jon Emerson-** Meeting adjourned unless anyone disagrees.

**Dennis Damon-** Second

All agreed.