

A meeting of the Maine State Ferry Service Advisory Board was held at 10:30am on Thursday, September 5, 2019, at the Rockland Ferry Terminal.

- A) Role Call:
Matinicus-out, Vinalhaven-vacant, North Haven, Islesboro, Frenchboro, Swan's Island, Bass Harbor
- B) Introduction of Visitors/List of Attendees:
Dennis Damon, Bass Harbor, Chairperson
Mark Higgins, Manager Ferry Service MDOT
Joanne O'Shea, Business Manager Ferry Service MDOT
Bill Pulver, MDOT
Mike McKenna, MDOT
Duncan Bond, Frenchboro
Phil Crossman, Vinalhaven
Lindsay Davis, Vinalhaven
Jon Emerson, North Haven
Rick Lattimer, North Haven
Phil Seymour, Islesboro
Kathy Clark, Swan's Island
Sonny Sprague, Swan's Island
John King, Islesboro
Gabriel Pendleton, Islesboro
Nick Battista, Island Institute
Maggie Wilcox, Islesboro
- C) Approval of Minutes from June 27, 2019
- D) Communications
Discussion of Melissa Hall email
- E) Reports of the Board-none
John requests that the Board receives confirmation of receipt of the annual report, as well as a response from the Commissioner. Bill stated that the commissioner did get the report and said he could respond. John is not requesting a written response, but to respond at a future meeting though Phil thinks a written report is reasonable and a response at FSAB is appropriate.
- F) Reports of the Department
Financial Report—Mike McKenna. This report is different than usual as it is more detailed and breaks down the costs. He asks if we should keep it this way or go back to a summary.
i. No questions regarding the revenue portion. Fiscal 2019 has been closed.

- ii. John asks if repairs are included in final analysis. Timing is difficult due to when bills were received. Mike will run 2019 finals for the board, broken into detail.
- iii. COI was done in Jan 2019 and a fast rescue boat was required to be put on Libby. Cert is good for next year, but determination needs to be made if costs can be justified for a 60yr old boat. It would be about \$500k to make needed upgrades and extend the life about 7 yrs. Otherwise a smaller vessel could be built to be used for other revenue streams. Question regarding if this would be a capital expense or operating expense—there are variables to consider. John asks how long it would take to build a new boat: 18-24 months to design, then another 12-15 months construction.
Island transporter costs about \$108k/year for 36 trips. There are not good commuter amenities on the vessel.
- iv. Retro Lump sum reclass is a state policy. Since 2014 there have been disagreements and a grievance. Money released this fiscal year.
- v. Mike says everything else is generally in line

G) Vessel Status Report—Report is handed out and reviewed by Mark

Jon asked about noise from Burgess. Mark says harmonics are low RPM and are fine. Jon asks if noise can be reduced next haul out, that it's a conversation stopper. Mark says it functions correctly.

Gabe asked for new vessel status. Mark says delivery will be around Feb, training in March, in service in April. VH pen construction (new dolphins and fencing) will occur in Feb to correspond with taking new vessel.

H) Island Specific Issues

- a. Phil: question about sea level rise and dolphins. Mark said there was a public meeting and studies about that. Question about VH Supervisor training. Mark said Supervisor has done Leadership Training. [Correction: she is signed up for the next session 11/5-11/7/19.] Question about ADA compliance. Multi-Modal Facilities is aware.
- b. Jon: question about cement work on NH/rebar is deteriorating. Mark: bridge crews do inspections and he will let them know.
- c. Gabe: customer service complaints about customers needing to be in vehicles at 15 min mark. Mark: it is being internally addressed.
- d. Lindsay: VH customers are being told they need to be in line 35 min ahead. Mark: this is not MSFS policy
- e. John: FB thread about 15 min rule. Mark talked about Bill Maxwell and our plans for customer service training and Safety Days in October
- f. Phil says customer service is a priority over rule-enforcement. Bill and Mark say the reason for the rule is safety and ensuring on-time boat departure.
- g. Sonny thinks 15 min rule is great, that it ensures expediency
- h. Jon gave positive feedback he heard this morning

I) Old Business

- a. Rate Increase-Bill: comment period ended 9/3. We are moving ahead with proposal, though considering a revenue-neutral item for Matinicus. Response to comments are occurring now. Oct 1 is the goal to implement new Tariff. Reservations are already on sale. We will allow customers to put the value of tickets towards the new Tariff rates.
- b. Update on Customer Service Training- Safety Days/Customer service training will be end of October.
- c. Engines off Update—Phil spoke with Chellie Pingree representatives who say the only way to make an exception means changing federal law. Jon suggests MSFS and DOT supports this for the sake of customers. Dennis suggests this is a way down the road but that it should be supported. Nick: The DOT could state a position as supportive or not well before it gets to congressional offices. Phil says commissioner should respond to the annual board report because this topic is included in the report.
- d. October 2018 Operational Safety Assessment—Mark: peer review with North Carolina and Casco Bay Lines. With administration change in Jan, he reached out again and will be going 9/25 to discuss route assessments, crewing, etc.
 - i. Nick asked about compressed schedule. Mark said we'd reconsider if there are changes to the 12hr work day limit. Lindsay asked about new captain's opinion on VH. Phil asked about danger of LED lights, and that fell short so schedule was due to fatigue. 540 of 600 VH residents signed a petition asking for winter schedule be restored. Gabe asked about crews taking mid-day breaks and being more liberal with cancellations due to weather.
 - ii. Bill says it's not fair to indicate that MSFS is "shopping for an excuse" to compress winter schedule. He listed many reasons for the decision. Dennis says we should err on side of caution when there could be a vessel mishap. John asks for middle ground for last time of ferry. Phil says there was ambiguity at the listening session on VH. Jon asks about operations during daylight-that the winter season for the schedule correspond with daylight savings.
- e. Capital Plan/fall paving at the VH terminal and sidewalk repair-no comments

J) New Business

- a. Tariff Review and Update: Mark says we have been updating the Tariff, and there is a proposal for parking fees. We plan to send out an updated draft via email next week.
- b. Parking Fees—a proposal was distributed which was met with mostly negative feedback. We asked for help with solutions:
 - i. Suggestion of satellite lot at Lincolntown and Rockland, \$500 for yr round pass
 - ii. Question of who will get the passes if there is a cap
 - iii. Parking garage, which would eliminate plowing
 - iv. Parking study was done in 2016. Parking garage was a \$6M investment
 - v. Agreement that this should be put on next FSAB meeting agenda because there is so much interest in it.
 - vi. Dennis gave example of parking meters in Bar Harbor

K) Motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 12 noon.

Next meeting: Oct. 3, 2019 at 10:30am