

**Whatcom County Ferry Advisory Committee**  
**June 5, 2024, 6 p.m.**

***Bold** text indicates Committee decision expected. Asterisk\* indicates attachment.*

**6:00 p.m.** CALL TO ORDER – Pam Gould, Chair

ROLL CALL

- |                  |                 |                              |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| · Janice Catrell | · Diane Harper  | · Thomas Philpot             |
| · Richard Frye   | · Todd Lagestee | · Catherine Shornick         |
| · Pam Gould      | · Carol Landt   | · <i>Uninc area position</i> |

FLAG SALUTE and MOMENT OF SILENCE

BUSINESS MEETING:

- Welcome to committee members, county staff and community, in person and on Zoom
- **Accept Agenda**
- **Adopt Minutes, May 1, 2024\***
- Gary Poole, Senior Master, news from the ferry
- Jon Scanlon, County Council [tentative]

**6:15** COMMITTEE WORK:

- Report on 5.21.24 Public Works committee meeting and update on revised budet
- ad hoc Access Committee, update
- ad hoc Ferry and Terminal Committee, update, Kurt Esveldt
- **Move meetings to 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays, starting in July**
- Open House July 24<sup>th</sup>, tentative

**7:15** OPEN SESSION: Attendees, then, if possible, Zoom attendees

**7:45** ADJOURN

COMMITTEE SCHEDULE:

- To be confirmed, July 24 [Note change in day and time to fourth Wednesday]: WCFAC Meeting and Open House

**Location: The Gathering Place – 3913 Legoe Bay Road, Lummi Island**

Join Zoom meeting hosted by LICA:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86163406751?pwd=XeapMTubZnjHjis938rDYtVxlqoHON.1>

Whatcom County Ferry Advisory Committee  
May 1, 2024  
Minutes

6:00 p.m. CALL TO ORDER – Pam Gould, Chair

Present: Janice Catrell, Pam Gould, Diane Harper, Todd Lagestee, Carol Landt, Tom Philpot, Catherine Shornick

Absent: Richard Frye

County representatives present: Jon Scanlon (on Zoom), Whatcom County Council (CC); Roland Middleton, Public Works (PW); and Gary Poole, Senior Master.

BUSINESS MEETING

Agenda: Stands, with update that only WCFAC members would be appointed to the ad hoc ferry outage committee this evening.

Minutes: April 11, 2024, Adopted

News from the ferry: Gary Poole reported that drydock plans are moving ahead for May 18<sup>th</sup> with hopes for June 15<sup>th</sup> return. Outages will occur on both the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> for placing necessary floats and ramps. See the Whatcom County website for complete information.

Public Works update: Roland Middleton reported that road striping is scheduled for this summer, and some large-scale vehicles will be brought over for availability for maintenance during drydock. As requested, he brought large scale drawings (from James Lee, PW) that will be available at the library once the terminal ad hoc committee reviews them.

WCFAC Chair comments: Pam Gould said that since WCFAC can only talk among themselves during open meetings, the first part of the meeting will be committee work. She also reported on efforts made to work with PW and the CC on code changes, but the Council adopted the new codes on April 23, effective May 9. New fares are effective June 1; existing punchcards can be used through June and can be exchanged for credit toward new cards once available in June. Director Kosa of PW requested that WCFAC work on “assisting with planning for the major service outage” anticipated during construction of new terminals. [See Pam’s attached comments.]

COMMITTEE WORK

Ad hoc code committee report on WC Code Chapter 10.34 Ferry Rates:

Diane Harper reviewed changes in the new fare structure, including recommendations by WCFAC that were largely bypassed. [See attached handout.]

As well, Diane reviewed the most significant changes to the Codes and their impacts [see attached handout]. She shared her disappointment that the Codes are poorly written after a missed opportunity to clean them up; that almost nothing WCFAC recommended was adopted, after an enormous amount

of work; and that a new annual, automatic fare increase or costs cut equal to the CPI increase will occur every January, which runs counter to the Council's adoption of a budget every two years. CPI has nothing to do with ferry operations, and fare increases are usually in whole dollar amounts; the Council seemed to indicate that if the CPI was small, they won't have to do it—which ignores that they adopted the wording "shall" so it is not optional. Gary Poole indicated that the work burden of annual increases (the first one in less than a year) will fall primarily to staff, not the ferry crew.

Ad hoc electric ferry and docks report: Tom Philpot reviewed a list of questions [see attached list], underscoring there will be many more questions to follow. Roland responded that:

- Terminal drawings are about 30% completed for permitting purposes; concept drawings (not final detailed design) are about 60% complete, and he will provide those as soon as available. Vessel structure (hull design, etc.) are more complete, but they are working on propulsion. Environmental concerns on design on being worked out.
- Shore power timing is up to PSE. It will be built into the terminals, and they are looking into where to store battery compartment on the island side. Some discussion followed regarding a new location for the Gooseberry terminal that should be completed by October 2046 when the current lease expires. Roland noted that the proposal to move the terminal is from the Lummi Nation.
- The Whatcom Chief may be able to come in and out for brief intervals during terminal construction particular points during construction after an initial period of around 7 or 8 weeks. Gary P. and James Lee (PW) are in frequent communication regarding this issue; permits must be completed (about a year out) and then more details can be ironed out. James indicated putting requirements on each phase of construction, which would provide windows for the Chief to come in. They are planning for the full six-month outage, but the goal is for a shorter time.
- The ad hoc committee may sit in on propulsion meetings; Roland will connect Tom P. with the right person to facilitate.

Ad hoc committee to work on extended service outage: It was suggested that WCFAC should appoint an ad hoc group to work with LICA on developing a larger community committee. First, Roland was asked about communication plans between the community and KPFF (as requested by KPFF on April 11). He noted that they would work off past successes such as setting up an open house, but he doesn't have a list of services and businesses—he'll look to island residents for guidance. Roland is essentially the collector and is not sure if that means a drop box, dedicated email, or such; he envisions surveys and conversations and noted PW has increased its social media presence including a podcast. As to PW's purview, Roland said they are looking at all public property on the island for purposes of stockpiling and parking vehicles; they will work to get the Chief in for periodic runs; and are looking at a landing craft through the Port of Bellingham. He affirmed that the outage 'has to happen' August 2027, with construction beginning July 1. PW can provide the mechanism but at this time there is no funding to assist with utilities/services that store vehicles on the island for six months.

WCFAC members agreed to form an Island Access ad hoc committee, with Carol and Catherine volunteering and Pam attending as available. Community members have indicated interest in

participating, and representatives from organizations and businesses should be included. The ad hoc group will coordinate with LICA, which will be discussing their involvement in May, and will start working on a structure and partial roster to bring to the June 5<sup>th</sup> WCFAC meeting. It makes sense to have subcommittees as well. Todd L. encouraged partnership with the fire department, which has an incident command system in place and can provide a template with which PW should also help. The advantage of an island is a more easily identified populace for notifications as to planning. Roland confirmed that he and KPFF will be managing this special project (no option to hire outside/new professional), noting that if this isn't an emergency he's not sure what is.

Meeting day discussion: The first Wednesday conflicts with the Grange monthly meeting. Due to other constraints, the June 5<sup>th</sup> meeting will stand, at which time a 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month meeting time will be considered, with the anticipation of at least one town hall in June/July.

### OPEN SESSION

Ralph Steele expressed frustration regarding code changes, including that PW had said they didn't need a change to access ARPA funds. Farebox revenue has three definitions; Diane H. underscored that errors in the ordinance are problematic.

Bob Anderson voiced dismay that not one recommendation from WCFAC (other than one timing issue) was approved by the Council, and that there is a high level of frustration at the lack of collaboration. WCFAC deserves better; this is not a trusted relationship. PW admitted there was a crisis with the Road Fund, and instead put pressure on the fare box. WCFAC held five meetings with input, and not a bit was accepted. He is deeply disappointed in the Council.

### Upcoming

- June 5, WCFAC meeting

Meeting adjourned 7:45 PM.

### Attachments:

- WCFAC 4-11-24 Minutes Approved (note: submitted with attachments 5.2.24 for County site)
- P Gould comments May 1, 2024
- Ferry and terminal ad hoc report May 1, 2024
- D Harper old vs new fares 5-1-24
- D Harper WC Code April 23, 2024

Zoom recording hosted by Whatcom County:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h6luQoIW014>

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Submitted by C. Shornick