

Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee (LIFAC)

July 2022 Meeting July 13, 2022 at LI Grange Hall

CALL TO ORDER

Cris Colburn, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:02pm

ROLL CALL

(Quorum) Cris Colburn (Chair), Judy Olsen (Vice-Chair), Jim Dickinson, Rich Frye, Todd Lagestee, Mike McKenzie

ALSO ATTENDING:

In Person: Mary Marshall, Bill Sager

Remote (Zoom): Laine Courie, David Parker, Mike Skehan

MINUTES CONSENT: Approval of June minutes moved and accepted, 6-0

PUBLIC COMMENT OPEN SESSION:

Laine Courie provided an update of the Lummi Island Public Dock Advisory Committee. It has a presentation scheduled with County Council, following a previous presentation before the Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Commission on March 17 this year.

Bill Sager invited committee members, present and past, to attend—and speak, if desired—in a celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Whatcom Chief. The event will be staged Sunday, August 21, in Orchard Park (in the public parking lot across from the ferry landing), presented by Lummi Island Community Association (LICA).

COMMITTEE INTERNAL ACTIVITY ITEMS:

1. **FILLING LIFAC VACANCY:** County Council appointed islander Mary Marshall to the LIFAC on July 12. Mary, an island resident 4 years, attended this meeting the next night in filling the vacancy created when William (Reid) Johnson moved to another county.
2. **ELECTION OF SECRETARY:** Mike McKenzie nominated Mary to fill the secretary position vacated by Reid. Seconded. Approved, 6-0.
3. **FEE FOR MEETING SPACE:** County Council consented to pay Grange rental for LIFAC's regular monthly meetings.
4. **ADMIN SUPPORT:** The Council's support staff, led by Jill Nixon, has assumed administration of LIFAC's email accounts. So far, they can:
 - a. Distribute official public notices; e.g., meeting announcements, agenda, minutes *et al*

- b. Offer sign-up for anyone to send email and/or documents to committee members and to receive information that the committee sends out.
- c. Eventually, LIFAC also will have an email for internal use, which becomes a public document if a quorum participates in it.
- d. Jill will provide training for LIFAC usage of the new email functions and she will manage distribution of official LIFAC materials.

CALENDAR ITEMS going forward:

In our continued collaboration w/ County support—both administrative & staff—some reports & presentations have been delayed/postponed because of time constraints related to staffing shortages and work overload (created by ferry service outages, emergency flood management, etc.).

County has agreed to schedule:

- Annual budget & performance review of ferry operations.
- Presentation of a report created by County Special Projects Manager Roland Middleton detailing the history of and current state of the ferry lease w/ Lummi Indian Business Council (LIBC).
- Report on contingencies for ferry operations when flooding occurs.
- And, LIFAC will approach County about an overview of a “Plan B” course of action to back up the current ferry service if it is disrupted. Meanwhile, the County continues efforts to obtain funding for and to build a replacement ferry within the next four years to meet its adopted clean-air mandate for public transportation.

The committee continues to explore possibilities for a remote attendance link, which will appear in the official meeting announcement whenever it’s available.

OLD BUSINESS

- Cris, who has had a career in public transportation and now retired from Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA), presented a detailed summary of the background work of LIFAC, on which he has served as an off-island representative most of its existence since 2012 (a replacement partial term, 5 years across two full terms, and, after a required year off, now in his fourth appointment).
 - Judy, Jim (who served on the Ferry Task Force that jump-started the whole movement) and Mike each commented on background events and activities leading to the funding, proposed design (Elliott Bay Design Group) and the consultant work on size and desired service levels and more (KPF Consulting Engineers Inc.) in concert with island stakeholders.

- Whatcom County Public Works representatives are on vacation. As chair, Cris reported on behalf of them that all is on track with submission and anticipated approval this summer of the federal grant (known as RAISE, distributed by the U.S. Dept. of Transportation) and the various state sources for funding.
- The Committee, after some wide-ranging discussion about concerns raised within and outside of our purview, agreed to seek what Judy Olsen termed “a road map” for creating a process by which these concerns can be addressed in a solutions-based process.
 - For example: One of the concerns, raised repeatedly at our meetings by Jim Dickinson, Update on Replacement Ferry Project (Roland Middleton, Public Works staff) is the proposed hull design on the replacement ferry. He also has presented data that he suggests shows that exceedingly high operational costs of a hybrid ferry are imminent.
 - [NOTE: In open public comments, island resident Mike Skehan has repeatedly addressed costs of operations with the replacement ferry design. He has submitted charts and his opinions and suggestions in documents appearing in LIFAC’s public records.]
 - Rich Frye expressed concern with the size of the designed ferry, its operating costs, and a perception that island residents and property owners don’t have enough input. He suggested that County create a survey of this constituency.
 - Todd Lagestee stated that his main concern is how the replacement ferry addresses climate-change issues, pointing out that he’s heard that the Whatcom Chief has the biggest carbon emission in the entire Whatcom County fleet of equipment and vehicles.
 - Judy suggested working with County and Public Works toward forming a process for recognizing and dealing with issues and concerns.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Mike will prepare an article about this meeting for The Tome, which is distributed island-wide and in mail subscriptions.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved, seconded, and approved 6-0 at 7:26pm.