REPORT FOR LIFAC ON COUNTY ACTIVITY

1. Proposal defeated (3-3, Brenner, Kershner, Knutzen opposed; Weimer absent) to amend Whatcom County Code Chapter 10.34, Ferry Rates (would have changed the method of calculating the 45% Road Fund subsidy of the ferry operations expenses) (AB2013-162)

Implications: We revisit the manner of all calculations, the “loose ends” that Joshua referred to in his report last year, areas lacking transparency, etc., and examine the 55/45. Quote from Sam Crawford (“80-20”).

2. Ordinance amending Whatcom County 2013 Unified Fee Schedule to incorporate “Ferry Non-Payment Fee” (AB2013-289)
   Introduced 5-1, Brenner opposed (proposed schedule – September 40 October 8 Public Works, Health, and Safety Committee and Council public hearing)

We learned about this too late to put anything in their packet the previous week. We submitted a short, concise, and clear recommendation on why it was premature and out of context to consider this. A penalty originally was mentioned in a previous session of the PW Committee, buried in the report on the status of electronic ticketing on the ferry.

Because some Islanders spoke up against having a public hearing during dry dock, the Council was about to table this until Council member Crawford spoke up and declared that they could go ahead and introduce it but delay the public hearing. Our recommendation was not to introduce it until they took a closer look at its intent (to penalize non-payment once credit cards become accepted). Introduction passed 5-1, Brenner opposed.

As a result of the short notice and confusion, Council chair Kershner revealed later that she intends to propose that nothing will appear on the agenda ferry-related until it first has been examined by the LIFAC.

3. Abart revealed that PW has contracted with an unidentified vendor for a “Beta” test program of an electronic ticketing system, with no commitment or obligation to purchase it. He was not forthcoming on details until paperwork was approved and signed. But at least no kiosk....

4. Earlier in the summer Council approved moving the special needs reduced fare administration to the Opportunity Council, which will charge $50 for each application.

   a. Some Islanders expressed concern about language in the ordinance that cut off the budget at a certain point; several Council members said that it would not be a problem, that this is stated in
many ordinances, and that if apps exceeded the stated budget then Council would amend it and find more money so that nobody in need would be left out.

b. Council also declined to issue a 10-ride pass, as requested by PLIC.

Clarifying some points from engineering about which various information arose among some Islanders:

5. Frank Abart nixed the engineers’ request to extend the period of major disruptions to ferry service while they performed some work at the base of the wing walls at Gooseberry Point – a necessary prelude to the rebuilding of the wing walls during upcoming Dry Dock. The reason for having that work done when it was related to the necessary low tides, which would not have been low enough again until October (resulting in significant delay of the work).

6. The ferry ran late often during weeks leading up to Dry Dock. During one short span it was because of a blown gasket on one of something related to turbos in an engine. Other times it was because of heavy traffic, onloading and unloading. But never because of work on the wing walls after the announced shutdowns for two days.

7. A question arose about all the electrical work at the Island dock. One Islander asked LIFAC if it had to do with electronic ticketing system. No, it is a complete overhaul of the electrical system at the dock that impacts the raising and lowering of the ramp, lighting in the building, etc.

8. Other letters to LIFAC asked about the two-lane lineup for ferry loading at Gooseberry, about the lack of drainage during heavy rain and/or high tides at Gooseberry, and too short of notice (8 days) about the service disruptions by wing-wall construction. We have addressed all of these previously. In short, the two-lane process will remain in place until Lummi Nation decides on its development of the Gooseberry area; the drainage cannot be improved because of the original design of the drain pipe and it is on Lummi property rather than the County’s.

Respectfully submitted:
Mike McKenzie, Chair
Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee