TO THE MEMBERSHIP

Your Board members know it is disappointing that the return of the Charlie Wells was delayed. We apologize for not meeting everyone’s expectations. Ferry service is scheduled to resume on Tuesday, October 13th.

We understand the dry dock creates hardships, especially for our full-time island residents. Several of us on the Board also live on the island and we are personally ready to have our ferry back in service.

This particular dry dock had several challenges. The shipyard postponed the start date a few days later than originally planned. Although there were major structural repairs that we had scheduled, significant unexpected work required by the Coast Guard added more time in drydock. The damp weather also hampered work, like painting. And, as you can imagine, the Covid-19 pandemic has slowed down progress.

Much of the work the Coast Guard required this time was maintenance previously advised during prior drydock inspections; this work had been deferred to future drydocks. When a decision is made to post-pone required maintenance, it means future dry docks take longer and cost more money. For this drydock, both deferred maintenance and unexpected work significantly contributed to the time required at the shipyard, delays in the ferry’s return to service, and additional costs.

Although we don’t have the final bill yet, we know the shipyard costs will exceed the money that had been previously budgeted. We are looking at ways to pay the bill out of the current budget, including reserve funds.

The shipyard costs will have an effect on the next HMC budget. HMC pays its bills by generating revenue in only three ways – annual assessments, special assessments, and ferry fees. We will keep you informed and engaged as we make necessary budget decisions. Unfortunately, one thing is certain – you will be asked to pay more money.

We’d like to acknowledge and thank those who have pitched in with boat crossings, grocery shopping, and all of the efforts to help each other. It’s this spirit that truly makes Herron Island a community.

Our ferry the Charlie Wells will return safe, seaworthy, and shiny.

Thank you all for your patience and understanding.

Your HMC Board of Directors