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List decisions and commitment list Island Council Meeting November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021, at 9:35 am  
at V.A. Lopes Legislative Hall (Government Guest House)

**Present:**

Government Commissioner Ms. M.A.U Francis Chairlady, Ms. C. Toet, Deputy Government Commissioner  
Councilman N. Sneek, Councilman C. van Putten, Councilman R. Merkmán, Council lady R. Leerdam,  
Plv. Griffier E. Jami

**Absent:** Council lady F. Spanner

	<b>Agenda point</b>	<b>Decisions and Commitments</b>
1.	Opening	
	The meeting started at 9:43 am	
2.	<b>Announcements</b>	None
3.	<b>Setting of agenda</b>	<b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> The Agenda is established as proposed & advertised.
4.	The prolonged delay in the startup of the ferry services to Sint Eustatius, Saba, Sint Maarten & Sint. Kitts	<b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Island Council member van Putten requested this meeting on this topic I suggest 20 minutes for the first round and 10 minutes for the second round.  <b>Councilman van Putten:</b> Begins debate on his request for the urgent meeting and the challenges faced trying to make this island council meeting possible.  <b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Made a statement of publications regarding statements made by Mr. van Putten.  <b>Councilman van Putten:</b> Stated he supports the ferry service and



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		<p>welcomes it despite his doubts with regards to the ferry routes.</p> <p><b>Councilman van Putten:</b> Following questions; When did exco realize that they weren't ready for the ferry service?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Exco stated in a release that Makana blue was not ready for the startup services on November 1<sup>st</sup>. Was there regular contact between the company and the government?</li><li>▪ Why did Exco wait until November 4<sup>th</sup> to inform the public that the services would not start on November 1<sup>st</sup> as was earlier announced?</li><li>▪ What is the current situation with regards to the negotiation between KMAR (immigration services) &amp; the customs department?</li><li>▪ What role did the kingdom representative RCN play today with the relevant ministries in the Hague to ensure that the startup of the ferry service would have taken place on November 1<sup>st</sup> as previously announced?</li><li>▪ What is Exco's position regarding the border control between Saba &amp; Statia considering we are part of the Dutch constitutional state and</li></ul>
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		<p>should not be subjected to any form of border control?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Are our local harbor authorities fully prepared and ready to handle the ferry service?</li><li>▪ Can the executive council fully commit itself to having the ferry service in operation for December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, without any further delay?</li><li>▪ It was announced previously that 20 million Euros would be made available for the operation of the ferry services at least for the coming 2 years. What provisions are made in terms of the financial durability offer for the first 2 years can we expect a further continuation of subsidies by the national government /ministry is from the local government of Sint Eustatius or can we expect an increase in the fares by the services provided?</li><li>▪ I would like to know if the fares that were published were agreed between the operators &amp; the government of Sint. Eustatius?</li><li>▪ What is the role of the Ministry of Kingdom relations in the ferry saga considering their coordinating role among the ministry in the Hague and the different problems</li></ul>
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		<p>we have encountered with KMAR(Immigration) &amp; Customs department?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What can the government of Statia explain with regards to its policy about future airlifts going and coming from Sint Eustatius?</li><li>▪ Was the awarding of the contract done fairly was the procedures done transparent yes, or no?</li><li>▪ Where can we find the list of criteria for the bidding process?</li><li>▪ Makana ferry won the bid. Did the said ferry bid meet the requirements?</li><li>▪ What is the long-term or short-term plan regarding the airlift to Sint Eustatius?</li><li>▪ I Would like a statement from the government seeing there were concerns in BES reporter feels it important for the company as well as the public to get some clarity.</li><li>▪ {It was reported by KMAR that the lack of personnel is not the issue when it comes to the ferry. KMAR also spoke about the issue of border control between Saba &amp; Statia. The borders are open from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm.</li><li>▪ I Would like to know what steps the government is willing to take to have this matter sorted out with the national government.</li></ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ At what time in the process was it made clear to the executive council that all measures to accommodate the ferry were not in place? Why was this not communicated to the public on a timely basis?</li><li>▪ Are there plans to build a ferry terminal on the location? If so, can you please inform us of the details? If not how will the passengers be protected from the elements of the weather?</li><li>▪ What additional measures have to be put in place before the ferry services can finally begin?</li><li>▪ Factor: It was rumored that the Makana ferry must have an engineer to operate can you provide clarity on this matter?</li><li>▪ Is the presence of an engineer on board the ferry a requirement if so, was this one of the bidding requirements?</li><li>▪ With all the ongoing discussion what guarantee do we have that the owner of the Makana Ferry service is still committed to this process?</li><li>▪ Because of the pandemic will passengers be subjected to the PCR &amp; antigen test. Will passage to &amp; from Sint Maarten be subject to mandatory</li></ul>
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		<p>quarantine? Especially from Statia to Sint Maarten.</p> <p><b>Councilman Merkman:</b> Apologizes for not being on time for the previous meeting, and said that he supports the ferry service in all facets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ I Want to know when the ferry services will begin?</li><li>▪ I Think that there are innovations that need to be researched to have a successful ferry service.</li><li>▪ Hopes the ferry services will start operating out of Sint Kitts seeing the close connection.</li><li>▪ Public service should be transport, not a luxury.</li></ul> <p><b>Council lady Leerdam:</b> Apologizes for arriving late for the previous meeting. Stated that her colleagues asked good questions with regards to sustainability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Are the ferry prices low because of our subsidies?</li><li>▪ How sustainable will this be after the subsidy?</li><li>▪ After two years, what is the plan of the Ministry? Will they do an evaluation &amp; see if they must continue with subsidizing?</li><li>▪ Is it confirmed that Makana will be stationed between the two islands? Or will it be stationed on a particular Island?</li></ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Have any vacancies been advertised already for the island that they can apply to be crew members?</li><li>▪ Is the route Statia /Saba/ St. Maarten and vice versa a good idea?</li></ul> <p><b>Councilman Sneek:</b> I was not in the meeting &amp; I'm not apologizing for not being present. I didn't attend because I did not see any new information that would be forthcoming from the agenda point.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ I questioned why the letter was confidential while it was already partly out in the media?</li><li>▪ I am skeptical about the ferry service. Part of it I do believe in I believe it's up to the madam chairlady with regards to the Sint Kitts route being added.</li><li>▪ We might need a ferry service with Saba &amp; Statia but I do not believe in the ferry service to Sint Maarten because of the time and stops that are being made.</li><li>▪ The reason why I am skeptical is that the idea was developed in the Hague &amp; not on our island, our island has not been included in the idea. I never saw underlining research or feasibility study that has been carried out that supports this idea of the</li></ul>
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		<p>ferry that is contrary to the airlift.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What is the sustainability of the ferry? Will it be the end after the two-year service?</li><li>▪ I do not think it will boost tourism (based on Knop's statement)</li><li>▪ I do not agree with a foreign company getting the job &amp; not a local joint from Saba &amp; Statia.</li><li>▪ I find that the harbor isn't ready when it comes to sanitary purposes &amp; also the departure and arrival terminal. I would like to know what kind of policy that is? that you have an airlift facility, and you start with ferry service.</li><li>▪ Heard the cry from Saba for BES connectivity.</li></ul> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Ferry services have been a long-awaited idea. A year and a half ago there was a real option and there was a subsidy that has been offered by the Dutch Federal Government. The task force has been working on this and I can understand the sentiments when is mentioned prolonged delay is. It is important to state in this meeting that we as the steering committee and the workgroup believe we were ambitious in setting the dates with a few areas that needed attention and were all aware of what those areas of attention are. With our eagerness to meet the date. It</p>
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		<p>would have been more ideal for us to set the date towards the end of December this year seeing the subsidy will end in December of 2023. This group was comprised of Saba &amp; Statia representatives. The decision of the ferry service was a unanimous decision of the two islands. It was a fair and open tender &amp; process and there were 7 companies involved. The criteria were checked.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> In this meeting hall on three (3) separate occasions. On one occasion it was placed on the agenda of the Central Committee &amp; you left the meeting councilman van Putten. It was on the agenda of November 4<sup>th</sup> of the Island Council so yes, the government commissioners have been forthcoming with information each time.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> The Border control issues; people question why the border control between the two islands. It has been like this for 11 years and none of us has questioned it, this does not mean we cannot question it now. We must look at the vulnerability of Saba &amp; Statia &amp; surrounding islands &amp; also those we do business with and our safety. I am happy that the question came so that it can also be taken up by the higher level of government in the Hague.</p> <p><b>Councilman Sneek:</b> Point of clarification: I questioned on numerous occasions in the island council and brought it up in the Hague &amp; IND.</p>
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		<p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Mr. van Putten the official publication you would have read on social media there was no blame on behalf of the government commissioners of Statia with regards to the operator &amp; if you can prove that I would like you to show it to us. Specifically, because of the sensitive nature and the ongoing discussions &amp; negotiations, we choose not to go into the public domain to place blame anywhere, because there are a few factors that still need to work towards in the find steps of realizing the ferry service.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> When did the steering committee realize they were not ready? There was a meeting of the steering committee approximately one week and a half ago and in that meeting determined one of the factors that played out in public relates to the KMAR, we have seen that is a much easier solution to be found with regards to the customs in the information that you have read the ongoing discussion on the level of the ministries we have at least 3 ministries on the table that are involved which are the BZK, INW &amp; EZK and all parties are committed to finding the solution especially regarding the situation surrounding the customs so that we can have a good start to our ferry service.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Company Makana: It was a fair and open tender process and there were 7 companies. The criteria for the</p>
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		<p>tender first proposal were checked on the exclusion criteria were checked. If they fulfill one of these criteria the candidate has excluded participation in the process. Important to note is that the candidate has a minimum of 2-year experience &amp; proven system capabilities regarding the operation of the ferry service. Legal financial, bankruptcy as being of the subject of insolvency would be a reason to exclude a company, breach of obligation relating to the payment of their taxes on social security contributions, being guilty of great professional misconduct, being guilty of fraud, laundering, or terrorism, the commitment of regularity within of article 12 council regulation.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> The company in question came to Statia over the weekend on an unofficial visit for shipping inspection. The shipping inspector said to us that all 13 certificates are in order. The ship registry, radio station, license, video safety briefing, captain licenses, boat master 1, VHF, security and basics, safety training, crew license, boat master 2 basic safety training, small craft vessel safety certificate and record of equipment, minimum safety manning document, captain and engineer crew medical fit certificate, the engineering license is expired but a dispensation of maximum 1 month is given, copy of the vessel safety management system, record of the conductive drills for familiarization and</p>
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		<p>training of all crew members. Fire in different places, man overboard, grounding flooding. Life craft service and certificates, fixed firefighting system, and portable fire extinguishers. Certificates that are not yet in order but are none critical and therefore do not hamper the start we concluded those in the information shared with you. That is also one of the things that are relevant for us to know to move forward.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Company status of affairs; behind the scenes everyone the steering committee the working committee and the three ministries mentioned are working diligently so that we can meet the requirements to ensure the startup of the ferry at the soonest time possible.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> You asked about the role of the Kingdom representative I cannot speak for anyone but on our part, there was no involvement of the kingdom representative.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> The local harbor authority is ready, and we are as ready as we can be as a small island. There will be evaluations of the ferry service. We will also evaluate how effective the schedule is.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Ferry 2 million dollars and the durability that was also one of the factors in the bidding process, you must have accompanied and after the process of the 2 years. This can give you the commitment that they have that type of operation that they can</p>
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		<p>continue with the service as they are involved in the startup process based on what I understand. I must say on the selection of the ferry the commissioner on Saba and myself decided deliberately not to be part of that discussion as higher-ups. We left that responsibility to the technical people which I explained previously to our commercial manager our policy advisor at ENI. On Saba, the director of tourism as well as a senior policy advisor of Saba supported by the consultant as well as other persons who were involved in looking at the offers that were made and to ensure that they met the criteria. One of the criteria was to be able to find a company that we believe based on the cash flow of the company viability and financial status of the company that the company will be able to carry this forward, again we are two years in front. My wish is that we can have a very successful ferry service for Sint Eustatius.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Talking about the continuation of the subsidy there is no discussion at this stage about a continuation of the subsidy. The subsidy now in question is a pilot for 2021 ending in 2023 at the end of December.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Can we expect an increase in the fares that's a question I cannot answer at the stage of being open. One of the important things is the affordability of ferry service between the islands. That was part of the negotiations with the operator. The fares were established. The</p>
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		<p>operator is an experienced operator. I hear some of the concerns about the operator not being the operator is from Anguilla and concerns where why not a Dutch company and when the information became more clear people discover that it was a company that has been doing business with Statia for the past 30 years.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> The situation regarding security and safety are responsibilities of the national government. Safety and security are covered among others under the customs and partly under immigration.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> You have expressed concerns if the local government may have had any hand in the delay that would be anything far from the truth because we are all excited it has been something that has been worked on in Statia.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Sint. Kitts proponent you are right the initial ferry pilot was indicating the 3 Dutch islands Saba Sint Maarten &amp; Sint Kitts due to my tourism in the years I recognized by councilman Sneek that Sint Kitts is a good route for Statia because of our close ties and family ties. I also believe Sint Kitts is a viable market once they are having fewer restrictions for traveling so right now for Sint. Kitts, we will have to halt any start-up there until they have fewer restrictions. We are entering into discussions with them as well.</p>
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		<p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> You are correct we do not have the facilities but not having the facilities is not a reason not to create an opportunity for Statia to have a ferry service. So, in preparation for the service, we came up with a makeshift situation where you see two (2) sturdy tents are placed in the harbor and the chairs that are in very good condition that we had formerly at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt, so the idea is that when visitors do come to Sint. Eustatius on the ferry we can accommodate as they await their turn to get clearance. You are correct councilman Merkman there are different ways you can do clearance it's a matter of between the agent the operator and the customs and KMAR. With regards to the toilet facilities in this Council, it was raised on several meetings where the fishermen complain of the shortage in facilities or when it came to water, electricity as well as the toilet facilities. In the meantime, we have set up water facilities for the fishermen, and the harbor authorities together with the commercial manager continue to work on the building of new toilet facilities in the harbor I have seen the drawings myself and they are being worked on as we speak. In the meantime, we will have to use the facilities at the fishery to accommodate the potential use of toilet facilities. I do not believe that should be a reason why we should not have a ferry service.</p>
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		<p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Council lady Leerdam you asked about the sustainability I believed I shared in the meeting here today that we have a two (2) year period which is to test the pilot and the viability of the pilot and in between to do the necessary evaluations to ensure the routes operating successfully and if it will become necessary to make any changes. The prices are indeed attractive, and I hope that Statians will make use of the ferry service and there are two (2) things that we can say I can go over what councilman Sneek have said that the airlift prices are almost \$240 \$260 and then you have an \$85 ferry for the coming two (2) years. We need to also look at the low-income earners, who are not able to afford a flight price under hardly any circumstances. The group of low-income earners deserves an alternative to travel. Your right travel is not a luxury, but it should be a necessity for all groups of our community.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> In the budget, it is allocated marketing funds. Marketing around the islands will be a small effort but the Makana assured in their offer that they have a link up with Expedia, Expedia will recreate the opportunity for bookings.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Statia will be its home port. One of the motives for the visit last weekend was also to look at the housing accommodation for its crew.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Vacancies; One of the questions raised was</p>
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		<p>how do we get a return on the investment we are making? The return is housing here, the ferry being stationed here, and the possibility to hire local people to be part of the process. The local authorities have no hand in the vacancies this is in the hands of Makana, but we specifically insist that we do believe it is important and necessary that Statians find employment opportunities.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Claudia will speak about two (2) things the new schedule and adjusted schedule. Councilman Sneek I will attempt to answer your question when it comes to skepticism, I can understand your position when you're a businessman and worked in tourism for several years. I am less skeptical because of all the explanations I have given. If we based it only on tourism, I could understand your skepticism, but we are not only looking at a ferry for tourism but for opportunities for Statia to travel in between the islands not only for tourism but also for people that may want to come for the weekend. Statements regarding Sint Kitts has a future. I believe we have concurred on that point. The Sint Maarten route through the process of evaluation we will have more information and that will be the test of time. You are correct anything that is linking on a long term through Saba for example would not make it attractive for everyone, but I do believe that is not the intention that it becomes a standard, there are</p>
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		<p>days it is necessary, but the part of the criteria is also that there is direct link Saba, Statia to Sint. Maarten and that is also possible in the ideal schedule.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> The cry for BES air connection is necessary, and I believe at this stage it needs more than sufficient attention.</p> <p><b>Dep. Gov. Commissioner:</b> I want to start with the question of where we can find the list of criteria. The proposals were evaluated and that was in July 2021 and September 2021 and there are four (4) way factors that were ferry vessel specifications of comfort speed and reliability that was 15 points the schedule was 15 points the pricing based on profit and loss statement were 30 points and the vision with sub-criteria were 40 points, the sub-criteria were operational expertise customer service, &amp; partnership understanding the travel potential and new markets and marketing requirements, transparency long term commitment and collaboration but also social-economic benefits to the public entity.</p> <p><b>Dep.Gov. Commissioner:</b> There were questions more about the sustainability details about that. 2 million in special allowance and in that special allowance it is stated that every 6 months a progress report must be delivered to the director of maritime business by the Ministry of INW. In this progress report, there is a description of the task and results</p>
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		<p>of the ferry services company, and based on this the ministry can look at the special allowance if the results are in order. So, every quarter the operator blue &amp; blue have to deliver a quarterly report of their financial and operational results and this is a discussion point in the steering group that we have. By approval, they get the subsidy for that quarter.</p> <p><b>Dep. Gov. Commissioner:</b> Then about the sustainability, I think there were questions from Mr. van Putten, Ms. Leerdam, Mr. Sneek, and Mr. Merkman. This PSO can be extended till the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2025. In May 2022 we will negotiate again with the ferry, but it is important if the Ministry will continue the subsidy based on the quarterly report. There is an option in the contract to extend but it is on the quarterly reports and results if we are going to extend and it's on the ministry if they will extend the subsidy.</p> <p><b>Dep. Gov. Commissioner:</b> Questions from Mr. van Putten about covid 19 situation what I can say about not only the covid 19 situation here but how it works, well for the ferry service to and from Saba and Sint Maarten the covid entry policy the most actual which is always on our website is fully applicable, so this applies that the same rules apply as for traveling with an airplane. You need to wear the facemask from begin of the boarding and disembarkation exception is for the outdoor deck when you are</p>
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		<p>allowed to sit without a facemask while maintaining social distancing and you to have the EHAS form. It will be checked on departure by the operator of the vessel they will not allow you to enter without a valid EHAS for your destinations. Vaccinated persons don't have measures to adhere to after travel but, non-vaccinated persons need to go into 10 days quarantine.</p> <p><b>Dep.Gov. Commissioner:</b> The statement question from councilman Sneek about shopping you can bring all the Christmas articles people traveling on the ferry are allowed 1 handbag and 1 suitcase 23 kilos for free and any additional will be charged. This same as the airlift Winair.</p> <p><b>Dep.Gov. Commissioner:</b> The scheduled minimum connectivity requirements were 2 same-day connectivity from Statia to Sint Maarten and also 2 same-day connections from Statia to Sint. Kitts and 2 same-day connections from Sint. Kitts to Statia. Connectivity with Saba I have taken notice of that today. We are taking note of those schedules.</p> <p><b>Dep.Gov. Commissioner:</b> Ms. Leerdam ask a question about the vacancies what is the effect of the labor on the island would like to add in the requirements of this PSO we said that is important that there is a social return so the ferry operator is obliged to spend a minimum of 6% of the fees to social return to Saba and Statia and social return aims to support the economic development of Statia</p>
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		<p>and Saba by hiring local staff contracting local services or providing social contribution within the communities of Statia.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Round two of this topic.</p> <p><b>Councilman Merkman:</b> Council lady Leerdam had already indicated with the fishermen was \$100 and you can go to Sint Kitts and whatever you're carrying you can take along but now I'm hearing they want to maintain the categories relating to airline and I am categorically against that. Because this puts a lot of pressure on the viability of the ferry service because this is one of the main reasons people will be using the ferry service to go to Sint Kitts or Sint Maarten. I want to touch on the maximum weight the maximum weight they are allowing is 50lbs which is whether you're going by sea is nothing. I would like to motivate the government commissioners to discuss with the company relating the company of 50lbs maximum weight. I also find that the toilet facilities at the fishermen are unacceptable because you already have the boardwalk using it and now the ferry. I would like the government commissioner to come with another alternative.</p> <p><b>Councilman Putten questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Can the community expect that the ferry service will begin on December 1<sup>st</sup>?</li></ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Why is it that the director of tourism of Statia is not a part of this committee?</li><li>▪ You said you had a task force steering how engaged are other stakeholders' councilmembers are complaining that there was no consultation with the council members, but other stakeholders in the community what was their involvement?</li><li>▪ I heard on the streets that persons who are not vaccinated would not be able to go on the ferry to Sint Maarten, Saba, or Sint. Kitts Is it so that persons who are not vaccinated will not be allowed to go on the ferry? I would like the government to clarify that.</li></ul> <p><b>Council lady Leerdam questions:</b> Was wondering if the boat can carry out such an ambitious schedule that was read by Ms. Toet between the three (3) islands when Sint Kitts is up and coming. Believes in working on the two connectivity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ I have a question about PSO I heard it can be extended until 2025. What is this extension based on? Is the subsidy still there what is extended until 2025 seeing that subsidy is now guaranteed for two years, I am not understanding the</li></ul>
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		<p>extension and who it is basically with. I have some serious concerns about those prices because everywhere you go in the world most of the time the ferry has the most expensive prices. Are these prices based on the subsidy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The \$85 is part of the determining factor of who would initially win the bid?</li><li>▪ Is the ferry services exempted from these harbor fees? If they are not what happens after the subsidy is no longer there?</li><li>▪ How sustainable are these fees after the 2-year subsidy? Is there a plan that the steering committee for continuous evaluation not only based on giving the money on the subsidy for the quarter but an evaluation as to these routes are good or not good?</li></ul> <p>Welcomes the services and just would like it to be sustainable.</p> <p><b>Councilman Sneek questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Who is subsidizing what? Is the national government subsidizing the ferry service or is the local government subsidizing the ferry service?</li><li>▪ Is the \$85 round trip valid for the one day only or is it</li></ul>
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		<p>valid when you go today &amp; come back next week?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Can we have the names of the 7 companies that have bid?</li><li>▪ One of my main concerns was that this is an idea from the Hague and not from Statia or Saba and there is no underlying research being done or feasibility study carried out?</li> <li>▪ I heard that the minister of INW has a PSO for airlift and wants to know if it's still on the table and I would like to have an answer for that.</li><li>▪ Is that in the agreement that during the term of the 2 years that they have to use this boat with the 150 max person capacity or will that size be reduced and they find out only 3 or 4 people a day are taking the boat to Sint Maarten? Why I am asking this is because I also think Ms. Leerdam bought that up to about seasickness.</li><li>▪ Can the island Council get a monthly report on the use of the ferry service so we can see how many parks monthly are used from Statia and the other islands?</li></ul> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> I will start by answering the questions of Mr. van Putten. Transparency: Transparency has been lacking and</p>
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		<p>I want to state here when you are at a certain level of negotiations there are some things you cannot just come into the public domain with, and you get the information as it comes in. A lot of the questions were operational we suggested it comes to a technical briefing of the central committee.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Your question is whether it was 2 million dollars or 2 million Euros it is 2 million Euros. You ask why the director of Statia tourism is not there I will explain to you how the structure is. We have a steering committee and in that steering committee you have my person, the commissioner on Saba, our commercial manager of transport, we have the policy advisor of Saba and consultant of Saba and there is a working committee. There is also the consultant, the policy advisor, and our commercial manager. When it comes to the director of tourism of Saba, she became involved. The person was recently appointed I believe in August or September and when it came to the decision making and the review of the bidding the director of Saba was involved. That group had diverse expertise. Statia bought 2 levels of expertise and Saba bought 2 levels of expertise and all 4 areas of expertise were relevant to the bidding process. The director of Statia is involved in what is called the marketing working group.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> The Covid situation will be a forever discussion Mr. van Putten you</p>
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		<p>raised a good question you know that we are in phase 3 of what we called the reopening of the road map for Statia. We went smoothly through phases 1,2,3 we are now at phase 3 we do recognize for all the already mentioned reason low vaccination level, limited medical capacity, a limited medical facility that we cannot go swiftly from phase 3 to 4, we will be sharing with the island council the strategic direction we feel we can take in gradually opening up but not jumping from 3 to 4 but in between 3 &amp; 4, creating a set up in staged that will give us time to gradually reopen in stage 3 and 4. It is already next week on the agenda for the meeting with you as island council members. We will take you along with the discussions and proposals that are on the table.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Leerdam, you are right the schedule is highly ambitious. It's a process we must go through so we can find out the best schedules to work for Statia. So, it's a pilot and with a pilot, you try to optimize all the different scenarios. There will be evaluation moments you cannot wait until the end of the 2 years to find out what is working and what is not working. So, every 3 months there is an evaluation to see how this ferry service is working for both islands.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> There was a question if the prices or based on the subsidy yes, the prices are based on the subsidy.</p>
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		<p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Your concern councilman Sneek &amp; Merkman about the luggage situation. Your message is clear and I'm almost sure the operators are listening along. It's a point we can discuss with him because I do understand wherein the prices must not be the prices that will mirror when there is a normal transport for the cargo vessel. It's a good point that you raise, and we will take it back to the steering committee.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Mr. van Putten the policy remains the same if you are non-vaccinated the policy is the same and the quarantine is part of our policy until we can do it differently and right now, we can't do any different.</p> <p><b>Councilman van Putten:</b> Point of clarification: I specifically ask if a person is not vaccinated if he or she will be able to use the boat. There is an antigen test. I say this because if you're talking about a person going into Sint Maarten, I think there should be some form of network. I see the point you want to protect the homeland; I am wondering if a person is going to Sint Maarten for a few hours, those who have the vaccine can catch the virus and bring it back. So, I'm wondering if they could not have been some form of flexibility in terms of making sure that a person takes the test coming back at least an antigen test. To me, this is a violation of human rights.</p>
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		<p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> I see non vaccinated people traveling daily on airplanes and nobody is stopping them, all over the world non vaccinated people are traveling. So, there would be no reason to prohibit non-vaccinated people from traveling on the ferry. The ferry is about doing business but of course, there will be guidelines. We will discuss with you as an island council the steps we know that we should safely take for Sint. Eustatius because it's also about safety and public health.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Ms. Leerdam your forward-thinking has already been built into the PSO. Yes, the boat will be subject to harbor fees.</p> <p><b>Councilman van Putten:</b> Point of clarification: madam speaker I am talking about harbor fees for the boat. You can eventually ask the public. When we go to Sint Maarten, we pay departure fees at the airport. Can we expect that might be something that could come up? That those using the ferry will have to pay the departure fee as well?</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> That's a good question councilman you know globally that's the trend that governments must find their way. However big or small to generate income for the use of its facility that is a normal expectation in any line of doing business and trying to transport of passengers between</p>
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		<p>different islands and or destinations.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Is there a plan to evaluate yes Ms. Leerdam we all want a sustainable ferry service. It is critically important that we always have those moments built-in for the evaluation.</p> <p><b>Councilman van Putten:</b> Point of clarification: I think the toilet issue is very cardinal. I would like the government to put the mobile toilets until something permanent can be put in place. I do not think the fishery is a good solution it is way too far from the city pier.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> There are two facilities on the vessel as well. I will have the harbor authority and commercial manager address your concerns.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> I am not able to answer your question councilman Sneek if the PSO for airlift is on the back burner. I wouldn't say it's on the back burner because we understand issues of airlift have the attention of the federal government and that we have an incoming parliament which I'm sure has their attention as well. But I won't say it's on the back burner.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> The 150 passengers you say based on the vessel. If my memory serves me correctly the Makana group said they have access to two smaller vessels so I believe at some point</p>
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		<p>they may need to bring the two smaller vessels here.</p> <p><b>Councilman Sneek:</b> point of clarification: in the agreement with Makana is it stated how many seats it needs to offer daily?</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Speaking of the statistics of the councilman Sneek I can't promise you monthly, but we will discuss with the ferry operator that we get the statistics at least quarterly because then is when we have the progress report. This is so that we can at least all have the same information, but I cannot sit here today and promise that to you monthly.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Mr. van Putten, but I believe the suggestion is good and I understand that the mobile facility that you saw in the harbor is also a backup plan for emergencies. Councilman Merkman &amp; van Putten we have the makeshift solutions and make this work for us until we have a more sustainable approach. They have assured me that these facilities are kept clean so that we make a good impression.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> The question about a ferry terminal there are plans ongoing for the renovations.</p> <p><b>Councilman Merkman:</b> Point of order; I was keenly listening to, the question that was asked and I did not get an answer if there was any agreement as to how many passengers they must transport.</p>
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		<p>Because we know that leads to when you cannot provide those passengers government has to put money into the bill. I would also like to know that, please.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> It is a very good question because always in these types of agreements I can say now sitting here this moment I would be blank on giving you an answer on that. I will ask while were here before the meeting closes if our commercial manager can give feedback on that because he is more intimately involved throughout the whole process. We will have that answered for you.</p> <p><b>Dep. Gov. Commissioner:</b> I will start with Councilman Sneek if it's a subsidy or special allowance. It is a special allowance, and the ministry gave the special allowance to the public entity, and based on the quarterly report we are just paying the ferry service. So that is how we organize it. Then the research was done about connectivity there was an expert group headed by Peter Hartman from the Netherlands and this expert researched to increase the connectivity especially in the area of an airlift. During this meeting, Saba and Statia were a topic and maritime connectivity could also be an alternative for the connectivity. Saba stated that they already have a ferry and that it was a success and that 50% of the passengers who visit Saba come with the boat so if it would be</p>
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		<p>more affordable and comfortable than a ferry service could also be an option. They expect via this that there will be more passengers via the sea, so that is the report from Peter Hartman.</p> <p><b>Councilman Sneek:</b> Point of clarification: That is my point exactly the report from Hartman is about air connectivity not about ferry service. The ferry from Saba is something different than the ferry from Statia and of course, I understand Saba point of view, but we are taking a long end in something more important for Saba than it is for Statia and that is a pity because for us air connectivity is more important than the sea connectivity. You used the Hartman report for it and I do not understand it because that is about air connectivity.</p> <p><b>Councilman van Putten:</b> The point that was brought forward by the colleague on the other side is also a concern that I share. I ask the question particularly, about the air connectivity I talked about the short-term medium-term, and long-term and as the colleague on the other side very well stated. Our situation was not addressed Because I know indeed, we had an edge, and we had a local boat there it worked well for them. I want to hear specifically from the government as to what plans. I want specifically for the government commissioners to address the airlift short-term long</p>
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		<p>term. It is a good thing that we call the meeting today this 2million Euro is an allowance. That is a new development.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> The discussions we are having about airlift are very important. This meeting is dealing with a ferry service we will come back to you on all those questions that you asked. Two things are very important, we discussed it here this morning, Statia deserves to have and an and there is a new dispute about that. We do know and we must be honest and open the issues we have with airlift are not issues of today they are very structural issues and not issues that you solve as a local government in 123 we know that. We saw that even in the pandemic there was a loan of I think of 3million and within less than a year. This required a much more detailed and structural and higher level of involvement with the issue with the airlift. This is not an issue that Statia Executive council or Island council can solve it requires that the 3 islands work together also with the ministry in the Netherlands. The commercial manager is working on how we can address the issue, we have other people on the committee we are working on this as well. The problems that Winair is having are not problems of yesterday or this pandemic these are structural problems that require a structural solution way beyond the capacity of any Saba or Statia. It is correct</p>
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		<p>that it will require the islands to work together collectively. The executive level as well as the level, of the island council I there say even at the level of the ministries, our commercial manager is having certain discussions there, but also if it needs to go to the parliament of the Dutch kingdom that is where it needs to go today. This requires a structural approach we are not going to solve it today in this island council. We are going to have a federal government soon where the issue of the public service operations can be picked up because we do believe that sustainable airlift is relevant and very important for our island.</p> <p><b>Councilman van Putten:</b> Point of order: Madam Speaker, yes, the focus today is on the ferry, but the ferry as the colleague on the other side said it is an issue, and holland looks for a short route in bringing a ferry service that is not benefitting us number one. Number 2 there was a report from Hartman KLM and then we found out that the former minister of transport had a report that was growing dust for a while and it was not important to her and then we talked about task neglect by the government was removed from task neglect, but when your government came in, they promise, because they have all the solutions and monies then it shouldn't be a problem. While agreeing that the technical level that you can have your transport director do certain things.</p>
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		<p><b>Dep. Gov. Commissioner:</b> The last question I have is that there are no agreements about the maximum of seats for the passengers.</p> <p><b>Councilman Sneek:</b> Point of clarification; The minimum or maximum?</p> <p><b>Dep. Gov. Commissioner.:</b> Maximum Capacity</p> <p><b>Councilman Sneek:</b> Point of clarification madam chair; so that means if I understand it well, we are sailing with a ship that can hold 150 passengers if they figure out they fill only 15 they are going to reduce it to a boat that only carries 15 capacity and you can't do anything about it. Is that what it means madam chair?</p> <p><b>Dep. Gov. Commissioner:</b> I am talking about the vessel specifications what was the requirement that there was a minimum of 50 seats that needs to be available. The Makana can carry 150 passengers that is what I am saying.</p> <p><b>Council lady Leerdam:</b> Point of clarification; basically, what you are saying is deputy commissioner is that they are subsidized for 150 seats not for the minimum of 50 seats, so, therefore, like councilman Sneek is saying for the pass next 3 to 4 months only 25 persons has been using the service this combination wise then they</p>
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		<p>will be paid for the 150 seats or will they be paid for the 50 seats. How is the lump sum every quarterly paid is it based on the minimum requirement seat or will it be subsidized for 150 seats. Listening to some of the comments it is very visible that the viability that the service will be struggling after its subsidy and what I meant when I said to evaluate which you said you're doing, I didn't mean like that I mean to start building your case as to why you need to maintain the subsidy. Because I am seeing different areas where you will have so many challenges and, in the end, you will say well hey after two years you will realize it's not viable because it was not being used as much. I would like to see that there is a report coming out saying well on the pilot project we realize on this scale, but on this scale, it is viable, and I want to maintain it on this scale. I do not want to hear after the 2 years that it was not viable based on XYZ and therefore it is stopped. Because personally hearing that the \$85 is based on subsidy and hearing they are not exempted from certain things after this subsidy is over I do not foresee anyone going on and paying these two prices because it's going to increase substantially and I guess we going come down in terms of size of the vessel, so maybe even the little extra we asking for to bring on for baggage will then not be an option because we are going to reduce in size and then it's going to just die a</p>
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		<p>natural death. I'm not saying you're not going to evaluate I'm saying we need to have an alternative coming out because we need to maintain the and an and the and not just one.</p> <p><b>Councilman van Putten:</b> Point of clarification; the point that my colleague made I think that it must be stressed, we cannot emphasize it enough. What are the condition and quality of the other boats have we seen them? If the boat size is reduced is the subsidy going down? Are we going to maintain the same amount that is very important?</p> <p><b>Councilman Sneek:</b> Point of clarification; a special allowance is not a subsidy. When Holland gives a special allowance to Statia, and I don't know how they share it if that is between Statia and Saba will each get half that's unclear maybe we can get an answer to that. With this setup holland the Hague got out of the PSO they are not part of it. PSO in the Netherlands is between the national government and the transport providers.</p> <p><b>Gov. Commissioner:</b> Those are some things we can research. The way this agreement is set up there are built-in moments for evaluation. Ms. Leerdam your concern are also ours and that's why there are moments it's an evaluation built-in every 3 months so that we will know the performance of the ferry service. In</p>
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		<p>the arrangement, we consider that. The agreement is based on the vessel that came here and has gone through the certification process as mentioned. The subsidy is based on the 50 persons and not the full size of the full vessel. Time will tell I believe firmly in this agreement the same as you do. Statia is pleased to for once have an opportunity that can be explored over some time to test its viability and if it fails which I hope it doesn't and all efforts will be made for it not to fail and I can assure you at the end of the day we will know what the outcome is, but again there is a built-in system that we can monitor the process and the progress there is marketing there is social return and investment and of course Statia will need to do a lot of marketing. I wish it well for Saba but also Statia and our community, and our tourism and hospitality sector.</p>
5.	Closing	The meeting closed at 1:25 pm

Adopted on .....2021.

The Deputy Registrar,

The Chairlady of the Island Council,

Mr. E.Jami

Ms. M.A.U Francis