



## Harsen's Island St. Clair Flats Association

### Minutes February 13, 2021

**Directors Present:** Craig Baloga, Lucy Burby, George Covalle, Steve Gartland, Jim Laethem, Steve Lawrence, Margaret Marchwinski, Melanie Most, Jane Mount, Harold Stieber, Dennis Szymanski, Jerry Thiel, Leonard Verlinden, Lois Whipple;

**Excused:** Deborah Addy, Susan Bryson, Jerry Freeman, Donna Halacoglu, David Martin, Kathy O'Connor, Rosemary Wiczorek, Terry Wiggins;

**Guests and Members Present:** Harold Bain, Lorraine Bain, Patty Bain, Mike Balan, Kathleen Bryant, Artie Bryson, Barbara Crown, Kurt Marchwinski, George Rose, Linda Schoonover, Joanne Shirkey, Whitey Simon, Mark Verschaeve.

Craig Baloga brought the meeting to order at the Harsen's Island Lions Hall at 9:29 am with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The January 2021 meeting minutes were presented. **Jerry Thiel made the motion to approve the January 2021 meeting minutes, Lois Whipple seconded to approve; all in favor, motion carried, minutes to be placed on file.**

#### **Executive Committee Reports**

**Treasurer Report:** Harold Stieber presented the January 2021 Treasurer's Reports. Harold reported that the balance in the checkbook for January 31, 2021 was \$20,677.84, with total cash on hand being \$87,582.83. Harold went over the unusual one-time expenses for this month regarding upkeep and maintenance on the Association's assets. Additionally, due to the unusually slow mail service and utility bills being submitted late, Harold is going to switch over to automatic payments of utilities as opposed to paying them manually each month. Full copies of the monthly Treasurer's Report are available by contacting Harold at [HaroldS@hiscfa.org](mailto:HaroldS@hiscfa.org).

**Lois Whipple made the motion to approve the January 2021 treasurer's reports, Jerry Thiel seconded to approve; all in favor, motion carried, reports to be placed on file.**

**Secretary Report:** There was nothing to report this month.

**Communications:** The Association received an email from Cindy Babisz about possible dates for Music in the Park to be held at Browne's Field this summer. Additionally, there was an email from Jill Larder in Lansing that illustrated a breakdown of ferry rates around the state of Michigan. An email was also received from Clay Township Supervisor Artie Bryson regarding information from the Harsen's Island Transportation Authority and Senator Lauwers in Lansing.

**Browne's Field:** Dennis Szymanski mentioned that one leg of the power coming from the pavilion into the pole barn is dead, and keys are required to get into the junction box / breaker box in order to assess the issue. This may be the root of the issue where power is not working correctly on another side of the pavilion as well. Craig Baloga and Jim



Laethem indicated that there are keys existing that should be available. Craig indicated that he, Dennis, and Jim can meet up at the field at a later date to sort it out.

The pond is currently at the lowest point of where it's going to be, but there's still approximately 12-18" of water in the culvert. The water needs to level out before any further work can proceed. Ultimately the water needs to drop approximately 2.5' before the system can function properly for water to flow out to the North Channel. The pipe for water below / behind the water station is noted on the plans for the property, but the exact location of it is not. With all of the work that has been going on in that area, it will be difficult and time-consuming to locate anything since hand-digging will be required.

**Government Affairs:** Lois Whipple has been following the COVID-19 situation with the St. Clair County Health Department. She mentioned that the county has been working to get more stations set up to administer the vaccine, but they are not getting enough vaccines to keep up with requests for the applicable groups to be rolled out in phases. It is possible for anyone to go to the health department's website to request the vaccine. Please visit the website for additional information: [http://stclaircounty.org/Offices/health/COVID-19\\_Vaccine.aspx](http://stclaircounty.org/Offices/health/COVID-19_Vaccine.aspx).

Lois also mentioned an article from the International Joint Commission about invasive species and the role of climate change. More information on that topic can be found here: <https://ijc.org/en/invasive-species-will-be-winners-and-losers-under-climate-change>.

There is legislation that is being re-introduced regarding dock inspections for transportation services like ferries.

There was a news article published that explains it in some detail which can be found here:

<https://www.clickondetroit.com/news/local/2021/02/10/new-michigan-legislation-would-reinforce-accountability-of-private-dock-owners/>.

**Guest Speaker, Clay Township Supervisor Artie Bryson:** Supervisor Bryson mentioned the Senate Bills that were just introduced concerning inspection of docks (as mentioned in the news article discussed earlier in this meeting). He mentioned that [Senate Bill 0123 \(2021\)](#) was so new that there was no "white paper" about it yet, but it seems more of an environmental concern as opposed to a structural inspection. Regarding the recent ice jam, there was a fluctuation of more than 2.5 feet in the water levels, and right now we're about 2-3 inches lower than what we were before the jam. The water level did spike to an all-time record high for this time of year. There were serious concerns at the wastewater treatment facility, but ultimately wastewater did not need to be let go into the river. There were 4 or 5 roads in Algonac under water during the jam and at least one home experienced water inside of it. There were some wet garages in Clay Township but Supervisor Bryson stated that he was not aware of any houses that got water inside. There were three streets that needed to be closed due to localized flooding. There was a dam near the state park, and one further up north near Marine City. The Coast Guard has been working to free the jam every day and seems to be clearing out now.

Supervisor Bryson mentioned that the design/engineering of the new kayak launch/park on Harsen's Island near the Schoolhouse Grille is underway. He is also looking at putting an archery range within the park if possible. He discovered a well-funded grant that the Township may pursue for this project. The grant may cover up to 75% of costs to construct the archery range if successfully obtained. As for the water plan, the computer systems that monitor the whole water plant is about 25 years old and was recently replaced and fully functional as of about two weeks ago. Additionally, there's a permit in the works for a Drinking Water Asset Management Grant which looks for lead in the lines. The Township would be getting \$830,000 for that if fully funded. Regarding COVID-19, the county has a new way to get in line for the vaccine. If anyone needs a new recycle bin, you can stop by the Township Office and get a new one.



Barbara Crown asked Supervisor Bryson whether there would be any transportation available for Islanders when a jam occurs and the ferry can't run. Supervisor Bryson reiterated that residents are not permitted to ride on the fire airboat, and that any transportation would need to be done with private transportation (e.g. private airboat). The only person who has done it in the past is currently out of state and won't be available immediately if the need/demand arises. Additionally, to use the personal airboat it costs around \$200/day for the rider on the insurance plus \$150/hour to operate the airboat. Previously, the HISCFA contributed gear (life jackets, etc.) and also contributed to the cost of fuel to support the endeavor. Craig Baloga volunteered to reach out to Bob Bryson to see whether he would be interested in supporting this community need again.

Supervisor Bryson also mentioned an opportunity to obtain a well-funded port security grant that would pay for a Coast Guard-certified large airboat that could traverse the ice in the area for the purpose of transporting passengers. Only non-profit organizations are allowed to apply for this type of grant. It would be possible for an organization such as HITA to take this on to apply for the grant since they seem to meet the application criteria. However, once obtained, the airboat would need to be insured, stored, maintained, and a licensed captain is required. It is also possible that HITA could come to a narrow agreement with the ferry that in the event the ferry is shut down, the ferry could utilize one of their captains to run the airboat back and forth and possibly put it under the ferry's insurance umbrella and operate it that way. This was previously discussed with Champions Auto Ferry and they were actually very receptive to doing something like this. Due to timing (being so late in the season), this would not be possible this year, but perhaps it may be possible for next year if taken on in a timely manner.

**Guest Speaker, Clay Township Fire Chief George Rose:** Chief Rose stated that the septic tank for the Island Fire Station was finally installed. The CTFD will be starting their training program with Lexipol Rescue 1 in February. Alumatech started building the new airboat; the hull is completed and they are putting the polymer bottom on it now. They should be done with the boat by the end of March or first part of April. The Island Fire Station is currently staffed 26 out of 28 days in February this year. There have been two grants submitted – one for portable radios (regional grant with CTFD, Ira Township, and Marine City), and one for new, upgraded AEDs. These grants will be determined in August. When the ferry shuts down, there are 2 firefighters and one medic from Tri-Hospital EMS who are staffing the Island Fire Station during the shutdown period. There is also life-flight available on standby with the Coast Guard, the Michigan State Police, and also Medstar Ambulance is on standby for a life-flight situation, all with their own helicopters. In the event of an emergency requiring a helicopter-evacuation, call 911 and the operator will determine the next critical steps. The tone will go out; the persons at the Island station will respond, and the fire airboat from the mainland will also respond. Helicopters are able to land at Browne's Field, on any highway, at the turnaround (near The Old Club), and the South Channel Yacht Club.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- *Browne's Field Restrooms / Fundraiser:* George Covalle stated that earlier this year the HISCFA asked Bob Williams to come up with a preliminary set of drawings, which he did at no cost to the HISCFA. He recently completed the drawings and George shared them with the group. In lieu of paying Bob personally for his work, Bob asked for a donation to the Harsen's Island Historical Society. **Jerry Thiel made a motion to donate \$500 to the Harsen's Island Historical Society; Dennis Szymanski seconded. All in favor; motion carried.** The next step is to get bids from contractors who could complete the job. George asked Dennis Szymanski for his input to get a rough idea of the possible cost for such a project so there can be a fundraising goal put in place to adequately collect the funding.
- *Annual Membership Letter:* Barbara Crown stated that the letter is now complete and with the printer for design. The application will be redesigned as well. We expect to see a proof of the letter this week. This



letter will need to be mailed out no later than March 1, 2021 so the proofread copy will need to be ready a few days before then. The printer will handle the mailing this year which will be much more efficient for the HISCFA.

- *Advertisers Letter:* A group of directors are meeting offline to stuff envelopes today. The next meeting for The Delta News will occur on March 17, 2021 to keep things moving on this large project.
- *Water Station:* Harold Stieber mentioned that he has been in contact with Todd Brady about the charges that will be incurred for updating the technology available at the station. George Covalle put a coat of primer on the walls inside the water station. Craig Baloga mentioned that one of the lights is no longer working, and he obtained a new fixture to replace it. George Covalle got a quotation for \$400 from Flats Epoxy to refinish the floor in the water station (grind down the floor and apply epoxy). There was already a motion in the October 2020 meeting to include repairs of this nature.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- *Executive Secretary Replacement:* This position is still open as a result of Neva Covalle's resignation in November 2020, and needs to be filled as soon as possible in order for the training with Wild Apricot to take place. Craig Baloga suggested that he would reach out to a new director to see whether they would be interested in taking on this position, but unfortunately that person is not able to commit to the position at this time. Barbara indicated that she (herself) is keeping up with the membership list in the meantime until an Executive Secretary can be named.
- *Committee Membership and Nominations:* Craig Baloga stated that we need to gain traction on committee involvement with some of the new directors and perhaps even change up the current committee rosters. This might help garner fresh objectives and fresh ideas. Craig asked Barbara Crown how this should occur, and Barbara suggested sending out the list to the directors to raise awareness of this need and request volunteers. You do not need to be a director (or even a member) to volunteer for a committee.
- *Asian Carp Update:* Later this year, a new name will be revealed as a way of rebranding the Asian carp such that it will seem more palatable-sounding, since it is possible to eat the fish. This may also be a sustainable way to help control the population. More information on this topic can be found in this article: <https://www.foodandwine.com/news/asian-carp-seafood-new-name>

Additional comments from directors or guests:

- ✓ Kathy Harrison mentioned that the defibrillator in St. Paul's Church needs a new battery and asked how it could be replaced. Chief Rose stated that someone from the CTFD changed the battery last year, but he would have someone come by and change it again and make sure it still works properly.
- ✓ Dennis Szymanski presented a donation to the HISCFA from the Harsen's Island Lions for \$1,000 to help build the fund for permanent restrooms at Browne's Field.
- ✓ Dennis Szymanski asked Jerry Thiel whether the Car Show will take place this year. Jerry mentioned he is not able to go to businesses/sponsors for donations or items due to the pandemic situation. Due to the reputation that has been built up in the past, it would be difficult to execute the car show to the same level of excitement as years past. Dennis suggested that perhaps people would just be interested in doing it, even if it was reduced. Jerry mentioned that normally at this time of the year (planning for a July show), he's already done most of the work to support this event. If there are several volunteers, this can still be executed, but it won't be nearly as profitable as years past. Steve Lawrence suggested opening it up beyond cars to include perhaps antique tractors, boats on trailers, motorcycles, etc. Jerry stated that this may be his



last car show, since he is looking to pass the torch for someone else to handle going forward. Supervisor Bryson mentioned it might be worthwhile to coordinate Music in the Park to *begin* around the *end* of the car show for the day, and that might help gain interest in attendance/participation. Craig Baloga stated that he's going to arrange a meeting for any volunteers interested in seeing the car show happen this year.

- ✓ Harold Stieber mentioned that Todd Brady (and his company) has been subsidizing the cost of maintaining the HISCFA website and email support. Todd is no longer willing to subsidize those associated costs so the Association will need to foot the bill going forward. There will be a conversion cost for the server (one time cost of \$42.50 per email address) then \$6/month per email address. There's currently 10 email addresses for the organization but there was discussion to reduce the number of email addresses available. President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Executive Secretary, **Dennis Szymanski made a motion to incorporate up to 8 email addresses with the hiscfa.org domain; Jerry Thiel seconded. All in favor; motion carried.**
- ✓ Harold Stieber mentioned that Jane Mount requested to be placed into a grant-writing role for the HISCFA, but there has been a challenge in finding sources for potential grants. Harold reached out to the Great Lakes Islands Alliance (GLIA) to find some sources for potential grants. Jane mentioned that non-profits seem to be the backbone of this Island, and she will get with Supervisor Bryson about potential grants since he seems to be knowledgeable about sources for grants.
- ✓ Harold Stieber addressed the issue with trash around the Island. Supervisor Bryson stated that he looked into buying large community bins but it wasn't cost-effective at the time. There is another source to obtain a less-costly wire/mesh container with lid that is collapsible for less than \$120. This is a potential option for the HISCFA to provide the source of the container, but the purchaser(s) will be responsible for obtaining it.
- ✓ George Covalle received a letter from the Community Foundation that mentioned that their main pool gross investment for the fourth quarter was 11.28% return, which brings our one-year-to-date return of 12.45 percent. Harold Stieber mentioned that the HISCFA's \$60,000 investment is now worth \$66,904.99 at the end of January 2021.

Next meeting will be Saturday, March 13, 2021 at **9:30 am** at the Harsen's Island Lions Hall.

**Jerry Thiel made the motion to adjourn; Lois Whipple seconded. All in favor; meeting adjourned at 11:04 am.**

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Most, Recording Secretary

[MelanieM@hiscfa.org](mailto:MelanieM@hiscfa.org)



## APPENDIX

Fire Department Incident Reports for Harsen's Island (January 2021)

Excerpt of Updated Plans for Permanent Restrooms at Browne's Field

Table of Ferry Rates throughout Michigan and Surrounding Waterways



# Clay Township Fire & EMS

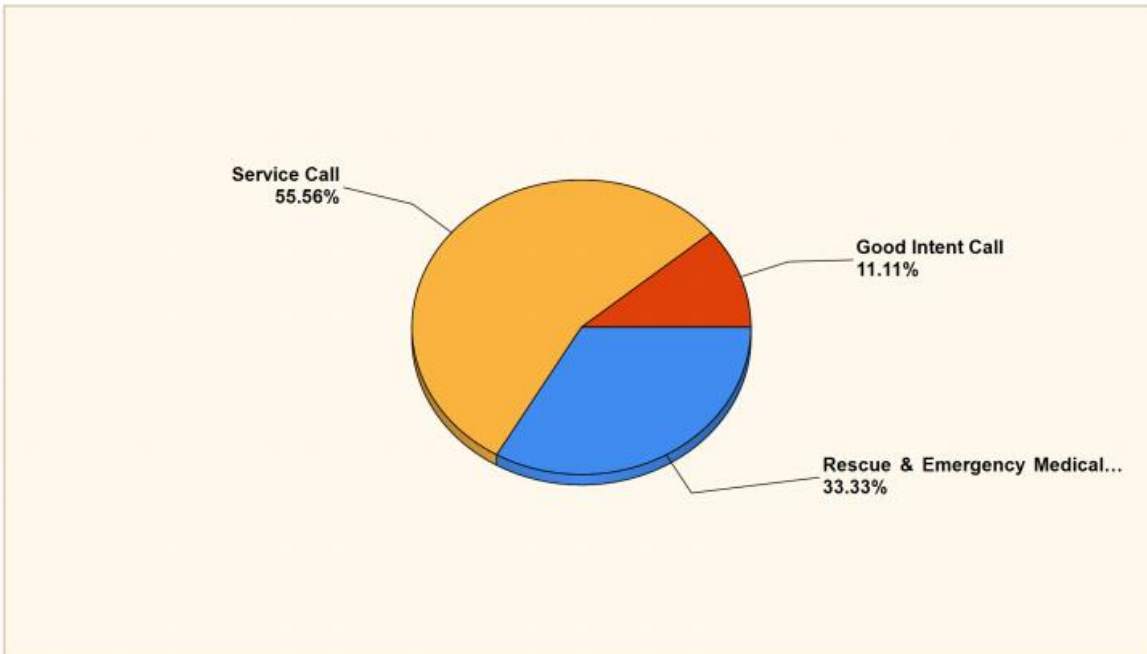
Clay Township, MI

This report was generated on 2/10/2021 10:58:21 AM



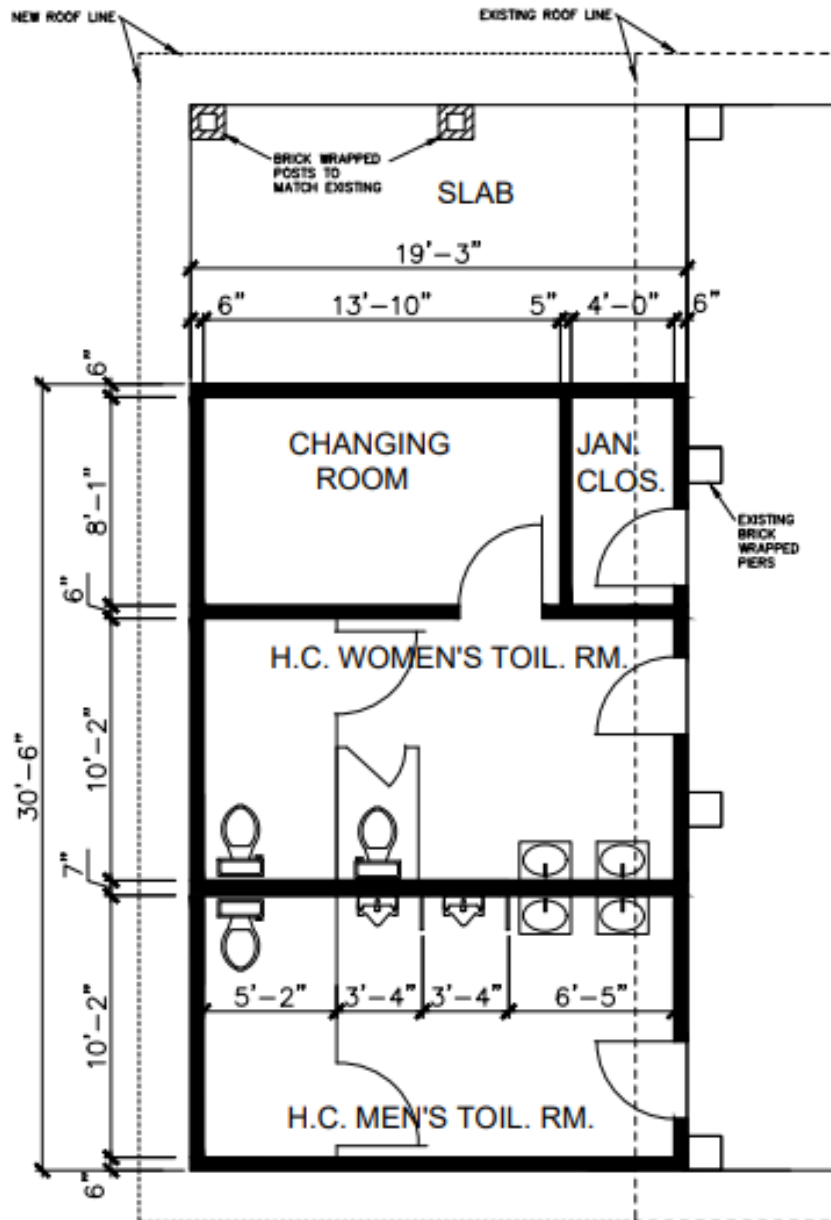
## Breakdown by Major Incident Types for Date Range

Zone(s): 3 - HARSENS ISLAND | Start Date: 01/01/2021 | End Date: 01/31/2021



MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	3	33.33%
Service Call	5	55.56%
Good Intent Call	1	11.11%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>

Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type		
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	1	11.11%
321 - EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	2	22.22%
500 - Service Call, other	2	22.22%
571 - Cover assignment, standby, moveup	3	33.33%
611 - Dispatched & cancelled en route	1	11.11%
<b>TOTAL INCIDENTS:</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>



FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"





## Ferries and Rates- State of Michigan

[http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9618\\_11010-66507--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,4616,7-151-9618_11010-66507--,00.html)

Location	Company	Routes	Rates (General, may vary)	Website Link	Run times
Detroit River	Detroit-Windsor Truck Ferry, Inc.	Detroit, Michigan to Windsor, Ontario	\$30.00 - 125.00 (For Standard Commercial Vehicle)	<a href="http://www.truckferry.com/">http://www.truckferry.com/</a>	Every 2 hours between 7am and 4pm
Lake Charlevoix	Charlevoix County Transportation Authority	Charlevoix, Michigan - Across South Arm of Lake Charlevoix	\$3.00 (For Adults)	<a href="https://www.charlevoixcounty.org/ironton_ferry/index.php">https://www.charlevoixcounty.org/ironton_ferry/index.php</a>	A couple times a day, April thru Thanksgiving
Lake Huron	Arnold Transit Company	Mackinaw City, MI to Mackinac Island; St. Ignace, MI to Mackinac Island	\$29.00 (For Adults, Round Trip)	<a href="http://www.arnoldline.com">http://www.arnoldline.com</a>	6 Times a day and every Half hour Memorial Day - Labor Day
	Plaunt Transportation Company	Cheboygan, MI to Bois Blanc Island	\$19.00 (For Adults, Round Trip)	<a href="https://plaunttransportation.com/">https://plaunttransportation.com/</a>	3x to 6x per day depending on time of year
	Shepler's Mackinac Island Ferry	Mackinaw City, MI to Mackinac Island; St. Ignace, MI to Mackinac Island	\$27.00 (For Adults, Round Trip)	<a href="http://www.sheplersferry.com/">http://www.sheplersferry.com/</a>	April thru October every Hour
	Star Line Mackinac Island Ferry	Mackinaw City, MI to Mackinac Island; St. Ignace, MI to Mackinac Island	\$29.00 (For Adults, Round Trip)	<a href="http://www.mackinacferry.com/">http://www.mackinacferry.com/</a>	April thru October every Hour
Lake Michigan	Beaver Island Boat Company	Charlevoix, MI to Beaver Island	\$27.50-\$32.50/adult \$100-\$115/car passengers separate	<a href="http://www.beaverislandboatcompany.com/">http://www.beaverislandboatcompany.com/</a>	One time a day MWF October thru Dec. Closed Jan-April 14. 1 to 4 times a day depending on the day May-Labor Day
	Lake Express	Muskegon, MI to Milwaukee, WI	\$165.00 (For Adults, Round Trip)/ \$202 - car round trip	<a href="http://www.lake-express.com/">http://www.lake-express.com/</a>	2 times a day May thru October
	Lake Michigan Carferry Service, Inc.	Ludington, MI to Mantowoc, WI	\$111.00 (For Adults, Round Trip)		
	Manitou Island Transit	Leland, MI to Manitou Islands	\$42.00/Adult	<a href="http://www.leelanau.com/manitou/">http://www.leelanau.com/manitou/</a>	Day trip on select days May- June 14. Day trip every Day Thru Labor Day
Lake Superior	Grand Island Ferry Service	Munising, MI to Grand Island	\$20.00/adult	<a href="http://www.grandislandmi.com/transportation.html">http://www.grandislandmi.com/transportation.html</a>	9am to 6pm June 19th- Sept 13th/ 3 Trips a day Sept 14-Oct 12
	Isle Royale Ferry Service, Inc.	Copper Harbor, MI to Rock Harbor	\$150.00 (For Adults, Round Trip)	<a href="http://www.isleroyale.com/">http://www.isleroyale.com/</a>	2 Trips- May 14-June 4 & Sept 10 -Oct 1/ 6-7 Trips - June 7-Sept 6
St. Clair River	Blue Water Ferry, Ltd.	Marine City, MI to Sombra, Ontario	\$3.00 (For Adults, Round Trip)	<a href="http://www.bluewaterferry.com/">http://www.bluewaterferry.com/</a>	
	Champion Auto Ferry	Algonac, MI to Harsens Island	12.00/car, Round trip, passengers included	<a href="http://hiferry.com">hiferry.com</a>	4:30am to Midnight- Every 15 min/ Midnight to 4:30am Every 30 min, Year Round Weather Permitting
	Walpole-Algonac Ferry Line, Ltd.	Algonac, MI to Walpole Island	\$8.00/car One way	<a href="http://www.walpolealgonacferry.com/">http://www.walpolealgonacferry.com/</a>	Every 15-20 Min Year Round Weather Permitting
St. Mary's River	Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority	Saulte Ste. Marie, MI to Sugar Island; Detour Village, MI to Drummond Island; Barbeau, MI to Neebish Island	\$20.00 (per car, Round Trip)	<a href="http://www.eupta.net/">http://www.eupta.net/</a>	This authority operates 3 different Ferries- Once an hour- weather permitting