

Lynn fighting to keep ferry afloat



BY THOR JOURGENSEN

LYNN — The Blossom Street commuter ferry to Boston is, at present, an uncertainty, with state and city officials scrambling to find money to pay for the water shuttle to operate for a third warm weather season.

“At this point there is no season because there is no money,” state Transportation Secretary **Stephanie Pollack** said Thursday.

State Sen. Thomas M. McGee and **state Rep. Brendan Crighton** are trying to find money to launch the ferry service in the spring, and Crighton said **about \$750,000 will be needed** to pay for the ferry operation this year.

“We’re working hard on it. The clock’s ticking,” Crighton said.

Pollack addressed about **50 Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce members** at the **Porthole Restaurant** Thursday, talking to them about **a potential 6 percent to 9 percent Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority** fare hike, and future projects, including upgraded maintenance in the Market Street commuter garage.

Pollack spoke bluntly when she compared the \$40 per ride state subsidy for the Lynn ferry with a \$13 per ride subsidy for MBTA late-night service, which was eliminated this week. The state subsidized the Lynn ferry’s operation costs in spring and summer 2014 and 2015, with **Boston Harbor Cruises** providing the boat.

In their bid to sustain ferry funding, McGee, Crighton and city officials point to increased ridership from one season to the next and the increased need for ferry service to serve Boston’s waterfront. “It will benefit not only our economy, but the regional economy,” McGee said.

Pollack said **the state will help city officials attempt to secure federal money to buy a ferry**. The boats **cost between \$4 million and \$5 million**.

The **Lynn Economic Advancement and Development** team is **also working to find money** to pay for another ferry season, said **city Economic Development and Industrial Corporation Director James Cowdell**. Formed last November, LEAD brings federal, state and city officials together to work on priority local development opportunities.

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