

logo not found or type unknown

## New Time For Ferry Service's Final Trip Between Cruz Bay and Red Hook Starts December 20

Education / **Published On December 16, 2021 07:04 AM /**

Linda Straker **December 16, 2021**

Image not found or type unknown



### Varlack Ferry service between Cruz Bay and Red Hook

The ferry services between Cruz Bay and Red Hook will be returning to full schedule as of December 20, but instead of closing off the service at 12:00 midnight from Red Hook, it will be at 11:30 p.m. nightly.

The decision to resume the last service 30 minutes earlier instead of returning to its traditional midnight cutoff was made during the Public Services Commission's regular meeting on Wednesday. It was not an order from the Commission, but an agreement decided on after much discussion among the board members and representatives from the ferry services.

“Under normal circumstances, even without the effects of Covid-19, ridership on the 11:00 p.m. from St. John to Red Hook carried little to no one,” said Delrise Varlack of Varlack Ventures who proposed the new schedule for consideration.

Kenrick Augustus Sr. had initially suggested that two weeks be granted for the management of the ferry to put the logistics in place to resume the service which was interrupted by Covid-19 regulations.

However, David Hughes, chairman of the Public Services Commission felt that was too much time and instead recommended that the service resume five days before Christmas Day. “Today is the 15th, I would like to see the schedule resume by Monday 20th and I don’t really think there is much of an argument against that because it isn’t much of a change,” he said after learning that currently the final trip for the night is at 11:00 p.m.

Commissioner Andrew Rutnik endorsed the decision. “I am supporting anything that can get us back to normalcy with their regulated runs,” he said while pointing out that the late run will accommodate hotel/hospitality and other workers as well as visitors who want to entertain themselves late.

“I am very comfortable with that plan,” he said while reminding the board that the territory is currently experiencing an increase of visitors despite the ongoing Covid-19 public health pandemic, and the two territories are heavily dependent on the tourism industry.

“The tourism season is returning, and people will be dining late,” said Rutnik, while Hughes added, “We certainly want the hospitality industry to be accommodated.” A high percentage of the workers on St. John and St. Thomas use the ferry services to transport themselves to and from their places of employment and home.

The full schedule is every hour on the hour and the last departure from St. John will be at 11:00 p.m. while the last departure from Red Hook will be at 11:30 p.m. The management of the ferries had already resumed the Charlotte Amalie service on November 13.

Traveling by ferry is an integral part of life in the territories and visitors who arrive by plane land in St. Thomas and therefore must ride the ferry to complete their trip to St. John.