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# T names operator for ferry to Boston, Quincy, Hull

By Matt Rocheleau and Jarret Bencks | GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS MAY 24, 2013

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For the first time in more than a decade, a new company will operate the MBTA's commuter ferry service between Boston and Quincy and Hull, officials said.

On Wednesday, the state Transportation Department board awarded Nolan Associates LLC, doing business as Boston Harbor Cruises, a three-year, nine-month contract for submitting the lowest bid of \$15,793,105, MBTA spokesman Joe Pesaturo said. The contract begins July 1.

The current holder of the contract, Water Transportation Alternatives Inc., doing business as Boston's Best Cruises, lost out after submitting a bid that was \$793,444 higher, Pesaturo said. The company has held the

contract with a subsidy since 2002, when the service became MBTA-owned, he said.

The Boston's Best Cruises site says the firm has operated the ferry routes since 1996.

At the state Transportation Department board meeting Wednesday, William Walker, owner of Boston's Best Cruises, said he wanted more details about the process the state took in awarding the new contract.

He also expressed concern that the contract change would lead to layoffs and that there would not be enough time for the new contract holder to make a smooth transition.

"Boston Harbor Cruises expects to work closely with the MBTA over the coming weeks to ensure a smooth transition for our passengers and the communities we serve," Sheila Green, a spokeswoman for the company, said in an e-mail.

"BHC is fortunate to have a diverse and talented pool of marine professionals who will be instrumental in implementing a smooth and efficient transition. We are confident that we have sufficient time to successfully assume the service."

She said the company will hire additional workers to run the F2 and F2H routes.

The contract is for two of the MBTA's four commuter ferry routes, the F2 and F2H. The F2, also known as Harbor Express, runs between Quincy and Boston via Logan Airport. Trips serving Hull are designated F2H. Ridership on the F2 and F2H routes was 284,937 in fiscal 2009, according to the most-recent available T statistics.

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