

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority (“Authority”) was held via Zoom on Wednesday, February 3, 2021.

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 A.M. by Chair, Stephen C. Waluk.

Members Present:

Stephen C. Waluk, Chair
Darrell Waldron
Peter Alviti, Jr. P.E., Ex Officio
R. David Cruise

Members Absent:

Judith M. Morse, Vice Chair

Invited Guests:

Lori Caron Silveira, Executive Director
Eric Seabury, P.E., Director of Engineering
Kathryn O’Connor, Director of Tolling and Operations
Kathryn Coleman, Manager of Tolling and Operations
Jeff Goulart, Chief Financial Officer
Toni Gubata, Controller
Stephen Cahill, Manager of Safety and Security
Remmy Villacis, Network Technician
Bill O’Gara, Legal Counsel
Bianca Costantino, Account Executive, RDW

Item No. 2

Public Comment – There were no public comments.

Item No. 3

Motion by R. David Cruise, seconded by Darrell Waldron, passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2021 Board meeting.

Item No. 4

Motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by R. David Cruise, passed unanimously to approve Pannone Lopes Devereaux & O’Gara LLC, invoices for professional services dated January 2021 in the amount of \$24,985.77.

Item No. 5

Motion by R. David Cruise, seconded by Darrell Waldron, passed unanimously to approve two task orders from ATANE under Contract 19-10 (On-Call Professional Engineering Inspection Services): 1) Routine Inspection of the Jamestown-Verrazzano Bridge and the Hummocks Avenue Bridge at a cost not to exceed \$650,559.96 and 2) Underwater Inspection of the Jamestown Verrazzano Bridge at a cost not to exceed \$390,580.15.

Item No. 6

Motion by R. David Cruise, seconded by Darrell Waldron, passed unanimously to approve a task order from Michael Baker International under Contract 19-10 (On-Call Professional Engineering Inspection Services) to perform the load ratings for six bridges in Jamestown: North Main Road Eastbound and Westbound (2 separate bridges) and Wildlife Passages I, II, III, and IV (4 separate arch bridges) at a cost not to exceed \$183,878.10.

Director of Engineering – Capital Projects – Status Report: Mr. Seabury indicated we have a total of just over 42 million in active contracts. A summary of the status of each contract was included in the Board packet. In referencing the Mount Hope and Sakonnet Miscellaneous Steel Repairs contract, which also involves paint work at Mount Hope, Mr. Seabury highlighted the fact that the contract incorporates the use of fiber reinforced polymer (FRP) products at Mount Hope for the safety walk, catwalks, and the north side shore stairs, and at Sakonnet for access to the tub girders. Mr. Seabury indicated that the FRP components will require much less maintenance, but the material does add a significant premium to the cost. Mr. Seabury is looking to use FRP for the access hatches to the anchorages on the Pell Bridge in place of the heavy cast iron structures we currently have. This may be available locally. He believes the use of FRP for targeted, isolated applications at our bridges would be most appropriate at this time.

Executive Director's Report:

- **Traffic and Revenue Data** – Traffic remains steady, down about 25%. We have done much better than other tolling agencies. We have stayed within budget and expenses; bonds are rated A with a stable outlook.
- **Cashless Tolling Test Period** – A cashless tolling test period will take place for four weeks beginning February 14th, twenty-four hours a day, eastbound. This is essentially Phase II in that cashless tolling is already taking place 11 PM – 7 AM seven days a week eastbound and westbound. This new phase, running 24 hours a day eastbound, will allow us to see the impact on all operations. Tolls will be collected by transponder and bill by mail, no cash or credit card transactions. Safety will be paramount, working with traffic consultant to direct traffic to open lanes, ORT and extreme outer lane heading eastbound into Newport. Chairman Waluk confirmed that the toll fare for cash customers will remain the same, current \$4 rate, no additional cost, just a different process for collecting the toll. This is a good time to give this a try as it is in the 10-year plan for a redesign of the toll plaza to occur to allow for free flow traffic, all electronic tolling. We also expect to plan to test on the westbound side in the future. At this time, we are working with the union, there will be no loss of jobs or reduction in shifts. Director Alviti asked what impact the 11 PM to 7 AM cashless tolling has had on toll revenue. Kathryn O'Connor, Director of Tolling and Operations indicated that the 11 PM to 7 AM cashless tolling has not impacted revenue much at all; there is very little traffic during those hours. The upcoming four week, 24 hours per day test period will provide an opportunity to see how it impacts a timeframe where we collect more cash. That said, cash is a much smaller portion of overall collection. From a traffic standpoint cash collection represents only 12% of traffic, (revenue is a little different), 88% is electronic, transponder-based collection. The testing period will provide an opportunity to determine the impact on front and back office operations and the impact on traffic and revenue. Westbound lanes will remain open for cash collection during the 7 AM – 11 PM hours. There will be signage informing motorists approaching the plaza.
- **RISD – Bike/Walkway Exhibition** – The Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) is currently running a post graduate course which involves the design of a virtual exhibition which will demonstrate different scenarios for crossing the Pell Bridge by foot or bike, incorporating the use of composite materials. We have assisted them where possible to help with design elements. The class is being sponsored through the Van Buren Charitable Foundation. The exhibition will involve the use of stationary bikes and virtual reality glasses and will be held in January of next year. Director Alviti followed up with comments, noting that this could be an event that raises expectations regarding actual construction of this project. He also noted that currently, “extruded” composite

materials are not readily accessible in our state. While it is a positive exercise, RITBA would need to begin to develop a plan to implement it, if the Board were to so choose, and would need to do a cost benefit and funding analysis. Chairman Waluk noted that the former Executive Director had some preliminary discussions with members of the federal delegation about creating a bike lane on the Bridge and this Board chose not to incur the expense of exploring that initiative. Chairman Waluk emphasized the importance of being cautious stewards of our limited resources and that the Board's primary responsibility is to provide safe and economical passage over the Bridge. RISD can move forward with their design of a virtual exhibition, and then our Board can address the feasibility of pursuing this concept in the future.

Motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by R. David Cruise, passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 AM.

Lori Caron Silveira
Secretary