

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

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 A.M. by Chair, Stephen C. Waluk.

Members Present:

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

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
Stephen Cahill, Manager of Safety and Security
Raphe Sciola, Senior Administrative Assistant
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 with a 4-0 vote to approve the minutes of the February 3, 2021 Board meeting. Judith M. Morse did not attend the February 3, 2021 Board meeting and thus abstained from the vote.

Item No. 4

Motion by R. David Cruise, seconded by Judith M. Morse, passed unanimously to approve Pannone Lopes Devereaux & O’Gara LLC, invoices for professional services dated February 2021 in the amount of \$39,330.38. \$27,032.33 of this figure is attributed to e-discovery management, deposition transcript services and expert witness fees related to litigation. It was agreed that at next month’s Board meeting an executive session would be included to provide for an update on pending litigation matters.

Item No. 5

Motion by Judith M. Morse, seconded by Darrell Waldron, passed unanimously to qualify both Government Strategies, Inc. and Athena Solutions Group, LLC to provide Professional Government Relations (Lobbying) Services, Contract 20-14, at a total cost not to exceed \$7,000 per month. The firms will represent RITBA’s interests in all matters affecting tolling, bridge construction and maintenance and public finance at the federal, state, and municipal levels.

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Item No. 6

Motion by Judith M. Morse, seconded by R. David Cruise, passed unanimously to approve a RIDOT/RITBA Maintenance Agreement relating to the Pell Bridge Ramp Project (Phase 2) which would require RITBA to operate and maintain three arterial Dynamic Message Signs. This maintenance agreement is required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The signs will benefit RITBA by cautioning motorists regarding safety issues and managing traffic on the Pell Bridge.

Item No. 7

Motion by Judith M. Morse, seconded by R. David Cruise, passed unanimously, to approve Change Order #2 in the amount of \$456,656.17 for Contract 19-3 – Newport Pell Bridge Partial Depth Deck Replacement, which had been awarded to Aetna Bridge Company. Director of Engineering Eric Seabury noted that this change order, along with the first one, will increase the total contract by 4.2%. The change order includes quantity changes to bid items and unanticipated extra work performed that was not included in the base contract.

At 8:50 AM Director Waldron left the meeting.

Director of Engineering/Eric Seabury - Capital Projects Status Report: A summary of all current projects was included in the Board packet. This month Director Seabury highlighted the following:

- Bridge Electrical and Communications Upgrades (Pell and Mt. Hope) This project involves placing fiber across the bridges; fiber terminations are being completed along with certifying the fiber ends.
- ATMS Bridge Safety and Video Analytics (Pell and Mt. Hope) This project is being done in conjunction with the fiber project. Currently finalizing the installation of cameras, speakers, and associated equipment.
- Bridge Inspections – Jamestown Verrazzano Bridge inspection is scheduled to begin March 15th and will take about two months to complete.
- Jamestown Verrazzano Bridge Guardrail and Railing Painting Project – (In-House) Due to the recent milder weather, prep work on the eastbound railings to ready the project for a spring start has begun.
- Mt. Hope and Sakonnet River Bridges – Miscellaneous Steel Repairs – Field measurements are completed so components for the project can be ordered by the contractor.
- Miscellaneous and On-Call Repairs – Pell and Jamestown Verrazzano Bridges – Currently working on concrete pier column repairs and preparing to do fiber-reinforced polymer repairs to pre-stressed concrete beams.

Chairman Waluk asked about the status of the lines (striping) on the deck heading westbound on the Pell Bridge following the close of work on the deck replacement project this winter. Old lines currently remain visible. Director Seabury is in communication with the contractor, Aetna Bridge, on this topic. When the deck finishing work takes place this spring, Aetna will eradicate the old lines by means of water blasting rather than grinding and will make sure that the final lines are clear and properly placed.

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CFO/Jeff Goulart – Summary Report: This month a financial summary report was included in the Board packet and will continue to be included each month. Mr. Goulart noted the following:

- The Authority's YTD revenue is higher than budget by 12%, or approximately \$1.8 million, primarily due to the conservative approach in budgeting as it was unknown what the impact of COVID would be.
- YTD revenue is lower than prior year by 18% or approximately \$4.0 million, also as a result of the impact from COVID.
- YTD personnel costs, including wages, taxes and benefits, are lower than budget by 24%, or approximately \$800,000, primarily due to open positions, reduced staff in the customer service center, elimination of 3rd shift of collectors, and lower health care costs.
- YTD personnel costs are also lower than prior year by 21%, or approximately \$666,000 due to the open positions, elimination of 3rd shift, and reduced staff in the customer service center.
- YTD operating expenses, before interest, depreciation and amortization, is lower than budget by 22%, or approximately \$1.5M, primarily due to the timing related to the bridge inspections, lower ETC/Transponder/Toll equipment expenses, lower legal/audit/professional fees, and overall reduction in discretionary spending.
- YTD operating expenses are lower than prior year by 13% or approximately \$731,000 in virtually every expense category listed in the detail profit and loss statement.

Director Morse inquired about receiving a more up to date financial report for each Board meeting. Jeff Goulart indicated that the timing of transmitting the Board materials the week before the Board meeting usually prevents the reporting of more current figures. It was agreed that if new, more up to date numbers become available, they will be provided to Board members before the monthly Board meetings.

Executive Director's Report:

- **Traffic and Revenue Data**
 - YTD, fiscal year, July 1, 2020 to date, traffic down 24%
 - September 2020 was best month, 80% of the previous year's traffic
 - December 2020 down 27% from December 2019
 - January 2021 down 25% from January 2020
 - February 2021 down 28% from January 2020 (storms also impacted traffic)
 - 89% of toll collection is by transponder, 11% by cash and credit
- **All Electronic Tolling (AET) Pilot Program**
 - started pilot program February 14th and ends March 14th
 - design provided for safe configuration of traffic through the Open Road Tolling (ORT) lane and the outermost lane heading eastbound, traffic adapted well
 - billed by transponder or by mail
 - have begun collecting data to analyze - no surprises thus far

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Chairman Waluk took the opportunity to thank Director Cruise for his service. Everyone thanked and congratulated him as this is likely his last Board meeting. Director Cruise indicated it has been a pleasure to work with the Board and he appreciated the insight he has gained into an area that was new to him when he was appointed to the RITBA Board.

Motion by Judith M. Morse, seconded by Peter Alviti, Jr., passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 AM.

Lori Caron Silveira
Secretary