

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority (“Authority”) was held at the Authority’s office in Jamestown, on Wednesday, October 6, 2021.

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 A.M. by Chair, Judith M. Morse.

Members Present:

Judith M. Morse, Chair
Darrell Waldron, Vice Chair
Peter Alviti, Jr. P.E., Ex Officio
Peter M. Janaros, P.E.
James K. Salome

Members Absent:

None

Invited Guests:

Lori Caron Silveira, Executive Director
Eric Seabury, P.E., Director of Engineering
Kathryn Coleman, Manager of Tolling and Operations
Jeffrey Goulart, Chief Financial Officer
Stephen Cahill, Manager of Safety and Security
Frank Flowers, Manager of Maintenance
Marianne Durgin, Executive Assistant to the Director
Remmy Villacis, Network Technician
William O’Gara, Legal Counsel
Colonel James Manni, Superintendent of the RI State Police, Director of Public Safety

Item No. 2

Public Comment – There were no public comments.

Item No. 3

Motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Peter Alviti, Jr., passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2021, Board meeting.

Item No. 4

Motion by Peter M. Janaros, seconded by James K. Salome, passed unanimously to approve a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the RI State Police (RISP), to establish a RITBA post within RISP and staff the post to monitor RITBA assets exclusively, in exchange for payment of an amount equal to the base salary of two troopers expected to be candidates in the next RISP academy class. The proposal was first presented by the RI State Police to RITBA and RITBA counsel then reviewed the terms and made some minor changes. The agreement is for three years. Director Caron Silveira indicated that the arrangement will benefit the Authority by having 24/7 RI State Police coverage allowing for regular communication to help with speed issues and other concerns. Colonel Manni addressed the Board, stating that goals will include suicide prevention, accident reduction and speed enforcement. State police will respond 24/7 to RITBA’s bridges, roadways, and other assets. One trooper will be assigned 8 am to 9 pm, and one 9 pm to 8 am. Colonel Manni believes having a designated RITBA post will provide the best possible response time. Other troopers outside the area will respond as needed. The Colonel stated, “A gray cruiser is the biggest deterrent we have in the state right now. When they’re present, people slow down and pay attention.” The two troopers’ base salary will be paid by RITBA, and all benefits will be paid by the RISP. Director Janaros indicated, as an Aquidneck Island resident, he looks forward to the additional state police presence and feels the agreement will be worthwhile. He believes this is a community-

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focused effort on the part of the Authority to provide an extra resource for Aquidneck Island. Director Janaros asked for clarification on the troopers' work assignments. Colonel Manni indicated the Authority's priorities will be the RISP's priorities. There will be one point of contact, the Captain, whom RITBA staff can communicate with and provide input on priorities. Director Caron Silveira stated it is the Authority's expectation that she and Steve Cahill, the Manager of Safety and Security, will be in touch with the state police on a regular basis to express what's being observed at the Authority in terms of safety concerns on RITBA bridges and other assets and what the needs are, so that RITBA will receive the maximum benefit from the arrangement. Chair Morse commented that the MOU would not begin until next summer and, therefore, would not impact this year's finances. It will be part of next year's budget. Director Alviti noted that when things go sideways on a highway, be it an accident or other incident, minutes count, in terms of response by emergency personnel. He then noted that on a bridge, 200 feet above the water, seconds count, and any reduction in the response time RITBA can offer to the public is paramount to the safety of everyone.

Item No. 5

Motion by Peter Alviti Jr., seconded by Darrell Waldron, passed unanimously to approve a Purchase Order for a total of \$25,600 with Sole Source Construction, LLC to perform roof work on the Pump House and gutter work on the RITBA Administration Building. The Pump House located on Route 138 in Jamestown requires removal of old roof shingles and installation of new architectural shingles. The RITBA Administration Building needs copper gutters and downspouts in areas that never had any, and that require management of roof runoff due to flooding and freezing conditions. RITBA sought quotes from four qualified State of RI Master Price Agreement (MPA) contractors. Two contractors provided quotes and Sole Source Construction had the lowest responsive quote for both items of work. Director Caron Silveira stated that there had been an inquiry from a citizen concerned that this was a sole source procurement. Director Caron Silveira explained that the name of the company is "Sole Source Construction," not to be confused with the legal term "sole source," which is a procurement concept.

Item No. 6

Motion by Peter M. Janaros, seconded by Darrell Waldron, passed unanimously to approve a resolution (with change noted below) which would provide the Executive Director the flexibility to enter contracts and task orders under \$25,000 without prior Board approval, especially when time is of the essence. The CFO will provide the Board with a monthly listing of contracts or task orders executed below the \$25,000 threshold. Director Janaros recommended that the resolution be modified with a requirement that the Executive Director give prior notice to the Board Chair before acting on an item. Director Caron Silveira proposed adding language under #1 of the resolution after "not to exceed \$25,000" to include "with prior notification to the Board Chair." Director Alviti moved to make that change, Darrell Waldron seconded the motion.

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

- Jamestown Verrazzano Bridge Guardrail and Railing Painting Project: (In-House): The project is nearing completion and the painters have done an excellent job. They will return to the north side to do some touch up painting to areas of the guardrail that have been struck by vehicles since it was painted last spring. The painters are also sealing curbing and sidewalk joints, which will keep water out of places where it shouldn't be.

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- Mount Hope and Sakonnet Miscellaneous Steel Repairs: Piasecki Steel is nearing completion of this project. They have incorporated the use of fiber reinforced polymer in staircases, platforms, and catwalks. A new, secured staircase is being constructed on the north anchorage that will allow access up the anchorage without the use of a bucket truck or physically going down the cables. New catwalks will provide maintenance with direct access to troughs so they can be cleaned of debris. For the 92-year-old life of the bridge, it has been difficult to access these areas.

Director Janaros requested that Mr. Seabury send him a copy of the recent Jamestown Verrazzano Bridge Inspection report.

CFO Jeff Goulart – Financial Summary Report

Mr. Goulart stated that July was a very good month traffic-wise and expects August to be, as well. It has been slow obtaining August data due to delays in receiving reciprocity numbers from other agencies. Toll revenue for the month of July was up \$284,214 compared with budget. The budget was set at 90% of 2019's numbers. The budget for the gas tax revenue was based on 97% of the estimate as provided by the Department of Revenue. This revenue was up \$94,898 vs. budget. Director Alviti sought clarification on the revenue numbers, asking if the budget was lowered due to the COVID crisis. Mr. Goulart confirmed the budget is lower than what it would have been without the impact of COVID. As mentioned above, it was set at 90% of 2019 levels. Director Alviti noted that the increase over budget appears to be signaling a return to traffic on the highways.

On the operating expense side, Mr. Goulart noted the following:

- **Personnel Services** – The \$84K positive variance in this category is partly due to some remaining open positions but mostly to how the payroll numbers fell this month, which will adjust higher next month. (The payroll expense is divided equally by 12 months, but some months have more pay periods than others.)
- **Contractual Services** – Primarily related to legal fees, with Atsalis case settled, this category down \$38K for month
- **Other Supplies and Expenses** – Again, a timing issue, postage lower this month, may be higher next month
- **Repairs and Maintenance** – Anticipated \$30K in ATMS costs for equipment this month that didn't occur, may see this cost in September or October
- **Bridge Inspections** – Bridge inspections with estimated start dates in July began in August so this category was down \$39K this month but will be higher in coming months. Some task orders for bridge inspections are also coming in under budget.

On the non-operating expense side:

- **Investment Income** – In July, rebalancing of the asset classes in the portfolio occurred locking in gains this month of \$100+K.
- **Miscellaneous Income** – Related to an insurance recovery for damage to the Jamestown Bridge, this line item will be reduced once the repairs are completed.

Chair Morse inquired about the Authority's investment income, wanting to be sure that it is being tracked and invested wisely. Mr. Goulart indicated that quarterly meetings have been set up with Citizens to review the Authority's investments. Additionally, an RFP will be issued in the next 30 – 60 days to ensure the Authority has the best investment advisors going forward.

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Executive Director's Report:

- **Traffic and Revenue Data** – Since last month's meeting, our traffic is sustaining into October. Early October numbers are looking very good; many days the traffic surpasses 100% of the same day in 2019. We are returning to some semblance of the normalcy of 2019.
- **AET Conversion** –
 - The toll collectors' last day will be October 28th. The transition to all-electronic tolling will take place during the late evening of October 27th and through the day on Thursday, October 28th. By the end of the day on the 28th, the collectors will have taken their last cash and credit card transactions. 15 bargaining unit employees are impacted; 8 have taken severance packages, and 7 have accepted new positions at the Authority. New image review positions have been created to assist in the bill by plate system, along with new traffic management technician positions which will assist in supervision of the Authority's assets.
 - The open road tolling lanes will be closed from October 14th through 28th. During this time new equipment and software will be installed by Kapsch, which will enable these lanes to become two open road tolling lanes in each direction. RITBA will be seeking the patience of the public. Safety will be paramount. Beginning October 14th, the two extreme outer lanes will be open during rush hours for bill by mail and E-ZPass transactions, and the inside lanes will be staffed with collectors and will also process E-ZPass transactions. Steps have been taken to consider the needs of our nearby residents, commuters, and RIPTA. Signage and communication will be key. Director Alviti asked when the toll collector lanes will be converted to open road tolling. Kathryn Coleman answered that those lanes will be decommissioned, and traffic will flow through the expanded open road tolling lanes once the work is completed in the October 14 – 28 period. Director Alviti asked what will happen to those lanes in the future. Mr. Seabury indicated that in the coming 18 months the design and construction of the new gantry will occur and the old collector lanes and booths will be demolished.
- **Federal Funding Requests** – RITBA continues to be aggressive in pursuing federal funding through the RAISE grant proposal submitted for the cable and anchorage dehumidification project for the Mount Hope Bridge. The Authority has received good support and feedback on the proposal from community leaders and is hopeful federal funding will be awarded for this critical project that will extend the life of the 92-year-old Mount Hope Bridge.

Chair Morse noted that the Pell Bridge Run is coming up. Director Caron Silveira confirmed it will take place on October 17th. Internal meetings and others with law enforcement will be taking place to insure all runs smoothly. The event concludes no later than 9:30 am.

Motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Peter Alviti, Jr., passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:21 A.M.

Lori Caron Silveira
Secretary