

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, November 3, 2021.

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 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

Item No. 2

Public Comment – There were no public comments.

Item No. 3

A motion made by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Peter M. Janaros, passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the October 6, 2021, Board meeting.

Item No. 4

A motion was made by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Peter Alviti to award Contract 21-06 – Customer Service Back Office System to Emovis Technologies, Inc. (Emovis) at a cost of \$1,990,000.00 for design and implementation and an annual cost of \$1,320,122.80. Ms. Kathryn Coleman stated that the Authority went out to bid for Contract 21-06 for a new customer service back-office system in July 2021. Four responses were received, and the selection committee conducted interviews with three of the respondents. Emovis, the incumbent, was recommended as the awardee as their proposal offered the highest quality scoring and the overall best value in providing improved customer service, account management, transaction processing, image review, invoice processing, reporting, website management and support of RITBA’s transition to all-electronic tolling. Emovis had the most experience with the E-ZPass Interagency Group (IAG), servicing two other agencies with full back-office systems. They also best addressed RIDOT’s needs by providing a separate system which the Authority believes will be safer. Emovis was the only respondent to provide three dedicated staff members to the Business Analyst position which amounts to half of a full-time employee. No other respondent had full back-office experience. The others have only served in a subcontractor role. Emovis also provided savings to the Authority on future IAG updates and there will be no cost for DMV interface changes. Director Caron

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Silveira noted that the current monthly maintenance fee will be reduced by \$3,700. Director Alviti asked if the cost submitted by Emovis is within RITBA's budget. Director Caron Silveira responded, yes. Director Alviti asked if the scoring system was spelled out explicitly in the RFP process, specifically the division between pricing and quality. Mr. Goulart responded, yes. Director Janaros noted he thought the RFP was well prepared.

Chair Morse indicated the Authority received a letter the previous day from one of the proposers who requested the Board consider not awarding the contract today and review their questions about the selection process first. Director Caron Silveira confirmed the letter had already been thoroughly reviewed multiple times. Director Caron Silveira indicated the Authority would like to provide a thoughtful, comprehensive response to the questions raised, but noted it would be important to not delay the award of the contract. Director Caron Silveira asked the Board to consider voting to award, subject to the Authority providing a detailed response to the letter. Director Alviti asked if the Chief Purchasing Officer at DOA had been consulted, and Director Caron Silveira responded no, indicating she is the Chief Purchasing Officer for RITBA under the Authority's By-laws and under state law, but that she would reach out to the state. The Executive Director had reviewed the selection committee's findings and had asked many questions. Director Alviti asked if this letter could be considered a formal protest. Director Caron Silveira stated the letter was not presented as a formal protest under RI law. RITBA legal counsel, Mr. William O'Gara suggested treating the letter as a protest even though it did not explicitly state that it was a protest under applicable law. Director Alviti asked if a proposer can have a post award interview to assess their shortcomings. Ms. Coleman indicated to her knowledge no respondent had asked for a briefing in the past, but a post award interview is possible. It was noted that if a proposer wanted to see information about the incumbent's work product prior to submitting their bid, they had the ability to request that information. There was a pre-bid meeting where questions were posed. Director Caron Silveira found the letter lacking in merit, felt all issues were addressed, and is comfortable that the selection committee took into consideration all the proper factors and that the award was not arbitrary or capricious in any manner. Director Salome asked counsel, William O'Gara, if he reviewed the letter and if he was comfortable with the Board moving forward with a vote. Mr. O'Gara noted he believed it made sense for the Board to authorize the Executive Director to move forward with the award after the "protest" had been answered. Counsel O'Gara again noted the letter was not presented as a formal protest but would be considered so out of an abundance of caution and he confirmed he believed the concerns were unfounded. Chair Morse mentioned that she had asked Director Caron Silveira why the Authority would be recommending awarding the contract to the highest bidder. She was assured by the Executive Director that the selection committee was thorough in their examination of all factors presented by the proposers and that she was comfortable with the decision process. Director Alviti stated he wanted to be comfortable with the order in which the Board would move forward with the award and therefore felt the letter should be answered first. Counsel suggested that the Board authorize the Executive Director to move forward with the award of the contract after the letter was responded to. If the conclusion was that the "protest" had merit, the award would not move forward. A motion was made by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Peter Alviti, and passed unanimously to rescind the earlier motion to award the contract. Director Alviti made a motion to allow the Executive Director to award the contract to the best evaluated firm, Emovis, at a cost of \$1,990,000.00 for design and implementation and an annual cost of \$1,320,122.80, subject to a finding by the Chief Purchasing Agent, the Executive Director, that the "protest" has no merit. The motion was seconded by Darrell Waldron and passed unanimously. The Board will receive a copy of the response to the letter.

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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:

- Bridge Electrical & Communication Upgrades – (Pell & Mount Hope) and ATMS Bridge Safety and Video Analytics: Fiber optic terminations are being finished on the Mt. Hope Bridge. They have been completed on the Pell Bridge and the testing phase of the new video analytics system has begun for the Pell Bridge. The new Operations Center is now functioning and is no longer part of tolling. It is being managed by Steve Cahill who has begun training the TMTs (Traffic Management Technicians), one of the new positions created after converting to all-electronic tolling. With the rollout of the new system, the operators are picking up events, such as stopped vehicles, and they are identifying whether these are true emergencies, which is helping the system to become smarter. This is the learning phase and once the Mt. Hope Bridge fiber optic work and camera installation is complete, the Mt. Hope Bridge will be added to the analytics system.
- Phase I - AET Conversion: As of 11 pm, Thursday night, October 28th, Donald Richardson, the longest serving employee of the agency, took the last toll. Lanes 1 and 12, the outermost lanes and 6 and 7, the original Open Road Tolling (ORT) lanes have become the current all-electronic tolling lanes. Aetna Bridge Co. will continue with phase 2 of the implementation, converting the ORT lanes to two lanes in each direction. Striping eradication, new striping, and signage work will be done to allow for two lanes in each direction in the old ORT lanes. This work will be completed by December 10th and at that time lanes 1 and 12 will be decommissioned.
- Jamestown Verrazzano Bridge Guardrail and Railing Painting Project: (In-House): As the project is nearing completion, the number of painters will be reduced by the end of the week. The south side is finished. The painters will now address the north side, touching up the railing, the guardrail, and sealing the curbing and sidewalks.
- Bridge Inspections: The inspection of the Pell Bridge Approach Spans is beginning. The interim inspection of Mount Hope will start at the end of November.

Chair Morse indicated she is concerned with two items; one is awaiting word on the outcome of the grant proposal for the Mount Hope Bridge cables and anchorages dehumidification project and the second is speeding on the bridges. She would like the Authority to investigate getting cameras on the bridges for speed detection.

CFO Jeff Goulart – Financial Summary Report

Toll revenue is up approximately 13% year-to-date. The budget was based on 90% of 2019's traffic numbers. The gas tax revenue is up approximately 8% year-to-date. The budget for the gas tax revenue was based on 97% of the estimate as provided by the Department of Revenue. August YTD toll revenue vs. 2019 is down about 2%, approximately \$38,000. August YTD gas tax revenue vs. 2019, is down 0.2% or \$6,000. Traffic has returned and we are getting back to pre-Covid levels.

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

- **Personnel Services** – Showing over budget by \$15,000 but on a quarterly basis we are on target as we reallocate the wages and benefits of the painters working on the Jamestown Bridge to the capital account on a quarterly basis. Personnel expenses vs. 2019 are down by 10%, approximately \$140,000. Also noted, there will be an annual savings of close to half a million dollars in personnel expenses with the conversion to all-electronic tolling. This also takes into account those full-time collectors who did not opt to take the severance package and instead took open positions with the Authority.

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- **Contractual Services** – Savings of \$41,000 primarily due to lower legal fees, including legal fees saved as a result of the litigation settled earlier in the fiscal year.
- **Other Supplies and Expenses** – Over budget by approximately \$90,000, this is primarily due to timing of postage purchases.
- **Insurance** – Under budget by approximately \$42,000 this month. This is primarily due to lower premiums as a result of a comprehensive bidding process conducted by RITBA's insurance broker.
- **Repairs and Maintenance** – Under budget by approximately \$37,000. Budget assumed \$30,000 of miscellaneous expenses to support the ATMS project, which have not been incurred. May incur only about \$8,000 - \$10,000 for the year.
- **Bridge Inspections** – Under budget by approximately \$110,000. Primarily due to the timing of task orders, several going out about 30 - 45 days later than anticipated.

Executive Director's Report:

- **Traffic and Revenue Data** – Traffic has returned. We are almost back to 2019 numbers and sustaining those numbers longer into the season. Traffic numbers are off no more than 10% and some days are reporting well over the 2019 numbers for the same day.
- **AET Conversion** – In the week leading up to the conversion we had a tropical storm which caused closure of both the Pell and Jamestown Bridges for about two hours. This prevented one of the contractors from getting onto the bridge and to the ORT lanes to continue the work that needed to be done. Despite this, by the morning of October 29th we converted to all-electronic tolling. By December 10th or sooner, the ORT lanes will become double lanes in each direction. We will then use the extreme outer lanes for emergency purposes only.
- **Federal Funding Requests** – The Authority should soon be hearing the outcome of the RAISE grant proposal submitted for the Mount Hope Bridge cables and anchorages dehumidification project and other requests for federal funding for critically important projects. The Authority had visits recently from both Senators Reed and Whitehouse and will be hosting meetings with Congressmen Cicilline and Langevin in the near future. We have responded to requests from the state to provide further input on our requests and have been working aggressively to call attention to the urgency of these projects. Director Janaros inquired about how the congressional delegation serves in this process. Director Caron Silveira indicated they have all submitted letters on our behalf and they continue to work on our behalf in Washington. Director Alviti asked what the funding request was for the Mt. Hope dehumidification project. Director Caron Silveira indicated \$25 million. Director Alviti stated that RITBA may find next that the awarding agency will inquire of RITBA if it would be able to make up the difference in funding if it were awarded less than the requested amount of \$25 million.
- **Speed Cameras** – The Authority sees this as a priority for January 2022 in the General Assembly session. Director Caron Silveira looks forward to discussions as to whether the use of cameras is appropriate and what other options might be available. How RITBA handles apprehending speeders in a safe manner is a concern, as the bridges do not lend themselves to conventional methods.

Chair Morse thanked the entire RITBA staff for a job well done with the transition to all-electronic tolling.

Motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Peter Alviti, Jr., passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 A.M.

Lori Caron Silveira
Secretary