

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority (“Authority”) was held at the Authority’s offices in Jamestown on June 15, 2022.

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 A.M. by Chair, James K. Salome.

Members Present

James K. Salome, Chair
Darrell Waldron, Vice Chair
Peter M. Janaros, P.E.
Karen D. Pinch

Members Absent:

Peter Alviti, Jr., P.E., Ex Officio

Invited Guests:

Lori Caron Silveira, Executive Director
Eric Seabury, P.E., Director of Engineering
Kathryn Coleman, Director of Tolling Operations
Jeffrey Goulart, Chief Financial Officer
Stephen Cahill, Manager of Safety and Security
Jeffrey Wiggin, Assistant Project Manager
Marianne Durgin, Executive Assistant to the Director
Remmy Villacis, Network Technician
Frank Flowers, Manager of Maintenance
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 May 25, 2022 Annual Board meeting.

Item No. 4

Motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Peter M. Janaros, passed unanimously to approve a Resolution thanking Judith M. Morse for her service to the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority. The Resolution reads: **WHEREAS**, Judith M. Morse worked tirelessly and earnestly to advance the interests of the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority during her tenure as a member of the Board; and **WHEREAS**, Judith M. Morse provided outstanding leadership and guidance to the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority; and **WHEREAS**, Judith M. Morse served with integrity and distinction on the RITBA Board for 6 years, 1 of those as Chairman of the Board, and during her tenure oversaw many initiatives which improved RITBA’s service to its customers, including the transition to All-Electronic Tolling on the Claiborne Pell Bridge and the Claiborne Pell Bridge Deck Rehabilitation Project, along with numerous maintenance and construction projects on all four major RITBA bridges; and **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the RITBA Board of Directors formally acknowledges and extends its sincere appreciation to Judith M. Morse for her distinguished years of service to RITBA and those who traveled over RITBA’s bridges, and wishes her continued success in all her future endeavors; and be it further **RESOLVED**, that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Ms. Morse. This Resolution has been adopted by the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority Board members at a meeting of the Board of Directors on June 15, 2022.

Item No. 5

Discussion Item: Legislative Bill to extend time of payment of tolls - Current tolling legislation provides that a toll violation be paid within 14 days from the date of billing to avoid assessment of a \$40 administrative fee. Director Caron Silveira indicated the Authority would like to pursue a legislative change allowing for 30 days before the first fee is incurred. Extending the payment period to 30 days would benefit customers while also enhancing productivity of the tolling personnel. A considerable number of customers interact with our E-ZPass personnel relating to the deadline of the 14-day payment period. In an AET environment, 30 days for first notice is standard. There was no vote on this item; it was to inform the Board of potential pursuit of a legislative change.

Item No. 6

Motion by Karen D. Pinch, seconded by Peter M. Janaros, passed unanimously to approve a 12-month extension of Contract 11-13 with Emovis for ongoing E-ZPass back-office maintenance and support while the new back-office system is being designed and implemented. The monthly RITBA fee is \$57,908.00 and the monthly RIDOT fee is \$57,855.00. Katie Coleman stated the monthly increase represents a 5% COLA.

Item No. 7

Motion by Peter M. Janaros, seconded by Darrell Waldron, passed unanimously to pre-authorize an amount not to exceed \$50,000 for WSP Task Order – Phase 2 - Final Design and Bid Phase Services for All Electronic Tolling. This will enable the final design process to proceed without interruption. The negotiations for the final design will be completed in the coming weeks, and the final task order recommendation will be presented to the Board for action at the next meeting. The pre-authorized funding will enable the geotechnical investigations to begin. Director Janaros commented that he likes the concept of pre-authorizing funding to keep projects moving. He inquired about the removal and replacement of Structure E noted in the draft task order and expressed concern about the cost and disruption to traffic. Mr. Seabury indicated that after recent conceptual cost estimating, the removal and replacement of Structure E has been deleted from the task order. A different approach will be employed involving rehabilitation to the structure, which will include beam and abutment work and hydro-demolition of the deck.

Item No. 8

Motion by Peter M. Janaros, seconded by Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to approve a Purchase Order with Oak Hill Farm, LLC in the amount not to exceed \$5,840 for parking lot sealing and restriping of the RITBA offices and maintenance parking lots. The parking lots need crack sealing to preserve the life of the asphalt, and the striping is worn. Adjustments will be made to include current ADA standards and the current RITBA maintenance vehicle fleet. Director Janaros confirmed with Mr. Seabury that Oak Hill Farm will meet the standards for paint striping outlined by DOT.

Item No. 9

Discussion Item: On-Call Electrical Services Contractor Selection – Contract 22-05 - The current On-Call Electrical Contract from 2015 with E.W. Audet recently expired. Mr. Seabury noted that electrical services are needed for the Authority on a regular basis as there can be power issues both on the bridges and at the offices. An open solicitation was issued for general On-Call Electrical Services. Proposals were received from three contractors: Arden Engineering Constructors, LLC, E.W. Audet & Sons, Inc., and AM Electric, LLC. All three provided a schedule of rates for their journeymen, apprentices, and equipment for the next five years. The selection committee found them all to be qualified and selected all three for a five year On-Call Contract.

Item No. 10

Motion by Peter M. Janaros, seconded by Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to approve of the Resolution dated June 15, 2022, which sets \$20,443,400 as the Renewal and Replacement Fund Requirement as required under the Master Indenture and applicable amended indentures until re-determined after the next annual inspection of the System (the Newport Pell Bridge and the Mount Hope Bridge as defined in the Indenture). Mr. Goulart indicated the figure is derived from expected capital expenditures for the coming fiscal year in the amount of \$12.9M dollars plus \$7.5M in insurance reserve. The Authority has a \$10M dollar deductible for a catastrophic event so the reserve would provide access to \$7.5M dollars. Last year the renewal and replacement fund amount was increased from \$18.9M to \$20.4M dollars. Executive Director Caron Silveira noted that for many years the renewal and replacement fund amount remained the same. Last year the team reviewed and analyzed the Authority's needs and increased the amount. Management recommends keeping the amount the same this year.

Item No. 11

Motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to approve the tentative agreement with the union addressing the wage/healthcare reopener for the CBA 2020 – 2023. The FY 2022 budget impact is approximately \$60K and the FY 2023 budget impact is approximately \$44K. Executive Director Caron Silveira stated the Authority is entering into the last year of its contract with the union and negotiations will begin next April for a new multi-year CBA. There were wage reopener provisions in the second and third years of the contract. Employees have been taking modest increases due to COVID and its effect on toll and gas tax revenue in 2020 and 2021. The agreement provides for a 2.5% increase effective July 1, 2022, with another 1.25% effective January 1, 2023, and a potential additional 1.25% if certain pre-COVID traffic and/or revenue benchmarks are met. Each member of the bargaining unit will receive a one-time payment of \$2,500 as a cost-of-living payment. To further address the recent increase in the cost-of-living, RITBA will allow a one-time, non-precedent-setting pay-out of up to forty (40) hours of vacation or sick balances (or a combination not to exceed 40 total hours). Director Pinch asked how many bargaining unit members there are. Director Caron Silveira answered there are 24 members.

Item No. 12

Motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to approve the annual operating and capital budget. The Fiscal Year 2023 operating budget has been established with total revenue of \$38M dollars, up \$3.9M from the Fiscal Year 2022 budget. The Fiscal Year 2023 capital budget has been established in the amount of \$12.9M dollars. Mr. Goulart reviewed the comprehensive budget summary he prepared for the Board of Directors which outlined the Fiscal 2023 Operating Revenues and Expenses and the FY Capital Budget. Director Pinch asked about the \$20,000 payment to the Town of Jamestown under Operating Expenses. Mr. Goulart and Director Caron Silveira indicated this has been a historical payment to the Town for the increased use of Town services provided to the Authority. It had been \$30,000 and was negotiated down to \$20,000 and will be further reduced to \$10,000 in next year's operating expenses.

Director of Engineering Eric Seabury - Capital Projects Status Report: This month Mr. Seabury highlighted the following:

- Newport Pell Bridge Pier 5W Girder Temporary Shoring and Bearing Removal and Replacement: Installed shoring on both girders. Work remaining includes jacking both girders and replacing the bearings.
- Phase II – AET Conceptual Design- Newport Pell Bridge: The conceptual design will be completed in about two weeks' time.

- Misc. Steel Repairs – Mt. Hope and Sakonnet: Piasecki Steel is about to begin the needed repairs that were identified in the Interim Inspection of the Mt. Hope Bridge. Shop drawings are being finalized for the work.
- ATMS Bridge Safety and Video Analytics – Pell and Mt. Hope: Camera equipment recently installed on Mt. Hope. In approximately one week the system will be operational.
- Underwater Bridge Inspection – Pell: The Newport Pell Bridge Underwater Inspection has been completed and the report work is ongoing. Director Janaros asked if images of the underwater inspection could be shared with the Board at a future meeting as he indicated they are remarkable to see.
- Load Rating – Jamestown: Ratings discussions are ongoing.
- Capital Improvement Plan Update: Being finalized in the coming week.

CFO Jeff Goulart – Financial Summary Report

April results continue to be strong. Total revenue, year-to-date actual vs. budget is higher by \$4.2M, or 15%, and operating expenses are lower than budget by \$1.6M, or 15%. Overall operating income is up \$5.8M vs. budget. Personnel expenses are down almost \$1M or roughly 19%. Contractual services, insurance, repairs and maintenance, and bridge inspections are all lower than budget. Other supplies and expenses are up primarily due to the additional bill-by-mail transactions requiring invoicing, postage, etc. Transponder expenses are up due to increased sales.

Executive Director’s Report:

- **Traffic Update** – Director Caron Silveira reported traffic is continuing to come back and should continue to improve with good summer weather. There are reports of a robust hurricane season ahead.
- **Federal Funding Requests** –
 - **2022 RAISE Grant** – The Authority is waiting to hear word on its second RAISE Grant Proposal submitted for the Dehumidification of the Cables and Anchorages of the Mt. Hope Bridge. The outcome should be received in early August. RITBA is seeking \$25M and will match this with \$10M.
 - **Other Funding Sources** – RITBA submitted a proposal to the Mega and INFRA Programs in an amount of \$138M. This included a bundled request for funding of projects for the Pell Bridge, including the dehumidification of the bridge, completion of the rehabilitation of its deck, painting of the towers, and work on the suspender ropes. The Authority should hear word on these submissions in early September.
 - **Bridge Investment Program** – The Authority will begin to put together a submission to this program. CompeteRI, which is a conglomerate of private companies, is offering services including grant writers to assist RITBA.
- **Suicide Barrier Study** - Director Caron Silveira noted there is \$1M in the state budget for the suicide barrier feasibility study, and the budget is expected to be passed by the House and Senate in the next day.
- **E-ZPass Operations** - There is a significant increase in bill-by-mail transactions, not unexpectedly due to the conversion to All-Electronic Tolling. It has burdened the telephone system. The team recently worked with the phone provider to improve the system so customer calls will be answered timely. Staff is also looking for ways to improve service at the Walk-In Center. In addition, the team has worked with AAA to improve services. Director Caron Silveira also shared that the E-ZPass Group (the toll interoperability network comprised of 19 states and growing) is beginning to explore the use of “sticker tags” rather than transponder devices to capture tolling data in the future.

- **Next Board Meeting** – Currently scheduled for July 13th. There is a possibility that a Board meeting in July will not be needed. The scheduled date for the August Board meeting is August 17th.

A motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Peter M. Janaros, passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:17 A.M.

Lori Caron Silveira
Secretary