

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 November 16, 2022.

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 A.M. by Chair, James K. Salome.

Members Present

James K. Salome, Chair
Peter M. Janaros, P.E.
Karen D. Pinch
Peter Alviti, Jr., P.E., Ex Officio

Members Absent:

Darrell Waldron, Vice Chair

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
Frank Flowers, Maintenance Manager
Jamie Swanberg, Manager of Tolling Operations
Marianne Durgin, Executive Assistant to the Director
Remmy Villacis, Network Technician
William O’Gara, Pannone Lopes Devereaux & O’Gara, Legal Counsel
David Schultz, Legislative Fiscal Analyst

Item No. 2

Public Comment – Three members of the public, Melissa Cotta, Jenny Gaynor, and Mark Gonsalves, Sr., all RI residents, addressed the Board advocating for safety barriers on the Authority’s Bridges. Chair Salome thanked all three for coming to the meeting.

Item No. 3

A motion made by Peter M. Janaros, seconded by Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the October 19, 2022 Board meeting.

Item No. 4

Motion by Peter Alviti, Jr., seconded by Peter M. Janaros, passed unanimously to approve a purchase order for annual on-call phone services with Partners Technology in the amount of \$8,700. The FY 2023 budget includes the cost for these services. Partners Technology is a Mitel Gold Partner (RITBA’s current phone system) with 20+ years’ experience with the equipment, software, and applications within the Mitel Portfolio. Services will be used on an “as needed basis.” Additionally, the company will assist RITBA staff in making improvements to the Interactive Voice Response system.

Item No. 5

Motion by Peter Alviti, Jr., seconded by Peter M. Janaros, passed unanimously to approve a task order with Atkins North America, Inc. (Atkins) in an amount not-to-exceed \$985,700.00 to perform a safety barrier feasibility study on the Mount Hope and Jamestown-Verrazzano Bridges. Atkins was selected via

a Request for Qualifications process to perform these services on December 9, 2021. The state of RI has budgeted \$1M towards the effort, which falls short of the more than \$1.5M needed to study all four major bridges under RITBA's care. Evaluating these two bridges first will maximize the utilization of the available funding.

Item No. 6

Motion by Peter Alviti, Jr., seconded by Peter M. Janaros, passed unanimously to approve a task order with AECOM in an amount not-to-exceed \$924,953.43 to perform design and bid phase services for the Mount Hope Bridge Dehumidification of Cables and Anchorages. AECOM was selected via a Request for Qualifications process to perform these services on June 20, 2022. The task order was then developed through several scoping meetings with project representatives from AECOM. RITBA also utilized the services of WSP, under the current Technical Services On-Call contract, to perform an Independent Fee Estimate (IFE) as required for FHWA funded programs and grants. The results determined that AECOM's fee is reasonable. Director Janaros stated he agrees with Mr. Seabury's assessment that the design for this project needs to happen now in order for the work to proceed in a timely fashion.

Item No. 7

Motion by Peter Alviti, Jr., seconded by Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to approve purchase orders for two vehicles in the total amount not-to-exceed \$100,000.00. One vehicle of the RITBA fleet that is under-utilized and costly to maintain and a second that is at the end of its useful life will be traded in for current market value. The Executive Director's 2017 Ford Edge and the Director of Engineering's 2014 Ford F-150, used for business purposes will be moved into the RITBA fleet for the remainder of their useful life. Replacement vehicles for the Executive Director and Director of Engineering will be purchased by first checking the availability of vehicles on the pre-approved state master price list. RITBA will procure new vehicles via bid only if necessary.

Item No. 8

Discussion of FY2023 Capital Improvement Plan – Mr. Seabury presented the FY2023 Draft Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which incorporates the INFRA grant funds in the amount of \$82.5M recently awarded to the Authority. Major revisions had been made to the 2018 "Ten Year Plan" just prior to receiving the award. The revised draft CIP now reflects project dates that also conform with the projected cash flow from the award. Mr. Seabury had an opportunity to share the plan with Director Janaros prior to the meeting, and he has made note of several comments that he will address before finalizing the CIP. Chair Salome and Director Janaros commended Mr. Seabury for a job well done. Chair Salome also expressed his thanks to Director Janaros for assisting with the review process.

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: Work remaining includes jacking both girders, then removing and replacing the bearings. Project should be complete within a few weeks.
- Phase II – AET Final Design- Newport Pell Bridge: The final design of the AET project is underway. Structural design concept for the new gantry is complete. Some of the aesthetics of the columns and the actual gantry truss crossing the roadway remain outstanding.
- Misc. Steel Repairs – Mt. Hope and Sakonnet: Piasecki Steel will be addressing the steel repairs on the Mt. Hope Bridge for items identified in the Interim Inspection report.
- Load Ratings and Inspections: An updated load rating on the Mount Hope Bridge is taking place. The consultant, Modjeski and Masters, has informed RITBA that the current posting of 40 tons

may have to be reduced to 30 tons in order to comply with guidelines in the new load rating manual. Mr. Seabury will provide follow up information on this item at a later Board meeting.

CFO Jeff Goulart – Financial Summary Report

- The Authority's first quarter financial performance has been solid. YTD total revenue was higher than budget by \$900K. Toll revenue was higher by 1.4M. However, this was offset by lower gas tax revenue, which was down by \$0.4M. YTD operating expenses were lower than budget by approximately \$700K. Personnel expenses, utilities, insurance, repairs and maintenance, and bridge inspections were all lower than budget. Contractual services and other supplies and expenses were higher, primarily due to the higher toll revenue and its impact on the bill-by-mail transactions. Overall, first quarter numbers have come in well as compared to budget. Year to date actual vs. prior year total revenue was higher by \$800K, due to an increase in toll revenue by \$1.0M. This has been partially offset by the lower gas tax revenue of \$200K. On a year-over-year basis, most expenses are higher, as expected, but coming in well below budget. Director Alвити inquired if the higher toll revenue is based on current projections or pre-Covid projections. Mr. Goulart indicated the higher toll revenue is based on pre-Covid projections. This year's budget was based on 2019. Even though traffic is not back to 100%, the average revenue per vehicle is approximately 30 cents higher. The increase in per axle rate from \$2 to \$3, along with the increase in bill-by-mail transactions due to All-Electronic Tolling, has resulted in higher toll revenue. Director Alвити noted it is interesting that toll revenue is stable and performing better than gas tax revenue. Mr. Goulart believes that lower gas tax revenue may be occurring in the boating industry as well, as he's noticed far fewer boats in the bay this season.

Executive Director's Report:

- **Tolling Operations** – Director Caron Silveira indicated the focus is currently on increasing new E-ZPass accounts, which will reduce the number of bill-by-mail transactions. The bill-by-mail transactions increase the amount of phone calls to the Authority, and there is a considerable burden on staff to review license plates, and attend to invoicing, mailing, and processing of payments for bill-by-mail transactions. In addition, RI is unusual in that it has over 44 different plate types, which makes reading them more difficult and increases risk of error. The same number or letter sequence can be found on different plate types. As of June 2021, the DMV stopped issuing different plate types with the same sequencing of numbers and letters. After completing a study of zip codes, the Authority has determined that its focus in opening new accounts needs to be on the residents in the local zip codes, not those in outlying communities of RI.
- **Federal Funding Requests** –
 - **INFRA Grant Funds** – The federal delegation recently attended a ceremony at RITBA to acknowledge the Authority's receipt of the INFRA grant funding of \$82.5 million for the rehabilitation of the Newport Pell Bridge. Federal Highway Regional Director, Carlos Machado also attended the ceremony and was thanked by RITBA for his support. Director Caron Silveira noted the Authority had strict criteria to follow in applying for the INFRA funding. Only specific types of projects could be pursued.
 - **Bridge Investment Program** - RITBA still has a smaller submission pending under the Bridge Investment Program for the Mt. Hope Bridge Dehumidification of the Cables and Anchorages project and is awaiting word.
 - **RAISE Debriefing** – RITBA received high marks in all categories of its 2022 RAISE grant submission except one. The category had to do with safety. RITBA could not represent that the project would have any bearing on reducing the number of bicycle and pedestrian

accidents and fatalities on the Mt. Hope Bridge. Pedestrians and cyclists are not allowed on the bridge. Instead, RITBA's submission in the safety category focused on highlighting that the project was designed to prevent a mass vehicular incident on the bridge. Scoring low in this one category impacted the final outcome, as RITBA was not granted an award.

- **Future Workforce Planning and Labor Programs** – Director Silveira noted she has been actively involved in various programs and initiatives that are being designed to ensure the future workforce will be ready for caring for suspension bridges and continuing interoperable tolling operations. She recently attended the Infrastructure Talent Pipeline Challenge at the White House. She is working with a group called Women in the Trades in RI and continues to participate in state and national initiatives, including Building Futures and Introducing Youth to American Infrastructure. Director Alviti noted he was heading next to a meeting with five of the building trades on this very issue. He noted the building trades are falling short in their ability to keep pace with the growing number of projects. There is a need to cultivate a new generation of young people to look to the building trades as a career opportunity. Director Caron Silveira and Director Alviti will keep each other abreast of their work in this area.
- **Proposed Schedule of 2023 Board Meetings** – A listing of proposed 2023 Board meeting dates was shared with the Board of Directors.

A motion by Peter M. Janaros, seconded by Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 A.M.

Lori Caron Silveira
Secretary