

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 January 25, 2023.

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 Alвити, Jr., P.E., Ex Officio
Peter M. Janaros, P.E.
Karen D. Pinch

Members Absent:

None

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
Remmy Villacis, Network Technician
Raphe Sciola, Senior Administrative Assistant
William O’Gara, Pannone Lopes Devereaux & O’Gara, Legal Counsel
David Schultz, Legislative Fiscal Analyst

Item No. 2

Public Comment – There were no public comments.

Item No. 3

A motion made by Peter M. Janaros, seconded by Darrell Waldron, passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2022 Board meeting.

Item No. 4

Motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to ratify a change order with Emovis to alter the first notice invoice structure at the Pell Bridge from a single notice to a consolidated notice structure at a one-time cost of \$13,381.00. This change will group multiple transactions from the same license plate into one invoice. The change is estimated to reduce the print house operation by 50% and will reduce the amount of postage, paper, and envelopes utilized under the current invoicing structure. Director Janaros asked if the change order amount was a not-to-exceed figure. Katie Coleman responded that Emovis prepared an exact one-time cost for the change order.

Item No. 5

Discussion – **FY2023 DRAFT Capital Improvement Plan** - Mr. Seabury presented the final draft of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). This draft includes revisions that incorporate the INFRA grant award of \$82.5M, which enables many of the project dates to change to conform with the projected cash flow. Director Janaros commended Mr. Seabury on a job well done. Director Janaros, along with WSP and

RITBA's financial consultants, also reviewed and provided input on the draft. Director Janaros noted that work item #2 for the Mt. Hope Bridge, the wearing surface replacement including deck concrete infill repairs, is slated to begin in July 2025. If grant funding is received in the near future, this item can be addressed sooner. Since the rideability on the bridge deck is poor, and if funding is not awarded, he suggested the Board consider approving a chip sealing procedure which would be a modest cost. Mr. Seabury noted that this would bring rideability to a new baseline, but staff would still need to continue patching potholes on a regular basis. Director Alviti inquired about the status of grants. Director Caron Silveira indicated RITBA should hear word on the Bridge Investment Program submission by the end of February or early March. This submission included the dehumidification of the anchorages and cables and the rehabilitation of the Mt. Hope Bridge deck for a total of \$62.5 million. It was agreed that the CIP did not need a vote as it is a living, constantly-changing document with no monetary component, and all future contracts come before the Board for a vote. In addition, the CIP is a sub-component of the 2018 10-Year Plan, which the Board approved.

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: Replacement of the bearings will take place in the spring when the weather is warmer and best suited for installing. In the meantime, Cardi Corp. is installing shoring on both girders, and they are almost finished installing beam stiffeners for jacking.
- Phase II – AET Final Design- Newport Pell Bridge: Productive progress meetings continue.
- Misc. Steel Repairs – Mt. Hope and Sakonnet: Piasecki Steel has addressed all the steel repairs on the Mt. Hope Bridge for items identified in the Interim Inspection report. In addition, they have installed 44 new scuppers which drain below the structural steel. The project finished under budget by \$300K.
- ATMS Bridge Safety & Video Analytics – Pell & Mt. Hope: Continuing work with Parsons to identify improvements to the cameras that are not reporting properly for the Pell Bridge.
- Load Ratings and Inspections: The load ratings for the Sakonnet River Bridge and the Evans Avenue Bridge are complete. A draft task order is being reviewed to begin a crack monitoring program on the Jamestown Verrazzano Bridge. Will be communicating with Federal Highway on this program and its findings.
- Safety Barrier Feasibility Study: Atkins will begin the feasibility study of safety barriers for the Mt. Hope and Jamestown-Verrazzano Bridges.

CFO Jeff Goulart – Financial Summary Report

- Total revenue was higher than budget by 17% or approximately \$3M. Toll revenue was higher by \$3.4M. However, this was offset by lower gas tax proceeds. YTD operating expenses were lower than budget by 9% or approximately \$500K. Personnel expenses, utilities, insurance, repairs and maintenance, bridge inspections, and transponders were all lower than budget. Contractual services and other supplies and expenses were higher, primarily due to the higher toll revenue generated by bill-by-mail transactions. Katie Coleman's approved item today will reduce this expense in the future. Year to date actual vs. prior year total revenue was higher by 16% or approximately \$2.9M. Toll revenue was higher by \$3M but offset by the lower gas tax revenue of approximately \$100K. Overall expenses are higher than prior year, with the exception of insurance, which is lower by \$6K. The Authority's overall financial position is in great shape. RITBA continues to look for opportunities for revenue enhancements and opportunities to decrease expenses.

Executive Director's Report:

- **Traffic Update** – Director Caron Silveira indicated there is not much change from last month. The tourism traffic has returned. The small deficit in revenue is presumed to be coming from the commuter side. Director Caron Silveira noted that the arrangement with the RI State Police has been beneficial to RITBA. The state police have been patrolling the bridges, monitoring traffic and have been helpful in pulling over the most egregious toll evaders, those with 100 or more tolls unpaid. They are issuing the toll evaders summonses to appear at the Traffic Tribunal. Stephen Cahill, Manager of Safety and Security, has RITBA's traffic management technicians monitoring the presence of the state police on RITBA's bridges. Director Pinch asked how the state police identify the motorists who are violators. Ms. Coleman indicated RITBA provides the state police with a listing of violators by vehicle make, model and license plate, as well as transaction information. They are also provided with a general pattern of timing of these unpaid crossings by each violator. To date, the state police have pulled over at least 15 egregious violators.
- **Tolling Operations** – Director Caron Silveira indicated it is a very busy time for tolling operations. RITBA is currently implementing a new back-office system and is working with the roadside integrator, which captures the tolling data in the lanes. The tolling department is making strides in doing better with phone service for customers. The increase in bill-by-mail transactions due to the conversion to all-electronic tolling has burdened the phone system, the website, and the walk-in center. Efforts are being made to increase E-ZPass accounts, which will reduce the bill-by-mail transactions. In addition to this activity, the new gantry is being designed. Staff is consulting with local architectural firms to assist with the aesthetic aspects of the new gantry. The goal is to have the gantry complement the design of the bridge in an understated way.
 - **E-ZPass Operational Update** – The E-ZPass system is in the process of going live with a new “hub” for exchange of files among E-ZPass entities. This should take place by Memorial Day. Up until now, all of the participating agencies have had to exchange files with one another. The new hub will make it much easier to share files.
- **Federal Funding Requests** –
 - **Bridge Investment Program** – As stated earlier, RITBA is awaiting word on this submission and should hear by the end of February or early March. The Governor's office has been in touch with USDOT and has had a meeting with the Secretary of Transportation to stress the importance of the need for the rehabilitation of the Mt. Hope Bridge, both the dehumidification of the cables and anchorages and the re-decking of the bridge.

Director Janaros inquired about the status of funding for the feasibility study for safety barriers. Director Caron Silveira indicated the Governor's budget does not have additional funds built in for the study. Director Caron Silveira is due to meet this week with both Senator DiPalma and Representative Solomon, who sponsored barrier study bills, and she expects they will be pursuing additional funding so that the Pell Bridge can be included in the study.

- **Next Board Meeting** – February 15, 2023

At approximately 9:00 a.m. there was a motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Peter M. Janaros, and passed unanimously to convene into executive session, pursuant to RI General Laws § 42-46-5 (a) (2) to discuss the truck tolling litigation.

At approximately 9:33 a.m. there was a motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Peter Alviti, Jr., and passed unanimously to reconvene into open session.

Chair Salome stated RITBA convened into executive session pursuant to RI General Laws § 42-46-5 (a) (2) to discuss the truck tolling litigation. No votes were taken. Motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Peter Alviti, Jr., and passed unanimously to seal the minutes.

A motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Peter Alviti, Jr., passed unanimously to adjourn the public meeting at 9:34 a.m.

Lori Caron Silveira
Secretary