

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 April 12, 2023.

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 A.M. by Vice Chair, Darrell Waldron.

Members Present

Darrell Waldron, Vice Chair
Peter M. Janaros, P.E.
Karen D. Pinch
Peter Alviti, Jr., P.E., Ex Officio

Members Absent:

James K. Salome, Chair

Invited Guests:

Lori Caron Silveira, Executive Director
Eric Seabury, Director of Engineering
Jamie Swanberg, Manager 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
William O’Gara, Pannone Lopes Devereaux & O’Gara, Legal Counsel
Marianne Durgin, Executive Assistant to the Director
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 Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the March 15, 2023 Board meeting and the minutes of the Executive Session of the March 15, 2023 Board meeting.

Item No. 4

Motion by Karen D. Pinch, seconded by Peter M. Janaros, passed unanimously to approve of a purchase order with J.H. Lynch & Sons, Inc. in the amount not to exceed \$36,875.00 to load, relocate, place, and stack 532 concrete barriers to the Lindsay laydown yard in Milford, CT. Three bids were received in response to an advertised Information for Bid (IFB), and Lynch’s bid was the lowest. The concrete barriers were leased from Lindsay in connection with RITBA Contract 19-03, Newport Pell Bridge Deck Rehabilitation. The lease agreement did not include transportation costs. RITBA has already returned the first 900 pieces of the 1,432 leased for the 19-03 project.

Item No. 5

Motion by Peter M. Janaros, seconded by Peter Alviti, Jr., passed unanimously to approve of a purchase order for Triple G Scaffold Services in the amount of \$19,950.00 for rental, delivery, assembly, and dismantling of scaffolding for one month duration. Also approved was authorization to expend up to an additional \$1,720 to cover up to one additional month of scaffolding, if necessary. Scaffolding is needed

for RITBA painters to continue painting steel pier bents on the Mount Hope Bridge that are inaccessible due to the terrain. Triple G Scaffold Services' bid was the lowest of three received in response to an advertised IFB.

Item No. 6

Motion by Peter M. Janaros, seconded by Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to approve of a task order for AI Engineers in the amount not to exceed \$202,227.00 for a crack monitoring plan for the Jamestown-Verrazzano Bridge to include special inspection and crack monitoring for a period of two years. Four of the prequalified On-Call Infrastructure Professional Services consultants responded to RITBA's solicitation for cost proposals and AI Engineers submitted the lowest proposal. A load rating was performed on the bridge in March 2023, and it showed shear cracking. The current Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) load rating manual does not allow for shear cracks. When the bridge was designed, the approved design procedure at the time allowed for shear cracking. FHWA is conducting a study to address these types of structures, but the results will not be available soon. Until then, FHWA has approved a plan of action to monitor cracks within the identified spans, control overweight vehicles, and establish thresholds to trigger remedial actions.

Item No. 7

Motion by Karen D. Pinch, seconded by Peter M. Janaros, passed unanimously to approve of the last one-year extension for three tolling consultants under Contract 19-6 - On-Call Toll Consulting Services: Stantec Consulting Services, Inc., WSP USA Inc., and Gannett Fleming, Inc. A new on-call RFQ and contracts will be issued in Summer 2023.

Director of Engineering Eric Seabury - Capital Projects Status Report:

- Newport Pell Bridge Pier 5W Girder Temporary Shoring and Bearing Removal and Replacement: Meeting with Cardi to be held April 13th to discuss mobilizing on site. Jacking and replacement of bearings are to take place in the coming weeks now that the weather is moderate.
- Phase II – AET Final Design- Newport Pell Bridge: 75% design has been completed. Bi-weekly meetings are taking place and the project remains on schedule.
- Mt. Hope Bridge Suspension Cables & Anchorages Investigation and Dehumidification: The project is in design, working towards a 30% progress submission. AECOM was on the bridge yesterday walking the cables and looking at the anchorages.
- ATMS Bridge Safety & Video Analytics – Pell & Mt. Hope: Continued testing with the consultant, Parsons, is taking place. There are mixed results, some success, but there are still issues that are being worked through. The system is operational but not fully tested and accepted.
- Safety Barrier Feasibility Study: The consultant, Atkins, has its team doing a full walk of both the Mt. Hope and the Jamestown Verrazzano Bridges to begin their feasibility analyses for safety barriers on these bridges.
- Load Ratings & Inspections: The load ratings have been completed, waiting for the final reports and approval of the crack monitoring plan.

CFO Jeff Goulart – Financial Summary Report: Overall revenue was higher than budget by \$6.0M, or 23%. Toll revenue was higher by \$6.7M and was partially offset by lower gas tax proceeds of \$0.7M, or 6%. Year to date operating expenses were lower than budget by \$0.6M, resulting in operating profit exceeding budget by \$6.6M. The operating expenses that were higher than budget have been a direct result of higher revenue, specifically the bill-by-mail transactions. These expenses include postage, supplies (envelopes and paper) and credit card fees. The consolidated invoice structure, recently approved by the Board, should reduce these costs moving forward. The significant operating expense line item that is lower than

budget is bridge inspections. This is due to a mix of the timing of the expenses and the overall lower cost of task orders as a result of seeking multiple bids for specific inspections. Preliminary March numbers also look to be positive when compared to budget and for March, traffic was 2% higher than 2022 and came in at 99% of pre-Covid levels. For the first 10 days of April, traffic has trended at 102% of 2022 levels. The Authority continues to look for areas to reduce expenses. As an example, RITBA pays nearly \$9,600 for the phone service in the tower elevators at the Newport Pell Bridge. Working with the phone consultant, a plan of action has been developed to reduce this cost by 90%.

Executive Director's Report:

- **Toll Revenue Bond Rating Upgrade** – RITBA's toll revenue bond rating was upgraded by Fitch from 'A-' to 'A.' Director Caron Silveira reported that the RITBA team did a great job working with Maureen Gurghigian, from Hilltop Securities. Fitch had also indicated that the bond "outlook" rating could go from 'stable' to 'positive.' It stayed at 'stable,' and the team will work to move it to 'positive' in the next rating review. Director Caron Silveira referenced a letter provided to each Board member that was sent to the House Finance Chairman and Committee, informing them of the toll revenue bond rating upgrade. Director Janaros inquired if the recent grant award of \$82M had influenced the rating in any way. Director Caron Silveira answered that she believes it did play a factor, in that the availability of the grant funding frees up other funds within the RITBA capital plan. Mr. Goulart concurred, noting that the federal grant award helped improve the Authority's debt coverage ratios.
- **Tolling Operations - Pilot Program – Evening Hours** – The Authority has been listening to its customers, motorists, and host community elected officials who have asked for additional customer friendly hours in the E-ZPass walk-in center. RITBA opened the E-ZPass walk-in for the hours of 4 pm to 7 pm on two consecutive Thursday evenings in the month of March and had a good response. Staff are still analyzing the results of the pilot program and are exploring other options to create additional customer friendly hours. One of the primary customer bases represented in those two evenings was commercial account holders.
- **Federal Funding** – The Authority is still waiting for the results of the Bridge Investment Program submission. The Authority has submitted for the Mt. Hope Bridge dehumidification project and the rehabilitation of the decking on the Mt. Hope Bridge as a bundled project. The office of the US Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg may be awaiting review of the submission by the President before awards are made. Director Caron Silveira, Mr. Goulart and Mr. Seabury recently appeared before RI Senate Finance and presented with the Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act (IIJA) task force on federal funding received at RITBA. The task force is charged with the responsibility of coordinating the federal funding projects in the state of RI. RITBA reported on its recently awarded \$82M in federal funding projects and on its remaining submissions awaiting review at the federal level. Senator DiPalma is making certain that all Rhode Islanders are made aware of what monies have been awarded for transportation projects in the state and how the funding will be spent.
- **General Assembly – 2023 Session** - A bill RITBA submitted to the General Assembly is pending, and a companion bill has also been submitted in the Senate to allow motorists 30 days to pay a toll invoice instead of 14. It will need a Sub A to also change the second notice from 45 days to 60 days. Representative Finkelman of Jamestown is the lead sponsor of the bill, and the Aquidneck Island contingent has offered their support. With delays in mail deliveries, customers being away on vacation, and it being standard

industry practice to give 30 days to pay an invoice, the Authority is hoping to extend the payment time from 14 to 30 days. This will also allow RITBA's customer service representatives to focus on customers who have more complicated tolling issues.

- **State of the State's Bridges – Legislators** – The second annual State of the State's Bridges took place at the Authority on March 21st. The legislators from RITBA's host communities, along with representatives of the leadership of the General Assembly, came to hear about current capital improvement projects for the bridges and other Authority activities. In addition, the FHWA bridge engineer for this region, Anthony Rotondo, also attended. The Authority also had a visit on April 4th from the new FHWA Regional Director Derek Torrey and Mr. Rotondo. The meeting with Mr. Torrey and Mr. Rotondo provided an opportunity to establish a good working relationship as RITBA undertakes its federally funded projects. Messrs. Torrey and Rotondo were most helpful, offering their assistance and guidance in the future for any needs that may arise.

A motion by Peter M. Janaros, seconded by Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to adjourn the public meeting at 8:52 a.m.

Lori Caron Silveira
Secretary