

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 August 23, 2023.

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

Members Present

James K. Salome, Chair
Darrell Waldron, Vice Chair
Peter Alviti, 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, Director of Engineering
Kathryn Coleman, Director of Tolling Operations
Jeffrey Goulart, Chief Financial Officer
Stephen Cahill, Manager of Safety and Security
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
Bari Freeman, Executive Director Bike Newport

Item No. 2

Public Comment – Bari Freeman, Executive Director, Bike Newport addressed the Board of Directors advocating for bicycle access on the Jamestown Verrazzano, Newport Pell, and Mount Hope Bridges. Ms. Freeman shared a document she had prepared which outlined options for multimodal access to the bridges. Ms. Samira Hakki also attended the public comment portion of the meeting and expressed her support for Ms. Freeman’s recommendations.

Chair Salome thanked Ms. Freeman for her presentation and for the handout and indicated the Board will take her recommendations into consideration.

Chair Salome commended Frank Flowers, Manager of Maintenance, for the excellent work the maintenance staff has done in maintaining the Authority’s assets.

Item No. 3

A motion made by Karen D. Pinch, seconded by Darrell Waldron, passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2023 Board meeting.

Item No. 4

Motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Peter Alviti, Jr., passed unanimously to approve a budget supplement in the amount not to exceed \$64,200 to Stantec’s task order (under Contract 19-6) for consulting services for the new All-Electronic Tolling toll collection system. The additional funding will allow Stantec to continue to assist RTIBA with the implementation and migration to the new gantry. A

second full procurement phase resulted in additional time utilized and Stantec also assisted in evaluating four vendor bids in each procurement phase while the original estimate was for three vendor bids. Director Alviti asked if Stantec would be providing the technical expertise of the proposed work and if RITBA staff would be supervising and overseeing its implementation. Ms. Coleman answered yes and that RITBA has an in-house lane technician.

Item No. 5

Motion by Peter M. Janaros, seconded by Darrell Waldron, passed unanimously to approve a budget supplement in the not to exceed amount of \$53,639 to Modjeski and Masters' (M&M) task order for load rating work of the Sakonnet River and Evans Avenue Bridges. In August 2022 the Board approved a task order with M&M for this work in the not to exceed amount of \$87,777. During the load rating, several unanticipated issues related to structural bracing details arose. Several iterations of load rating analyses had to be performed. Modifications of the load rating manual also prompted additional work to be performed. RITBA staff reviewed the proposed task order amendment and found it reasonable considering the associated extra work that was required. Director Janaros noted he was concerned because M&M proceeded with the work prior to taking note of extra hours involved that exceeded the initial task order budget. Mr. Seabury indicated he has notified M&M in writing that no future work can proceed without prior approval by the Board of Directors. Director Alviti asked if the issue with the bracing had to do with the new regulations in the load rating manual. Mr. Seabury replied that the bracing issue had to do with the original design of the Bridge. Director Alviti asked Mr. Seabury to investigate whether there may be any recourse with the original design consultant to make a claim for the additional costs for this work. Director Pinch inquired if the Authority has done work with M&M in the past, and if overages occurred. Mr. Seabury indicated he is only aware that the consultant performed a bridge inspection on Pell several years back. This is the first experience Mr. Seabury has had with M&M.

Item No. 6

Motion by Peter M. Janaros, seconded by Darrell Waldron, passed unanimously to approve a budget supplement in the not to exceed amount of \$18,670.94 to Modjeski and Masters' (M&M) task order for load rating work of the Mount Hope Bridge. In August 2022 the Board approved a task order with M&M for this work in the not to exceed amount of \$358,937.00. During the load rating, several unanticipated issues occurred as a result of the new load rating manual's guidelines. As in the previous item, M&M had to perform additional work to analyze the bridge further and to sort through the issues. RITBA staff reviewed the proposed task order amendment and found it reasonable. Director Alviti inquired about the outcome of the load rating of the Sakonnet River Bridge. Mr. Seabury noted M&M was able to run several iterations, by theoretically eliminating some of the cross braces from the analysis and eventually was able to get all the legal loads to rate. No posting was required on that bridge; it remained in the same load carrying capacity as before. Mount Hope posted at 36 tons for 6 axles or more. Analysis from recent RIDOT traffic counts showed that it is unlikely the bridge will see more than one truck at 6 axles or more per day if at all.

Item No. 7

Motion by Peter Alviti, Jr., seconded by Peter M. Janaros, passed unanimously to approve a task order for Jacobs Engineering Group, Inc. (Jacobs) to perform the routine inspections of the Newport Pell Bridge and Structure E at a cost not to exceed \$725,349. RITBA solicited cost proposals from seven prequalified On-Call Infrastructure Professional Services consultants and received four proposals. Mr. Seabury noted WSP has performed the inspections for nearly the past twenty years except for one inspection by M&M. This will be an entirely fresh look at the bridge by Jacobs, which is welcomed.

Item No. 8

Motion by Peter Alviti, Jr., seconded by Darrell Waldron, passed unanimously to approve a purchase order in the not to exceed amount of \$27,450, plus a contingency in the not to exceed amount of \$5,000 for D'Ambra Construction Co., Inc. (D'Ambra) to perform repair of a sinkhole discovered underneath pavement near the Tiverton boat ramp and fishing pier facility under the Sakonnet River Bridge. D'Ambra will perform the required pipe repair, restoration of the fill, and asphalt re-surface.

Item No. 9

Motion by Peter Alviti, Jr., seconded by Darrell Waldron, passed unanimously to approve a task order in the not to exceed amount of \$889,946.00 for the consultant Atkins to perform a safety barrier feasibility study for the Newport Pell and Sakonnet River Bridges. The RI General Assembly has budgeted \$750,000.00 for this study and RITBA will supplement the State's funding. The Authority has previously tasked Atkins to perform a safety barrier feasibility study of the Jamestown Verrazzano and Mount Hope Bridges. Director Alviti asked if the scope of the new task order would include whether the bridges are suitable for having barriers, what kind of barriers would be allowed on the bridges, and if a cost analysis will be performed. Mr. Seabury replied yes to all the above. Director Janaros expressed concern about the supplement that will be funded by the Authority. He feels the matter of conducting a barrier feasibility study is a statewide issue and is concerned that supplementing the State's funds with toll revenue from the Authority may set a precedent. He does not want toll payers to bear the cost. Director Caron Silveira noted she and RITBA Chief Financial Officer Jeff Goulart consulted with bond counsel to discuss the matter to be certain the correct decisions are made. The Authority would need to supplement the funding provided by the State in the rough amount of \$140K. Critical to the Authority's mission is an examination of what would be feasible to put on the bridges, so that no type of barrier would affect the integrity of the bridges. Also, of critical importance is where the supplemental funds would be taken from, bond revenue, gas tax revenue, or toll revenue. The supplemental funding will be taken from the most appropriate source. Director Alviti agreed with Director Janaros that the barrier study is a statewide issue, however, he stated the bridges are also a statewide issue. He noted the bridges are here to support the statewide economy and they are supported in part by statewide gas tax and some of the bond repayment comes from revenue from the gas tax, therefore at least two of the three funding sources of revenue are available to support a statewide matter and are not particular to toll payers. Director Janaros wanted the record to state that while he agrees that supplemental funding from the Authority for the feasibility study is an appropriate use of funds, he does not feel future expenditures from capital funds would be an appropriate use for matters of this type.

Item No. 10

Motion by Peter M. Janaros, seconded by Peter Alviti, Jr., passed unanimously to approve the change of the white necklace lighting on the Newport Pell and Mount Hope Bridges to red, white, and blue each year from Memorial Day through the month of July. Lighting the two suspension bridges red, white, and blue during this timeframe encompasses both Memorial Day and the July 4th holidays. There are costs (approximately \$3K) associated with changing the lights to our nation's colors and then back again, including labor, materials, and the services of an electrical contractor so the policy will be a cost-effective measure. The policy will also provide the public with clear expectations for the years ahead. Director Janaros noted as an Aquidneck Island resident he knows it has been received well and he feels it appropriate the Board set a policy. Director Alviti asked if the bulbs are incandescent lights. Frank Flowers, Manager of Maintenance indicated they are LED lights. He asked if the Authority has looked into making modifications to have a controller installed. Mr. Flowers said the cost was researched for the Mount Hope Bridge and it is approximately \$750K. Mr. Seabury said that while the dehumidification projects of both the Mount Hope and Pell Bridges will be occurring, adding this component into the specifications for the projects will be considered. Necklace lights will have to come apart as part of the

dehumidification process, so it makes sense to consider some kind of programmable system at that time. Director Alviti also mentioned that perhaps it would be reasonable to consider charging fees if there were requests from the public to have the lights changed, which would offset the cost.

Item No. 11

Motion by Peter Alviti, Jr., seconded by Darrell Waldron, passed unanimously to approve the terms and conditions of a new 3-year CBA with USAW-RI, the union that represents RITBA's maintenance employees, traffic management technicians, and image review clerks. Wage increases are 3/2.5/2.5, which is in line with other public and quasi-public contracts. Other operational changes will benefit both parties. The union has ratified the CBA. Legal counsel has reviewed the CBA and approves.

Item No. 12

Motion by Peter M. Janaros, seconded by Peter Alviti, Jr., passed unanimously to approve negotiating a lease with OSHEAN for fiber on the Newport Pell Bridge and/or Mount Hope Bridge. Instead of leasing the fiber for a negotiated sum, RITBA would receive services that are currently costing the Authority between \$50,000 and \$90,000 a year. Upon agreement of a negotiated lease, Mr. Goulart will bring it to the Board for approval. Director Alviti expressed concern that the agreement might not allow for competition by other companies to access fiber to provide the Aquidneck Island community options for access to high speed internet and broadband services. Mr. Seabury and Mr. Goulart assured the Board that there is plenty of fiber available for other companies to consider leasing and opportunity for companies to install their own fiber over the bridges.

Item No. 13

Motion by Peter Alviti, Jr., seconded by Peter M. Janaros, passed unanimously to approve the architectural design and implementation of the new gantry concept by Newport Collaborative Architects (NCA) featuring the colors of the Pell Bridge and ocean. NCA is a subconsultant to WSP who has set the parameters regarding the structural design and basic geometry, framework, and location of the structure. RITBA staff presented NCA's conceptual designs to the RITBA Board at the June 20th meeting for consideration and discussion. The other conceptual design that was presented featured a nautical flag theme which denotes "Welcome to Newport" through the nautical flags. Director Caron Silveira noted RITBA staff felt the nautical theme, featuring incredible artistic elements, might distract from safe driving. In addition, staff recommend the gantry serve its sole purpose, to collect tolls, and therefore it should not have any wording on it that might distract drivers. Director Caron Silveira noted the "art deco" signing at the old toll plaza may be repurposed on the land adjacent to the Authority's offices.

Director of Engineering Eric Seabury - Capital Projects Status Report:

- Phase II – AET Final Design Newport Pell Bridge: Currently out to bid and bids will be opened on August 30th.
- Mt. Hope Bridge Suspension Cables & Anchorages Investigation and Dehumidification: The project is in design, working towards a 30% progress submission. Work completed includes field inspections, data collection, and preparation of a bid package for the air flow test on the cables.
- Compression Link Phase I Work – Newport Pell: AETNA has mobilized. Equipment has been evaluated and reconditioned, materials have been ordered, and the quick deck assembly has been approved. The remaining work includes installing the quick deck and jacking, removing pin nuts and evaluating the condition. Mr. Seabury anticipates coming to the Board to seek additional funds to complete this project.
- Safety Barrier Feasibility Study: The study is for the Mount Hope and Jamestown Verrazzano Bridges. Atkins has provided a matrix of available barrier types. Further structural design analyses of the bridges are ongoing.

Director Alviti asked if there are any open and active contracts with Cardi Corporation. Mr. Seabury replied, no. The Authority had Cardi working on the bearing replacement on Pier 5W and the project is complete and closed out.

Executive Director's Report:

- **Federal Funding PROTECT Grant** - Director Caron Silveira noted the submission to the PROTECT grant is seeking the balance of funding for the Mount Hope Bridge Dehumidification project. The Authority has secured \$10 million in congressionally directed funding to begin the project, and she reiterated the project is underway. Director Caron Silveira also announced the Authority has won the 2023 Providence Business News award for innovative projects in the government sector for its Mount Hope Dehumidification project.
- **Customer Service** – The Authority continues to be attentive to customer service needs. Director Caron Silveira will be speaking with WPRO and WADK to get the word out that the E-ZPass Walk-In Center will be open two upcoming Thursday evenings, August 24th and 31st from 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. to service in-person customers in addition to the regular walk-in center hours of Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- **New Systems**
 - **E-ZPass Hub** – The Hub will allow participating agencies to exchange files and share data. The system continues to grow. The Gordie Howe International Bridge will become a member of the E-ZPass system.
 - **Back Office & Lane Integration** – The engineering and construction aspects of the new gantry are being coordinated with the software and new tolling systems.
- **Next Board Meeting – September 20, 2023** – Director Caron Silveira indicated the consensus is for Board meetings to continue to remain at the current start time of 8:30 a.m. This can be revisited in the future.

A motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to adjourn the public meeting at 9:45 a.m.

Lori Caron Silveira
Secretary