

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 December 13, 2023.

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The meeting was called to order at 8:59 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, 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  
Jeffrey Wiggin, Assistant Project Manager  
Jamie Swanberg, Manager of Tolling Operations

**Item No. 2**

**Public Comment** – There were no public comments.

**Item No. 3**

A motion made by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the October 18, 2023 Board meeting.

**Item No. 4**

Motion by Peter M. Janaros, seconded by Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to qualify seven firms as On-Call Tolling Consultants for Contract 23-19 - On-Call Toll Consulting Services: Gannett Fleming, HDR, Jacobs, Milligan Partners, RK&K, Stantec, and WSP. The firms will be called upon for services related to toll system planning, tolling and traffic studies, financial and operation analysis, toll system design, review and testing, violation enforcement, and future technical solutions. Task Orders will be brought to the Board for approval as services are needed.

**Item No. 5**

Motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to approve a six-month extension to Contract 11-13 with Emovis beginning December 24, 2023. This is for on-going E-ZPass Back Office maintenance and support while the new back-office system is being designed and implemented. Ms. Coleman indicated the go-live date for the new back-office is expected to be sometime in January or February. Director Janaros asked about the financial effect. Ms. Coleman stated the current monthly fee will be the same for the period of the contract extension, \$57,907.50. Director Caron Silveira noted the terms of the contract extension have been a high priority in her discussions with Emovis. This is an extension of a contract that involved RIDOT’s tolling system. The original contract included fourteen

tolling points, thirteen of which were RIDOT tolling points and just one being a RITBA tolling point. The terms and conditions of the contract extension needed to be modified to extend the contract just for RITBA's needs. The Authority has reached an agreement with Emovis on the terms and conditions and this contract extension will cover the Authority until the new back-office system is ready to go live. Director Janaros asked if RIDOT has paid for some of the costs. Director Caron Silveira stated RIDOT continued to pay its share of the monthly cost through June 2023 after RIDOT truck tolls were suspended by Judge Smith in September 2022. There will be a modest increase in the monthly fee for RITBA once the new back-office system goes live and the new contract begins. The system will include improvements and new features.

#### **Item No. 6**

Motion by Peter M. Janaros, seconded by Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to approve an amendment to the construction contract with AETNA Bridge Company for the jacking installation and evaluation of a compression link on the Newport Pell Bridge in the additional amount not to exceed \$100,000.00 for a total revised contract amount not to exceed \$300,000.00. Jacking and removal of the nut on the compression link pin has been completed. The project involves the use of a QuikDeck scaffolding system. As the equipment may need to be used for several additional months, the RITBA team will be evaluating the cost benefit of purchasing the QuikDeck versus continuing to rent it. Mr. Seabury will revisit this with the Board once a recommendation has been determined. Director Janaros noted the work to date will reveal what the issue is and what is needed to fix it. Mr. Seabury noted WSP is in the process of preparing a task order proposal for the design of the fix.

#### **Item No. 7**

Motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to qualify the following legal firms for on-call legal services for a five-year term to be used at the discretion of the Executive Director: Hawkins Delafield & Wood LLP, Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C., Moses Ryan LTD, Pannone Lopes Devereaux & O'Gara LLC, Rodio & Ursillo, LTD and Taft & McSally LLP. In July 2023, the Authority issued an RFP for on-call legal services and six firms submitted proposals. In November, interviews were conducted with all six firms, and staff recommended qualifying all six for on-call legal services, to be engaged as needed.

#### **Item No. 8**

Motion by Karen D. Pinch, seconded by Darrell Waldron, passed unanimously to qualify Hilltop Securities Inc., and PFM Financial Advisors LLC for on-call financial advisory services for a five-year term to be used at the discretion of the Executive Director. In August 2023, the Authority issued an RFP for financial advisory services and two firms submitted proposals. In November, interviews were conducted with the two firms and staff recommended qualifying both firms for on-call financial advisory services. Director Janaros noted that PFM Financial Advisors' rate is higher. Mr. Goulart stated he has had experience with PFM and found them to be very competent. Chair Salome noted he has had experience collaborating with both firms and found them both to be highly competent.

#### **Director of Engineering Eric Seabury - Capital Projects Status Report:**

- *Phase II – AET Construction - Newport Pell Bridge:* The architectural design of the new gantry was the last remaining piece to be addressed. RITBA received a proposal for the design with a seven-digit figure. Based on the cost, staff have decided to pause and not move forward at this time as the cost cannot be justified. Mr. Seabury noted it is truly a separate part of the project and, if desired, can be revisited at a later date. In other aspects of the project, during the Structure E median demolition, the contractor discovered that an overlay was done on the deck in the 1980s, and it was performed improperly. The decision has been made to replace the bridge deck rather than try to rehabilitate it. It will be done in phases so the opening of the new gantry slated for April with two lanes open in each direction will stay on track. Everything else with the project has

gone according to schedule, and Mr. Seabury indicated Lynch, the contractor, has been a pleasure to work with. Director Janaros asked if the structural steel is sound on the bridge. Mr. Seabury said it is in great condition. Director Janaros requested staff take an aerial photo of the bridge deck with the use of a drone so the Board can get a better understanding of the area in need of replacement.

- **Mt. Hope Bridge Suspension Cables & Anchorages Investigation and Dehumidification:** Bids for the cable air flow test have been opened. The air flow test will give the consultant the information needed to finish the design work for the dehumidification project. The bids came in higher than anticipated. The low bid was \$1.47M, which was approximately twice what had been anticipated. RITBA staff met with the low bidder, Kiewit Construction, and discussed areas where costs could be cut back. Several areas have been identified; one being considered is having RITBA take charge of providing traffic control. The project will not be rebid as staff is confident that Kiewit will be able to reduce some of the project costs where RITBA can self-perform some of the work. Director Janaros asked if any work could be performed at night. Mr. Seabury answered that it was discussed, but determined not advisable as it would not be safe to work on the cables in the dark.
- **Safety Barrier Feasibility Study:** The safety barrier feasibility study is moving forward on all four bridges. RITBA has regular meetings with Atkins, the consultant, to get updates.

**CFO Jeff Goulart – Financial Summary Report:** October YTD Financial Statement Notes – Actual vs. Budget material variance analysis: Total revenue exceeded budget by \$2.3M or 15%, due to higher toll revenue as gas tax proceeds were flat to budget. Operating expenses were lower than budget by 7% or \$300K. Personnel expenses, utilities, contractual services, and insurance were all lower, while supplies and expenses, repairs and maintenance, and bridge inspections were higher. Year to Date Actual vs. Prior Year: Revenue was higher by 6% or approximately \$1.0M, primarily due to the higher toll revenue, partially offset by lower gas tax proceeds. Operating expenses were lower than prior year by 1%. Utilities, contractual services, supplies and expenses, and bridge inspection were lower but partially offset by a higher personnel cost, insurance and repairs, and maintenance costs. Overall, the Authority has performed well this fiscal year and last year. Director Caron Silveira noted that transponder revenue will go up this month as customers are coming in to open new accounts in response to the closing of the Washington Street Bridge. The Authority is adding additional customer service hours. The E-ZPass walk-in center will be open from 1 pm to 6 pm on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. Chair Salome asked if staff could consider adding Saturday hours for customers who are working and unable to get to the office during the week.

#### **Executive Director’s Report:**

- **Plaza Road Design Work** – The project is moving along very well. As Mr. Seabury noted, Lynch is on schedule. Director Caron Silveira stated she has stressed the importance of the project being completed on time to ensure there will be no disruption to tourism, hospitality, etc. at the start of the busy season, come Memorial Day weekend. Most recently, a company from NH had scheduled a brief period over two days to deliver pieces of median barrier directly to the work zone that are necessary for the project. This necessitated a few minutes of closure in the work zone. Staff monitored the delivery to keep disruption to travel to a minimum.
- **Speeding and Other Safety Issues** - The Authority has been focused on this issue. Director Caron Silveira and staff have met with Lt. LeValley of the Wickford Barracks. The Authority has noticed an increased presence of the State Police. They are assisting with monitoring the Mt. Hope Bridge to ensure no overweight vehicles are crossing it. Director Caron Silveira has also reached out to the Truckers Association to remind them that the overweight trucks must only use the Sakonnet River Bridge, not the Mt. Hope Bridge. As the new session of the General Assembly will open in January, the Authority will look to see if there is anything that can be done in terms of addressing speeding on the bridges. Director Caron Silveira noted the silver lining with the current road design project is that motorists are keeping speed down in the work zone area.

- **Federal Funding-** Director Caron Silveira noted the Authority is still waiting for word on the PROTECT grant submission. With a nearly 100-year-old Mt. Hope Bridge, the Authority needs the additional funds to complete the dehumidification project. Staff anticipates getting word on the submission no later than February 1.
- **Next Board Meeting** – January 24, 2024.

Chair Salome thanked everyone and wished all a Happy Holiday. A motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Peter M. Janaros, passed unanimously to adjourn the public meeting at 9:24 a.m.

**Lori Caron Silveira**  
**Secretary**