

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 24, 2024.

The meeting was called to order at 8:38 A.M. by Chair, James K. Salome. Director Waldron joined the meeting at 8:40 am.

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
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
Brian Lamoureux, 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
Bernie Kalus, PE, Senior Vice President, WSP

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 December 13, 2023 Board meeting.

Item No. 4

Motion by Peter Alviti, Jr., seconded by Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to approve a purchase order in the amount of \$9,000 for Partners Technology to build a Proof of Concept (POC) to demonstrate the updated phone system’s IVR (Interactive Voice Response) ability to handle credit card payments via tokenized merchant services for the new E-ZPass back-office. This will remove RITBA staff from obtaining credit card information directly from the customer, thus enhancing the security of the system. Director Janaros inquired about the dollar value set at a flat amount. He pointed out the engineering task orders have a detailed itemization of tasks and fees with a not to exceed value. The Authority pays only for the services incurred. Ms. Coleman responded that she believes the construction service contracts are structured much differently than IT related task services. A set dollar amount is provided by the IT vendor for the service with a known base rate per hour. When Partners Technology was qualified as RITBA’s on-call consultant, the rate was set at \$225 per hour, which is lower than most IT vendors. Chair Salome asked if the \$9K is a not to exceed amount. Ms. Coleman indicated it is the exact amount for the services and she is confident the hours estimated are needed and will be used. Director Alviti asked what happens if the consultant goes over the amount of time set for the task. Ms. Coleman responded it is a fixed price,

and would not change. Chair Salome noted that if the consultant did work additional hours, the fee would not exceed what was approved. Director Janaros asked if this approach is in accordance with RITBA's procurement regulations. Director Janaros also wanted to be certain the Authority was not engaging a sole source. Mr. Goulart noted the Authority issued an RFP for phone services and received two proposals. Partners Technology was the more qualified firm. The company has recently saved the Authority close to \$10K on the Pell Bridge elevator phones. Mr. Goulart concurred with Ms. Coleman that the \$225 rate per hour is reasonable. Director Alviti asked if the RFP was evaluated on a scoring system. Mr. Goulart responded yes, the RFP was evaluated as a scored best value, and it is an approved procurement method in the State of RI. Director Janaros asked for confirmation that this is within RITBA's procurement policy. Mr. Goulart confirmed that it is. Lastly, Director Pinch noted the IT vendor has likely performed the task regularly, knows the time it will take, and knows there will not be unknowns, as there might be in a construction project.

Item No. 5

Motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to approve a task order for Partners Technology to migrate RITBA's current phone system workflow to the new back-office requirements at a cost of \$29,700. The new back-office requires many updates to the E-ZPass phone Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. The updates are inclusive of authenticating customer logins, updating customer accounts, transferring calls to a secure tokenization system for credit card processing, screen popping customer's account information, and processing self-service invoice account payments. Director Caron Silveira noted the secure tokenization system is similar to the system Lifespan uses when a customer calls to make a payment. The system lets the customer service representative step away from the transaction while the customer securely makes their payment and then the representative returns to the call. This method also enhances RITBA's cyber security protection.

Item No. 6

Motion by Karen D. Pinch, seconded by Darrell Waldron, passed unanimously to approve a task order with Emovis to perform professional services for RITBA's back-office support system at a cost of \$63,698 per month. The contract has been negotiated to extend from a 5-year base contract to a 6-year base contract guaranteed, in addition to a yearly CPI-U, Northeast region, annual adjustment after the first year of the contract. These are renegotiated terms with Emovis inclusive of reducing operations and maintenance costs for Contract 21-06, Customer Service Back-Office Support System as the RIDOT tolling program has ceased. The original contract was inclusive of both RITBA and RIDOT tolling back-office and invoicing systems. Director Caron Silveira noted the team worked hard in the negotiations to get the RIDOT tolling program services removed from the contract moving forward. The terms were negotiated to zero. Ms. Coleman indicated RITBA is grateful to Emovis for working with RITBA to come to these terms.

Item No. 7

Motion by Peter M. Janaros, seconded by Peter Alviti, Jr., passed unanimously to approve a construction contract with Kiewit Infrastructure Company (Kiewit) to perform the Mount Hope Bridge Main Cable Trial Blow Test at a cost not to exceed \$1,469,460. RITBA is negotiating with Kiewit to reduce costs by approximately \$200K by offering RITBA maintenance support in the form of RITBA staff providing traffic control and the use of RITBA's under-bridge inspection equipment. The blow test is part of the design of the Mount Hope Bridge Cables and Anchorages Dehumidification project. Three bids were received, and Kiewit was the apparent low bidder. The original estimate for this work set by RITBA's design consultant, AECOM, was \$600K. Subsequently, it was determined through recent research of other bridges performing this test, that the concept of using injection and exhaust sleeves is the most effective means to perform the test. The addition of the use of injection and exhaust sleeves caused the bid amount to be higher than originally estimated. Chair Salome asked if the Authority has had experience working with Kiewit. Mr. Wiggin responded it had not. He indicated Kiewit is a large construction engineering company

with much experience. Director Janaros noted Kiewit was one of the partners involved in building the Jamestown Verrazzano Bridge. Director Alviti stated Kiewit is a very reputable company. Director Alviti inquired about AECOM's original estimate being just \$600K for the work. Mr. Wiggin noted that the use of the injection and exhaust sleeves is new in the industry and because of the recent findings from the blow test performed at the Benjamin Franklin Bridge, which included the use of injection and exhaust sleeves, AECOM recommends using this procedure, thus increasing the cost. Besides getting a flow report, a flow rate will also be provided. The difference in cost is covered in the Authority's budget for the project. Chair Salome inquired about how long the test will take. Mr. Wiggin indicated it will take eleven weeks, beginning in March. Director Caron Silveira noted she and Mr. Seabury will be visiting the Benjamin Franklin Bridge in the coming week. She also noted she will be reaching out to all stakeholders to inform them of the impact of the work being planned. It will run approximately 55 days, with one lane at a time crossing the bridge, Monday – Thursday, 9 am to 3 pm and Friday, 9 am – 1pm. This should not impact the commuting hours. The work cannot be performed at night or on Saturdays. It is due to be completed by Roger Williams University's commencement date. Director Alviti inquired if a traffic analysis has been conducted to estimate wait times for the project. Mr. Wiggin indicated the Authority will rely on its in-house historical data with similar lane closures. Chair Salome asked if RITBA will employ local police to assist with traffic control. Mr. Wiggin indicated RITBA will provide its own traffic control. There will be alternating lanes and staff will make sure traffic keeps flowing. The staff in operations have access to cameras at the intersections and can monitor the approaches to the bridge and communicate any backups so adjustments can be made. Mr. Cahill, Manager of Safety and Security noted that RITBA staff have received updated training in flagging operations. There was a tabletop exercise in the training, providing staff an opportunity to practice how they would respond to various scenarios regarding traffic flow. The Board noted the Mt. Hope Bridge was closed for a full year in 1985 when a redecking project took place. Director Alviti asked if there have been any recent one lane closures. Mr. Wiggin responded Piasecki recently performed scupper work. The wait times were not significant. Of note was the Portsmouth approach needed monitoring as it is a busy intersection. Director Janaros, in his time as RITBA Director of Engineering, recalled the suspender ropes were replaced and the same method of alternating lanes for traffic control was utilized, and it was effective. Director Pinch asked if the work is weather dependent. Mr. Wiggin stated that because the work will begin in March, it should be past the threat of snow. Nighttime work was considered, but visibility is poor, and the safety of the workers would be a concern. The life of the bridge will be extended by fifty years once the entire dehumidification project is complete.

Item No. 8

Motion by Peter Alviti, Jr., seconded by Peter M. Janaros, passed unanimously to approve a task order for GM2 to perform the routine inspection of Fishing Pier Access Road Bridge and a separate inspection of the adjacent sheet pile wall at a cost not to exceed \$21,052. Five of RITBA's prequalified On-Call Infrastructure Professional Services consultants submitted letters of interest and GM2 was selected as the best candidate for the proposed work. The sheet pile wall adjacent to the bridge was constructed as a temporary support during the construction of the Jamestown Verrazzano Bridge. RITBA has no records of inspection for it since it came under RITBA's care and custody from RIDOT. Director Janaros noted that this is a not to exceed value so if the consultant spends less on the task, RITBA would pay less.

Item No. 9

Motion by Peter Alviti, Jr., seconded by Darrell Waldron, passed unanimously to approve a task order for WSP to perform design of the repair of the southeast compression link on the east tower of the Newport Pell Bridge, bid support services, and construction support services during the construction phase at a cost not to exceed \$315,417.72. RITBA, WSP, and Aetna completed the field inspection of the compression link, and the final field report of findings and recommendations was submitted to RITBA by WSP on 11/14/23. Director Janaros commented that this involves complex engineering design work that requires a lot of detailed information. He believes this will be funding well spent, as it will provide a template for other similar structures on the bridge that may need work in the future.

Item No 10.

Motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Peter Alviti, Jr., passed unanimously to approve a project contingency for the Automated Electronic Tolling System Conversion & Roadway Improvements for the Claiborne Pell / Newport Bridge Toll Plaza in an amount not to exceed \$3,000,000 for a total revised construction contract amount not to exceed \$13,759,843. There are three items that will require change orders: 1) Structure E's concrete deck was discovered to have deteriorated further than originally anticipated and WSP recommends that the bridge deck be replaced in its entirety, 2) "Common Borrow" has been underestimated in quantity and 3) "Trimming and Fine Grading" which is a component WSP did not include as a bid item needs to be addressed. Chair Salome asked for an explanation of "Common Borrow" and "Trimming and Fine Grading" and Mr. Wiggin explained the two. The approved contingency amount will also cover any potential minor change order items that may arise before completion of the project. The approved contingency amount keeps the project under the initial budget. Further discussion with WSP and the contractor, Lynch, will take place before any change orders proceed. The approval of the project contingency will allow RITBA to maintain the project schedule, allowing for all four lanes of traffic to open before Memorial Day 2024. RITBA staff will update the Board of Directors on the status of change orders at every Board meeting. Director Janaros asked why concrete cores were not obtained for the 53-year-old Structure E as part of the original project design. Mr. Bernie Kalus, WSP Project Manager, answered Director Janaros. He indicated that in 2006, cores were obtained but they did not extend down to the level that was recently evaluated. The design for the current project was for an overlay. WSP accounted for the risk involved in what the full cores evaluation would discover. The funding is within the budget to replace the bridge deck in its entirety. The full core evaluation was done when Lynch was on site as the deck was being ripped up in preparation for the next phase of construction. The median area showed the most deterioration. Director Janaros expressed concern that the effect of not performing the full cores analysis before the project design commenced has created the need for the change order and it has disallowed the opportunity for competitive bidding for this aspect of the project. In addition, he is concerned it may have put constraints on the schedule. Mr. Kalus noted the project will be able to proceed on schedule with two lanes open in both directions in time for the busy spring and summer traffic seasons. Director Janaros asked about the common borrow. The bid document noted 750 yards would be needed; it is now up to 5,800 yards. He asked for clarification on this change. Mr. Kalus responded the increase was primarily because the material excavated from the site was found to be unsuitable for reuse up to about a foot and a half deep, not six inches as initially estimated. RITBA staff is working with Lynch to see about decreasing the unit price as there is now a larger quantity needed. Director Caron Silveira summarized the contingency request indicating the Authority is asking for \$3M in contingency change order funding, of which \$1.6M will be allotted for the redecking of Structure E and the remaining \$1.4M will be used for the common borrow and the trimming and fine grading items. The contingency will also allow the project to move along seamlessly without any interruptions. Finally, Director Alviti confirmed with staff that the \$3M was part of the original budget for contingency funding for the project. He asked if there are any other high-risk items remaining in the scope of work that is yet to be performed. Mr. Kalus indicated there are no other high-risk items remaining.

Director of Engineering Eric Seabury - Capital Projects Status Report:

- Phase II – AET Construction - Newport Pell Bridge: As noted earlier, the project is on schedule. The change order contingency has now been approved.
- Mt. Hope Bridge Suspension Cables & Anchorages Investigation and Dehumidification: The blow test will now move forward. Design for the project continues.
- Compression Link Phase I Work – Newport Pell: The design for the repairs continues. A field trip is planned to visit the Benjamin Franklin Bridge. This bridge has undergone compression link replacements. Mr. Wiggin noted that he and Director of Engineering Eric Seabury participate in a bridge owners' group workshop comprised of about five Bridge Authorities that meet every three

to four months to share information and valuable knowledge about how capital repairs and projects have been undertaken at their respective bridges.

- Safety Barrier Feasibility Study: Bi-weekly meetings have been taking place with Atkins, the consultant.

CFO Jeff Goulart – Financial Summary Report: The Authority’s financial performance continues to be strong through November and Mr. Goulart expects it to continue throughout the remainder of the fiscal year. YTD Financial Statement Notes – Actual vs. Budget material variance analysis: Total revenue exceeded budget by \$3.1M or 17%, while operating expenses were lower than budget by \$100K or 2%. Personnel expenses, utilities, contractual services, and insurance were all lower, while other supplies and expenses, repairs and maintenance, and bridge inspections were higher. Transponder expenses were flat to budget. Year to Date Actual vs. Prior Year: Revenue was higher by approximately \$800K, or 4%, while year to date operating expenses were higher than prior year by \$65K or 1%. Utilities, contractual services, other supplies and expenses, repairs and maintenance, and bridge inspections were lower but partially offset by higher personnel and insurance costs.

Executive Director’s Report:

- **Plaza Road Design Work** – Director Caron Silveira shared a short video of the recent demolition of the old toll plaza heading eastbound. The eastbound toll booths were part of the demolition and have become the property of the company who performed the demolition. Director Caron Silveira noted there have been a few inquiries about the old toll booths, interested parties looking to repurpose the booths, for either use at a park or preserving one for posterity. She noted they are not the original toll booths from 1969; these came from Texas at some later date. While the eastbound toll booths were demolished, the westbound ones remain. Chair Salome asked what the procedure would be if someone were interested in obtaining one. Mr. Goulart indicated they are now essentially the property of Lynch, the contractor, and RITBA could work with Lynch if there was interest. Director Caron Silveira noted the subcontractor who performed the demolition was Kinetic, and she stated they did a very good job, taking extra care to perform the work during good weather conditions. They delayed the final demolition one day due to elevated winds, to be extra cautious with motorists traveling through the open road tolling lanes adjacent to the demolition. The plaza road design project is proceeding on schedule. The road design is being reconfigured for free flow traffic. The old design was intended for vehicles coming to a complete stop at the toll plaza.

Washington Bridge – Impact on RITBA Operations – Beginning on the day after the reconfiguration of traffic on the Washington Bridge, the Authority experienced an increase in traffic. Apps like Waze and Google Maps began redirecting motorists to travel from the East Bay down and cross the Pell Bridge westbound to get to places in and around the East Providence area affected by the Washington Bridge lane closures. To help RI motorists who were now choosing to alter their commutes and travel to work by crossing the Pell Bridge, the Authority began waiving the \$10 fee for a transponder when opening a new account and made this retroactive to December 1. This honored those motorists who chose to open accounts in that timeframe, by providing credit to their newly opened accounts. Having an E-ZPass account affords the RI resident with a passenger vehicle an \$.83 cent rate per crossing rather than a \$3 per axle rate, providing a good savings to the customer for each crossing. The Authority continues to see an uptick in congestion and traffic in the afternoons heading westbound. The number of new transponder requests from 12/1/23 – 1/5/24 was 4,284, about 1,400 more than the previous year at the same time. Mr. Goulart stated that from December 12th to the 31st approximately 50K additional vehicles crossed the Pell Bridge, which was an increase of approximately 8-12%. Director Alvit asked if this accounts for vehicles crossing in both directions. Mr. Goulart replied that it does. Mr. Goulart estimates there have been approximately 6-7K additional vehicle

crossings thus far in the month of January, up roughly 7%. Director Caron Silveira indicated a guesstimate is that more than 50% of the additional vehicle crossings are traveling westbound.

- **Next Board Meeting** – February 21, 2024.

Ms. Coleman took a moment to express her gratitude and to commend the RITBA staff, Eric Seabury, Jeff Wiggin, Frank Flowers, Dan Van Gyzen, the construction support consultant WSP, and contractor Lynch, for their ability to not disrupt the tolling system during the demolition of the eastbound plaza. The power continued to run across the entire canopy for all the lanes and did not disrupt the existing open road tolling system from capturing the tolling data.

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

Lori Caron Silveira
Secretary