

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 March 20, 2024.

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The meeting was called to order at 8:35 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  
Joseph Rodio, Rodio & Ursillo, Legal Counsel  
Marianne Durgin, Executive Assistant to the Director  
Jeffrey Wiggin, Assistant Project Manager

**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 February 21, 2024 Board meeting.

Chair Salome took a moment referring back to the call to order to welcome Mr. Joe Rodio of Rodio & Ursillo, LTD as new legal counsel for RITBA Board meetings. Chair Salome indicated the Board looks forward to working with Mr. Rodio. Mr. Rodio expressed his appreciation and stated he looks forward to working with the Board, as well.

**Item No. 4**

Motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Karen D. Pinch, passed unanimously to approve a five-month extension of Contract 15-12 with Kapsch TrafficCom USA, Inc. at a cost of \$15,511.49 per month beginning April 1, 2024, for ongoing Toll Collection System maintenance and support while the new all-electronic gantry is being designed and implemented. The current contract expires on March 31, 2024. Emovis is the new lane integration provider. They visited RITBA on March 11 along with RITBA’s tolling consultant Stantec, to discuss the new gantry installation and the existing toll plaza demolition deadline of mid-September 2024. Emovis will be installing some of the equipment prior to the testing. They will be able to meet the September deadline required for the project. The extension of the 15-12 contract will allow the old and new gantries to collect data at the same time to compare the integrity of the new system to the existing system. Katie Coleman indicated the monthly fee amount is the same that the Authority is currently paying for the services.

**Item No. 5**

Motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Peter M. Janaros, passed unanimously to approve a task order for WSP, one of RITBA's On-Call Technical Services consultants, to perform design and bid phase services for a rubberized asphalt chip seal treatment for the Mount Hope Bridge's entire deck surface at a cost not to exceed \$65,806.77. At the February Board meeting, it was decided to pursue a rubberized asphalt chip seal treatment now, given that full deck rehabilitation is several years out in the capital plan. RITBA staff reviewed WSP's proposal and found it reasonable given the nature of the work. WSP was involved with the design and implementation of past chip seal treatments on the bridge. Director Janaros commented that he has been in favor of the approach of using a chip seal treatment for some time. He indicated to avoid traffic issues Mr. Seabury has looked into having this work performed at night. It will also be performed over the course of only one to two days. He feels the benefit and payback will be very worthwhile. Chair Salome asked how long the chip seal treatment is likely to last. Mr. Seabury replied that with a good subsurface it will last about four to five years. The Mount Hope Bridge's subsurface is not great, but the treatment will smooth out most of the deck surface and put the deck in a much more rideable condition than it currently is, until the Authority is ready to do an entire surface rehabilitation. It is the best option without spending a significant amount of funds. Director Janaros explained that the alternate approach would be to put in new patches, costing nearly 1.5M and then have to remove the patches at the time of the full deck rehabilitation. Chair Salome asked when the full deck rehabilitation project is scheduled. Mr. Seabury said it is included in the 2026 capital plan. There is a possibility that it could be delayed if bids for the dehumidification of the cables and anchorages come in higher than expected this coming summer. Director Janaros asked when the chip seal treatment is planned to take place. Mr. Seabury indicated the work would likely occur in late summer to early fall. Mr. Seabury further noted that another grant application was recently submitted for the Mount Hope Bridge and the deck rehabilitation was part of the submission, creating the possibility that the Authority may receive funding for the deck rehabilitation.

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

**Discussion: Selection of Program Manager for Newport Pell INFRA Grant Project Bundle:** In November 2023, the Authority solicited proposals for a Program Manager (PM) to assist RITBA staff in the management of the INFRA Grant projects. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the funding source for the INFRA Grant and approved the use of a PM. On January 16, 2024, RITBA received proposals from HDR and the team of Patrick/AI for PM services. After the selection committee reviewed the proposals and interviewed both teams, HDR was selected as the most qualified firm. There were three main design projects included in the RFP. RITBA staff expects to present an initial HDR task order and fee for approval at the April Board meeting. HDR's initial tasks will be reviewing bridge plans, grant agreements and their requirements, and similar design project plans that RITBA has undertaken in the past, such as the last deck project. While performing these initial tasks, a larger and more in-depth task order will be formulated for further work. The design projects will take place over multiple years so it is anticipated that the PM services will require multiple task orders. Director Janaros noted he believes it was a good, strong proposal submitted by HDR.

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

- Phase II – AET Construction - Newport Pell Bridge: Several items have been completed by the contractor Lynch, including: The Structure E bridge deck replacement eastbound, a good portion of the highway build-up, and the concrete slab under the new eastbound gantry location. Lynch is now working on the demolition of the westbound side of Structure E. New rebar will be put in place, the highway on the westbound side is being ripped up, the gantry foundations have been completed, drainage work is taking place, and the foundation for the toll equipment building has been completed. The project has been moving at a good pace and is on schedule. Lynch has asked to advance certain portions of the work. Director Janaros asked when all lanes will be back open at Structure E. Mr. Seabury replied all four lanes are expected to be open by May 17.

- *Mt. Hope Bridge Suspension Cables & Anchorages Investigation and Dehumidification*: The cable air flow testing is currently underway. A few weather days with rain and high winds prevented work from taking place. The consultant is getting the cables unwrapped. The work was planned for fifty-five workdays and could potentially end early. Mr. Seabury noted the contractor Kiewit has been professional and a pleasure to work with. Chair Salome asked about the impact on traffic. Mr. Seabury stated traffic has been moving well, and local radio stations are reporting only minor slowdowns due to the work. The Authority has kept to the stated hours of one lane of travel between 9 am to 3 pm, Monday through Thursday, and 9 am to 1 pm on Fridays.
- *Compression Link Phase I Work – Newport Pell*: RITBA staff continues to monitor the scaffolding that is installed under the Newport Pell Bridge at the compression link location. Costs will continue to be incurred for the rental of the scaffolding equipment until the repair work is complete. WSP is expecting to submit a 60% design proposal for the Phase II work by April 4.
- *Safety Barrier Feasibility Study*: A draft report for the Mount Hope Bridge and the Jamestown Verrazzano Bridge is due on April 1. The Pell Bridge and the Sakonnet River Bridge studies will continue, and the draft report for those bridges is not due until later in the year.
- *Load Ratings and Inspections*: The North Main Street Bridges and the Wildlife Arches on Route 138 will be inspected by Commonwealth Engineers and Consultants. The Pell Bridge Main Span will be inspected by November of this year.

Director Janaros asked if there is a schedule for when the compression link repair work will go out to bid. Mr. Seabury indicated once WSP completes the 60% design proposal, the Authority will have a better idea of the timing.

**CFO Jeff Goulart – Financial Summary Report:** YTD performance continues to be solid. YTD Financial Statement Notes – Actual vs. Budget material variance analysis: Total revenue YTD for the first seven months was higher than budget by \$4.8M or 20%. Both toll revenue and gas tax revenue were higher than budget. Operating expenses were lower than budget by \$500K or 6%. Personnel expenses, utilities, contractual services, insurance, repairs, and bridge inspections were all lower than budget. Other supplies and expenses were higher than budget mostly due to postage. Transponder expenses were also higher than budget.

**Executive Director’s Report:**

- **Plaza Road Design Work** – Director Caron Silveira stated she is pleased to report to the public that the project is on schedule. When speaking to the public or the media, she reminds them that while the return of two lanes open in each direction at the “pinch-point” near the old toll plaza will occur by May 17, the project will be ongoing.
- **Mount Hope Bridge Cable and Anchorages Dehumidification Project** – When speaking about this project, Director Caron Silveira indicated it helps to clarify that it is the dehumidification of the cables and the anchorages of the bridge. It has been referred to by the public as “dehumidifying the bridge” which is not accurate. Director Caron Silveira said she has personally checked the traffic on the bridge several times during the cable air flow testing period and found it to be moving well. During the first week of testing, Roger Williams University was on spring break, which helped reduce the amount of traffic crossing the bridge while the testing began.
- **Federal Funding Opportunities** – RITBA is currently waiting for a decision on its PROTECT grant submission for the Mount Hope Bridge Cable and Anchorages Dehumidification project. The federal government will not reimburse RITBA for any monies that have already been spent. The dehumidification project had to move forward so that there would be no need to go to a more drastic remedy. As time moves forward, RITBA will have less opportunity to seek grants, as monies have already been put toward the project. Mr. Goulart created a plan of finance and capital plan to allow the Authority to move forward with the project. There is also a small Bridge Investment Program grant that is pending. The Governor’s office has provided a grant writer to

assist RITBA staff in strengthening certain portions of the proposal. The Authority's toll revenue bonds are currently being reviewed by one of the bond rating agencies. Director Caron Silveira hopes to share good news about RITBA's bond rating at the next Board meeting.

- **Washington Bridge – Impact on RITBA Operations** – Recently there was a significant increase in traffic that could not be explained by any work the Authority was doing on the Pell Bridge. The increase in traffic has been occurring in the afternoons heading westbound and it has resulted in slow moving traffic for the length of the bridge. The Authority hasn't seen this kind of traffic in the afternoons, and it appears to be due to the westbound Washington Bridge closure. Some of the increased traffic is coming from Newport, and some is coming from the Mount Hope Bridge and Sakonnet River Bridge. Director Caron Silveira has reached out to the RI State Police to make certain they will help monitor the Mount Hope Bridge so no overweight vehicles will cross.
  - **RITBA Appearing before House Finance** – Since there has been increased engagement around the state on all topics related to bridges and transportation, Director Caron Silveira along with Messrs. Goulart and Seabury will appear before House Finance, the Subcommittee on the Environment and Transportation. The Authority is on the agenda with RIDOT and RIPTA. Last year RITBA was not asked to appear before this subcommittee. Sharon Reynolds Ferland, House Fiscal Advisor, and her staff will present a PowerPoint showcasing the three transportation agencies and RITBA staff is needed to answer any questions that may arise.
- **Next Board Meeting** – April 24, 2024.

A motion by Darrell Waldron, seconded by Peter M. Janaros, passed unanimously to adjourn the public meeting at 8:59 a.m.

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