



SAULT STE. MARIE BRIDGE AUTHORITY

SAULT STE. MARIE, MICHIGAN

NICHOLAS WHITE, CHAIR
THOMAS BUCKINGHAM SR., MEMBER
LINDA HOATH, MEMBER
SCOTT SHACKLETON, MEMBER

SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO

NATALIE KINLOCH, VICE CHAIR
WARREN ASKEW, MEMBER
THYE LEE, MEMBER

Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority Minutes August 18, 2022 James McIntyre Board Room Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

Present: Nicholas White, Chair
Natalie Kinloch, Vice Chair
Thomas Buckingham, Sr., Member
Linda Hoath, Member
Scott Shackleton, Member
Warren Askew, Member (via telephone)

Absent: Thye Lee, Member

Also Present: Peter Petäinen, Bridge Director, IBA
Laura Mester, Chief Administrative Officer, MDOT
Michael Dittenber, Attorney General's Office, MDOT
Emily Jacques, Chief Financial Officer, IBA
Fiore Cappelli, Operations Manager, IBA
Karl Hansen, Bridge Engineer, IBA
Marcus Eidenier, Facilities & Asset Manager, IBA
Cheryn Sanford, Departmental Analyst, IBA
Dan Weingarten, MDOT Communications Representative

Chair White called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

I. **Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Member Hoath to approve the May 12, 2022, Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority regular meeting minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Kinloch. Motion carried unanimously.

II. **Bridge Director's Comments**

A. Toll Software Replacement Project

Peter reported the new toll software went live at the International Bridge Administration (IBA) on August 10th. Peter stated from concept to study to implementation this entire project has gone very smooth, and the entire team is very

REPLY TO: PETER M. PETAINEN, BRIDGE DIRECTOR

pleased with the selected vendor. All testing phases for the IBA have been complete and the operational acceptance phase will last for 90 days after the last implementation. Blue Water Bridge (MDOT) is scheduled to go live on August 20th, and FBCL will follow on September 15th.

Operations Manager Fiore Cappelli reported toll staff were able to catch on to the new software quickly and have all provided positive feedback on the ease of the system. Staff have begun to issue tags to account holders to replace the current Prox card with the initial focus of getting commercial accounts switched first. To date, 288 tags have been issued.

Peter stated the mobile app for online account access is in the final development stages and will be launched for customer use in the near future.

Member Shackleton inquired into the status of the bridge cams being back online for customer viewing. Peter stated Siemens is currently onsite and he will be working with them to attempt resolution to the ongoing issues with the bridge cams.

B. Other Comments

- Peter stated discussions were held on House Bill 5315 at yesterday's SSMBA audit committee meeting. If adopted, the bill will designate several State of Michigan facilities, structures, and utilities as "Key Facilities" and allow enforcement of trespasses on "Key Facilities" which will be punishable as a felony in lieu of a misdemeanor.

Member Buckingham made a motion to adopt the following resolution in support for House Bill 5315:

WHEREAS,

The Sault Ste Marie Bridge Authority is committed to preserve and maintain the International Bridge, the only international crossing within a 300-mile radius of Sault Ste Marie, to provide safe, secure, pleasurable, and expedient passage between Sault Ste Marie Michigan and Ontario for economic benefit and improved quality of life; and

WHEREAS,

trespassing on the International Bridge represents a security risk for bridge operations, bridge staff, and the traveling public; and

WHEREAS,

trespassing on the International Bridge is dangerous to patrons crossing the bridge as well as to the trespasser; and

WHEREAS,

the International Bridge is a key facility in the State of Michigan and is a critical connection point between the Canada and United States at the center of the Great Lakes; and

WHEREAS,

trespassers on the International Bridge should be held accountable for the serious nature of their offense; and now therefore be it

RESOLVED,

that, we the undersigned members of the Sault Ste Marie Bridge Authority strongly support HB 5315 which makes the International Bridge and other facilities in the State of Michigan key facilities and defines trespassing on these key facilities.

The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Kinloch. Motion carried unanimously.

- Peter stated the negotiated changed pandemic terms of the Duty Free lease expired on June 30, 2022. The Duty Free Operator has reached out to the IBA to begin negotiations for new terms. Member Shackleton made a motion to authorize Peter Petainen to negotiate new lease terms on behalf of the SSMBA board of directors with the Duty Free Operator. Peter will bring updated lease term recommendations to the board for review and approval at the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Member Askew. Motion carried unanimously.

III. **Finance and Operations**

A. Traffic and Revenue

CFO Emily Jacques reported total traffic as of June 30, 2022, showed a 186% increase compared to 2021; though traffic is still down 50% when compared to 2019 pre-pandemic traffic. Emily reported she will be closely monitoring commercial traffic as it shows a 15% decline compared to June 2021. Member Buckingham asked if it was possible to determine what commodities are declining; Emily stated there is a delay in receiving that type of information and that it won't be available until 2023. Member Shackleton proposed asking commercial truck drivers what they are transporting on a volunteer basis; Peter stated he will look into conducting an internal survey and will keep the board apprised of any information gathered. Member Askew asked if the Mackinac Bridge is seeing the same commercial decline; Peter stated not according to their published monthly traffic statistics and that the IBA commercial traffic typically is not on the same route of travel as the Mackinac Bridge's commercial traffic.

B. Second Quarter Financial Report

Emily reported total assets were at \$7.1M as of June 30, 2022, and total liabilities were at \$800K. Total revenue as of June 30, 2002, was \$3.1 million and total expenditures were at \$3.8 million.

C. Draft 2023-2027 Business Plan

Peter stated the draft 2023-2027 Business Plan was sent to all members with the meeting packet; please forward any comments or recommended changes to Emily by September 30, 2022, so they can be incorporated into the final draft which will be presented to the board at the November meeting. The following is a summary of planning assumptions used when updating the plan:

- Working with depressed traffic volumes through 2027
- Keeping a close eye on the exchange rate
- Reduced levels of maintenance spending throughout the plan period
- Reduced staffing levels continue throughout the plan period
- Adjusting the annualized construction index factor from 3.5% to 5.4%

IV. **Maintenance Operations**

A. Activity and Project Tracking Report

Asset Manager Marcus Eidenier stated labor and benefits were down 16.2% when compared to 2021; this is attributed to continued reduced staffing for both fulltime and part-time staff. Equipment costs show an increase of 40% compared to 2021 which is attributed to the above average snowfall received in 2022.

B. Maintenance Projects

Marcus stated the maintenance crew continues to work on routine maintenance items identified in the 2021 routine detailed bridge inspection and the 2020 fracture critical inspection. Other projects that will be assigned to the maintenance staff as time permits include completing the repair of delaminated concrete on top of Pier 19, installation of new expansion joint seals, and spot painting.

V. **Capital Projects**

A. Canadian Railing Paint Project

Bridge Engineer, Karl Hansen, reported the Canadian rail painting project being done by Hastings Painting of Windsor Ontario got off to a rocky start; however, is now running smoothly with approximately 500 of the 1700 total meters complete to date and is on track to meet the completion date in November.

B. 2022 Fracture Critical Member Inspection

Karl reported the 2022 fracture critical member inspection took place during the first week of August with no significant findings. The final report will be presented to the board at the November SSMBA meeting.

VI. **Public Comment**

There was no additional public comment.

VII. **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Member Hoath to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Kinloch. Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
International Bridge Administration



Peter M. Petäinen
Bridge Director

PP:cs