



## SAULT STE. MARIE BRIDGE AUTHORITY

SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO

NATALIE KINLOCH, CHAIR  
WARREN ASKEW, MEMBER  
THYE LEE, MEMBER  
RÉMI PAQUETTE, MEMBER

SAULT STE. MARIE, MICHIGAN

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

**Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority  
Minutes  
February 23, 2023  
James McIntyre Board Room  
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan**

**Present:** Natalie Kinloch, Chair  
Thomas Buckingham, Sr., Vice Chair  
Warren Askew, Member  
Thye Lee, Member  
Rémi Paquette, Member  
Linda Hoath, Member  
Scott Shackleton, Member

**Absent:** Nicholas White, Member

**Also Present:** Peter Petäinen, Bridge Director, IBA  
Laura Mester, Chief Administrative Officer, MDOT (via MS Teams)  
Michael Dittenber, Attorney General's Office, MDOT (via MS Teams)  
Sara Moore, Int'l Border Crossing & Trade Specialist, MDOT (via MS Teams)  
Emily Jacques, Chief Financial Officer, IBA  
Karl Hansen, Bridge Engineer, IBA  
Marcus Eidenier, Bridge & Facilities Asset Manager, IBA  
Cheryn Sanford, Departmental Analyst, IBA  
Dan Weingarten, MDOT Communications Representative (via MS Teams)

Chair Kinloch called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

**I. Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Member Paquette to approve the November 10, 2022, Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority regular meeting minutes with the following change:

*Member Askew was present at the meeting (not via telephone as draft minutes reflected)*

The motion was seconded by Member Hoath. Motion carried unanimously.

REPLY TO: PETER M. PETAINEN, BRIDGE DIRECTOR

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A motion was made by Member Lee to approve the November 10, 2022, Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority closed session meeting minutes with the same change as listed above for the regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Member Shackleton. Motion carried unanimously.

## II. **Bridge Director's Comments**

### A. Letter to Governor

The draft annual letter to the Governor was included in the board packet for review and consideration. Pete stated he has "increased" the wording in regard to the budget issues the bridge is experiencing and welcomed any comments or recommended changes by board members.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Buckingham to approve the draft letter to the Governor and submit to the Governor on or by March 31, 2023. The motion was seconded by member Paquette. Motion carried unanimously.

### B. Other comments

- Peter reported the 60-day Operational Acceptance Testing (OAT) began on February 6, 2023. Overall, the system is performing very well with an 98-99% accuracy rate. There are some minor issues yet to be resolved such as how bad weather/snow affects the electronic tolling transactions. After the OAT phase is completed on April 6, 2023, the one-year warranty period will begin. The project management contract with DTMB has been closed out, of which the project partners will incur no cost from these services from DTMB; project management will now fall to the IBA on behalf of all partners. Transitioning customer prox cards to the electronic tags has been going well and all three project partners have been very happy with the tag vendor which has provided fast and reliable service.
- At yesterday's audit committee meeting, toll rates and proposed changes to the toll rate structure were discussed. The Audit Committee will present their recommendation to the board at the May SSMBA meeting with potential board approval for any changes at the August SSMBA meeting.
- A copy of *The Bridge* quarterly newsletter published by the Center for Technology and Training was included in the board packet for review; the fall edition of the newsletter highlighted the HRCSA paint system recently utilized by the International Bridge.
- Copies of the artwork for the front and back of the 2023 Michigan Map, created by Brian Whitfield of MDOT Mapping and Media, was displayed. The map will feature the International Bridge in celebration of its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### III. **Finance and Operations**

#### A. Traffic and Revenue

CFO Emily Jacques reported 2022 traffic increased by 219% compared to 2021 with 624,960 total crossings. Commercial traffic did see a 14% decline in 2022; however, January 2023 commercial traffic saw an increase of 3.7% compared to January 2022.

#### B. December 31, 2022 Preliminary Year End Financial Report

Emily reported total combined balance sheet assets were at \$7.7M as of December 31, 2022, and total liabilities were at \$1.03M. Total fund balances ended the year at \$4.042M, total revenue was \$7.9M, and total expenditures were at \$8.5M.

Anderson and Tackman will be onsite during the week of March 6<sup>th</sup> to conduct final field work and they will present the final year-end financial report to the board at the May SSMBA meeting.

Discussion took place regarding long-term versus short-term investments. The IBA continues to operate in a very serious operational environment and cash flow remains to be a significant issue. Over the past three years the bridge has lost over \$10M in toll revenue and all cash investments have been kept in a liquid account.

Member Shackleton warned staff to remain vigilant against fraudulent activity, noting he is aware of a northern Michigan business who recently suffered a \$1M loss due to fraudulent activity. Chair Kinloch inquired as to whether or not the IBA would be insured against such fraudulent activity; Emily will follow up with the insurance company and report back to the board at the May SSMBA meeting.

### IV. **Bridge Engineering and Maintenance**

#### A. Activity and Project Tracking

Facilities and Asset Manager, Marcus Eidenier reported labor and benefits were up 7.1% and equipment expenses were up 40% in 2022 compared to 2021. The increase can be attributed to hiring two limited term bridge workers to assist with snow removal activities; however, these two limited term positions are being fully funded by FBCL.

#### A. Maintenance Projects

Marcus stated the maintenance crew will focus on completing Pier 19 repairs during the 2023 season along with having a dedicated crew to work on routine maintenance items identified in the 2020 Fracture Critical Inspection and the 2021 Routine Detailed Inspection. As time permits, the maintenance crew will also work on repairing bridge deck joints, electrical junction boxes on the Canadian arch, U.S. arch structural handrail, and treatment of super/substructure concrete with silane sealer.

**B. Capital Plan Update**

Bridge Engineer, Karl Hansen, reported that Hardesty & Hanover is working on the second phase of the capital plan update; the updated plan will be submitted in May and will be incorporated into the 2024 business plan.

**V. 2023 Meeting Dates**

2023 meeting dates were set at the November 10, 2022 regular meeting with the caveat of the dates working for all members. It has been proposed to move the August meeting date forward one day to August 16, 2023 and for the August meeting to be take place in Ottawa.

Member Hoath made a motion to change the August meeting date to August 16, 2023 and for the meeting to be held in Ottawa subject to the approval of all members. Member Askew seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**VI. Public Comment**

There was no public comment; however, Karl introduced maintenance crew leader Jeremy Sprague. There was a security incident that occurred on the bridge this past fall which involved a disturbed individual climbing over the green rail of the bridge to potentially jump. Jeremy approached the individual in an IBA vehicle and was able to coax them back over the rail and into the vehicle potentially saving their life. With great pleasure, Karl presented Jeremy with a State of Michigan exemplary service award to acknowledge his courage and for placing the disturbed individuals interests above his own. Congratulations Jeremy!

**VI. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Member Shackleton to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Member Hoath. Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 10:07 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
International Bridge Administration



Peter M. Petäinen  
Bridge Director