



SAULT STE. MARIE BRIDGE AUTHORITY

SAULT STE. MARIE, MICHIGAN

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

SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO

NATALIE KINLOCH, VICE CHAIR
THYE LEE, MEMBER
RÉMI PAQUETTE, MEMBER
KAREN RICHARDS, MEMBER

**Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority
Minutes
November 21, 2024
James McIntyre Board Room
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan**

Present: Natalie Kinloch, Vice Chair
Linda Hoath, Member
Scott Shackleton, Member
Nicholas White, Member
Thye Lee, Member
Rémi Paquette, Member
Karen Richards, Member

Absent: Thomas Buckingham, Sr., Chair

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
Karl Hansen, Bridge Engineer, IBA
Fiore Cappelli, Operations Manager
Cheryn Sanford, Departmental Analyst, IBA
Marcus Eidenier, Bridge Facilities and Asset Manager, IBA
Dan Weingarten, MDOT Communications Representative
Mark Helinski, Hardesty & Hanover, LLC
Jeremy Vanlerberg, Hardesty & Hanover, LLC
Jeremy Sprague, IBA Maintenance Crew Leader
Sheldon Salvalaggio, IBA Steeplejack
Drew Hojnoski, IBA Equipment Technician
Dyllon Anderson, IBA Laborer
Nic Jeffreys, IBA State Worker

Vice Chair Kinloch called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

REPLY TO: PETER M. PETAINEN, BRIDGE DIRECTOR

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I. **Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Member Hoath to approve the August 15, 2024, Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority regular meeting minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Member Richards. Motion carried unanimously.

II. **Bridge Director's Comments**

- As reported in the letter to the board, IBA staff had hands-on training during several real time minor security/emergency incidents this fall and additionally participated in a full-scale security exercise hosted by the Area Maritime Security Committee.
- The Mackinac Bridge Authority (MBA) held their quarterly meeting earlier this month in our conference room. The MBA board were grateful for the use of our conference room and having their meeting in the Sault allowed them to participate in a tour of the Sault Locks project.
- The October 1, 2024 toll rate change took effect with no issue and no customer comments were received.
- The IBA hosted a CBC production company this fall; they were filming portions of a reality T.V. series from one of the bridge arches and then they filmed part of the actual reality competition in Parks Canada property right under the Canadian arch. The reality show is scheduled to air in late February/early March.
- Peter expressed congratulations to his successor as BTOA President, Tal Czudner, Chief Executive Officer of the Windsor Detroit Borderlink, which is the Canadian half of the Windsor-Detroit Tunnel.
- Peter expressed appreciation to MDOT for Federal Technical Training Funds the IBA received this year allowing staff to attend training and conferences this year at no cost to the IBA.
- Peter expressed congratulations to two of our staff members, Matt Strange and Nate Jeffreys for successfully completing the MDOT commercial drivers license (CDL) school and achieving their CDL licenses.
- MDOT is doing a "My MDOT Story" campaign where the MDOT Mapping and Media crew films various MDOT staff members while they speak on their employment experience with MDOT. CAO Laura Mester stated the campaign was designed to allow staff from all levels see where they fit into MDOT's mission which makes it personal for all staff. Jeremy Sprague, crew leader for the IBA was chosen to film a segment; Pete played Jeremy's segment for the board.
- Peter stated insurance coverages were reviewed with the audit committee yesterday; upon renewal there will be no changes to coverages or deductibles. Canadian health coverage was also reviewed with the only change being for employees hired on or after January 1, 2012 to bring it in line with health coverage for U.S. employees.

A motion was made by Member Richards to approve the insurance policy renewals with no changes to existing coverage and deductibles as presented by AON and VAST for SSMBA/IBA for December 1, 2024 –

November 30, 2025. The motion was seconded by Member White. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by member Shackleton to approve the insurance policy renewal as prepared by JDB Group (Schuster Boyd McDonald) for SSMB/IBA for December 1, 2024 – November 30, 2025, amending the policy for employees hired on or after January 1, 2012 to match the established age limit consistent with Michigan employee coverage. The motion was seconded by Member Paquette. Motion carried unanimously.

III. **Bridge Engineering and Maintenance**

A. Bridge Inspections Closed Session

Due to the confidential nature of the materials to be discussed, per article 15.268 of the Open Meetings Act, Section 8, Paragraph H, a motion was made by Member Hoath to enter closed session, Member Lee seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken by all members present to go into closed session. All present voted aye. The meeting was closed to the public at 9:15 a.m.

Member Lee made a motion to re-open the meeting to the public. Member Hoath seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken by all members present to re-open the meeting. All present voted aye. Meeting re-opened to the public at 9:57 a.m.

B. Bridge Inspections

Bridge Engineer Karl Hansen reported the Underwater Inspection for all the bridge piers located in the U.S. has been completed with no critical findings and no appreciable changes from the last inspection performed 5 years ago. The inspection of the five piers located in Canada will be performed in the spring and a representative from Great Lakes Engineering will present those findings once complete. Member Shackleton made a motion to approve the partial 2025 Underwater Inspection Report for the completed U.S. pier inspections as prepared and submitted by Great Lakes Engineering Group, according to Article VII, Section 1, Paragraph D of the Intergovernmental Agreement which requires approval of the annual report filed by the engineering consultant, with or without disapproval of certain elements. The motion was seconded by Member White. Motion carried unanimously.

Mark Helinski from Hardesty & Hanover stated the 2024 Fracture Critical Member Inspection went well with no new significant findings and that the Bridge continues to be in fair condition. Member Lee made a motion per Article VII, Section 1, Paragraph D of the Intergovernmental Agreement which requires approval of the annual report filed by the engineering consultant, with or without disapproval of certain elements. The Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority does hereby approve the 2024 Fracture Critical Member Inspection report dated November 2024 as prepared and submitted by Hardesty and Hanover with no exceptions taken. The motion was seconded by Member Richards. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Maintenance and Activity and Project Tracking

Marcus Eidenier stated current project and activity reports were included in the board packets for review. Labor and benefits reflect an increase of \$200K when compared to the third quarter of 2023; Marcus stated the increase is due to the hiring of two additional bridge workers, an additional pay period during the first quarter, and union contract signing bonuses which were not anticipated when setting the 2024 budgets. The IBA has been notified that we will be reimbursed for the contract signing bonuses which will be reflected in the fourth quarter report.

D. Maintenance Projects

Marcus stated the 2024 maintenance season has come to a close with maintenance staff completing 86% (the goal was 85% completion) of the routine maintenance (RM) items that were outstanding from the 2022 Fracture Critical report and 74% of the RM items from the 2023 routine detailed inspection report.

Maintenance staff also:

- Cleaned and coated 44 sections of the green pedestrian rail
- Completed spall repairs on pier 25
- Assisted the state-wide MDOT crew with applying an epoxy friction surface coating on approximately 45,000 sq. ft. of the bridge deck

E. Equipment Update and Disposal Request

The new international truck which was ordered in the first quarter of 2024 had a two-year lead time; however, we have been notified it will be delivered in April 2025 which is one year ahead of schedule. Once we take possession of the new truck, it will be sent to Truck and Trailer in Boyne Falls for fit-up and completion with the goal to have it enter into service for the 2025-26 winter season.

In early October the IBA was informed of available funding from FBCL for one additional new plow truck. Time was of concern as the new truck had to be sourced and fit-up for service by March 31, 2025. To move forward with the truck purchase, minimal concessions on specifications were allowed, as there was limited availability of new trucks on dealer lots. The purchase of a Kenworth T380 chassis was completed October 8th and the IBA took delivery October 11th. Total purchase price including delivery was \$114,728 USD. An additional \$105,881 CAD is committed to snow plowing fit up work by Northern Powertrain in Sault, Ontario. Delivery of the new truck is anticipated late February 2025. IBA would like to express our gratitude to FBCL for this owner contribution to modernize our plow truck fleet.

The IBA's Sterling tandem axle truck was delivered to Northern Powertrain in late summer for snowplowing fit-up work. The estimated completion time is late November. Bridge winter plowing for 2024-2025 will be performed with the Sterling tandem, and a tandem axle truck on loan from the MDOT State-wide fleet. Plaza plowing work will be completed with the loader MetalPless plow and pickup truck plows until the two new single axle trucks enter service in 2025.

The 1998 single axle Peterbilt truck, part of the current IBA fleet, was approved to be refurbished in May 2024. After the Peterbilt was evaluated by Northern Powertrain and an outside engineering firm, it was determined the frame was corroded beyond repair. Cost to proceed with refurbishment at this time would be significantly higher than originally estimated. Considering the age and increased refurbishment cost, we ask for board approval to dispose of the 1998 Peterbilt single axle dump truck.

Member Paquette made a motion to approve the disposal of the 1999 Peterbilt single axle dump truck, VIN #1NPNHZ8X5XS494089. Member White seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. **Finance and Operations**

A. Traffic and Revenue

CFO Emily Jacques reported there has been 850,000 year-to-date crossings which is 88% of 2023 total crossings.

B. Third Quarter Financial Report

Emily reported total balance sheet assets were at \$9.9M as of September 30, 2024, and total liabilities were at \$1.1M. Total fund balances were at \$6.3M, total revenue was \$5.9M, and total expenditures were at \$4.5M.

C. 2024 Proposed Budget Amendments

Budget amendments were presented to the audit committee yesterday for discussion and recommendation to full board for approval.

Member Hoath made a motion to approve the 2024 budget amendments as presented in the board packet and recommended by the audit committee. Member Richards seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

D. 2025-2029 Business Plan

CFO Emily Jacques thanked the board for reviewing and providing recommended changes to the draft business plan in a timely manner. All recommended changes/additions have been made and were included in the final draft provided to the board for review/approval.

Member Shackleton made a motion to approve and adopt the Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority (SSMBA) 2025-2029 Five Year Business Plan, including the Asset Management Plan, Capital Plan and Long-Range Financial Plan, and the proposed SSMBA fiscal year budgets ending December 31, 2025 as presented. Member Paquette seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

V. **Election of the 2025 SSMBA Chair / Vice Chair**

Member Lee made a motion to elect Natalie Kinloch as the 2025 SSMBA Chair. Member Hoath seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Member White made a motion to elect Linda Hoath as the 2025 SSMBA Vice Chair. Member Richards seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

VI. **Selection of 2025 Meeting Dates**

Member Hoath made a motion to set the following dates for the 2025 Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority regular meetings:

February 20, 2025

May 22, 2025

August 14, 2025

November 20, 2025

Member Richards seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

VII. **Adjournment**

Member Hoath made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:31 a.m. The motion was seconded by Member Lee. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
International Bridge Administration



Peter M. Petäinen
Bridge Director

PP:cs