



## 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  
February 22, 2024  
James McIntyre Board Room  
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan**

**Present:** Thomas Buckingham, Sr., Chair  
Natalie Kinloch, Vice Chair  
Linda Hoath, Member  
Scott Shackleton, Member  
Nicholas White, Member (via zoom)  
Thye Lee, Member  
Rémi Paquette, Member  
Karen Richards, 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  
Karl Hansen, Bridge Engineer, IBA  
Cheryn Sanford, Departmental Analyst, IBA  
Fiore Cappelli, Operations Manager, IBA  
Marcus Eidenier, Bridge Facilities and Asset Manager, IBA

Chair Buckingham called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

#### I. **Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Member Shackleton to approve the November 16, 2023, Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority regular meeting minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Kinloch. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Member Hoath to approve the November 16, 2023, Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority closed session meeting minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Member Paquette. Motion carried unanimously.

REPLY TO: PETER M. PETAINEN, BRIDGE DIRECTOR

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## 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 welcomes any comments or recommended changes by board members.

A motion was made by member Shackleton to approve the draft letter to the Governor and submit to the Governor on or by March 31, 2024. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Kinloch. Motion carried unanimously.

### B. Other Comments

- On behalf of all IBA staff, Pete expressed condolences to the family of Janet Hotchkiss, a recently retired IBA toll collector who unexpectedly passed away on January 25, 2024. Condolences were also expressed to Emily Jacques whose grandfather passed away on February 9, 2024.
- Pete stated the IBA has been requested to host the 2024 spring Transportation Border Working Group meeting at the end of May. Depending on the size of the group, the meeting will be held in our conference room, or at Lake Superior State University. Pete stated he will provide more details to the board as they become available.
- Pete reported customers are now fully migrated from the discontinued Prox cards to the new toll tags. Tag sales remain steady with approximately 18,000 tags currently in service.

## III. **Finance and Operations**

### A. Traffic and Revenue

CFO Emily Jacques reported total traffic in 2023 saw an increase of 55.4% compared to 2022 with 971,006 total crossings in 2023. This is still a decrease of 25% compared to pre-pandemic traffic; however, it is trending in the right direction.

### B. December 31, 2023 Preliminary Year End Financial Report

Emily reported total balance sheet assets were at \$8.2M as of December 31, 2023, and total liabilities were at \$700K. Total fund balances ended the year at \$4.9M, total revenue was \$5.5M, and total expenditures were at \$6.7M.

Anderson and Tackman will be onsite during the week of March 11<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.

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

### A. 2024 IDS Contract

Bridge Engineer Karl Hansen reported the current IDS contract with Hardesty & Hanover has been extended for a one-year period to allow the 2024 Fracture Critical

Member Inspection to take place while he IBA continues to work FBCL and the Blue Water Bridge (MDOT) to review and consider the potential benefits, alternatives, and risks of future shared contracting for bridge inspection services, conceptually similar to how the toll software project was contracted.

B. 2024 Underwater Inspection

Karl stated requests for proposals for the 2024 Underwater Inspection were solicited from four consultants in December; two proposals were received and reviewed in January with Great Lakes Engineering Group (GLEG) being selected as the most qualified. Karl stated he is currently in the process of negotiating a price proposal with GLEG; once a final price has been agreed upon a contract will be issued.

C. U.S. Storm Sewer Main Cleaning and Inspection

Karl stated as he reported to the board at the November 2023 meeting, the U.S. storm sewer main continues to show signs of back-up. The IBA will be working to have a large Vactor unit out of Escanaba, Michigan come in the spring to attempt to clear the lines, after which the sewer lines will be inspected with a camera to see if the clearing process was successful. An update will be provided to the board at the May SSMBA meeting.

D. Maintenance Projects and Activity

Asset Manager, Marcus Eidenier reported fourth quarter labor and benefit costs were up 29.3% compared to 2022. The increase was due to three temporary bridge workers being hired in the fall of 2022 to assist with snow removal. Equipment repair activity saw an increase of 49.7% due to the aging condition of the IBA fleet. Other areas that saw an increase during the fourth quarter were critical security system and camera repairs and activities relating to bridge electrical systems.

E. Maintenance Projects

Marcus stated there are no major maintenance projects planned for the 2024 season. The maintenance staff will work on completing routine maintenance items from the 2022 fracture critical inspection and the 2023 routine detailed inspection. Other items that the crew will work on as time allows will be spot painting on the green pedestrian rail, spot painting on the bridge substructure, and expansion joint seal replacement.

F. Equipment Disposal / Acquisition Update

At the November SSMBA meeting, the board approved disposal of the International Maxforce 7400. Subsequent to the November meeting, the truck was placed on the State of Michigan auction site with a minimum bid set at \$2,000. No bids were received and the current plan for disposal is to remove any remaining viable components, then transport the truck cab and chassis to the local scrap metal processing facility.

Marcus stated the IBA has defined new plow truck specifications and has issued a request for bids from prospective suppliers. Research has determined that by

purchasing the new unit through a vendor that has a contract with the State of Michigan will result in significant cost savings with an approximate cost of \$98K (MSRP is \$169K). The lead time to receive the new vehicle is estimated to be two years. Marcus stated he is now working to get price quotes on outfitting the truck with things such as the plow frame and dump box.

Peter stated he reported to the audit committee yesterday that the IBA recently incurred an unplanned emergency repair cost to upgrade and replace the phone system which unexpectedly failed. The total cost for the new system was \$12K (CDN); in comparison the last system purchased in 2015 was \$15.5K(USD). The IBA is respectfully requesting SSMBA approval to dispose of the old unusable phone system components. A motion was made by Member Lee to dispose of the 2015 phone system components as requested. The motion was seconded by Member Hoath. Motion carried unanimously.

V. **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

VI. **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Member Lee to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Member Hoath. Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 9:53 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
International Bridge Administration



Peter M. Petäinen  
Bridge Director