



SAULT STE. MARIE BRIDGE AUTHORITY

SAULT STE. MARIE, MICHIGAN

SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO

THOMAS BUCKINGHAM SR., CHAIR

LINDA HOATH, MEMBER

SCOTT SHACKLETON, MEMBER

NICHOLAS WHITE, MEMBER

NATALIE KINLOCH, VICE CHAIR

THYE LEE, MEMBER

RÉMI PAQUETTE, MEMBER

KAREN RICHARDS, MEMBER

Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority

Minutes

May 16, 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
Dan Weingarten, MDOT Communications Representative
Tim Burke, MDOT Photographer
Ken Talsma, Principal, Anderson Tackman & Company
Mike Grentz, Partner, Anderson Tackman & Company

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

I. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Member Hoath to approve the February 22, 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

- Pete stated the IBA was anonymously nominated for the "Beyond Sault Ste. Marie" award as part of the Sault Ontario Chamber of Commerce annual awards

banquet. The banquet was held on May 9th and although we were not selected as the award recipient the nomination was very much appreciated.

- Pete reported the 2024 annual bridge walk is set to take place on June 29, 2024. The walk is advertised on both the Sault Ontario and Sault Michigan Chamber of Commerce Facebook page. There will be no bicycle parade and the walk will be led by the Law Enforcement torch run. Due to current road construction, the walk will begin near the Lake Superior State University (LSSU) Fine Arts Building versus the usual starting point at the LSSU Norris Center. It is anticipated the bridge will be closed for approximately one hour in duration to accommodate the walk.
- Pete stated the Transportation Border Working Group will be holding its bi-annual meeting here in Sault, Michigan on May 22-23, 2024. The IBA will be hosting the event in our conference room. The group will participate in a tour of the Sault Locks project and will also have the opportunity to do an arch tour for those interested.
- Pete reported MDOT is undergoing a department-wide risk assessment that will be conducted by the Office of Commission Audit. The IBA is scheduled to begin its risk review sometime next month. Laura Mester stated the assessment will be consistent across the entire department and will focus on revenue, or lack thereof to support future operational and capital needs.
- As part of the U.S. Coast Guard Area Maritime Security Committee, the IBA will be participating in a full-scale emergency response exercise sometime in September.

III. **Finance and Operations**

A. December 31, 2023 Audit Report

CFO Emily Jacques introduced Ken Talsma and Mike Grentz of Anderson, Tackman & Company. Mr. Grentz stated the IBA received the best possible independent audit result, an “Unmodified Opinion” which means everything was within all generally accepted auditing principles.

Vice Chair Kinloch made a motion to approve the December 31, 2023 Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority Audit Report. The motion was seconded by Member Shackleton. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Traffic and Revenue

CFO Emily Jacques reported total traffic as of March 31, 2024 saw an increase of 23.2% compared to March 2023. This is only 78% of pre-pandemic traffic levels; however, traffic continues to trend in the right direction.

C. First Quarter Financial Report

Emily reported total balance sheet assets were at \$8.7M as of March 31, 2024, and total liabilities were at \$1.2M. Total fund balances were at \$4.9M, total revenue was \$1.6M, and total expenditures were at \$1.6M.

D. Independent Auditor RFP and Renewal

At yesterday's SSMBA Audit Committee meeting, it was recommended to have MDOT's Office of the Auditor General issue one last short-form request for proposal (RFP) to renew with Anderson Tackman, and Company to be the Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority's independent auditor for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2024. Next year a full RFP will be issued to select SSMBA's independent auditor.

Member White made a motion to exercise the option to go forward with a short-form RFP process for a contract with Anderson Tackman & Company as the Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority's independent auditor for the fiscal year ending December 21, 2024. The motion was seconded by Member Paquette. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. **Bridge Engineering and Maintenance**

A. 2024 Underwater Inspection

Bridge Engineer Karl Hansen reported the contract was signed just yesterday with Great Lakes Engineering Group to perform the required five-year underwater inspection of fifteen submerged piers in the St. Mary's River. The underwater inspection of the piers on the U.S. side is scheduled to take place in early June; we are working to schedule a date for the inspection of the piers located on the Canadian side in late June or early July.

B. 2024 Fracture Critical Member Inspection

Bridge Engineer Karl Hansen reported Hardesty and Hanover will be on-site to conduct the hands-on portion of the 2024 Fracture Critical Inspection during the first two weeks in August. A report of preliminary findings will be presented at the August SSMBA meeting.

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

Karl reported the cleaning of the sewer main on the U.S. side of the bridge has been completed. There was a section that was almost 100% packed with 8-10 cubic yards of sand, after the blockage was cleared there were several cracks noted. The vendor who performed the work was Tunnel Vision out of Escanaba, Michigan and they will be forwarding a digital file of the video they took inside the sewer main. Karl stated he will work with MDOT's Ancillary Structures Group to review the video footage and get their recommendation on what steps, if any, need to be taken next. Karl will provide an update to the board at the August meeting.

D. Maintenance Projects and Activity

Marcus reported labor and benefits saw an increase of 37% as of March 31, 2024 compared to 2023. This increase is the result of one extra pay period in the reporting period this year as well as pre-negotiated bonuses all staff received during the first quarter.

E. Maintenance Projects

Marcus stated there are no large-scale 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 Acquisition/Refurbishment Update

Marcus reported the IBA has placed an order for a new International Plow truck from Tri-County International under the State of Michigan's MIDeal plan. The purchase price is \$98,500 and the upfit work on the truck will be an additional cost of \$105,193.02 which includes dump box, plow frame, under body scraper blade, and miscellaneous items to ready the truck for its intended purpose. There is a two-year lead time before we receive the new truck. To reduce operational risk with our current aging equipment, we solicited bids to refurbish our current Peterbilt which low bid came in at \$49K. Additionally, we requested prices to upfit the current IBA Sterling tandem axle dump truck to allow for snow plowing and that price came in at \$23K.

Member Lee made a motion to proceed with the refurbishment of the IBA Peterbilt plow truck and the 2012 Sterling tandem axle dump truck as presented. The motion was seconded by Member Hoath. Motion carried unanimously.

V. **Public Comment**

Joined by the IBA maintenance crew, Pete recognized Tim Burke with MDOT Media and Mapping for his 36 years of service to MDOT. Tim has provided excellent service to us at the bridge over the years and will be retiring in early June. Pete presented Tim with a plaque made by our maintenance crew featuring a rivet with steel from the International Bridge expressing our best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

VI. **Adjournment**

Member White made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 a.m. The motion was seconded by Member Lee. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
International Bridge Administration



Peter M. Petäinen
Bridge Director