



SAULT STE. MARIE BRIDGE AUTHORITY

SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO

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

SAULT STE. MARIE, MICHIGAN

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

**Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority
Minutes
February 20, 2025
James McIntyre Board Room
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan**

Present: Natalie Kinloch, Chair
Thye Lee, Member
Rémi Paquette, Member (via MS Teams)
Karen Richards, Member
Linda Hoath, Vice Chair
Thomas Buckingham, Sr., Member
Scott Shackleton, Member
Nicholas White, Member

Also Present: Peter Petäinen, Bridge Director, IBA
Laura Mester, Chief Administrative Officer, MDOT
Michael Dittenber, Attorney General's Office, MDOT (via MS Teams)
Emily Jacques, Chief Financial Officer, IBA
Fiore Cappelli, Operations Manager
Cheryn Sanford, Departmental Analyst, IBA
Marcus Eidenier, Bridge Facilities and Asset Manager, IBA

Chair Kinloch called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

I. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hoath to approve the November 21, 2024, Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority regular meeting minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Member Richards. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hoath to approve the November 21, 2024, Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority closed session meeting minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Member Lee. Motion carried unanimously.

REPLY TO: PETER M. PETAINEN, BRIDGE DIRECTOR

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II. **Bridge Director's Comments**

A. Letter to the Governor

A copy of the draft annual letter to the Governor was included in your packet for review. If you have any suggested changes, please forward them to the IBA for incorporation into the final version. A motion was made by Member Shackleton to approve the draft letter to the Governor and submit it to the Governor on or by March 31, 2025. The motion was seconded by Member Richards. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Other Comments

- Transport Canada held their semi-annual site inspection on December 17, 2024. The site visit went well with no observed deficiencies, and all was found to be in compliance.
- Progress has been made with Evolgen to reschedule the inspection of the underwater piers located in Canada; the new inspection date is set for May 28, 2025, weather permitting, with an alternate date of May 29, 2025.
- We continue to monitor the three remaining sets of rocker links on the bridge by painting and observing them for any cracking to ensure they are functioning properly. The IBA took a similar approach to the rocker links that were replaced on pier 18R back in 2017. Karl has been in touch with Beckie Curtis with MDOT's Bureau of Bridges and she has indicated this may be a good fit for a Transportation Pooled Fund research project that the State of Indiana is leading, and Michigan is a participant, it would allow us to place strain gauges on these rocker links as part of their pool research fund project. We will keep the board updated with any new information we receive.
- The episode of Canada's Ultimate Challenge that was filed on the bridge will be the fifth episode in the series which is scheduled to premiere on February 27, 2025.
- Peter stated he will be attending the Eastern Border Transportation Coalition conference in Quebec City on May 6-7, 2025; he will report any items of concern or interest to the board at the May meeting.
- After a hiatus of several years, a new organizational team is bringing back the Sault International Festival of Races with a target date of September 27-28, 2025. The weekend will include a half marathon, a 5k run, a 5k walk, and a proposed 5-mile bridge run. The bridge run would take place at 8:00 a.m. on September 27th and would require a one-hour bridge closure if the board agrees. A motion was made by Member Buckingham to support the 2025 Sault International Festival of Races to include a 5-mile bridge run resulting in a full bridge closure for approximately one hour in duration. Member Lee seconded the motion; Vice Chair Hoath abstained; motion carried.

III. **Bridge Engineering and Maintenance**

A. Coordinated Inspection Contract

The IBA has been working on a coordinated inspection contract for inspection services for the International Bridge, the Bluewater Bridge FBCL, and the Bluewater Bridge MDOT. A formal request for proposals (RFP) was issued on February 10, 2025 and a

mandatory pre-bid meeting was held virtually yesterday with 42 attendees from 19 different firms in attendance. The RFP's are due on March 10, 2025 after which a scoring committee will meet to review and score the proposals for the most qualified consultant. Karl will provide an update on the results at the May meeting.

B. Maintenance and Activity and Project Tracking

Marcus Eidenier stated current project and activity reports were included in the board packets for review. Marcus reported the IBA faced significant challenges in 2024 with filling our seasonal positions due to a lack of available candidates; this resulted in a 9% decrease in our part-time labor costs. In order to cover the part-time labor shortages, we used our fulltime staff which resulted in an 8% increase in our fulltime labor budget. Additionally, bridge worker overtime is up 30% compared to 2023 due to the harsh winter we have had. Equipment usage also saw a 25.4% increase which can again be attributed to the harsh winter we have had.

C. Maintenance Projects

Marcus stated he has a very aggressive schedule planned for the maintenance department this spring/summer. Some of the projects planned are:

- Work on routine maintenance items from the 2023 detailed annual inspection; these are at a 74% completion rate currently and the goal by the end of the 2025 season to have these at 85% completion.
- Spot painting on the lower portion of the U.S. Arch.
- Cleaning and coating of the green pedestrian rail.
- Gusset repair at pier 50.
- Complete the friction surface application on the Canadian approach.

D. Equipment Update

The Sterling tandem axle dump truck had had the fit up work completed and is now incorporated into our vehicle fleet. The tandem axle plow truck we have on loan from MDOT has experienced some mechanical issues though upon researching, MDOT was aware of these mechanical issues but could not resolve them, we do still continue to utilize this truck as needed. We are on schedule to receive the new Kenworth truck by the end of March 2025.

IV. Finance and Operations

A. Traffic and Revenue

CFO Emily Jacques reported 2024 traffic is up 14.3% compared to 2023 with a total of 1,109,831 crossings. Discussion took place in regard to February 2025 traffic being down due to the current political climate; the IBA will keep a very close eye on traffic trends and will report back the board in May.

B. December 31, 2024 Preliminary Year End Financial Report

Emily reported total balance sheet assets were at \$9.7M as of December 31, 2024, and total liabilities were at \$1.1M. Total fund balances were at \$6.1M, total revenue was \$8M, and total expenditures were at \$6.8M.

V. **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

VI. **Adjournment**

Member Richards made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:11 a.m. The motion was seconded by Member White. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
International Bridge Administration



Peter M. Petäinen
Bridge Director

PP:cs