



## SAULT STE. MARIE BRIDGE AUTHORITY

SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO

SAULT STE. MARIE, MICHIGAN

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

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

### Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority

#### Minutes

August 14, 2025

James McIntyre Board Room

Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

**Present:**

Natalie Kinloch, Chair  
Thye Lee, Member (via MS Teams)  
Rémi Paquette, Member  
Karen Richards, Member  
Nicholas White, Member

**Absent:**

Linda Hoath, Vice Chair  
Thomas Buckingham, Sr., Member  
Scott Shackleton, Member

**Also Present:**

Peter Petäinen, Bridge Director, IBA  
Laura Mester, Chief Administrative Officer, MDOT  
Michael Dittenber, Attorney General's Office, MDOT  
Karl Hansen, IBA Bridge Engineer  
Emily TenEyck, Chief Financial Officer, IBA  
Fiore Cappelli, Operations Manager  
Cheryn Sanford, Departmental Analyst, IBA  
Marcus Eidenier, Facilities and Asset Manager, IBA  
Dan Weingarten, MDOT Communications Representative  
Matt Davis, Great Lakes Engineering Group  
Eric Rickert, Great Lakes Engineering Group

Chair Kinloch called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

**I. Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Member Richards to approve the May 22, 2025, Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority regular meeting minutes with the following change:

Member Rémi Paquette attended the meeting in person, not via MS Teams as the draft minutes reflected.

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**

- Peter stated with the three U.S. members absent, MDOT CAO Laura Mester, has signed a document authorizing Member White to represent the U.S. Members interest to allow for a quorum.
- Peter stated the 2025 Bridge Walk successfully took place on June 28<sup>th</sup> with approximately 1,000 walkers participating. Plans are also being made for the Sault International Festival of Races that is scheduled for September 27, 2025, from 8:00 – 9:30 a.m.
- Peter stated the Underwater Inspection of the bridge piers located in Canada was completed in early June. The IBA has met with the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) who regulates power within Ontario, along with representatives from Transport Canada and the Federal Bridge. Planning, coordination, and communication for future inspections was the topic of discussion to ensure future inspections are completed in a timely fashion.
- Peter stated a television team filming an episode of *"The Mightiest"* did some filming from the bridge deck for a future episode featuring the Sault Locks. Once an air date for the episode is known, Peter will share that information with the board.
- Peter stated he recently met with the new Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) Northern Regional Director on June 8, 2025. Local CBSA staffing and building sizes were discussed and the regional director will be working with the local Chief to formulate some consolidation plans for their operation. As more information is available it will be shared with the board.
- MDOT Director, Brad Wieferich, is scheduled to be at the IBA on August 18<sup>th</sup>. Peter stated he plans to show the Director the epoxy overlay project which was recently completed.
- Peter stated the draft 2026-2030 Business Plan was included in the board packets for review. If you have any suggested changes, please forward them to the IBA by September 19<sup>th</sup> so they can be incorporated in the final draft which will be presented to the board for approval consideration at the November meeting.
- Peter stated MDOT provides retiring employees recognition of service plaque; the IBA recently discovered MDOT also does memory plaques for former MDOT employees how have passed away. These plaques provide a unique memory for both the employee and their families and are always appreciated.

## III. **Bridge Engineering and Maintenance**

### A. Underwater Inspection

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 White to enter closed session, Member Richards 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 9:25 a.m. Member Richards made a motion to re-open the meeting to the public. Member White 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 9:40 a.m.

Great Lakes Engineering Project Manager, Erik Rickert, stated there were no significant changes or findings in the Underwater Inspection. Member White made a motion to approve the complete Underwater Inspection Report including the remaining Canadian piers inspected in 2025, as prepared and submitted by Great Lakes Engineering Group with no exceptions taken. Member Paquette seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Coordinated Inspection Contract

The four-year contract for coordinated inspection services for the International Bridge, Blue Water Bridge Canada, and Blue Water Bridge MDOT was finalized in June with Modjeski and Masters. This one contract will allow inspection and other as needed engineering services to take place on all three big bridges. The first authorization under this new contract was for the IBA annual inspection which took place last week; the inspection went well with no significant findings (the final report will be presented to the board in November). The authorization for the Blue Water Bridge Canada inspection is currently in process with that inspection scheduled for September with the authorization and inspection for the Blue Water Bridge MDOT following. Bridge Engineer Hansen expressed appreciation to the MDOT contracting department for their efforts to accelerate this entire contracting process; Bridge Director Petäinen stated this was a very unique contract and the MDOT contracting staff were great to work with. MDOT CAO Laura Mester stated as one of the owner representatives of the International Bridge, she feels fortunate to have this team in place and that this contract, as well as the toll software project, is a model of how International relationships can be beneficial for all.

C. Maintenance Activity and Project Tracking

Facilities and Asset Manager, Marcus Eidenier, stated activity and project tracking reports were included in the board packets for review. Labor and benefits saw a 6.4% decline while equipment costs saw an increase of 10% compared to the second quarter of 2024. Routine maintenance on structural steel saw an increase of \$16,000 which is attributed to the focused effort in 2025 of bridge painting.

D. Maintenance Projects

Marcus reported staff have really refined their process and have managed to double their production of cleaning and coating the green pedestrian rail in 2025 compared to 2024 with 570' being completed this season.

The crew began spot painting the U.S. Arch during the week of June 2<sup>nd</sup> and plan to continue working on this until late August.

For the remainder of the season, staff will work on a gusset plate repair at pier 50, completing routine maintenance items detailed in the 2023 routine detailed inspection and the 2024 fracture critical inspection, completing the friction surface application on the Canadian approach, and then starting the friction surface application on the U.S. approach.

IV. **Finance and Operations**

A. Traffic and Revenue

CFO Emily TenEyck reported second quarter traffic ended down 23%; the biggest decline has been in discretionary auto traffic. Emily stated she will continue to keep a very close eye on traffic and will apprise the board of any new developments.

B. Second Quarter Financial Report

Emily reported total balance sheet assets were at \$9.8M as of June 30, 2025, and total liabilities were at \$1M. Total fund balances were \$6.3M, total revenue was \$3.8M, and total expenditures were \$3.6M.

C. Independent Auditor RFP and Renewal

Emily reported the Sault Ste. Marie Bridge Authority Audit Committee met yesterday afternoon to review and discuss independent auditor proposals which were recently submitted. Thye Lee, Audit Committee Chair, stated it is the recommendation of the audit committee that the IBA engage Anderson, Tackman, & Company for external auditing services.

Member Lee made a motion to approve Anderson, Tackman, and Company, as the independent auditor for fiscal year 2025 as recommended by the Sault Ste. Marie Audit Committee, from the list of auditors through a request for proposal reviewed and provided by the State of Michigan Auditor General. Member White seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

V. **Public Comment**

There was no public comment; however, there is a conflict with the scheduled November meeting date. Member White made a motion to authorize Bridge Director Petäinen to work with all members to determine a proposed new meeting date. Member Richards seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

VI. **Adjournment**

Member Paquette made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:32 a.m. The motion was seconded by Member White. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,  
International Bridge Administration



Peter M. Petäinen  
Bridge Director