MAINE TURNPIKE AUTHORITY
WORKSHOP

August 21st, 2025

1. Pursuant to notice, a workshop of the Maine Turnpike Authority was held at 9 a.m. on August 21st, 2025.

   The following were present:

   Michael Cianchette, Chair
   Jane Lincoln, Vice Chair *(On Zoom)*
   Emily Becker, Member
   Nina Fisher, Member
   Thomas Zuke, Member
   Commissioner Dale Doughty, Member Ex-Officio

2. John Sirois, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, introduced Leann Fajardo, the MTA's new Controller.

3. Executive Director Andre Briere congratulated Dale Doughty on his new position as commissioner of MaineDOT and welcomed him to the board.

4. Executive Director Briere described the strategic planning process that had commenced with a recent meeting of MTA management. He said the process was intentionally limited to two years because that was more conducive to achievement of progress towards realistic goals than a longer process. He said that goals in four broad areas had been outlined at the planning meeting and that four work groups, one for each subject area, were being formed to work towards achievement of those goals.

5. Chairman Michael Cianchette noted that he had been at the recent strategic planning session for part of the day and thought that what he had seen was productive.

6. Executive Director Briere presented a spreadsheet documenting statutory Department Projects that the MTA had agreed to invest in. He said that the two agencies planned to introduce a more interactive process for agreeing to these projects this fall. He noted that the current list included transit projects which had not normally been part of the list. He said the goal was to provide "seed money" to give these initiatives a fair chance to get off the ground,, rather than to become a permanent operator or funder of these services.

7. Chief Administrative Officer Erin Courtney noted that there had been several discussions with Glenn Fenton of Portland Metro on projects that had potential benefit to the Maine Turnpike as well as to regional transportation as a whole.

8. Emily Becker said that she was happy to see Glenn Fenton at today's workshop. She asked if staff had also talked to other transit providers, such as providers in Androscoggin or York County. Ms. Courtney said that had not been done yet. She said that Commissioner Doughty had engaged in some preliminary discussions with other providers, but that both agencies agreed that Metro had suggested immediate opportunities with potential. She said that if this was a direction the board supported, then the MTA could reach out and branch out geographically in the future.

9. Commissioner Dale Doughty said that he thought the list before the board presented a good blend of the two agencies' goals, and reflected the spirit of the MTA's new mission statement "We Serve Maine." He said that in the past projects had tended to be added haphazardly to this list, as need arose, but that he hoped to develop a more methodical, cooperative process.

10. Glenn Fenton, Executive Director of Greater Portland Metro, gave a presentation to the board on transit initiatives he hoped that the MTA would consider funding. He said that the system had been at an all-time high for users in 2019 and was now at 90 percent of pre-pandemic ridership. He described three projects, including a fixed bus route service in Scarborough, a micro transit initiative in Scarborough and South Portland, and a proposal for the Lewiston/Auburn to Portland bus service.

11. Nina Fisher joined the meeting during Mr. Fenton's presentation.

12. Chairman Cianchette asked if providers in Biddeford / Saco were prepared to work the Scarborough service into their plans, since there seemed to be some overlap in the proposed service and existing ones. Mr. Fenton answered that discussions were planned and that there might be a opportunities for the Biddeford / Saco providers to truncate some of their routes, or to branch out in other directions.

13. Chairman Cianchette asked how Metro would introduce micro transit to Scarborough to give it the best "head start" possible. Mr. Fenton said that he thought it could be done through hosting public events and talking to businesses to get them involved.

14. Chief Financial Officer John Sirois introduced Financial Analyst Tyler Laverriere, who reviewed the draft 2027 Operating Budget with the board. Mr. Lavierre noted that there was an increase of about $2 million in the proposed budget and went over a line item comparion showing the changes. He said that, as in the past, salaries, benefits, and Maine State Police funding represented over 50 percent of the changes. He said that another significant increase was in the salt budget, which was 16 percent higher, partly to account for potential increases due to delivery costs and tariffs.

15. Nina Fisher asked about the number of MTA employees, the vacancy rate and whether the vacancies were included in the budget with full benefits. John Sirois stated that the number of positions was around 430, with a vacancy rate of less than 10 percent. Tyler Laverriere confirmed that the vacant positions were included and were budgeted at full benefits.

16. Chairman Michael Cianchette said that he thought the 6 percent assumption for increases in benefit costs might be low and asked if it had been tested. Human Resources Director Lauren Carrier agreed that it seemed low, but that six percent had been pretty accurate for many years. John Sirois said that the state system's increases in out of pocket costs and decreases in benefits had contributed to a slowing in overall benefit costs.

17. Chief Financial Officer John Sirois presented some proposed revisions to the MTA's Financial Planning Principles. He said a key revision was replacement of the current goal of unencumbered cash equal to 10 percent of annual toll revenue with the principle that a reserve of 700 days cash on hand should be maintained. He said that this was based on the metric, "cash on hand", that rating agencies used, and that Moody's, for instance, felt that 500 days was an acceptable minimum.

18. Tim Cote of HNTB Corporation reviewed the draft RM Deposit with the board. He described the genesis of the process in the MTA's Bond Resolution and reviewed the three categories of projects that were included – Reserve Maintenance, Perennials and Capital. Mr. Cote then described the process of reconciliation, which included moving projected expenditures for 2025 forward as well as unspent amounts to calculate a $ 42 million recommended deposit. He said this amount was consistent with prior years.

19. Chairman Michael Cianchette requested that the board be provided with historical RM deposit amounts for the last several years.

20. Chief Operations Officer Peter Merfeld introduced a proposed contract with a consultant to assist in the design of the MTA's work zone speed enforcement program. He said the bill authorizing the program had been carried over into the legislature's next session and that MTA staff hoped to be able to use the next eight months or so to reach at least 60 percent design in order to get a head start on issuing an RFP when and if the bill eventually passed. Executive Director Briere added that he believed this consultant would also be a resource to allow MTA staff to more accurately answer legislative questions relating to the cost and methodology of the proposed program.

21. Nina Fisher asked about the sole source nature of the contract and whether this contractor was the only consultant who could supply these services. Peter Merfeld replied that there were other consultants capable of this nationwide, but that this consultant had very recently finished working on a similar project in Connecticut and seemed to have the most relevant experience, as well as being able to meet the MTA's somewhat constrained time window.

22. Chief Administrative Officer Erin Sullivan presented a proposed contract with Cornerstone for public relations services relating to the upcoming Forest Avenue Bridge repairs. She

said these were emergency repairs necessary to ensure that the bridge remained drivable during the full rehabilitation. She said the construction was expected to generate a lot of noise, and MTA staff wanted to reach out to local neighborhoods proactively regarding this. She said that, among other outreach efforts, a public meeting was planned for late September.

23. Nina Fisher asked why this contract was sole source. Ms. Courtney responded that time pressure was the primary reason, with this repair contract being scheduled for award the first week of September. She said that Cornerstone had the background knowledge to be able to undertake this project without a lot of preparation time, which was important.

24. Emily Becker asked if noise mitigation was under consideration. Executive Director Briere said that staff intended to do some monitoring and that there might be a couple of impacted locations that qualified. He said that if noise mitigation were done it would not necessarily have to consist of a full-fledged noise barrier.

25. Staff Attorney Jonathan Arey reviewed a proposed Freedom of Access Act Reimbursement policy with the board. Commissioner Doughty asked if the MTA had a formal Document Retention Policy. Executive Director Briere answered that there was no entity wide policy but that he planned to implement one.

26. Chief Operations Officer Peter Merfeld presented a proposed revision of the MTA's existing Interchange Policy. He said that it had been revised to be more generalized and less prescriptive in nature, with more discretion on the study of proposed interchanges left to the MTA.

27. Mr. Merfeld next described proposed revisions to the MTA's Noise Policy, stating that numbers had been updated in the policy and other changes made to more closely approximate the current MaineDOT version.

28. On motion of Nina Fisher, seconded by Thomas Zuke, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to enter executive session for the purposes of:

    - Discussion, pursuant to 1 § 405(6)(E) and §405(6)(F), of the legal rights and duties of the MTA in relation to negotiations relating to the MTA's contract with its current ETC System vendor, TransCore.

    The executive session began at 11:15 A.M. and ended at 11:45 A.M.

29. On motion of Tom Zuke, seconded by Nina Fisher, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to adjourn.

Adjourned at 11:45 A.M.

August, 2025

Jonathan Arey
Secretary

10/20/25
Date