



**MAINE TURNPIKE AUTHORITY  
MEETING**

**May 23, 2024**

1. Pursuant to notice, a meeting of the Maine Turnpike Authority was held at 9 a.m. on May 23rd, 2024

The following were present:

Daniel Wathen, Chair  
Michael Cianchette, Vice Chair  
Jane Lincoln, Member  
Andrew McLean, Member (*On Zoom*)  
Thomas Zuke, Member  
Bruce Van Note, Member Ex-Officio

2. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Michael Cianchette, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to approve the minutes of the board's April 25<sup>th</sup> meeting.
3. John Sirois, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, reported on traffic and revenue. He said that the actual final numbers were slightly higher than in his written report and that May was shaping up to be a very good month, with class six vehicles being the only class with negative numbers. Mr. Sirois reported that the MTA was currently \$ 700,000 under budget in its operating expenses and that required deposits were being made ahead of schedule.
4. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Jane Lincoln, with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to approve investments of money to the credit of Maine Turnpike Authority funds made during the month of April, 2024, as detailed on a report submitted to this meeting by Bangor Savings Bank, dated May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024
5. Thomas Zuke, chairman of the Finance and Audit Committee, reviewed the minutes of a joint April 25<sup>th</sup> meeting with the Long Range Planning Committee.

6. Director of Building Maintenance Shawn Laverdiere presented bids received for roof repairs at five MTA maintenance locations.
7. On motion of Michael Cianchette, seconded by Thomas Zuke, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to award a contract for roof repairs in the amount of \$ 205,540.00 to Superior Roofing of Portland, Maine.
8. Chairman Wathen asked if there were any questions or objections related to items on the consent agenda. There were none, and the May Contract Consent Agenda was considered approved.
9. Chief of Operations Peter Merfeld, reviewed the bids received on five contracts with the board. Mr. Merfeld noted that the bids on the first three contracts were close to the estimate or under. He said that the bids received on Contract 2024.13 – Culvert & Slope Repairs had been very high, but that he recommended award to the low bidder if that bidder met qualifications. He said that MTA staff had also spoken with this bidder about value engineering, and was trying to determine the specific nature of the materials involved, with hopes of lowering the price.
10. Michael Cianchette said that he understood the slope repair was of an emergency nature. He noted that both bids received had been high, but also fairly close together, and asked Peter Merfeld if he had an idea as to why that was. Mr. Merfeld replied that there was a lot of risk in this contract due to the unknown nature of the underground materials the culvert had to go through.
11. On motion of Michael Cianchette, seconded by Jane Lincoln, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to approve the award of the following contracts:
  - Contract 2024.06 – Southern Bridge Repairs, in the amount of \$ 934,680.45, to CPM Constructors.
  - Contract 2024.08 – Exit 36 Pavement Repairs & Biddeford / Kennebunk Park and Ride, in the amount of \$ 444,760.00, to Coastal Road Repair.
  - Contract 2024.11 – Cumberland Service Plaza Fuel System Replacement, in the amount of \$ 2,447,600.00, to SRS Petroleum Services.
  - Contract 2024.13 – Culvert & Slope Repairs, in the amount of \$1,349,809.00, to Chase Excavating.
  - Contract 2024.15 – Variable Message Sign & Walkway Replacement, in the amount of \$ 299,000.00, to Moulison Electrical.
12. Construction Project Manager Jamie Mason updated the board on ongoing construction contracts. He said that the bridge had been removed at Route 122 and the contractor was rehabilitating the abutments in preparation for the new girders. Mr. Mason said the

expansion of the Litchfield Maintenance restrooms to include separate male and female restrooms had begun. He said the contractor on the southern paving project had milled all the southbound lanes and had relocated to work on the Wells paving project until repairs at Spruce Creek were complete. Mr. Mason reported that the contractor on the Portland area paving project was on schedule and was expected to be working through July. He said the clearing project was close to completion.

13. Erin Courtney, Public Relations Manager, reported on items related to her department. She said that she would be at the Kennebunk Service Plaza the following day with Miles the moose, greeting tourists and giving away foam antlers. She shared a press release on this event as well as the new part time shoulder use system on the Piscataqua River Bridge. She reported on a recent work zone awareness press conference and the upcoming annual snow plow rodeo.
14. Director of Maintenance John Cannell presented a proposal for purchase and installation of a dump truck body and snow plow equipment. Mr. Cannell stated that the purchase would be a sole source purchase from H.P. Fairfield to ensure consistency with the equipment on existing MTA trucks.
15. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Jane Lincoln, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to approve the purchase of a dump body and snow plow equipment from H.P. Fairfield in the amount of \$ 169,592.00, as described on a purchase order from Fairfield dated April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and presented by John Cannell to this meeting.
16. Warren Knight, co-owner of Smiling Hill Farms in Scarborough, Maine, addressed the board on issues related to the proposed Gorham Connector. Mr. Knight said that he felt that it was important to address the board directly because he felt that the information the board was receiving from Executive Director Peter Mills while, not untrue, might be overly optimistic. He said that the position of his family was that he did not want to sell any property or see the Smiling Hill property reduced in size in any way. He said there was a “critical mass” of acreage needed to maintain a viable dairy farm. Mr. Knight said that his family had owned this property since the 1720s and was not interested in jeopardizing that heritage for a fair market value sale. He said that the MTA would be required to condemn this property and that he was prepared to fight that process as not being in the public interest. He said that if eminent domain were pursued he would be seeking compensation for the entire farm property, including the portions made “un-viable by the taking. Mr. Knight said that the Gorham project would not improve traffic flow and did not have public support. Mr. Knight said that he would share a written copy of his comments with the board.
17. Myles Smith of Mainers for Smarter Transportation addressed the board next. Mr. Smith stated that the Gorham project had been put in the MTA’s lap to cure traffic issues for a few wealthy suburbs. He said that this project was not needed to address delays and that other recommendations of a 2012 report, such as replacement of traffic lights, had not been implemented. He stated that one of the MTA’s own reports had claimed that the project would only save from 2 to 5 minutes on the trip between Gorham and Portland. Mr. Smith

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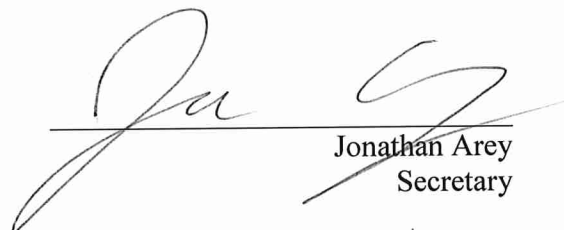
said that the project was financially risky and that the estimate of the cost had increased substantially over the last few years. He asked that a 2019 report on the project's financial feasibility be released, along with a 2023 follow up to that report. He said that he would also like to see traffic figures based on a post-Covid environment. Mr. Smith said that the project was an unnecessary distraction from the MTA's core mission that all MTA users would pay for in one form or another. He asked the MTA to consider dropping this project to concentrate on projects directly related to the MTA's mission and lowering tolls.

18. On motion of Michael Cianchette, 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 MRSA § 405 (6), of the employment, appointment, assignment, duties, promotion, demotion, compensation, and evaluation of a group of the MTA's management and confidential employees where public discussion could reasonably be expected to violate the right to privacy of one or more of the employees in that group.
- Discussion, pursuant to 1 MRSA § 405(6)(E), of the legal rights and duties of the MTA in regard to the permitting process for the Gorham Connector.

The executive session began at 9:45 A.M. and ended at 11:30 A.M.

Adjourned at 11:30 A.M.

  
Jonathan Arey  
Secretary  
11/4/24  
Date