



**MAINE TURNPIKE AUTHORITY
MEETING
November 21st, 2024**

1. Pursuant to notice, a meeting of the Maine Turnpike Authority was held at 9 a.m. on November 21st, 2024

The following were present:

Michael Cianchette, Chair
Nina Fisher, Member
Jane Lincoln, Member
Andrew McLean, Member (*via Zoom – until 9:38 A.M.*)
Thomas Zuke, Member
Dale Doughty, for Bruce Van Note, MaineDOT Commissioner

2. Chairman Michael Cianchette called the meeting to order.
3. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Jane Lincoln, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to approve the minutes of the board's October 17th meeting.
4. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Nina Fisher, and with unanimous support of the members present, it was voted to elect Jane Lincoln as Vice Chair of the Maine Turnpike Authority for the remainder of the 2024-2025 term.
5. John Sirois, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, reported on traffic and revenue. Mr. Sirois stated that traffic across all classes of vehicles was down this month as compared to last year, though the year to date figures were still significantly higher than last year. He noted that the MTA was ahead of schedule on its required deposits and that investment returns and E-Z Pass sales were strong.
6. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Nina Fisher, 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 October, 2024, as detailed on a report submitted to this meeting by Bangor Savings Bank, dated November 12th, 2024.

7. Acting Executive Director Peter Merfeld reported on the status of the Crosby Farm facility. He said that this facility, which had been used for years by the State Police, was still partially in use by MTA Highway Maintenance, with about twenty five employees at the facility. He said that due to the age of the structure a consultant was being engaged to look at a new structure for employee use. Mr. Merfeld also mentioned the MTA's two leases for electric vehicle charging locations, with Tesla and Chargepoint, which were expiring in 2026 and 2027, respectively. He said that the MTA's concession area vendor, Applegreen, was interested in managing these leases and said that it might be an opportunity to consolidate them into one agreement.
8. Director of E-Z Pass Pamela Lambert reported on the activities of the Employee Appreciation Committee. Ms. Lambert said that the committee believed that recognition of years of service should return to the MTA in some form as well as quarterly meetings between upper management and supervisors. She said that coffee machines at maintenance areas and fare collection locations would be appreciated as well.
9. Deputy Director of Engineering Kristi Van Ooyen reported on the activities of the Employee Policy Committee. Ms. Van Ooyen said that the committee was still meeting twice a month, reviewing existing policies, and that a few have been forwarded to the board. She said that the committee planned an outreach to employees in the next newsletter, eliciting comments and questions on existing policies.
10. Chairman Michael Cianchette reviewed the minutes of the November 14th Personnel Committee with the board.
11. Safety Coordinator Arlo Pike described the recent renewal, for the second time, of MTA's SHAPE Award status by the Maine Department of Labor. Mr. Pike described the physical inspections and document reviews required by this process. He noted that the MTA had several different industrial "classifications", requiring different review standards, which made coordination and planning essential in achieving agency wide certification. He noted that for the MTA's initial SHAPE award the review had taken four days, but that this renewal had only taken a day and a half.
12. Dale Doughty noted that MaineDOT had participated in this program as well, but had divided its various component units and dealt with them independently. He said he knew from experience that the MTA being certified as a single unit was a significant achievement.
13. John Sirois, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, reviewed information on 2024 cost of living increases that had been shared with the personnel committee at its last meeting.
14. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Jane Lincoln, it was voted to approve an increase of 3.52% to the salaries of all MTA employees classified as Professional / Technical, effective December 31st, 2024, said increase being equivalent to the Annual CPI for the Northeast Region as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

15. Purchasing Manager Nate Carll presented the bids received for the MTA's Electrical Supply Contract. Mr. Carll said that, based on advice of the MTA's broker, he recommended a one year contract with Shell Energy. Mr. Carll noted that Shell had provided the lowest bid, at .09283 cents per kilowatt hour, though that bid was subject to daily change and had not yet been updated this morning.
16. On motion of Nina Fisher, seconded by Thomas Zuke, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to award Shell Energy a one year contract to supply the MTA with electricity, commencing December 1st, 2024, to Shell Energy, provided that Shell remained the low bidder on this date, and its final price did not, in the opinion of MTA staff, differ substantially from the price presented to the board.
17. Director of ITS Eric Barnes presented a proposed update to the scope of a four year Toll Equipment Upgrade Plan, the original of which had been presented and approved the previous year. Mr. Barnes explained that this version of the plan moved purchases of new CPCs (Central Processing Computers) forward to 2024. He noted that another adjustment had been to reflect a rise in the price of servers due to some upgrades the MTA had requested.
18. Director of Highway Maintenance John Cannell reviewed a proposed three year equipment replacement plan with the board. Mr. Cannell noted that normally he presented one year at a time, but that he was requesting approval of a three year plan, partially due to lead time on trucks with Allison transmissions. He described the purchases in 2025 as straightforward replacement purchases except for some $\frac{3}{4}$ ton pickups with lane blades for debris removal and six new plow trucks, which he hoped to aggregate with purchases in the second year of the plan. Mr. Cannell noted that under the proposed plan the truck purchases would be awarded in the second quarter of 2025, with the chassis arriving in the last quarter of 2025 and the first quarter of 2026. He projected setup would be complete in 2027.
19. Chief Operations Officer Peter Merfeld noted that there was money budgeted in the RM Deposit for truck purchases in 2025, but that under the proposed plan this would be carried over to 2026, and some money projected to be spent in 2027 would also be added to the 2026 total.
20. On motion of Jane Lincoln, seconded by Nina Fisher, the equipment purchases presented by John Cannell for 2025, 2026, and 2027 were approved, as was the replacement schedule for plow trucks that Mr. Cannell had described to the board.
21. Director of Highway Maintenance John Cannell reviews bids received for a contract to clean MTA catch basins. Mr. Cannell explained that staff had contemplated purchasing a catch basin truck so that highway maintenance employees could do this task themselves, but that it was determined to be too much of an investment in money and staff time. He said that staff was requesting permission to award contracts to all three vendors who had submitted bids, and to assign work in the form of task orders to those contractors, based on location and other considerations.

22. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Nina Fisher, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to authorize staff to award contracts for cleaning MTA catch basins to Badger, Vortex, and Maine Hydro-Vac Services at the hourly prices and in accordance with the other terms outlined on the document presented to the board entitled “Catch Basin Cleaning and Vacuuming Bid Results 12/1/2024 to 11/30/2027.”

23. Director of Engineering Steve Tartre described some right of way proposals to the board.

24. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Jane Lincoln, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to approve the following right of way related items:
 - A crossing license to Summit Natural Gas for installation of a gas line under the Maine Turnpike at mile marker 58.3, near Blackstrap Road.

 - Modification of an easement acquired by eminent domain from Allegiance Trucks in Saco, Maine, said modification being intended to clarify Alleigance’s rights in regard to crossing or relocating the MTA’s drainage ditch in that easement, and being done in consideration of full settlement of all outstanding claims Allegiance may have against the MTA in relation to the initial taking.

 - Approval of an extension of the MTA’s current lease agreements with the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority and the Town of Wells, to extend the term of those leases until December 15th, 2027.

25. Chairman Michael Cianchette asked if there were any questions or objections related to items on the consent agenda. There were none, and the November Contract Consent Agenda was considered approved.

26. On motion of Jane Lincoln, seconded by Thomas Zuke, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to award Contract 2024.17 – Stevenstown Road Bridge Repairs, in the amount of \$162,017.00, to CPM Constructors.

27. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Jane Lincoln, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to approve final payment the following contracts:
 - Contract 2023.01 – Crosby Vehicle Storage Garage, in the amount of \$187,865.30, for a final contract amount of \$ 2,346,871.45, to Doten’s Construction.

 - Contract 2021.07 – Exit 45 Interchange, in the amount of \$ 21,363.59, for a final contract amount of \$ 28,336,028.26, to CPM Constructors.


- Contract 2023.09 – Litchfield Maintenance Restroom Renovation, in the amount of \$ 26,550.72, for a final contract amount of \$ 354,009.57, to E.J. Perry Construction.
 - Contract 2024.02 – Portland Area Paving, in the amount of \$ 325,395.84, for a final contract amount of \$ 8,412,629.66, to Costal Road Repair.
28. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Jane Lincoln, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to award the following engineering consultant contracts:
- Contract 2024.106 – General Environmental Services, with a not to exceed amount of \$600,000, to GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc.
 - Contract 2024.107 – Stormwater Management and Compliance Assistance, with a not to exceed amount of \$150,000, to GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc.
29. Project Manager Jamie Mason reported on ongoing construction projects. Mr. Mason said that the contractor on the Saco Interchange Project was paving base layers on the plaza roadway connecting to Route 112, with the plan for the winter being to work on sign foundations and do interior/electrical work on the plaza building. He said the project was projected to be complete in a year. He said that the Route 122 Bridge was complete and open, with some slope work left to finish. Mr. Mason said that the headquarters renovations were progressing incrementally, with work on the customer service center having commenced and the third floor work projected to be complete in a month or so. He said that the bridge repair project on the southern end was complete, except for incidentals. He reported that the foundation for the vehicle garage at York Maintenance was installed and the contractor was waiting for the building to be delivered.
30. Erin Courtney, Director of Communications, updated the board on subjects relating to her department. Ms. Courtney described a Crash Safety press conference that had taken place earlier in the week and said that she had put out a press release regarding Thanksgiving travel. She said that most summer weekends experienced more traffic than Thanksgiving on the Maine Turnpike, but that news organizations expected something for the holiday. She said that the next issue of the employee newsletter would begin a focus on unusual jobs at the MTA that most employees probably did not know much about, and said the first installment would deal with Andrew Constantine who worked with Intelligent Transportation Systems. She described the employee pumpkin contest of the month before, which had seen participation higher than usual. She mentioned that the MTA had hired Kaela Caldwell as the new payroll manager. She said that she was putting letters together for newly elected public officials and working on a reply to the legislature's transportation committee on questions they had asked about contractor relations and MTA/Maine DOT coordination. She said that the annual MaineDOT Transportation Conference was December 5th and that the group Women in Transportation would be hosting a reception after the conference.

31. Jane Lincoln asked if the MTA planned to do any kind of orientation / introduction to the MTA with new members of the transportation committee. Ms. Courtney replied that the MTA did an event every other year, which was usually held in West Gardiner, because of its proximity to Augusta, and included a tour of the MTA facilities there.
32. Chairman Michael Cianchette noted the Streetlight Data, Inc. privacy statement that had been included in the materials. He said that privacy issues related to data collection were something he believed the board should take seriously and monitor.
33. On motion of Nina Fisher, seconded by Thomas Zuke, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to amend the recently enacted Authority Vehicle Policy by adding two positions – Resident Engineer and Senior Resident Engineer – to the list of MTA staff that were assigned an MTA take home vehicle.
34. Chairman Cianchette asked board members what they thought of amending the bylaws to remove the formal standing committee structure, with the goal of doing more work in a workshop environment rather than committee meetings, but retaining the possibility of the board appointing either ad hoc or standing committees as needed.
35. Thomas Zuke said he supported that idea. Jane Lincoln said she did as well, but liked the idea of certain board members being designated as “facilitators” to communicate with staff on particular areas, very much as had been done with the employee staffed committees. Nina Fisher said that, being new to the board, she did not have a strong opinion on the committee system, but said she felt that hybrid meetings, with some remote and some in person participation, should be avoided when possible. She said she saw the value in live board meetings but suggested that workshops might be exclusively done through Zoom.
36. Chairman Cianchette thanked the board members for their comments and asked staff to send him any comments on this proposal that they had. He called the board’s attention to the draft meeting schedule for 2025 and suggested that, if there were no conflicts, this schedule would be used for now, subject to change in December depending on what was decided regarding committees. There were no conflicts expressed and Board Secretary Jonathan Arey asked that board members contact him if they discovered any.
37. Nina Fisher mentioned that she had received comments on the timing of MTA meetings to the effect that 9 AM on a Thursday was a difficult time to attend for most members of the public. She suggested that the board consider having meetings in the evenings occasionally, possibly at remote locations. She also asked if MTA board meetings were noticed in the weekly legislative report. Board Secretary Jonathan Arey said that they were not but that he could look into how that would be done. Executive Director Peter Merfeld said that the board had held evening meetings “on the road” in the past, usually 3 to 4 times a year, and that staff was willing to accommodate whatever schedule board members wanted to follow.
38. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Nina Fisher, 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)(A)(1) of compensation and conditions of promotion of MTA employees.

The Executive Session began at 10:35 A.M. and ended at 11:20 A.M.

39. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Jane Lincoln, and with unanimous approval of the members present it was voted to approve reclassification of six management / confidential positions, three professional / technical positions, six positions in the headquarters' unit and eight positions in the fare collections unit, all as shown on documents submitted by staff for each category of employee titled "Proposed Salary Adjustments with Benefits Impact, and having print dates of November 8th, 2024.
40. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Nina Fisher, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to approve an increase of 3.00% to the salaries of all MTA employees classified as management / confidential, effective December 31st, 2024.
41. It was the sense of the board that no changes should be made at this time to the current MTA policy titled "Non-Union Policy for Step Increases and Cost of Living Adjustments", due to the fact that the board was currently searching for a new executive director and that whoever was eventually chosen for that position should be included in discussions bearing on the compensation and terms of employment of management / confidential employees.
42. Adjourned at 11:25 A.M.


Jonathan Arey
Secretary
12/2/24
Date