



**MAINE TURNPIKE AUTHORITY
MEETING
July 25, 2024**

1. Pursuant to notice, a meeting of the Maine Turnpike Authority was held at 9 a.m. on July 25th, 2024

The following were present:

Michael Cianchette, Vice Chair
Jane Lincoln, Member
Andrew McLean, Member (*On Zoom*)
Thomas Zuke
Katharine Wiltuck, for Bruce Van Note, MaineDOT Commissioner

2. Acting Chairman Michael Cianchette called the meeting to order and presided throughout the meeting.
3. On motion of Jane Lincoln, seconded by Andrew McLean, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to approve the minutes of the board's June 27th meeting.
4. John Sirois, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, reported on traffic and revenue. He said that commercial traffic was up over 8 percent, deposits were strong, at \$6 million over the level of deposits at this point in 2023, and that return on investments remained high as well.
5. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Andrew McLean, 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 June, 2024, as detailed on a report submitted to this meeting by Bangor Savings Bank, dated July 8th, 2024
6. Executive Director Peter Mills reported on various issues, including the engagement of consultants by MaineDOT to study transit systems west of Portland and opportunities that might be facilitated by a Gorham Connector to expand walking and/or bicycle corridors in the area. He said the consultant would be conducting public participation sessions, though that process was expected to take a few months to get started.

7. Director of Maintenance John Cannell introduced Bob Brown and Jay Starr, Highway Maintenance III employees who he described as “shepherds of the highway.” He read two e-mails received recently from motorists who had experienced trouble on the highway praising Mr. Brown and Mr. Starr and thanking them for their assistance.
8. Director of Public Safety and Special Services Greg Stone reported on recent activities of the employee Ethics Committee. He said the committee was drafting an ethics code in line with direction received from the board and expected to have a decent draft of the code by the next board meeting.
9. Engineering Program Manager Kristi Van Ooyen reported on recent activities of the employee Policy Committee. She said the committee would be reviewing just over 40 policies and had started working on eight that were commonly provided to new employees and therefore seemed like a good initial focus.
10. Director of Human Resources Lauren Carrier reported on recent activities of her department. She said that the revised job descriptions were complete as was the recently commissioned FLSA study. She said that all employees whose status under FLSA would be affected by the study were being notified. She said that the wage survey results had been received and that staff was analyzing this and preparing a report for the board’s Personnel Committee. Ms. Carrier said that the MTA’s evaluation forms had been condensed and revised to make them less onerous to use. She said that two bids had been received to administer the MTA’s co-pay and medical reimbursement programs, and that the bids would be brought to the Personnel Committee for review.
11. Chief Operations Officer Peter Merfeld reported on the MTA’s recent meetings with the Associated General Contractors of Maine. He said that the first meeting, in May, had been somewhat contentious, as described in a memo provided to the board. He said the second meeting, held last week, had been more constructive. He said that, among other issues, there had been discussion on sticker tags and other options to handle contractor passes that might be an improvement over the current system.
12. Purchasing Manager Nate Carll presented the bids received for highway salt, noting that the prices quoted by the low bidder were a little lower than last year.
13. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Jane Lincoln, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to award a contract to supply salt to the MTA’s Highway Maintenance locations for the 2023-2024 season, to Eastern Salt, at the prices shown in a document presented to the board titled “2024-2025 Road Salt Official Bid Results.”
14. Purchasing Manager Nate Carll presented the bids received to supply the MTA’s propane for 2024 -2025. Mr. Carll said that the MTA used approximately 150,000 gallons of propane a year, which supplied the great majority of the MTA’s heating needs. He said that the MTA had experience with the low bidder, Fielding’s, and had no concern with its ability to fulfill the MTA’s needs.

15. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Jane Lincoln, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to award a contract to supply propane to the MTA to Fielding's Oil and Propane at \$ 1.3475 a gallon.
16. Acting Chairman Michael Cianchette asked if there were any questions or objections related to items on the consent agenda. There were none, and the July Contract Consent Agenda was considered approved.
17. Chief of Operations Peter Merfeld presented the only bid received on Contract 2024.16 – Slope and Drainage Repairs. He said that the bid was significantly higher than the estimate, and that he believed this was because the estimate did not properly account for the mobilization costs resulting from the multiple locations included in this contract.
18. On motion of Andrew McLean, seconded by Thomas Zuke, it was voted to award Contract 2024.16 – Slope and Drainage Repairs, in the amount of \$ 484,344.00, to R.J. Grondin and Sons.
19. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Jane Lincoln, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to approve final payment on the following contract:
 - Contract 2023.02 –Exit 102 On Ramp, to R.J. Grondin \$ Sons, in the amount of \$ 53,330.60, for a final contract amount of \$ 3,432,546.37.
20. Project Manager Jamie Mason reported to the board on ongoing construction contracts. He said that work had commenced on the new Saco toll plaza slab and collector / distributor road. The gas main in Route 112 had also been relocated for the reconstruction of that roadway in connection with the new interchange. Mr. Mason said that the contractor was preparing to set the girders for the new Route 122 Bridge in Auburn and that the bridge should be open by mid-November. He said that the Portland area paving job was 95% complete, and that the Wells area paving job was essentially complete with only incidentals remaining. He described the levelling of what had previously been a huge mound of earth to improve sight distance at the Auburn Interchange and said that he expected that project to be complete before the board's next meeting.
21. Erin Courtney, Public Relations Manager, reported on items related to her department. She described the MTA's media notification software and provided examples of how the software notified users of "hits." She discussed the recent press release on the Gorham project which had announced the extension of the public process on that project and the reasons for the extension. She mentioned the upcoming Sea Dogs game employee event.
22. Rebecca Grover presented a proposed renewal of the MTA's current agreement with the MaineDOT regarding administration of the GoMaine Commuter Program. Ms. Grover said that a new person had been hired at MaineDOT to administer this program and the program had been doing very well signing up new companies, including Bath Iron Works.


23. Acting Chairman Michael Cianchette recognized that there were members of the public present who wished to speak on the Gorham Connector Project.
24. Stanis Roberts of Scarborough introduced himself and thanked the board for what he saw as a recent shift in the MTA towards greater transparency. He said that he appreciated the slowdown of the public process and thought it had been well explained in the public announcement of it. He said he believed that an independent analysis of intersection improvements should be conducted. He felt that the only alternative formally presented had been the new roadway. He said he believed that there was a conflict of interest involved when the firm that designed the roadway, HNTB, was also contracted to analyze project alternatives. Mr. Roberts recommended that independent traffic modeling be done to clarify the time that would be saved by the connector, in order to resolve conflicting claims made by the MTA in its land use study and elsewhere. He said that not enough information on environmental impacts had been provided, including backup for the claim that the road would reduce greenhouse gases overall. He said that the public needed complete and current cost estimates of the connector and the amount of the toll needed to sustain it and that he was concerned the connector would be subsidized by mainline tolls.
25. Paul Drinan of Westbrook, representing the Bicycle Coalition of Maine (BCM,) said that in 2022 the BCM had published a statement opposing the Gorham Connector. He said the Connector would lead to more VMT (Vehicle Miles Travelled), more sprawl, and degrade the environment. He said that highways only induced demand and that the only proven solution to congestion was transit improvements. Mr. Drinan said that the BCM supported the recently announced pause in the project and hoped for a thorough public engagement that explored all transportation alternatives. He said that he hoped the MTA would wait to see the impact of the 2024 mass transit plan approved by GPCOG before pursuing this project.
26. Elizabeth Trice of Portland introduced herself as a housing and transportation advocate and said that the concerns with the Gorham Connector were diverse, including concerns over Red Brook, Smiling Hill Farm, trail opportunities, eminent domain and financial issues. She said the MTA needed to look at recent PACTS / GPCOG studies on transit, including the upcoming rapid transit program. She said it was important to think about how the area grew and to pursue solutions such as alternative commutes. She urged the MTA to stop spending money on the project, including land acquisitions, until the public process had completely played out. Ms. Trice said that there seemed to be a really good culture at the MTA and that she appreciated that. She said she understood that local road improvements were not a part of the MTA's mission, but hoped that the MTA could approach this process holistically.
27. On motion of Andrew Mclean, seconded by Michael Cianchette, 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)(C), of property acquisitions necessary for the construction of a Gorham Connector and the use of that property for

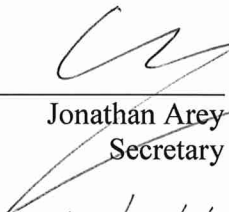
wetland mitigation purposes, as well as discussions of the acquisitions of drainage rights on property abutting the Maine Turnpike in Saco, Maine;

- Discussion, pursuant to 1 MRSA § 405(6)(E), of the legal rights and duties of the MTA in connection with permitting for the Gorham Connector where premature public knowledge of the issues discussed would clearly place the MTA at a substantial disadvantage;
- Discussion, pursuant to 1 MRSA § 405(6)(E), of contemplated litigation regarding a previous acquisition of property by the MTA;
- Discussion of the employment, appointment, assignment, duties or compensation of an individual or group of MTA employees; and
- Discussion of information contained in records created by the MTA where access by the general public to those records is prohibited by statute.

The executive session began at 10:15 A.M. and ended at 11:50 A.M.

28. On motion of Bruce Van Note, seconded by Jane Lincoln, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to authorize MTA staff to acquire two drainage and access easements in Saco, Maine, for \$10,000.00 each, for the purposes of maintaining a drainage ditch near Lund Road in Saco, Maine, said acquisitions to be conducted by eminent domain if necessary.
29. On motion of Jane Lincoln, seconded by Thomas Zuke, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to adjourn at 11:50 A.M.



Jonathan Arey
Secretary

11/4/24

Date