



**MAINE TURNPIKE AUTHORITY  
MEETING**

**March 28, 2024**

1. Pursuant to notice, a meeting of the Maine Turnpike Authority was held at 9 a.m. on March 28, 2024

The following were present:

Daniel Wathen, Chair  
Michael Cianchette, Vice Chair  
Jane Lincoln, Member  
Andrea McLean, Member (*via 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 February 29<sup>th</sup> and March 11<sup>th</sup> meetings.
3. John Sirois, Director of Finance and Treasurer, reported on traffic and revenue. He stated that revenue and traffic were actually up slightly less than shown in his written report due to the recent storm.
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 February, 2024, as detailed on a report submitted to this meeting by Bangor Savings Bank, dated March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
5. Executive Director Peter Mills reported on various matters, including the recent public meeting in Gorham on the proposed Gorham Connector. He said the meeting had been well organized and he felt that questions had been answered well and thoroughly. Mr. Mills said that he felt there had been a good exchange of information overall at the meeting.

6. Christian Smith of Wipfli, the MTA's independent auditing firm, reported to the board on the result of this year's audit. Mr. Smith said that the audit had gone well, with no internal control deficiencies noted, and that his firm had issued a "clean" audit opinion. Mr. Smith reviewed the financial statements with the board, describing recent changes in the MTA's net position, and said that overall the MTA was in very good financial condition.
7. Chairman Wathen asked Mr. Smith how long his firm spent on the MTA audit. Mr. Smith answered that it took three employees about three weeks to complete.
8. Director of Maintenance John Cannell reported on winter maintenance activities. He said that February had been an extremely mild month with only 1,000 tons of salt used, compared to approximately 7,000 tons in the two prior Februaries. He said that more salt had been used in last week's storm than in the entire month of February. Mr. Cannell noted that the MTA had used about one half the total amount of salt that it had used in 2023.
9. Michael Cianchette noted that brine use, unlike salt, had not declined much from 2023. Mr. Cannell answered that the purpose of brine was to adhere salt to the road and activate it more quickly. He said that brine helped to decrease salt use, and that he felt the fact that brine use was heavy compared to salt use was a sign of skillful application.
10. Eric Barnes, ITS Director, presented a summary of a contemplated toll equipment upgrade, phased over the next three years. He noted that although the lane equipment had been successfully updated there were several components of the support system, such as servers and backups, that had not been upgraded. Mr. Barnes stated that he was seeking approval to commence the contemplated 2024 purchases.
11. On motion of Michael Cianchette, seconded by Thomas Zuke, and with unanimous approval of the members present, the purchases shown under the column labelled 2024 on the chart presented to the board titled Proposed Toll Equipment Upgrade (2024-2027), totaling \$2,935,780.00 and consisting of the purchase of two central processing computers, plaza servers and plaza UPS units, was approved.
12. Bill Yates, Director of Information Services, presented bids received for replacement of the MTA's current phone system, including a five year maintenance contract for the replacement system.
13. On motion of Jane Lincoln, seconded by Thomas Zuke, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to approve a contract in the amount of \$ 197,422.76 with CorpDVS for the replacement of the MTA's phone system and a five year maintenance contract on that system.
14. Director of Maintenance John Cannell presented bids received for the MTA's annual guardrail purchase, undertaken each spring to replenish stock. Mr. Cannell noted that three bids had been solicited and that Main Line Fence had submitted the lower of the two bids received.

15. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Bruce Van Note, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to approve the purchase of guardrail components from Main Line Fence, in the total amount of \$201,477.63, as shown on the document submitted to the board titled “Guardrail Components Pricing – 2024.”
16. Director of Maintenance John Cannell presented bids received for the MTA’s annual purchase of traffic paint and mixing beads, recommending award of the paint contract to Franklin Paint and the bead contract to Potter’s Industries.
17. On motion of Michael Cianchette, seconded by Thomas Zuke, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to approve the purchase of traffic paint from Franklin Paint, in the amount of \$414,026.75, and the purchase of beads and Visi-Loc from Potter’s Industries in the total amount of \$138,852.00, all as shown on the document presented to this meeting by John Cannell entitled “Traffic Paint & Glass Beads/Visi-Loc 2024.”
18. Chairman Daniel Wathen asked in what respect the low bidder for supplying the trailer listed on the April Consent Agenda did not meet MTA specifications. Purchasing Manager Nate Carll answered that the trailer undercarriage had not been galvanized as required by the specifications. There being no other comments or questions on the consent agenda, it was considered approved.
19. Chief Operations Officer Peter Merfeld reviewed the bids received on three contracts. He noted that competition and availability of contractors were reflected in the favorable bids received for the headquarters improvement contact. He reminded the board that there were other expenses connected to this project, such a furniture purchases and rental of temporary space, that were not included in this bid. Mr. Merfeld said that staff was not recommending award of the bridge painting contract, noting that the bridges included could be repackaged with next year’s painting.
20. On motion of Michael Cianchette, seconded by Thomas Zuke, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to award the following contracts:
  - Contract 2023.10 – HQ Building Improvements, in the amount of \$ 2,404,496.20, to BenchMark, of Westbrook, Maine.
  - Contract 2024.04 – Pavement Rehabilitation Exit 75, in the amount of \$1,335,279.22, to R.J. Grondin & Sons, of Gorham, Maine.
21. Director of Building Maintenance Shawn Laverdiere, presented a proposal submitted by Keystone Masonry for masonry repairs at the MTA’s service plazas. Mr. Laverdiere noted that masons seemed to be in short supply and that Keystone was the only one of four firms solicited that had submitted a proposal.

22. Chief Engineer Steve Tartre described a slope failure around a culvert on the northbound side of the turnpike at mile 72.4 northbound, in New Gloucester. Mr. Tartre said that repair methods were still being evaluated but that staff and HNTB estimated that the cost could be around \$500,000. Tim Cote of HNTB Corporation noted that the roadway seemed stable for now, but that a lane closure was in place nevertheless.
23. Commissioner Van Note asked about the depth of cover over this culvert and Steve Tartre answered that it was about 40 feet.
24. Engineering Program Manager Kristi Van Ooyen reported on the failure of a joint on the Stroudwater Bridge. She noted that the armor on the joint had come loose, allowing it to flap up and present a hazard. She said a steel plate had been placed over the middle lane to keep it open for traffic until repairs could commence. She said that the plan for the repair was to use the right lane and shoulder as two traffic lanes, and that she expected the repair to last about three weeks.
25. Chairman Wathen asked what the probable cause of the failure was. Ms. Van Ooyen replied that it had probably been due to vibrations, possibly combined with faulty concrete.
26. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Jane Lincoln, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to approve the following repair contracts:
  - A contract for Masonry Repairs to Keystone Masonry, Inc., in the amount of \$228,600.00, as itemized in a proposal dated March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, submitted by that firm.
  - A contract for slope and culvert repair to R.J. Grondin and Sons in an amount not to exceed \$500,000.00.
  - A contract for repair of the Stroudwater Bridge to CPM Constructors in an amount not to exceed \$187,000.00.
27. On motion of Michael Cianchette, seconded by Thomas Zuke, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to approve the following final payments:
  - Contract 2022.02 – Exit 36 Improvements and Pavement Rehabilitation, to Pike Industries, in the amount of \$ 774,874.51, for a final contract amount of \$4,545,410.90.
  - Contract 2024.51 – Widened Concrete Haunch Removal, to New England Infrastructure, in the amount of \$ 25,690.50, for a final contract amount of \$342,540.00.
28. Chief Operations Officer Peter Merfeld reported on ongoing construction projects. He noted that the contractor had returned to work on the Saco Interchange project. He said that the contractor on the York electrical repair contract was setting up conduit and would then demobilize until the generator was delivered in the fall. Mr. Merfeld said that CPM

was the subcontractor on the Kittery pavement project and was also going to be conducting the Stroudwater Bridge repairs – therefore some time allowance would be made on the Kittery project to accommodate this.

29. Gregory Stone, Director of Public Safety, reported on preparations for the eclipse on April 8<sup>th</sup>. He said that no one knew how much traffic would be generated by eclipse watchers but that MEMA was concerned. He surmised that for the Maine Turnpike traffic would not be much heavier than a normal summer weekend, but that preparations had been made for close contact with MEMA that day.
30. Erin Courtney, Public Relations Manager, reported on items related to her department. She said that preparations were being made for public communications on part time shoulder use on the Piscataqua River Bridge this summer. She said the MTA budget had passed and she did not anticipate much else for the MTA to be concerned with this legislative session. She said that she was making efforts to stay in touch with legislators from the Gorham area on the Gorham Connector project. Ms. Courtney said that the annual report had been completed, as had the logo and Facebook page for the Gorham project. She said there had probably been about 325 people in attendance at the Gorham public meeting and that 372 comments had been received. She said the comments were currently about 52 percent negative although much of those comments were focused on the Smiling Hill issue and that she hoped increased information on that issue would result in shifts in opinion in the future.
31. Director of Maintenance John Cannell presented a proposed purchase of a Telehandler forklift. He said that the forklift moved up and down as well as in and out and was intended for sign shop use as well as use on the highway. Mr. Cannell said the forklifts had been unavailable from four of the five vendors contacted.
32. On motion of Michael Cianchette, seconded by Thomas Zuke, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to approve the purchase of a Telehandler forklift in the amount of \$ 176,860.00 from W.D. Matthews.
33. Chairman Wathen asked if there were any comments or questions from members of the public. There were none.
34. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Jane Lincoln, 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 construction of a Gorham Connector and the possible lease of temporary space for MTA customer service employees during renovations of the MTA's headquarters.

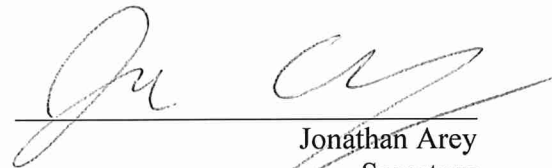
The executive session began at 10:21 A.M. and ended at 10:55 A.M.

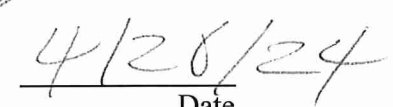
35. On motion of Thomas Zuke, seconded by Jane Lincoln, and with unanimous approval of the members present it was voted to:

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- authorize Executive Director Peter Mills to negotiate a sublease with Martin's Point and J.B. Brown for a lease through 2025 on temporary office space at Washington Avenue for customer service use during the renovation of the MTA's headquarters, and
- to ratify the purchase and sale agreement entered into by MTA staff with William and Cathyellen Hebert for the purchase of property at 178 Brackett Road in Gorham, Maine.

Adjourned at 10:55 A.M.

  
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Jonathan Arey  
Secretary

  
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Date