



**MAINE TURNPIKE AUTHORITY
MEETING
June 27, 2024**

1. Pursuant to notice, a meeting of the Maine Turnpike Authority was held at 9 a.m. on June 27th, 2024

The following were present:

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

2. Chairman Daniel Wathen called the meeting to order and appointed the following board members as liaisons to the recently formed Employee Committees.

Policy Committee – Jane Lincoln	Employee Appreciation – Daniel Wathen
Ethics – Thomas Zuke	Mission and Vision – Bruce Van Note
Employee Development – Michael Cianchette	

3. Chairman Wathen mentioned that in its last report the Employee Ethics Committee had requested guidance on the scope of its mission and said that he believed the committee should confine itself to the formation of an ethics code for employees and leave administrative matters to administrative staff and the board.
4. On motion of Michael Cianchette, seconded by Jane Lincoln, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to approve the minutes of the board's May 23rd and June 12th meetings.
5. John Sirois, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, reported on traffic and revenue. He said that the current figures were lower than in the written report due to the intervening rain. He said that overall traffic was up about 3.7 % for both commercial and private traffic. Mr. Sirois mentioned an increase in Maine State Police costs of between

\$400,000.00 and \$ 500,000.00 annually due to that entity's new labor contracts. He said that he still expected the MTA to be under budget operationally this year.

6. Michael Cianchette asked how Applegreen's was performing and whether concessions staffing had improved. Greg Stone, Director of Public Safety and Special Services, said that staffing was much improved from the year before. He said that there were still issues with full staffing at the Cumberland and Gray service plazas, however.
7. On motion of Jane Lincoln, seconded by Michael Cianchette, 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 May, 2024, as detailed on a report submitted to this meeting by Bangor Savings Bank, dated June 13th, 2024
8. Executive Director Peter Mills stated that he would not be seeking reappointment as executive director at the September board meeting. Mr. Mills said that he would assist the board with finding a replacement, even after September if need be, and to help in an ongoing basis with the Gorham project if requested. He said that he had more to discuss with the board in executive session.
9. Chairman Daniel Wathen said that the board would begin as search process for a new executive director and would share the plans for that shortly. Mr. Wathen said that, in order to establish as smooth a transition as possible, he would entertain a motion to appoint an acting Deputy Executive Director.
10. On motion of Michael Cianchette, seconded by Jane Lincoln, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to appoint Peter Merfeld as acting Deputy Executive Director.
11. Chief Operations Officer Peter Merfeld shared some suggestions for an MTA mission statement that had been developed by the Employee Mission and Vision Committee. Mr. Merfeld reported that the committee also believed that it would be valuable to have a strategic planning session during the winter of 2024-2025, after a new executive director had been appointed. Chairman Wathen suggested that the mission statement suggestions be discussed with Commissioner Van Note, as the committee liaison, and suggested that the committee should, at least at this time, confine itself to the subject matter assigned to it, which he believed was formation of a mission statement. He said that he hoped that the mission statement finally adopted would reflect the way that MTA employees, particularly highway maintenance employees, often went above and beyond in serving MTA users.
12. Commission Bruce Van Note said that he would discuss the formation of a mission statement with Peter Merfeld and/or other members of the Mission and Vision Committee.
13. Chairman Wathen asked if there were any questions or objections related to items on the consent agenda. There were none, and the June Contract Consent Agenda was considered approved.

14. Chief of Operations Peter Merfeld, reviewed the bids received on Contract 2024.12 – Cleaning and Painting Steel Structures. He said that the bids were close to each other and competitive. He noted that, as usual with bridge painting contracts, the bidders were from out of state.
15. On motion of Jane Lincoln, seconded by Michael Cianchette, it was voted to award Contract 2024.12 – Cleaning and Painting Steel Structures, in the amount of \$1,595,000.00, to Saffo Contractors, Inc., of Wilmington, North Carolina.
16. On motion of Michael Cianchette, seconded by Jane Lincoln, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to approve final payment on the following contracts:
 - Contract 2019.04 – Interchange 103 Barrier Toll Plaza Open Road Tolling Conversion, to Sargent Corporation, in the amount of \$ 48,333.62, for a final contract amount of \$ 29,978,601.64.
 - Contract 2024.10 – Clearing Mile 25.8 to 32.0, to Comprehensive Land Technologies, Inc., in the amount of \$ 97,379.00, for a final contract amount of \$245,009.00.
17. Chief of Operations Peter Merfeld reported on engineering consultant procurements, and said that MTA staff had received eleven proposals for engineering design contracts, one for the General Engineering Consultant contracts, and six or seven proposals for inspection contracts.
18. Chief of Operations Peter Merfeld reported to the board on ongoing construction contracts. He said that the Saco Interchange project was on schedule, and shared a photograph on the soil nail wall currently being constructed for embankment support. He said that the former Route 122 Bridge had been removed and that the plan was to set steel for the new structure in mid-July. He reported that the High Street Emergency Vehicle Ramp was complete and that final payment would be requested soon. He said that the Spruce Creek repairs had held things up a bit on the Kittery paving project but that it was still ahead of schedule. He said that the Portland and Wells area paving projects were almost complete, with the first likely to be done in July and the second almost ready for striping. He said that the earthwork and tree clearing was complete on the Exit 75 Pavement Rehabilitation, and milling was in progress.
19. Erin Courtney, Public Relations Manager, reported on items related to her department. She shared a letter to the MTA from members of the legislative transportation committee, noting that in response the MTA planned to work with the AGC and MaineDOT to discuss contractor relations and consolidation of services among other issues. Ms. Courtney also reported on a recent workshop on mileage based user fees which she had attended, describing the concept of a clearinghouse that would distribute collected funds to different states.

20. Chairman Wathen noted that there was a proposal for the purchase of audiovisual equipment under Other Business. He said it was his understanding that this equipment was part of the headquarters renovation project but that we were separating the purchase and installation of this equipment from the main contract for that project. He asked if the proposal presented for this would be a sole source contract.
21. Bill Yates, Director of Information Services, said that the proposal was to replace all equipment in the building, including the current State Police equipment. He said that the proposal was sole source due to the fact that the proposed contractor was the only one in the area with the resources to do this installation in a timely manner and the capability to support the equipment installed.
22. Michael Cianchette asked if this purchase had been budgeted into the amounts previously presented for the headquarters renovation project. Bill Yates replied that it had been.
23. On motion of Jane Lincoln, seconded by Michael Cianchette, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to approve a contract for purchase and installation of audio visual equipment from Headlight Audio Visual, in the amount of \$ 354,540.50, in accordance with a document titled "System Design Proposal and Contract" dated May 16th, 2024, created by Headlight and provided to the board by MTA staff.
24. Chief Operations Officer Peter Merfeld presented the current version of the MTA's Four Year Capital Plan. Mr. Merfeld noted that every June MTA staff provided the draft plan to the board in order to get approval to advertise the plan for comment over the summer. He said that the only unusual aspect of the current plan was a line for Gorham in 2027, and that otherwise it was fairly routine.
25. Commissioner Bruce Van Note noted that in the plan for 2025 some projects included the statement "funded in previous year." He asked if there were any way to say how much the project was actually projected to cost instead, since this was a planning document, and not an accounting one. Mr. Merfeld said that this could be done, but it could cause the impression that the MTA was spending more than it actually was.
26. On motion of Michael Cianchette, seconded by Andrew McLean, it was voted to authorize MTA staff to publish the MTA's Draft Four Year Capital Plan for public comment.
27. Chairman Wathen asked if there were any members of the public present who wished to address the board. Stannis Moody Roberts said that he lived at 38 County Road in Scarborough, near a proposed interchange for the Gorham Connector, and that he wished to address the board on that project. Chairman Wathen said that there would be further public meetings on that project specifically where full testimony on the proposed project would be taken, but that the board would be happy to listen to brief comments on the subject.
28. Mr. Roberts said that there were traffic problems in North Scarborough but that he believed eminent domain was something that should be used only as a last resort when there was

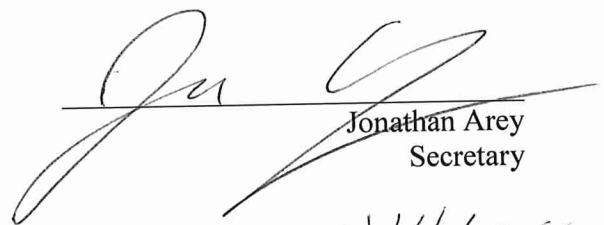
clear community support. He said that he believed there were solutions other than constructing a new road that should at least be tried on local roads as part of intersection design, including turning lanes, that would have much less impact on private property. He said that if these solutions did not provide relief, construction of a connector with two lanes, rather than four, would have much less impact. He said that traffic growth was not continuing to rise at the rate that it had in the past, and birth rates were low, which translated into a low rate of growth.

29. Mr. Roberts said he had not received data requested from the MTA, such as a traffic and revenue study, and that he had not even received a response to his request until he contacted his state senator. He said that he believed the MTA was not looking out for the public good, but seemed solely concerned with promoting this project as proposed. He stated that the MTA's publicity of the project had the nature of advertisements for it, as opposed to impartial requests for public comment, which he believed was more appropriate for a public agency.
30. Mylsey Smith, from Mainer's for Smarter Transportation, addressed the board. He said that he believed that there were solutions to the area's traffic issues other than building a highway and that this problem should not have been given to the MTA to solve. He said that over 11,000 Mainers had signed a petition opposing the project and that he was concerned about the opportunities available to participate in the process. He said he believed that MTA meetings should be streamed online, with the minutes published online afterwards. Mr. Smith noted that he had heard today that a transition was coming up for the MTA, which might be an opportunity to think differently about highways. He said he was not against toll highways, but that he believed MTA tolls should be used to support other state transportation projects. He said that the MTA had not provided a cost estimate since 2019 and that he wanted to know how much this connector would cost.
31. Chairman Wathen thanked Mr. Roberts and Mr. Smith for their comments and encouraged them to attend the future public meetings that the MTA planned to hold on the project.
32. 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;
 - 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; and
 - Discussion, pursuant to 1 MRSA § 405(6)(F), of information related to design of the Gorham Connector project contained in records to which public access is prohibited by statute.

June, 2024

The executive session began at 10:04 A.M. and ended at 12:32

33. Chairman Daniel Wathen appointed Michael Cianchette, Jane Lincoln, and Thomas Zuke to a Succession Committee, tasked with overseeing the search for a new executive director for the MTA.
34. 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 purchase 15.5 acres of property in Scarborough, Maine, from Cleon Nelson, for \$ 260,000.00, as presented to the board.
35. On motion of Michael Cianchette, seconded by Bruce Van Note, and with unanimous approval of the members present, it was voted to adjourn at 12:34 P.M.


Jonathan Arey
Secretary
11/4/24
Date