

PROCEEDINGS OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION HELD ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4, 2012, AT 10:00 A.M., IN THE GNOEC CONFERENCE ROOM, VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA BUILDING, 3939 NORTH CAUSEWAY BOULEVARD, SUITE 400, METAIRIE, LA

PRESENT: Lawrence K. Katz, Chairman; Stephen G. Romig, Treasurer; Peter F. Egan, Secretary; Michael R. Lorino, Jr., Assistant Secretary Treasurer

OTHERS: Carlton Dufrechou; Debbie Lopreore; Cheryl H. Lambert; Chief Nick Congemi; Melissa M. Phillipott; Georgie Bagnetto; Eileen Barthe'; Red Thompson; Robert Graham; Stacie Heffker; Aubrey Deliberto; Howard Hotard; Phil Meyers, Cary Bourgeois, Jim Martin & Shelby LaSalle, Jr., GEC, Inc.; Burgess McCranie, McCranie, Campbell, Sistrunk, Anzelmo, Hardy, McDaniel & Welch; Bill Becknell, The Becknell Law Firm; Denis Milliner, Bank of New York; Patrice McNeal, Chase Bank; Bennett Powell & James Lynch, Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management; Andrea Calvin, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation; Steve Bowes, Sisung Investment Management Services; Rene Chopin, Burk-Kleinpeter, Inc.; Rene Poche & Kristen Kendrick, Corps of Engineers; Fred Robertson; Bob Warren, The Times-Picayune

ABSENT: Lawrence M. Rase, Vice Chairman

The Chairman called the meeting to order.

**On motion by Lorino, seconded by Romig, the minutes of the regular meeting held March 7, 2012 were accepted as written. Mr. Katz, Mr. Romig, Mr. Egan and Mr. Lorino voted in favor of the motion.**

On behalf of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, Dr. Calvin reported in March of the forty water quality samples taken, thirty-two samples (80%) met primary contact recreation standards. Two exceeded on the South Shore and six on the North Shore. In response to Mr. Katz's inquiry regarding the lighthouse project, Dr. Calvin stated it is going well; all the pilings are in place, the foundation is being poured and everything is on track.

On behalf of the Causeway Police Charitable Foundation, Chief Congemi reported there was a meeting last Monday but because of the rain he could not attend. He stated everything is pretty much

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the same as it was at the last meeting. Mr. Dufrechou stated, from what he hears, the skeet shoot fund-raiser might be postponed.

Mr. Dufrechou reported for the month of March the drawbridge had eight vessel openings, no pin motor incidents, gate incidents, brake incidents, or drive fault incidents and two test openings. He stated the drawbridge was closed to marine traffic from March 12 through March 19 because of the trunnion bearings replacement. He stated there were three days of fog operations on March 14, 15 and 16. Mr. Dufrechou reported police and MAP handled 268 breakdowns on the Causeway Bridge and 32 breakdowns on the Huey P. Long Bridge.

Mr. Dufrechou reported on March 10, Boh Brothers' pile driving for the Corps project cut the Entergy power line to the South Shore; power was lost in the VOA, Lakeway and other nearby buildings. Entergy restored power in about two hours. He stated the Causeway supplied cable from its reserves to Boh Brothers to expedite repairs.

Mr. Dufrechou stated on March 13, about 5:40 p.m., Causeway officers stopped a weaving vehicle headed north for a possible DWI. He stated the male driver stepped out of his vehicle in Crossover 4, started the field sobriety test and then decided to jump over the railing into the lake. He stated it was windy and rough water; the man was found hanging onto a utility vault piling and was lifted from the water by Causeway personnel using rescue equipment. Mr. Dufrechou stated the St. Tammany Parish had numerous warrants out for him. Chief Congemi stated the man had multiple DWIs. Mrs. Lopreore thanked the Security Camera Department personnel, especially Barbara Boyle and Jennifer Morin, who actually located the man holding onto the piling. Mr. Dufrechou added it was a good team effort.

Mr. Dufrechou reported on Friday, March 23, the telecommunications tower adjacent to the North

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Toll Plaza was struck by lightning about 5:00 a.m. He explained the strike knocked out the toll system, the phone system, several variable message signs and cameras. He stated the toll collectors began to collect manually, maintenance personnel helped out in the toll booths and monitored traffic on the approach roads. Mr. Dufrechou stated shortly before 6:00 a.m. tolls were lifted completely because traffic was backing up. He stated tolls stayed in the toll-free mode for almost two and one half hours; after 8:30 a.m. tolls were collected manually on an intermittent basis with free passage being allowed until about 7:00 p.m. when Lane 4 was made operational again. Mr. Dufrechou stated for three days Howard Hotard and Aubrey Deliberto worked from 6:00 a.m. Friday morning, March 23, until after 7:00 p.m. on Sunday night to get three lanes operational. He stated Carey Bourgeois was supportive, as well as Aaron Burback and Terry Ross of GEC, Inc., who were helping throughout almost the entire weekend to get the message signs working. Mr. Dufrechou stated he cannot say enough about their tireless efforts, especially Mr. Hotard and Mr. Deliberto, who for the next week searched across the country for spare parts. He stated by cannibalizing the equipment that was damaged they were able to get Lane 3 operational on Thursday of last week. Mr. Dufrechou stated all four lanes are operating currently - Lane 4 is almost 100%; Lanes 1, 2 and 3 are not classifying vehicles so the toll collectors are manually classifying. Mr. Dufrechou stated the toll collection system upgrade/replacement was intended to go out for proposals later this year but because of the current situation and condition of the equipment, going out for proposals should be accelerated immediately.

Mr. Dufrechou reported on April 2, the Huey P. Long westbank traffic circle turn signal went out during the afternoon rush hour traffic. He stated the officers hand-directed traffic during that time. The DOTD corrected the problem yesterday morning.

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Mr. Dufrechou reported that yesterday afternoon around 4:00 p.m. there was a two-car crash northbound in which one of the vehicles overturned. Four persons were transported to area hospitals.

Mr. Dufrechou stated the Causeway was closed about forty minutes and the accident is under investigation. In addition, Mr. Dufrechou stated because of thunderstorms last night the bridge was closed twice because visibility was less than one hundred feet.

Mr. Dufrechou reported after the opening of the third lane exiting the southbound bridge, the traffic flow has improved significantly; the average commute time is about thirty-five to forty minutes. He added the Corps project is ahead of schedule and should be complete in November 2012. Mr. Lorino pointed out the new ramps to the I-10 make it easier too and all of that in conjunction with everything else will be a gigantic improvement.

Mr. Bourgeois presented a power point of the trunnion bearing project work performed by Boh Brothers in March. He showed photos of where the bascule is and the trunnion portions that hold up the bridge as it opens - dual bascule spans so there are eight locations where the trunnions are. He explained how two were replaced on the southwest leaf, showing before and after. Mr. Bourgeois showed what the marine operation entailed; all work had to be done from a barge, with the exception of lifting one or two pieces of equipment. He stated the work was originally supposed to take about four or five days but actually took the better part of eight days; while they were lifting one of the scaffolding segments, one of the cables broke. With respect to the replacement caps and the work that is left to do, Mr. Bourgeois explained the bolt hole in the part that is in place was not manufactured according to the original drawing; the bolts are slightly misaligned. He stated they will take the part and over drill the hole so it can be set in place temporarily and then the parts on the bridge today will be remanufactured and reinstalled; the new pieces will go into inventory to do this

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if it ever becomes necessary again. He added at this time the old cap is in place with the new bearing at the bottom. Mr. Dufrechou asked if this is the only bearing cap replaced in the forty years of the drawbridge. Mr. Bourgeois replied yes, they have never had to do this before. Mr. Dufrechou stated once the bearing pads were pulled out, the night they were going back in it was discovered that the bridge had actually shifted horizontally, and the drawbridge had to be jacked back to the west to get enough space to get the bearing pad in there. He stated everyone did a terrific job. Mr. Lorino asked how many bascule openings there are in a year. Mr. Graham stated one hundred to one hundred fifty openings. Mr. Dufrechou mentioned it is for mostly recreational vessels. Mr. Dufrechou stated the caps should be back in the next couple weeks. Mr. Bourgeois added that portion will take about two weeks.

Mr. Dufrechou presented a power point of the North Shore toll lanes after the lightning strike showing everything that was knocked out of operation - electronics, lights, signs, booth equipment, and backup computers did not work. He stated the system is more than twenty years old, obsolete, hard to maintain and spare parts are difficult to get. Mr. Hotard described how the toll system lane equipment works. Mr. Egan stated on behalf of the Commission, he would like to recognize Mr. Hotard and Mr. Deliberto for the work they performed in that period of time. Mr. Egan added as a commuter, the kind of work they do to get commuters through the lanes is not appreciated enough. Mr. Dufrechou stated another challenge is the original equipment is wired in the ground and subject to water during rain; the new system wiring will be overhead and use more fiber. Mr. Bourgeois stated there will be less equipment in the lanes and booths. In response to Mr. Lorino's inquiry, Mr. Bourgeois stated they have looked at a number of different systems with current technology offered. He stated there are some exotic systems as far as items in the lane, different features, but they are not

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sure if they should go to that degree of sophistication or if it is a stable enough platform. Mr. Dufrechou stated some of the proposers said the technology has improved and they would be able to update this equipment. Mr. Bourgeois stated systems have gone to more open platforms where they are all kind of using the same backbone type of things so it is easier to upgrade and keep current along the way. In response to Mr. Lorino's inquiry, Mr. Bourgeois stated there are numerous systems with current technology installed across the country. He added new technology is always being developed, which was shown by one vendor, but the engineers are not 100% sure the Causeway needs to go to that extreme with what it is doing. Mr. Dufrechou stated they would prefer not to be the experiment. Mr. Lorino agreed, but added when they do things, they want to make sure when it is done they do not have to go back later for things; the intent should be to have a system that will be progressively able to be upgraded in the future. With respect to taking action on this matter, Mr. Dufrechou stated it was discovered early this morning that the Commission does not have to do an emergency resolution, however, they still are trying to compress the schedule, including the potential of moving the Commission May meeting back a week or two. Mr. Dufrechou explained the purpose of the project is to update the hardware and software for the toll collection system to enhance maintainability and reliability.

**On motion by Romig, seconded by Lorino, the following resolution was introduced:**

**WHEREAS, on March 23, 2012, lightning struck the North Toll Plaza overwhelming both the lightning grounding equipment for the toll plaza and surge protection for the toll collection system damaging the electronics of all four toll lanes;**

**WHEREAS, repairs to the 20 plus year old system which was originally scheduled for replacement in 2013 exhausted GNOEC's inventory of spare parts, required cannibalizing of old parts and equipment, as well as searching and locating parts from vendors throughout the country;**

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**WHEREAS, another incident could result in a system failure and due to limited spares repairs may be impossible;**

**WHEREAS, the current system is only partially operating and affects toll collection and proper movement of traffic;**

**WHEREAS, the repairs to the toll system to facilitate the movement of commuters/motorists from the north shore to the south shore must be accomplished in the most expeditious manner possible to protect the financial status of the Commission.**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Commissioners of the Greater New Orleans Expressway Commission that as a result of the damage to its toll system due to the lightning strike that occurred on March 23, 2012:**

- 1. A Request For Proposals be issued and advertised for the purpose of repairs and/or replacement of the toll collection system;**
- 2. GEC, Inc. as the consulting engineers for the Greater New Orleans Expressway Commission is instructed and authorized to prepare the specifications and requirements in connection with the RFP; and**
- 3. The General Manager of the Greater New Orleans Expressway Commission is authorized to take any and all action required to issue and advertise the Request For Proposals, including but not limited to, approval of the specifications and requirements to be prepared by GEC, Inc.**

Mr. Katz asked if the Commission is authorizing GEC, Inc. to prepare the specifications, is there a project for this. Mr. Dufrechou stated the estimated cost right now is between \$1.6 and \$1.8 million.

Mr. Katz stated he knows there is a budget for the project but is asking about one for preparing the specs - the engineering part of it - is what was talked about this morning over and above the \$1.6

million. Mr. Bourgeois replied yes, it is. Mr. Katz asked if there is a maximum on it; is it part of the total or part of the percentage. Mr. Bourgeois stated they can only work it as a percentage. Mr.

Katz stated so GEC cannot include it as far as its general percentage, not over and above, and compressing the time table will or will not increase that cost. Mr. Bourgeois stated no, it should not.

Mr. Katz stated the next question he has, and he is sure Mr. Thompson and Mr. Graham know off

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the top of their heads, how often does the Causeway get hit by lightning - once a month. Mr. Graham stated sometimes once a year; it has been a while; there has never been a lightning strike this significant before; it has always maybe knocked one booth out. Mr. Katz asked if the new system will be more hardy that there will not be this problem again. Mr. Bourgeois stated there will be surge protection installed with it and the engineers will come back with follow-up projects that will be for lightning protection around the canopy area also. Mr. Katz asked if this will be done simultaneously or afterwards. Mr. Bourgeois stated it will be done such that they will have it constructed at the same time. He added it will take a while to get the new system installed so they will follow along with the other project in such a manner that it will be operational at the same time. In response to Mr. Katz's inquiry, Mr. Bourgeois replied all of this is going to be somewhere in the late fall because they also have the construction of the 5<sup>th</sup> lane that is going on. He stated the final installation of the surge/lightning protection will be installed on the roof of the plaza that is being built as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> lane; there will be a new roof for the 5<sup>th</sup> lane and there will be conduit running through it. Mr. Bourgeois stated they will have to get with the contractor as to how he can speed up his procurement of everything associated with the 5<sup>th</sup> lane to accomplish getting the toll system in place. Mr. Katz asked if the surge protection is included in the budget or is that on top. Mr. Bourgeois replied no, it is on top of the budget. He explained the engineers originally looked at having one larger project to restore the lanes, replace the equipment, do surge protection and everything, and that is when they discovered that there was a time limitation on the TEA-21 money so they had to break out the hard construction portion at the beginning, the lane only, which was recently bid and awarded to Barriere Construction by DOTD. Mr. Bourgeois stated then the engineers were going to do a follow-up project, which was the toll collection and everything else,



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but because of this and the nature of what is needed to go about it with RFP process, they will end up instead of having two projects there will be three - the one to do the concrete in the lanes, the new toll collection, and then the last bit of construction to complete the job. In response to Mr. Katz's inquiry, Mr. Dufrechou stated there is budgeted up to \$2 million to install the toll collection system so surge protection should be included. In response to Mr. Katz's inquiry as to the cost of the surge protection, Mr. Bourgeois stated he is not sure at this time; the timing of this has left him a little unprepared so there is no budgetary detail on this now. Mr. Katz stated he understands that since toll collection was back up and running within twenty-four hours, it would not qualify under the terms of business interruption insurance. He asked about the timing for business interruption insurance to pick up - 365 days or 72 hours. Mr. Lynch stated it would be seven days, not 365 days. Mr. Katz stated most businesses he has seen it is 72 hours - 3 days. Mr. Dufrechou stated to clarify - there was a loss in revenue of about \$30,000 this time; if there is a recurrence, it will be more difficult to restore and there would be a much greater probability for loss of revenue. He asked if that extends for seven days, would the insurance kick in to cover the lost revenue. Mr. Powell stated he is not sure. Mr. Katz asked Mr. Powell and Mr. Lynch to look into this and let Mr. Dufrechou know. Mr. Katz mentioned approximately \$30,000 in tolls was allowed to go free and was not in a twenty-four-hour period; it was a small part of that period. He asked if going from seven to three days is a small increase in the insurance premium, then that would be something for the staff to consider. Mr. Dufrechou stated the average revenue on Fridays is about \$50,000. Mr. Katz stated if the difference in premium is only \$10,000 or \$15,000 it may be something to consider now or at renewal. Mr. Powell stated they will provide the information to Mr. Dufrechou. Mr. Lorino asked if the Commission has lightning strike insurance on its equipment and when the new system is put

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in if it is hit by lightning, will it be paid for in full. Mr. Powell replied, yes, subject to the deductible. Mr. Lorino asked if the insurance will be upgraded assuming this system is costing a lot more than the old system did. Mr. Powell replied yes, the amount of the new system will be the new amount of insurance. Mr. Egan stated the Commission needs an aggregate of the cost projection for the total project, including construction of the 5<sup>th</sup> lane, surge protection, coordinating toll traffic, and all items/sections of the project. Mr. Katz stated \$2 million is not a surprise but the concern is staying within the long-term budget. Mr. Bourgeois stated the new system, depending upon how it is installed, will be less likely to be hit because they are going aerial with this. He explained what happened was a ground strike which radiated out; the new one should be a more hardy system. Mr. Katz stated the Commission will be more comfortable knowing what the total is on the toll system before making a decision and asked that the information be provided. **Mr. Katz called for a vote on the resolution introduced. Mr. Katz, Mr. Romig, Mr. Egan and Mr. Lorino voted in favor of the motion.**

Mr. Katz stated the Causeway participated in a transportation safety summit poster competition. He stated the entrant was one original poster per agency, talked about the size and then an outside panel judged each of the posters to select the winner. Chief Congemi stated the Department of Transportation and Development won and the Causeway was second. In response to Mr. Katz's inquiry, Mr. Dufrechou stated the DOTD was the judge. Chief Congemi stated obviously the Causeway's was better and had he been there he would have taken exception. He stated there were only two entries, the DOTD and the Causeway.

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Mr. Katz announced the May 2, 2012 meeting will be rescheduled to accommodate the process of RFPs on the new toll system.

Mrs. Lopreore stated April 8 - 14, 2012 was Telecommunications Week, which is when dispatchers are recognized for their hard work and dedication. She explained it is done through the State and St. Tammany held a banquet dedicated to them. Mrs. Lopreore thanked and recognized the Dispatch Department.

Mr. Dufrechou stated the exit on the Hue P. Long Bridge eastbank is supposed to be open next week and hopefully the police officers will not have to enforce the "No Left Turn" that has been going on for several months. Chief Congemi stated new roadways are being done and part of the old ones will be demolished. Mr. Lorino stated he knows Mr. Dufrechou does a lot of things and has a lot going on, and he would like to say he did a great job a few weeks ago when there was a commuter who was adamant about the fog policy of rolling convoys. Mr. Lorino stated Mr. Dufrechou responded to the commuter's e-mail and now the commuter understands the process a lot better. Mr. Lorino thanked Mr. Dufrechou for responding and explaining the rolling convoy.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



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PETER F. EGAN  
SECRETARY



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LAWRENCE K. KATZ  
CHAIRMAN