

PROCEEDINGS OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION HELD ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2013, AT 10:00 A.M., IN THE GNOEC CONFERENCE ROOM, VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA BUILDING, 3939 NORTH CAUSEWAY BOULEVARD, SUITE 400, METAIRIE, LA

PRESENT: Lawrence M. Rase, Chairman; Michael R. Lorino, Jr., Vice Chairman; Stephen G. Romig, Treasurer; Anthony V. Ligi, Jr., Assistant Secretary Treasurer; Tommy S. Cvitanovich, Member

OTHERS: Carlton Dufrechou; Cheryl H. Lambert; Chief Nick Congemi; Melissa M. Phillpott; Georgie Bagnetto; Red Thompson; Robert Graham; Stacie Heffker; Perry Daigrepoint; Cary Bourgeois, Gavin Gillen & Bob Boagni, GEC, Inc.; Burgess McCranie, McCranie, Campbell, Sistrunk, Anzelmo, Hardy, McDaniel & Welch; Bill Becknell, The Becknell Law Firm; Denis Milliner & Byron Poydras, Bank of New York; Kathy Gambino & Jim Lynch, Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Svc.; Rene Chopin, Burk-Kleinpeter; Shelby P. LaSalle, Jr.; Faimon Roberts, The Advocate; Polly Greene, St. Tammany Farmer; Robert Rhoden, The Times-Picayune

The Chairman called the meeting to order.

Mr. Rase stated he thinks everyone is aware of the tragedy on the bridge Monday. He stated Miguel Rodriguez was a nineteen-year-old young man who got out of Grace King last year and was working in the masonry field. Mr. Rase stated Mr. Rodriguez was on the North Shore doing a job and was coming home and then going on to the Saints game when the accident occurred. He stated Mr. Rodriguez's family got here in the year 2000 but he got here in the year 2006. Mr. Rase stated the staff has had a chance to meet with the family and they seemed to be good hard-working American people and are certainly very upset by what has happened. Mr. Rase stated Mr. Rodriguez's mother got in last night. Mr. Rase called for a moment of silence for Mr. Rodriguez.

On motion by Ligi, seconded by Romig, the minutes of the regular meeting held September 4, 2013 were accepted as written. Mr. Rase, Mr. Lorino, Mr. Romig, Mr. Ligi and Mr. Cvitanovich voted in favor of the motion.

On behalf of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, Mr. Dufrechou reported for September thirty-

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nine water quality samples taken. Of the thirty-nine samples, thirty (77%) met primary contact recreation standards. He stated overall the lake is doing pretty well. Mr. Rase stated they will be working with Mayor Cooper in Covington on the Bogue Falaya.

On behalf of the Causeway Police Charitable Foundation, Mr. Gillen stated the skeet shoot is coming up on Friday, October 4, and it looks like the goal has been exceeded.

On the North Toll Plaza Lane Modifications project, Mr. Dufrechou presented Plan Change No. 9 that will modify the additional striping that improved traffic flow in the summer. He stated the Plan Change provides for the addition of a pay item in the amount of \$30,972.10 and no additional calendar days. Mr. Dufrechou stated this was to facilitate the traffic when the work underneath the Monroe Overpass was being done, adding it definitely relieved traffic backup. He stated approval is recommended by both the staff and engineers. **On motion by Cvitanovich, seconded by Romig, during construction the contractor was requested to modify the temporary striping to improve traffic flow through the project area. Plan Change No. 9 provides for the addition of a pay item for Temporary Pavement Markings (Type 1 Removable Tape). Based upon the recommendation of the Staff and its Consulting Engineers, the Commission authorized the General Manager to complete the execution of Plan Change No. 9 in the amount of \$30,972.10 and no additional calendar days. Mr. Rase, Mr. Lorino, Mr. Romig, Mr. Ligi and Mr. Cvitanovich voted in favor of the motion.**

On the project Replace the Toll Collection System, Mr. Dufrechou presented Plan Change No. 4 that provides for the installation of a conduit enclosure for Lane 4 and modifications to the toll collection software for a total increase of \$21,100 and no calendar days. He stated staff and engineers recommend this. Mr. Dufrechou stated three of the five lanes have been upgraded; Lane 2 should

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have the new toll equipment in about ten days and Lane 1 will be completed by the end of the month.

Mr. Dufrechou stated by November 1 it will be completely on the new system. **On motion by Romig, seconded by Cvitanovich, Plan Change 4 provides for the installation of a conduit enclosure at Lane 4 and for modifications to the toll collection software in the total amount of \$21,100 and no additional calendar days. Based upon the recommendation of the Staff and its Consulting Engineers, the Commission accepted Plan Change No. 4 on the referenced project. The General Manager is hereby authorized to complete the execution of Plan Change No. 4 with The Revenue Markets, Inc. (TRMI Systems Integration). Mr. Rase, Mr. Lorino, Mr. Romig, Mr. Ligi and Mr. Cvitanovich voted in favor of the motion.**

Mr. Dufrechou stated they are looking at the incident of Monday afternoon with a very critical eye; to be direct, the problem is they have a bridge that was designed in 1956. He stated it is extremely strong; it has been maintained continually; if one looks at the statistics safety-wise, it is still the safest bridge in the State of Louisiana and probably in the country; compared to any State system it is probably at least two and one-half to three times safer as far as accidents go. Mr. Dufrechou stated the challenge they have is, while the bridge was designed in 1956, conditions have changed; the primary change has been automobiles; in 1956, very few people had pickup trucks and an SUV was nonexistent. He stated in the late 1980s pickup trucks became more prevalent as a personal vehicle and certainly in the 1990s the SUVs came out; today almost every second vehicle will be a higher profile vehicle. Mr. Dufrechou stated the original bridge, the 1956 bridge, and its sister, the northbound bridge, the 1969 bridge, were both designed to the design standards of the day and they have been remarkably safe for fifty-seven years for one and forty-four years for the other. He stated the accident rate yet is about 150 accidents per year; to do the math, that is one accident

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for every 76,000 of transits, which is unheard of anywhere in the country. He stated that is a testimony to the people who drive the bridge daily looking out for each other, certainly the first responders, the police, the MAP operators and Dispatchers - everyone who reacts so quickly. Mr. Dufrechou stated, however, we have a situation that since the mid-1990s they have seen more vehicles, particularly high profile, high center of gravity vehicles, that will impact the rail and potentially go over; there have been nine since 1995; there have been three this year and most recently the one on Monday with Miguel. Mr. Dufrechou stated he wants to talk about the incident on Monday; the first responders responded flawlessly. He stated Miguel went in the water right at 4:00 p.m.; an eye witness stopped and saw Miguel surface; Miguel indicated he was okay, looked like he was trying to take his boots off, but unfortunately he went down within twenty seconds. Mr. Dufrechou stated our guys were there in ninety seconds with the MAP folks the first ones on the scene; the police officer was there; all of them have had water rescue training as recently as the most recent session in the last month. Mr. Dufrechou stated he is absolutely positive if Miguel had stayed on the surface, our guys would have gotten him; he knows they would have saved him as they did the individual who went overboard in the spring. He stated it is a tragedy that Miguel was not able to stay up longer. Mr. Dufrechou stated first of all, it is amazing that he was able to get out of the vehicle. He stated the impact itself had to be traumatic. Mr. Dufrechou stated where they are going in the near term is looking at the potential addition to the existing rails out there. Mr. Dufrechou showed slides of the incident pointing out the vehicle drifting to the left side, hitting the left rail, left curb. Chief Congemi stated the driver then went all the way to the right-hand lane, which was very peculiar. Mr. Dufrechou showed the driver coming back hitting the right curb, at this point takes on a ninety degree turn; then coming across and impacting the rail

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going over into the water. Mr. Dufrechou stated what makes this unique is this is the first time they were able to capture the entire event on video. He stated they were hoping to recreate the incident with the help of, not only the engineers, but the Texas Transportation Institute at Texas A & M. Mr. Dufrechou stated the Commissioners know that for almost a year now they have been looking at enhanced rails. He stated they have made applications for grants from the U. S. Government. Mr. Dufrechou showed the slide looking at the northbound bridge and stated of the two bridges, this is the one that has the higher rail; thirty-one inches on the northbound; it was designed in 1969. He showed the southbound bridge, same section, with twenty-five inches; so there is a difference of six inches from the top of the concrete between the southbound and the northbound bridges. He stated the overboard incidents in the last twenty years are on the southbound bridge so that six inches seem to make the entire difference in the two bridges. Mr. Dufrechou referred back to the first slide showing the northbound bridge and stated all these were designed to the standards of the day, 1956 and 1969 standards. Mr. Dufrechou stated the contemporary solution, what would work on I-10, does not work on the Causeway, but it would be the quickest fix; if they drilled in the curb, in this instance the northbound bridge, with a new barrier that would go up to thirty-six inches, that would keep any vehicle that hit, this basically this would keep the vehicles on the road. Mr. Dufrechou stated what it would do, however, is it sacrifices the curb; none of us can recommend this because the curb has been a haven of last resort since day one. He stated there are more than 200 first responses every month on the bridge when people cannot get to one of the seven crossovers - this is where they go, where they stand when they are broken down until the first responders can get to them. He stated if they do this barrier, they will be putting them in the roadway, which would be catastrophic, putting people right in

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oncoming traffic, which they cannot have. Mr. Dufrechou stated so this solution, while it works on interstate systems or other bridges that have wide areas or broad shoulders, out here they would be actually putting people directly in harm's way; so this is not an option, not a way to go. Mr. Dufrechou stated they have to come up with something truly innovative. He stated the first bridge in 1956 when it was built it was the cutting edge; it was the first use of prestressed concrete and modular component construction, and that is what they will challenge the engineers to do today, not only the engineers but the folks at Texas A & M, to try to come up with some out-of-the-box thinking, very innovative, and something that can be done without stopping traffic. He stated there are 20,000 vehicles coming south every morning and 20,000 going north every afternoon; they have got to make these improvements while traffic is flowing. Mr. Dufrechou stated where they are right now is the Commissioners have already authorized the work over a month ago with Texas A & M; they are trying to get them to come on board to help come up with innovative design. Mr. Dufrechou showed the southbound bridge and stated the handrail, the rail on top was never intended to be a barrier; it was always intended, because this was a haven of last resort, this was a handrail for the public - that is its function; it was never intended to take any kind of impact at all; the impact was always the concrete. Mr. Dufrechou stated the handrail would be potentially eliminated and either a new barrier built on top of the curb or behind, somehow attached to the anchoring; this is where they are focusing right now. Mr. Dufrechou stated eventually they will do both bridges but in the near term they are looking at the southbound bridge first of all. Mr. Dufrechou stated where he wants to go more than that though is they have a magnificent bridge that has a tremendous safety record. He stated currently the Causeway only has seven crossovers, seven places where they can get vehicles to and out of traffic. He added we need more areas like this. He

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stated the best alternative everybody would want is shoulders but they are almost three-quarters of a billion dollars. Mr. Dufrechou stated Mr. Bourgeois and some of his associates have already looked at conceptual designs of safety bays, which are basically a two block long segment of shoulder that could be staged between the seven crossovers. He added they are not cheap - they are about \$10 million per pair. Mr. Dufrechou stated where they would like to go as far as staff is they would propose a safety bay between each crossover and raise the rail. Mr. Dufrechou stated he does not have a cost estimate yet, which will take probably at least a couple months and he cannot tell where the money will come from - he just knows they have to do it - try to find it. Mr. Rase stated the main thing, as Mr. Dufrechou said, is more than 200 times a month that this occurs. Mr. Dufrechou asked Mrs. Bagnetto if Dispatch gets seven or eight calls a day at least on breakdowns on the bridge. Mrs. Bagnetto replied easily. Mr. Dufrechou stated that is each and every day, 365 days a year, adding if they move the curb they are putting people in jeopardy and cannot have that happen. Mr. Dufrechou stated the I-10 solution, while it is something that could happen almost tomorrow, they cannot recommend it in good conscience; they would be literally putting people directly in the line of traffic so it is not going to work. He stated they have to do something; the bridge was extremely cutting edge when it came out in the 1950s and 1960s, and that is where they have to go again - be very innovative. Mr. Dufrechou stated to borrow from an engineer he has grown to admire a lot in the last couple years and he borrowed this from Captain Kirk of Star Trek - we are going where no man has gone before with this design - it is truly the first time that anybody, not only the United States, but any other has done anything like this.

Mr. Dufrechou showed slides and pointed out the following: Lane 3 was opened on September 20 and three lanes have the new toll equipment in them. Lane 2 still has legacy equipment. Lane 1 will

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be complete next week and Lane 2 will be the final one. He stated on November 1 they will have a big celebration.

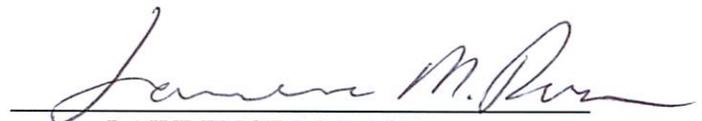
Mr. Dufrechou showed attenuator damage by a tractor-trailer in a crossover on September 25 but they were caught. Mr. Dufrechou stated it hard for a tractor-trailer to get out of a crossover. He stated the crossovers are only 84 feet and this is another reason why the safety bays will be so helpful. Mr. Dufrechou stated the Discovery Channel was on the bridge filming the Causeway because it is one of the few bridges, in not only the country but the world, that are still in A-1 condition.

Mr. Dufrechou stated lifting the truck from the lake today was postponed until tomorrow. He stated the southbound bridge will be closed maybe forty minutes or so around 12:00 noon. The northbound bridge will remain open. Chief Congemi stated it will be closed for a short time today. Mr. Dufrechou stated tomorrow it will be closed definitely southbound; they are trying to keep northbound open but if they have rubber-necking they will close northbound too.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



ANTHONY V. LIGI, JR.
ASSISTANT SECRETARY TREASURER



LAWRENCE M. RASE
CHAIRMAN