



Citizens Advisory Committee Minutes

June 26, 2024

Location: via Zoom

Attendance:

New Jersey: Reggie Haynes, Judy Boldurian, Pamela Mack-Brooks,

Pennsylvania: Tyrone Wesley, Robert Melikian

Emeritus Member(s): Jeff Kessler, John Boyle, Stephen Benigno

DRPA/PATCO: John Rink, GM; Robert Finnegan, CSSO; Jerry Sahi, CFO; Nicole Ochroch, SE; John Hanson, CEO; Cheryl Ansert, Administrative Coordinator

Potential Members: Grace Kimbaris

Call to Order

A motion was made to approve the May 8, 2024 minutes. The Minutes were approved.

Finance

CFO Sahi

Unaudited Traffic

- Unaudited traffic for May was roughly around \$4.2M, which is 1 ½ % higher than last year for the month and around 7% less than May 2019.
- Unaudited traffic for May YTD was around 19.2M, which is similar to last year. Around 1.4M, 6.7% less than 2019. Truck traffic is around 1.2% less than 2019.

DRPA Audited Traffic and Revenue

- DRPA audited revenue for March YTD was \$74.5M, which was 4.6% better than budget, 0.4% less than 2023 and 1.9% less than March 2019.
- DRPA audited traffic for March YTD was 11.5M, which was 3.2% better than budget, 0.03% less than 2023 and 4.6% less than March 2019.

PATCO Audited Traffic and Revenue

- PATCO audited revenue for April YTD was \$4.3M, which was 0.6% better than budget, 3.2% better than 2023 and 51.5% less than April 2019.
- PATCO audited traffic for April YTD was 1.8M, which was 1.1% better than budget, 3.7% better than 2023 and 49.4% less than April 2019.

March YTD unaudited operating expense was \$40.2M, which \$25.5M was for DRPA and \$14.6M was for PATCO. \$5.5M favorable to budget around \$2.8 is related to employee cost and around \$2.7M is timing related.



Have Higher Interest rates impacted bond ratings?

CFO Sahi

- High interest rates do not impact the bond rating, the money we have for projects in our accounts & investments impact bond ratings. Interest rates will impact when we go for bond issues, depending on what the market rates are.

CEO Hanson

- As interest rates rise above the coupon rate the price of the bond drops. If interest rates drop, the price of bonds typically go up b/c the interest rate will be higher than the face value.
- Interest rates have no impact on our bond rating.

Steve Benigno:

Does the DRPA have a policy or are there any regulatory requirements for the bonded debt ratios?

CEO Hanson

- There's no bond to debt ratio requirements, but there are debt service coverage ratios that are specified in the bonding dentures. At the end of every year we have to pass two resolutions, 1 looks back to see we've met our debt service coverage ratio and the other looks at the future budget and based on the budget decides if we will meet our debt service coverage ratios and we typically tremendously outperform those coverage ratios.

CFO Sahi

- We have to put a reserve fund aside for at least 12 months on bond payments, that's a requirement.

Bridge and Highway

The BFB Walkway has closed 15 minutes early over the past few months due to police staffing shortage. Will there be officers hired to close the shortfall gap?

CSSO Finnegan

- That issue was addressed last week with the Chief and the Captains and they in turn addressed it with their watch commanders. If that was occurring it should not continue to occur.

Updates on construction projects on the bridges, walkways, lights, access roads, etc.

SE Ochroch

- The Betsy Ross Bridge painting project is about 29% spent. Painting on the west side and over Conrail with more work over the summer. Toll plaza is currently being blasted and painted. Lanes 1 and 6 have closures for the safe span deck. Under deck concrete repairs are taking place, they have not seen as many repairs that they had anticipated.
- BF 54 is the main BFB project and we are on time for completion December, 2024. All cable wrapping is complete on the North and South sides, they are working on their punch lists. Platforms to be removed from both the South & North sides. Walkway on South side is open as of Memorial Day weekend. Lighting is currently de-energized and work is still be updated on that. There will be a special preview of the lights July 4th. We are about 95% complete on the miscellaneous steel repairs. All tower rocker and anchorage rocker links have been complete and we're about 99% completed on the painting.



- CBB has emergency weld repairs going on right now and is scheduled for completion March, 2025. CBB painting and bridge rehabilitation project was advertised on June 18th with a bid opening date scheduled for early August and we are continuously monitoring the deck. Traffic bridge OPS has been completing night repairs in the outer lanes and we have additional deck repairs included in that.
- At all facilities we have our 2024 biennial inspections going on. The biennial inspections are a critical project. They are done at all of our facilities, they inform us of our capital program and help to prioritize our projects.
- This summer is very busy with inspection activities for Franklin Square. We are continuing work on the elevator and escalator installation. Concrete has been placed on the 7th Street curb as well as the Bollard foundation protection for the station entrance and we are completing landscaping and the installation of the green roof at the new head house.

Bob Melikian:

It seems like the decking is getting worse when you drive over it where the joint is. Is that something that is on the plan to upgrade or improve? What about inspecting the materials at the base of the pedestals for the bridge, from a safety point of view, for ships potentially banging into them again?

SE Ochroch

- The decking is a large project, we are about 60% complete on the design process. We are doing a full depth of the pavement on top, not just milling and paving. We are looking at some interim short-term solutions for the areas that are not in great shape and we are fully aware of those areas and how to phase in this larger project. The BFB is 1 ½ miles long with seven lanes so it's a lot of disruption in trying to figure out how to make improvements.
- In terms of our bridge support protection systems. Those do get inspected as part of our biennials every two years. We do underwater inspections every four years and I believe the next one is this year. In addition, we have a design project that just kicked off in March I believe for the enhancement of both the WWB and BFB pier supports.

Bob Melikian:

But has anything new or additional been suggested or implemented as a result of the tragedy down in Baltimore?

CEO Hanson

- We had a contract for the inner bridges (WWB & BFB) prior to this tragedy. They are suspension bridges and are constructed using these steel towers that sit on concrete which is anchored to the riverbed. They are protected by fender systems that are probably outdated now. There is preliminary engineering going on that's underway and we are very close to implementing a new solution even though we believe the risks in those areas are very low for a variety of reasons. We are not yet prepared to go out to the outer bridges. We have very robust systems in place at the outer bridges. We have dolphins in place at the BRB that were originally installed in 1976, but they're extremely robust. In the early 2000's we installed rock islands around the CBB.

Steve Benigno:

Do you know the inspection rating for each of the four bridges?

SE Ochroch

- All of our bridges are in a state of good repair. I do not have the ratings off the top of my head, but if they were not in a state of good repair then we would have to take actions to either shut down the bridge or severely limit the traffic. We work to maintain our bridges and prioritize the emergency work, for example, the welds on the CBB. We will get the work done that's needed to keep our bridges in a state of good repair and our annual inspectors have a protocol. If there is an emergency issue that they see, there's a chain of command for what they do. We then take immediate action to fix or analyze it. We are in constant communication with what our inspectors see in the field in real time. We can get you those ratings, Steve.

CEO Hanson

- We don't focus on the numbers quite so much because they're not that helpful compared to what we do with the biennial inspection, which again to the point somebody asked maybe it was about regulatory requirements it's required in our bonding dentures and because of the age of the facilities, we've actually taken the biennial inspection and we're doing the smaller inspections every year. Everything is in excellent shape as Nicole said, but we'll get you those ratings.

GM Rink

- The biennials for PATCO are done the same way as the bridges. They go through all the facilities, the bridges, the cars, all of our systems and if anything needs to be done it is brought to our attention and we immediately go out and fix it.

PATCO

What is the purpose of adding the license plate readers for PATCO police?

CSSO Finnegan

- It is a New Jersey State police project, which was presented to us and requested the use of our facilities for mounting of the license plate reader cameras.
- DRPA and PATCO get to use the data that is collected if needed for investigative purposes.

Bob Melikian:

Is it shared with the Pennsylvania State Police as well?

CSSO Finnegan

- It is put into a specific database and if an agency utilizes that database they would have access to the data.

Bob Melikian:

Are you mounting any of these on vehicles as well?

CEO Hanson

- We are not doing that, it is not our program. It's not something that we believe would produce enough results for us to invest in the equipment. The state is doing this and we are not putting anything on vehicles.



CSSO Finnegan

- Several years ago (15-17) we had grant funding for two mobile LPR's that were mounted on two vehicles. There are very high maintenance costs with them and there were a lot of calibration issues so they were not very beneficial to us at that time. We never looked into continuing with those.

PATCO ridership updates. Is it plateauing or still recovering?

GM Rink

- As of the end of May we are up about an additional 85,000 riders. It has pretty much plateaued with just a minor percent increase.
- Overall 3.8% up from the end of May this year as compared to last year.

NYC MTA has a reduced fares program for low-income residents called fair fares. Is this something DRPA could consider for low-income riders in PATCO?

GM Rink

- Our reduced fare program is for senior medical card holders or the disabled.

CEO Hanson

- Not something at this time we are going to consider. When we get to the next fare increase we can look at the potential for other discounts.

PATCO cleanliness and safety update

GM Rink

- As the chief presented last month, they continue with the overtime detail weekdays in the early morning. It has been very effective. For the past month, the number of removals has dropped in the stations and on the cars. I was out in the city portion of the concourse over in Philly and the number of unsheltered that were in the stations has dramatically dropped. When I was at 12th & 13th there was only three in the city owned area and none in the 15th St area. I do believe the additional overtime patrols and what the police have been doing has been effective in regards to removing those who shouldn't be riding from the system.

CSSO Finnegan

- We haven't resolved the issue and unfortunately, there are details that we cannot fill at this time. But when they are filled and we do have the additional resources to do that through overtime, it does help clean the system out.

Steve Benigno:

The overtime for the police officers is that calculated in their pension?

CEO Hanson

- Yes. We are like everyone else where we are facing real issues in terms of being able to recruit and hire police officers. The immediate action we've taken is we negotiated a temporary agreement with the police to increase the rate of overtime pay in order to make our cops more likely to take these overtime details when they're offered. We are hoping if we become more competitive in salary we can bring more police officers onboard.



Chairman Haynes:

- Alan and Pamela are transitioning to Emeritus in September. We need more members from PA. We have five from New Jersey right now, but after the veto period we will have six. In September when Pamela and Alan go to emeritus, that will be two from New Jersey side, so we will need more members. Larry comes off emeritus, Steve comes off emeritus and Dan Daniels comes off emeritus in October.

Members transitioning to Emeritus:

Alan Becker & Pamela Mack-Brooks – Emeritus in September

Active members (8) New Jersey (5) Pennsylvania (3)

Daniel McArdle and Grace have applications and are going through process

OPEN Forum

Next CAC Meeting: August 14, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m.

Next DRPA Meeting: DRPA Board Meeting on July 17, 2024 @ 9:00 a.m.