

PROCEEDINGS OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION HELD ON TUESDAY, MAY 3, 2011, AT 10:00 A.M., IN THE GNOEC CONFERENCE ROOM, VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA BUILDING, 3939 NORTH CAUSEWAY BOULEVARD, SUITE 400, METAIRIE, LA

PRESENT: Pat Brister, Chairman; Lawrence K. Katz, Vice Chairman; Lawrence M. Rase, Secretary; James E. Ravannack, Treasurer; Frank L. Levy, Assistant Secretary Treasurer

OTHERS: Carlton Dufrechou; Debbie Lopreore; Cheryl H. Lambert; Chief Nick Congemi; Melissa M. Phillipott; Eileen Barthe'; Georgie Bagnetto; Red Thompson; Robert Graham; Perry Daigrepoint; Stacie Heffker; Sgt. Michael Kelly; Brian Burr; Charlotte Grant; Jamie Butler; Verdi Adam, Phil Meyers, Cary Bourgeois, Shelby P. LaSalle, Jr., & Carmelo Gutierrez, GEC, Inc.; Burgess McCranie, McCranie, Campbell, Sistrunk, Anzelmo, Hardy, McDaniel & Welch; Allison Becknell, The Becknell Law Firm; Bill Murhammer; Denis Milliner, Bank of New York; Steve Bowes, Sisung Investment Services, Inc.; Kelly McHugh, Kelly McHugh & Associates, Inc.; Gavin Gillen, Burk-Kleinpeter, Inc.; Franklin Kyle, Kyle Associates; John Shires, Professional Engineering Consultants Corp.; Polly Greene, St. Tammany Farmer

The Chairman called the meeting to order.

On motion by Rase, seconded by Ravannack, the minutes of the regular meeting held on April 5, 2011 were accepted as written. Mrs. Brister, Mr. Katz, Mr. Rase, Mr. Ravannack and Mr. Levy voted in favor of the motion.

On behalf of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, Mr. Dufrechou reported for April that of the forty water quality samples taken, thirty-one samples met primary recreation criteria. Mr. Dufrechou stated because of the high river stages of the Mississippi River, the Corps of Engineers will more than likely open the Bonnet Carre Spillway next week. He stated it appears the opening will be comparable to the high river stages in 2008. Mr. Rase stated it is a very dire situation in the river currently. He stated they are trying to get emergency funding for dredging but it has been falling on deaf ears. Mr. Rase stated the point is if something is not done in the next six to eight days, there will be problems of vessels not being able to come in the river and the river will be shut down. He stated the Louisiana delegation is working very hard for a resolution, but other states are not.

**GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING - MAY 3, 2011**

On behalf of the Causeway Police Charitable Foundation, Mr. Gillen stated the annual fund-raiser luau is this Saturday, May 7, from 7:00 - 11:00 p.m. at the Pontchartrain Yacht Club in Mandeville. He stated tickets are still available from Mrs. Lambert or may be bought at the door.

For the month of April, Mr. Dufrechou reported twenty-one drawbridge openings, one drive fault incident and one test opening. He stated there were no fog operations. He reported Police and MAP responded to 307 breakdowns on the Causeway Bridge and 44 on the Huey P. Long Bridge.

Mr. Dufrechou stated Standard & Poor's affirmed the Commission's "A" bond rating, which is a tremendous accomplishment. Mr. Dufrechou stated he appreciates all the work Mrs. Lambert and the financial people do to keep the rating high.

Mr. Dufrechou reported on April 13 and 14 CPR classes were provided for Causeway personnel. Mr. Graham stated about twenty-three employees participated.

Mr. Dufrechou stated on April 27 there was an incident in which a truck carrying propane caught on fire requiring the bridge to be closed for about fifty minutes.

Mr. Dufrechou stated on April 29 the annual audit for fiscal year 2010 was completed by the State Legislative Auditor's Office. He stated there are no findings. Mr. Dufrechou expressed appreciation for the work by Mrs. Lambert and Mrs. Phillipott.

Mr. Dufrechou stated on April 29 he had a meeting with the LA DOTD and the Federal Highway Administration regarding the potential federal funding. He stated there is almost \$10 million available for hurricane restoration work as well as appropriations the Causeway may be able to act upon. With respect to the North Channel Emergency Span Motors project, Mr. Dufrechou reported the work was supposed to be complete in June, but is more likely July 2011. It is a \$409,234 project. With respect to the Bridge Modifications at STP/LPV Hurricane Protection Work project, Mr.

**GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING - MAY 3, 2011**

Dufrechou stated legal is reviewing the maintenance agreement for the Tag Store Customer Service Center software. He added Mr. McCranie and Mr. Bourgeois are continuing to pursue the state and federal governments for reimbursement.

On the Purchase of Spare Structural Components project, Mr. Dufrechou stated Boh Brothers Construction Co. has begun fabrication of the spare components. The work should be complete in August 2011.

On the North Channel Bascule - Bascule Span Repairs project, Mr. Dufrechou stated the Notice to Proceed is anticipated for May 9.

On the VMS/Call Box/HIL System Migration project, Mr. Dufrechou reported the contractor, Jack B. Harper, anticipates completion this month.

With regard to projects authorized but not yet underway, Mr. Dufrechou stated the Resurface Pavement, South Marine Crossing project design is in pier review.

Mr. Dufrechou stated on the Florida Triangle/Turning Lanes West Causeway project, the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with St. Tammany Parish has been executed by St. Tammany so the project can move forward.

Mr. Dufrechou recognized Brian Burr, MAP operator, and Sgt. Mike Kelly for executing the save on Sunday when a motorist went into the lake about 11:35 a.m. Mr. Burr stated while in Crossover 3, he received a call about a stalled vehicle in the roadway at the twelve-mile marker and he responded. He stated as he got to the 12.9 mile marker, there was a man walking on the shoulder, a white pickup truck was in front of him with the stalled vehicle in front of it. He stated when the driver looked up to see the stalled vehicle in the roadway, he swerved, lost control of the truck and went off the bridge. Mr. Burr stated he passed the stalled vehicle, got out of his MAP unit, saw the

**GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING - MAY 3, 2011**

man in the water, threw the life ring to him and then pulled him up in the rescue basket. Mr. Dufrechou recognized Jamie Butler in the Security Camera Department and Charlotte Grant, one of the stellar Dispatchers, who received the calls and began getting information out to the police and MAP. Mr. Dufrechou stated it was a team effort. He stated the motorist was in the water five minutes or less because of the tremendous response. Sgt. Kelly stated it was an overall effort from everyone, including toll collectors and bridge monitors. He stated they all worked together to save a life and get the truck out of the lake. Mrs. Lopreore stated it was a job well done. Mr. Dufrechou showed photographs of the rescue. Mr. Dufrechou pointed out Sgt. Kelly is the instructor for the water rescue training each year. Mr. Dufrechou stated the bridge was closed about forty-five minutes. Sgt. Kelly stated it was less time on the second closure to get the vehicle out of the water. In response to Mr. Dufrechou's inquiry, Sgt. Kelly stated the vehicle was right side up, facing north; it turned around under the water. Sgt. Kelly stated the driver was not sure how he got out of the vehicle, but from looking at the vehicle it seems like from the water rushing in he may have been pushed out through the back glass, which was blown out of the vehicle. He was wearing a seat belt, which probably saved him. Chief Congemi stated the vehicle was a high-rise Ford Ranger. Mr. Dufrechou stated everyone did a magnificent job.

Mr. Dufrechou showed a video of a storm system that passed the night before the prior Commission meeting, during which an eighteen-wheel truck was blown onto the railing. Mr. Graham stated there were about seventy feet of railing knocked out.

Mr. Dufrechou showed a video of a vehicle fire from about three weeks ago. Mr. Ravannack asked Chief Congemi if there is any idea how the vehicle caught fire. Chief Congemi stated it may have been an electrical short. Mr. Dufrechou stated traffic was stopped on the northbound bridge to allow

**GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING - MAY 3, 2011**

emergency vehicles to get to the scene by going south on the northbound bridge. Sgt. Kelly stated this was done to respond more quickly. In response to Mrs. Brister's inquiry as to what damage was done to the bridge, Mr. Graham stated the surface was cleaned and there was no structural damage. In response to Mrs. Brister's inquiry, Sgt. Kelly stated Mandeville Fire Department responded. Mr. Ravannack stated one thing he would like the Commission to note is a lot of things, savings and incidents, have happened on the bridge, and he knows Chief Congemi does not like recognition, but he would like to recognize Chief Congemi for his people and everybody under him. Mr. Ravannack expressed his congratulations to Chief Congemi for a doing a great job.

Mr. Bourgeois stated a few months back the engineers were tasked with determining what would be the most appropriate system to replace the current toll collection system. He stated as part of this, they investigated three alternatives. He stated the first one is something that is in essence the same as methodology as the current system. On the other end of the spectrum is a system that would be a complete Open Road system, which would not involve booths at all and be an automated system where people would have toll tags to drive through, similar to the LA 1 bridge. The third alternative would be a combination of those - a number of open road lanes and a number of lanes manned in similar current fashion. Mr. Bourgeois stated they did a slight cost comparison as to how much each of the options would cost and how much each would bring in relative to what percentage of collections. He stated an Open Road system has a little of what is termed "leakage", not being able to collect from everyone because not everyone would have a toll tag or might be an out of state vehicle, which cannot be recovered. Mr. Bourgeois stated as far as the existing system, the system has the highest percentage of return type of collections. He stated the existing system has a slight drawback in that it has a large quantity of personnel, which is why some agencies weigh which way

**GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING - MAY 3, 2011**

to go. Mr. Bourgeois stated as has been demonstrated this morning, the personnel are a part of the need for the current system. He added it was the other aspect of what they considered - how the toll system is part of the operation on the bridge. Mr. Bourgeois stated the plaza in its current configuration, with the people associated with it, is the sticking point in keeping a system of the existing type in place, which is the engineers' recommendation. Mrs. Brister stated she likes the idea that there are some people, at least one or two, at the toll plaza. Mr. Dufrechou stated the staff is in agreement with that completely. Mr. Katz asked if the recommendation is to keep the existing configuration or have they not gotten that far yet. Mr. Bourgeois stated yes, adding it is how they go about implementing a new version. He stated they have seen the need over time for a fifth lane partially for capacity reasons and mostly for operational reasons relative to maintenance. He stated if they choose the alternate of going forward with something absolutely new, it would be located a little up or downstream from where it is - they have not gotten that far yet. Mr. Katz stated he thinks down the road they may have to consider raising the cost of tolls for cash customers to encourage them to buy toll tags and with that have more people using the toll tag lanes. Mr. Dufrechou stated that may become a necessity in a few years, adding that he hopes with the storm protection work underway they will be able to hold everything as it is now. Mr. Ravannack stated in looking at the design, the Causeway has a unique situation and cannot be pulled from a book. Mr. Bourgeois stated the first item was to determine what kind of system does the Causeway want; it is totally different between an Open Road system and a system of booths with attendants. The Open Road system can actually be placed with no need for a plaza-type environment. He stated the engineers wanted to get concurrence with the recommendation before they flush out the actual design work to be done. Mr. Bourgeois stated right after Hurricane Katrina a full inspection of the facility was conducted.

**GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING - MAY 3, 2011**

He stated they also had people from the Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration with them. He stated they compared what is called a Detailed Damage Inspection Report. The inspection report is the document that includes every item believed to be damaged at the time and looks at what could be done to prevent this same type of damage from occurring in the future. Mr. Bourgeois stated the report was turned in to FHWA and DOTD, and became the basis for generating five separate inter-governmental agreements between the GNOEC and DOTD. He stated as a local agency the Causeway is not eligible to go directly to FHWA; it has to go through the DOTD, which is why the agreement is with DOTD. Mr. Bourgeois stated construction funding for all this work is 100% federal funding for Katrina-related work. He stated the GNOEC's match toward this would be all engineering design, environmental work/services, construction inspection and testing services. Mr. Bourgeois stated the first agreement developed was the repair work - about \$7 million worth of damage under the bridge from Katrina and Rita. This agreement paid for the portion eligible after insurance that was not covered by FEMA. He explained FHWA covered the costs of physical damage; FEMA covered the cost of police, maintenance and operational types of costs. Mr. Bourgeois stated under this agreement there was about \$5 million paid from insurance and under this portion of the agreement there was \$1,300,000 for additional damage that was not covered by insurance; it basically covered the deductible. Mr. Bourgeois stated the other four separate agreements are designed to prevent damage in the future - a program FHWA has to minimize the amount of future damage that it will have to pay out. Mr. Bourgeois stated the first of these agreements will cover replacement of the traffic signs on the bridge. He showed the hurricane damage to the signs and support posts. He stated the support structure will be beefed up so in the future if anything is lost, it will only be the sign face as opposed to having to replace the actual

**GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING - MAY 3, 2011**

structure that holds up the sign. Mrs. Brister asked if in any prior hurricanes there was any damage like that on signs. Mr. Bourgeois stated signs were bent because the metal is so thin and the area that holds it on is small. He added they are trying to make sure none of the structural supports break. In response to Mrs. Brister's inquiry, Mr. Bourgeois replied not to that extent because of where the storm was; it was always small. Mr. Bourgeois showed slides and stated the biggest exposure right now is the cable tray that runs across the bridge. He explained about 99% of it is on the inside of the bridge, but to economize the vaults were put on the outside so the cable has to run underneath the bridge where it is at its closest point to the water. Mr. Bourgeois stated they will be reinforcing the cable tray for the entire transition area. He stated none of the fibers were damaged. He stated FHWA does not want to see that type of damage in the future so they will pay today for an upgrade to keep it from happening again. Mr. Bourgeois stated the largest damage that occurred to the bridge was at the nine-mile turnaround. He stated the turnaround is at the lowest level of the bridge, about five feet above the water; the spans at the lowest level were washed into the lake - similar to what happened on the I-10 Twin Spans. He stated at the time there were four ramps, each had about nine or ten spans on it; they used the high level spans from two of the ramps to put back in place at the lower level on the other two ramps. Mr. Bourgeois stated what they would do is relocate all the items at the nine-mile turnaround to a new platform that will be built near one of the crossovers at the south channel. He showed slides of the damage that had occurred during Katrina. Mr. Bourgeois stated the last of the projects is to realign some of the spans on the northbound bridge. He explained the northbound bridge has a longer span length, two spans for every three spans on the southbound side - eighty-four feet instead of fifty-six feet - the extra length required that the girders be deeper; the bottom of the girder is actually closer to the water on the northbound bridge than it is on the

**GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING - MAY 3, 2011**

southbound bridge. Mr. Bourgeois stated the water came into the lake and as the storm was leaving, the water was at its highest point so, like on the Twin Spans, there was a little shifting of the spans.

Mr. Bourgeois stated these projects have been out there for a while but due to the total number of projects the State had, the amount of money was exhausted. He stated at the end of last year the engineers started trying to get back into the mix as the State was trying to get funds replenished. He stated on March 25, 2011 the FHWA approved the current listing of projects that includes all of these and funding is ready to proceed with the projects. Mr. Dufrechou stated he very much appreciates the work by Robert Lambert, Cary Bourgeois, Shelby LaSalle and Verdi Adam.

With regard to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Emergency Relief Projects - Permanent Restoration Repair Agreements, State Project Numbers 706-99-0002, 706-99-0003, 706-99-0004 and 706-99-0005, Mr. Dufrechou stated this is what Mr. Bourgeois has just described and would request authorization of the referenced projects from LADOTD and FHWA and authorize initiation of preconstruction engineering and environmental services for the project. Mr. Dufrechou stated the Staff is recommending this for the Commission's consideration. **On motion by Levy, seconded by Katz, based upon the recommendation of the Staff and Consulting Engineers, the Commission authorized the General Manager to request authorization of the referenced projects from LA Department of Transportation and Development and the Federal Highway Administration. The General Manager is hereby authorized to execute project memorandum with the Consulting Engineer, GEC, necessary to begin Preconstruction Engineering and Environmental Services for the project. Mrs. Brister, Mr. Katz, Mr. Rase, Mr. Ravannack and Mr. Levy voted in favor of the motion.**

Mr. Dufrechou stated on the Transportation Equity Act for the Twenty-first Century (TEA-21) High

**GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING - MAY 3, 2011**

Priority Project Funds, these are the funds discussed earlier that could potentially be used for the toll system, about \$1.5 million. He stated this would authorize the Commission to coordinate with LADOTD and FHWA, and authorize the execution of a project memorandum to initiate Preconstruction and Environmental design, not to exceed the estimate of \$135,000. **On motion by Katz, seconded by Ravannack, based upon the recommendation of the Staff and Consulting Engineers, the Commission authorized the use of Transportation Equity Act for the Twenty-first Century (TEA-21) High Priority Project Funds on the toll collection system and toll plaza infrastructure. The General Manager and Consulting Engineers are hereby authorized to coordinate with LADOTD and FHWA regarding the use of these funds. The General Manager is hereby authorized to execute project memorandum with the Consulting Engineers, GEC, necessary to begin Preconstruction Engineering and Environmental Services for the projects in an amount not to exceed \$135,000. Mrs. Brister, Mr. Katz, Mr. Rase, Mr. Ravannack and Mr. Levy voted in favor of the motion.**

With regard to the Discretionary Bridge Program Funds, Mr. Dufrechou stated this would be applicable to the South Channel Fender Repair and Structural Improvements project, North Channel Bascule Span Control System Replacement and Piling Restoration for the transformer platforms. He stated it would also authorize coordination with LA DOTD and FHWA for the use of these funds, which is approximately \$2.8 million for these three projects. **On motion by Rase, seconded by Ravannack, based upon the recommendation of the Staff and Consulting Engineers, the Commission authorized the use of Discretionary Bridge Program Funds on the following projects: South Channel Fender Repair and Structural Improvements (Project No. 417), North Channel Bascule Span Control System Replacement (Project No. 204), and Piling**

**GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING - MAY 3, 2011**

Restoration - Transformer Platforms (Project No. 426). The General Manager and Consulting Engineers are hereby authorized to coordinate with LADOTD and FHWA regarding the use of these funds. Mrs. Brister, Mr. Katz, Mr. Rase, Mr. Ravannack and Mr. Levy voted in favor of the motion.

Mr. Dufrechou stated Fiber Optic/Cable Tray Lease RFP would authorize Requests for Proposals for the use of the Causeway's excess fiber strands and tray space. He stated the RFP will be out before the next Commission meeting. **On motion by Ravannack, seconded by Katz, based on the recommendation of the Staff and Consulting Engineers, the Commission authorized the General Manager to obtain Proposals for the usage of excess fiber optic strands and cable tray space with the GNOEC facilities.** In response to Mr. Levy's inquiry as to any interest expressed, Mr. Dufrechou stated there has been interest from at least six or seven entities. **Mrs. Brister, Mr. Katz, Mr. Rase, Mr. Ravannack and Mr. Levy voted in favor of the motion.**

Mr. Dufrechou stated at the North Toll Plaza there is a trench drain that is failing after fifty years of operation and needs to be repaired. The cost estimate is about \$25,000. **On motion by Rase, seconded by Levy, based on the recommendation of the Staff and Consulting Engineers, the Commission authorized the General Manager to acquire bids for the repair of the trench drain at the North Toll Plaza. Mrs. Brister, Mr. Katz, Mr. Rase, Mr. Ravannack and Mr. Levy voted in favor of the motion.**

With regard to the fiber optic lease, Mr. Dufrechou thanked Mrs. Lopreore, Mr. Bourgeois and Mr. Becknell for their work in a short period of time to get the RFP going.

Mrs. Brister pointed out the FHWA funding is a tremendous opportunity for the Causeway and expressed her appreciation to the engineers for their efforts to secure the funding. She added the

**GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING - MAY 3, 2011**

Regional Planning Commission is involved also. Mr. Dufrechou agreed it is a great opportunity.

Mrs. Lopreore stated another community partner, Magnolia Ridge Apartments, is allowing the Causeway to use its sign if needed to announce an extended closure of the bridge. She stated the location is on the I-10 Service Road near Bonnabel Boulevard. She added this is in conjunction with several other partners she has previously mentioned in meetings. Mr. Dufrechou stated he thinks everyone is aware that Mrs. Lopreore is the person who really runs the Causeway operations day in and day out.

Mr. Levy asked if anyone knows when the sign system in New Orleans East on I-10 may be in operation. Mr. Bourgeois stated it is in design at the present time, adding the one in Irish Bayou should be installed shortly. He stated after Katrina some signs were replaced and some were newly installed; they should be operational within the next few months. Mr. Bourgeois stated they have been in discussions with LADOTD regarding the long-term goal of completing the fiber optic reach around the lake. He stated LADOTD is rebuilding its system to achieve that goal. Mrs. Lopreore stated she has been attending the traffic management meetings in which different agencies come together to discuss regional connections of signs, communicating, and assisting one another. Mr. LaSalle stated the Causeway will have control of access to the signs.

Mr. Dufrechou reported there is an auction of Causeway items that have been declared surplus scheduled for Thursday, May 5.

Mr. Dufrechou thanked Mr. LaSalle for the article on the Causeway wind turbine in the American Public Works Association magazine.

Mr. Dufrechou recognized staff employees Perry Daigrepoint, who keeps the tag store open; Eileen Barthe', Human Resources Director; Georgie Bagnetto, a Debbie, Jr. in training and Melissa

**GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING - MAY 3, 2011**

Phillpott, who recently attended a seminar on the accounting system software. He added these are just a handful of people who keep the Causeway going each day. Mrs. Brister pointed out the Causeway's great bond rating during times when many are not.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



LAWRENCE M. RASE
SECRETARY



PATRICIA P. BRISTER
CHAIRMAN