

**THE NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC BELT RAILROAD COMMISSION
FOR THE PORT OF NEW ORLEANS
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 2021**

**A REGULAR MEETING OF THE NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC BELT RAILROAD
COMMISSION FOR THE PORT OF NEW ORLEANS, PROPERLY NOTICED AND
AUTHORIZED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCLAMATION 7 JBE 2021, CONVENE
D REMOTELY VIA ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 2021
AT 2:22 P.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Darryl D. Berger, Chairman
William H. Langenstein, III, Vice Chairman
Charles H. Ponstein, Secretary-Treasurer
Tara C. Hernandez, Member
Walter J. Leger, Jr., Member

MEMBERS ABSENT: Joseph T. Toomy, Member

STAFF: B. Christian, Chief Executive Officer
M. Stolzman, General Manager
C. Kocur, Vice President, Engineering
J. Escudier, Executive Counsel
M. Scelson, General Counsel
F. Hasbun, Office Administrator

GUESTS: M. Ganon, Port of New Orleans
B. Landry, Port of New Orleans
R. Wendel, Port of New Orleans
A. Evett, Port of New Orleans
C. Coats, Port of New Orleans
S. Gauthier, Port of New Orleans
R. Aragon Dolese, Port of New Orleans
M. Verderame, Port of New Orleans
J. Guidry, Port of New Orleans
E. Pansano, Port of New Orleans
T. Carter, Port of New Orleans
J. Crist, Port of New Orleans
G. Palermo, Port of New Orleans
M. Gresham, Port of New Orleans
J. Mansour, Port of New Orleans
J. Sholar, Port of New Orleans
C. Gilmore, Port of New Orleans
A. Coates, Port of New Orleans
J. Ragusa, Port of New Orleans
C. Alfonso, Port of New Orleans
A. Taylor, Port of New Orleans
C. Falgoust, Port of New Orleans

J. Woodward, Port of New Orleans
M. Sulser, Port of New Orleans
A. Madere, Port of New Orleans
P. Jackson, Port of New Orleans
M. Singley, Port of New Orleans
D. Collins, Port of New Orleans
Chief R. Hecker, Harbor Police Department
Capt. M. Montroll, Harbor Police Department
B. Adams
Candance for Rep. Illg. Jr.
F. McCormack
Justin
K. Price
K. Galloway
K. Palmisano
L. Barback
L. Jackson
R. Archey
R. Greg
Rep. R. Garofalo, Jr.
R. Rhonda
R. White
Ryan G
W. Wachel

I. Roll Call & Determination of Quorum

Following a roll call of Board members, Chairman Berger confirmed a quorum and called the meeting to order at 2:22 p.m.

II. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes for December 2020

Chairman Berger called for a motion to approve the public meeting minutes for December, as previously circulated.

Commissioner Langenstein moved to approve the minutes and Commissioner Hernandez seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

III. Public Comment

Chairman Berger called for all agenda-related or general public comment, but there was none. Ms. Verderame confirmed there were no public comments submitted in advance or via the Zoom Chat feature.

IV. Action Items:

A. Acceptance of the December Financial Statement

Mr. Wendel presented the December financial statement for the Commission, a copy of which is made a part of these minutes. He provided an overview of the monthly and fiscal year-to-date revenues and expenses for the period ending December 31, 2020.

Commissioner Ponstein moved to accept the financial statement and Commissioner Langenstein seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

B. Consider Approval of a Resolution Amending the Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans' Financial and Operating Plan for Fiscal Year 2021.

Mr. Wendel presented and recommended approval of the resolution. In June 2020, the Commission adopted the Financial and Operating Plan for Fiscal Year 2021. Due to continued business interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission's revenues have continued to be adversely impacted beyond the original budgeted projections. Mr. Wendel noted that the Amended Financial and Operating Plan for Fiscal Year 2021 reduces revenue projections by \$3 million, while also decreasing expenses by approximately \$2.1 million. This will result in an overall reduction of income before depreciation of \$900,000.

Commissioner Leger moved to approve the resolution and Commissioner Hernandez seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

C. Consider Approval of a Resolution Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer to Exercise the Remaining Renewal Options to the Agreement with C.D.L. Electric Company, Inc., for As-Needed Grade Crossing Protection System and Hydraulic Switch Services, for a Cost Not to Exceed \$275,000 Per Year.

Mr. Kocur presented and recommended approval of the resolution. In January 2018, the Commission entered into a contract with C.D.L. Electric Company, Inc. ("CDL"), to perform as-needed grade crossing signal and hydraulic switch inspections, maintenance, and consulting services. The services are performed on the 33 grade crossings within the NOPB Network and all hydraulic switches on NOPB's track, which was initially seven (7) but will soon be forty-eight (48) with the addition of forty-one (41) hydraulic switches currently being installed in NOPB's Cotton Warehouse yard.

The initial contract term was for a period of one (1) year, with four (4) one-year renewal options. Presently, staff recommend authorizing the Chief Executive Officer to exercise the two (2) remaining one-year renewal options, for an amount not to exceed \$275,000 per year. Funding for this contract is allocated in the Commission's Expense Budget.

Commissioner Ponstein asked for clarification as to the number of switches across the NOPB network. Mr. Kocur responded that, within the next 60 days, there will be 48 hydraulic automatic power switches, but staff anticipates that more power switches will be installed during the extended terms of this agreement.

Commissioner Langenstein asked if the annual maintenance cost is anticipated to remain in a similar range. Mr. Kocur confirmed adding that efficient maintenance of the switches has proven to contribute to a reduction of incidents and repairs thus lowering hourly costs.

Commissioner Hernandez moved to approve the resolution and Commissioner Langenstein seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

V. Report of the General Manager

Mr. Stolzman presented the General Manager's Report. He echoed Ms. Christian's acknowledgement of the NOPB's continued commitment to safety.

Mr. Stolzman provided a summary of transportation operations, car shop operations, and storage and switching volumes. He noted that local and Class I switching volumes have started to increase, predominantly in connection with plastic and petroleum products. Railcar storage volume is also increasing and is expected to continue to increase as more storage capacity becomes available.

Commissioner Ponstein inquired about the Commission's current railcar storage capacity. Mr. Stolzman responded that the current capacity is approximately 1,000 railcars, but with the completion of the Kingfish Yard and the France Yard expansion, storage capacity will increase to 1,500 railcars.

Mr. Stolzman noted that intermodal volumes remained consistent in December and should continue to increase. Transportation dwell remained under 10 hours, demonstrating continued operational efficiency. Mr. Stolzman praised the Operations team for achieving such positive results in the last few months, despite numerous weather interruptions and the holidays. Engineering and maintenance productivity remained steady and close to projections in all categories, including track surfacing, mill tie replacement, bridge tie replacement, and bridge tie mill production.

Bad order releases and car repair volume have increased in December. Further process adjustments aimed at mitigating expenses and increasing car shop revenues went into effect in January. Locomotive availability remained at 100% for the month of December.

VI. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chairman Berger called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Ponstein so moved and Commissioner Hernandez seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY** and Chairman Berger adjourned the meeting at 2:40 p.m.