

**THE NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC BELT RAILROAD COMMISSION
FOR THE PORT OF NEW ORLEANS
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 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 182 JBE 2021, CONVENED REMOTELY VIA ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2021 AT 1:31 P.M.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: William H. Langenstein, III, Chairman
Joseph F. Toomy, Member

STAFF: B. Christian, Chief Executive Officer
M. Stolzman, General Manager
C. Kocur, Vice President, Engineering
A. Ferrand-Rodgers, Director, Organizational Development
F. Hasbun, Manager, Administration
J. Escudier, Executive Counsel
M. Scelson, General Counsel

GUESTS: M. Ganon, Port of New Orleans
R. Wendel, Port of New Orleans
A. Evett, Port of New Orleans
T. Rives, Port of New Orleans
R. Aragon Dolese, Port of New Orleans
C. Coats, Port of New Orleans
E. Pansano, Port of New Orleans
M. Verderame, Port of New Orleans
J. Guidry, Port of New Orleans
G. Brown, Port of New Orleans
M. Gresham, Port of New Orleans
C. Labat, Port of New Orleans
C. Gilmore, Port of New Orleans
D. Cordell, Port of New Orleans
G. Palermo, Port of New Orleans
S. Gauthier, Port of New Orleans
J. Crist, Port of New Orleans
A. Gennaro, Port of New Orleans
P. Beard, Port of New Orleans
B. McManus, Port of New Orleans
J. Mansour, Port of New Orleans
A. Coates, Port of New Orleans

J. Gommel, Port of New Orleans
G. Rose, Port of New Orleans
M. Cloos, Port of New Orleans
C. Alfonso, Port of New Orleans
J. Ragusa, Port of New Orleans
C. Falgoust, Port of New Orleans
H. Horan, Port of New Orleans
J. Moran, Port of New Orleans
M. Singley, Port of New Orleans
P. Jackson, Port of New Orleans
Chief R. Hecker, Harbor Police Department
Capt. Montroll, Harbor Police Department
A. Wondolowski
Barnesk
B. Rushing, Waldemar S. Nelson and Company, Incorporated
B. Strahin
B. Law
B. Adams, Volkert, Inc.
Chinnk
J. Byrne
J. Martin
Jkdawes
K. Price
M. LeCompte, Arthur J. Gallagher & Co.
M. Garriott, Evans-Graves Engineers, Inc.
R. Chauvin
Ujjal
W. Evans, GIS Engineering

I. Roll Call & Determination of Quorum

Following a roll call of Commission members, and in the absence of Commission Chairman Langenstein, Vice-Chairman Ponstein confirmed a quorum and called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes for September 2021

Vice-Chairman Ponstein called for a motion to approve the public meeting minutes for September 2021, as previously circulated.

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

III. Public Comment

Vice-Chairman Ponstein asked for any agenda-related or general public comments, but there were none. Ms. Verderame confirmed that no public comments were submitted in advance or via the Zoom Chat feature.

IV. Action Items:

A. Acceptance of the Financial Statement for September 2021

Mr. Wendel presented the Commission's September financial statement, 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 September 30, 2021. He reported lower operating revenues this month due to work interruptions caused by Hurricane Ida. Switching and car shop revenues were below budget but storage and real estate revenues were closer to expectations. Payroll expenses were below budget but maintenance costs were higher than expected. Overall, the operating income was \$421,000 below budget this month but is still significantly higher than last year at this time. Non-operating revenues were higher than expected due to the profitable sale of a surplus asset.

Commissioner Hernandez moved to accept the financial statement and Commissioner Leger seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

B. Consider Approval of a Resolution Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer to Enter into Annual Agreements Providing for Employee Benefits for Health, Dental, Vision, Long-Term Disability, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, and Life Insurance Coverage.

Mr. Wendel presented and recommended approval of the resolution. He provided an overview of current and proposed employee benefits for health, dental, vision, long-term disability ("LTD"), accidental death and dismemberment ("AD&D"), and life insurance coverages, as well as an overview of the different benefit coverages for which the Commission received marketplace quotes. He recommended continuation of healthcare coverage with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana ("BCBS") at a cost increase of 5.2%. Dental and vision coverages through Principle Financial Services, Inc. will be renewed with a 3% rate increase for dental coverage and no rate increase for vision coverage. The Hartford, Inc. will continue to provide life, AD&D and LTD coverages, with minimal rate changes. These benefits will be applicable to all non-union Commission employees, and the coverage period will commence on January 1, 2022.

Commissioner Hernandez asked if the 5.2 % rate increase with BCBS was in line with the general trend in the industry. Mr. Wendel responded that this number is actually below the average rate increase for health care coverage.

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

V. Report of the General Manager

Mr. Stolzman presented the General Manager's Report. He stated that Hurricane Ida negatively affected the Commission's operations. Local customer volumes were 44 % higher than in September 2020 and would have been even stronger without the loss of eight (8) full days of work post Hurricane Ida. Class-I switching volumes were also down due

to the hurricane. Storage volumes remained strong, averaging over 1,000 cars per day for the entire month.

Despite the lost days of operation and traffic interruptions, intermodal volumes were stronger than expected. Due to the down time and traffic congestion, dwell numbers increased to thirty-nine (39) hours but numbers should return to a normal average of eleven (11) hours in October.

Engineering continues to face supply challenges for cross ties and bridge ties but, with the arrival of new suppliers, replacement production should increase in the next few months. Track surfacing and mill production volumes were down due to the lost days of work and continuing supply challenges.

Car shop volumes were also negatively impacted by Hurricane Ida. However, the storm did not cause any water or wind related damage to the cars.

VI. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Vice-Chairman Ponstein called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Hernandez moved and Commissioner Leger seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY** and Vice-Chairman Ponstein adjourned the meeting at 1:44 p.m.