

BURLINGTON COUNTY BRIDGE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 14, 2020

Meeting was held via phone conference due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Chairman Singleton called the meeting to order. The Compliance Statement was read by the Commission Secretary:

“This meeting is to be conducted in accordance with notice requirements of P.L. 1975, CH. 231. A ‘Notice of Meeting’ was posted in a public place on November 14, 2019 at the entrance to the Administration Building, Headquarters of this Commission, with copies of such notice being delivered to the Camden *Courier Post* and *Burlington County Times* for publication and posted on the Burlington County Bridge Commission Website.”

Commissioners Present: Chairman Troy E. Singleton
Vice-Chairman Matthew J. Riggins
Commissioner John B. Comegno II

Others Present: Joseph Andl, Executive Director
Christine J. Nociti, Chief Financial Officer
Kathleen M. Wiseman, Secretary/Office Mgr/Mgr of Records
Anthony T. Drollas Jr., Solicitor
Elizabeth Verna, Chief of Staff
Constance Borman, Human Resources Director
Patrick Reilly, Director of Public Safety and Security
Stanley Ozalis, Manager, Technical Operations
Sascha Harding, Director of Engineering
Michael McCarron, Director of Tolls and Tower Operations
Dennis Stewart, Assistant Manager, Burlington-Bristol Bridge
Ellen Brennan, Manager, HR/Health Benefits
Ronald Cesaretti, Deputy Director/IT
Michelle Chiemiego, Purchasing Agent
Stephanie Brandt, Accounting Manager
John Zarsky, Pennoni Engineering
David Levinsky, Burlington County Times

Vice-Chairman Riggins led the flag salute followed by a moment of silence.

Roll Call - Attendance of all Commissioners taken by Secretary Kathleen M. Wiseman.

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-27

RESOLUTION TO CONVENE EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING

WHEREAS, the Burlington County Bridge Commission (“Commission”) is subject to certain requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, et seq.; and

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12, provides that an Executive Session, not open to the public, may be held for certain specified purposes when authorized by Resolution; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the Commission to discuss in a session not open to the public certain matters relating to the item or items authorized by N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b and designated below:

- (1) Matters Required by Law to be Confidential: Any matter which, by express provision of Federal law or State statute or rule of court shall be rendered confidential or excluded from the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act.
- (2) Matters Where the Release of Information Would Impair the Right to Receive Funds: Any matter in which the release of information would impair a right to receive funds from the Government of the United States.
- (3) Matters Involving Individual Privacy: Any material, the disclosure of which constitutes an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy such as any records, data, reports, recommendations, or other personal material of any educational, training, social service, medical, health, custodial, child protection, rehabilitation, legal defense, welfare, housing, relocation, insurance and similar program or institution operated by a public body pertaining to any specific individual admitted to or served by such institution or program, including but not limited to, information relative to the individual’s personal and family circumstances, and any material pertaining to admission, discharge, treatment, progress or condition of any individual, unless the individual concerned (or, in the case of a minor or incompetent, his guardian) shall request in writing that the same be disclosed publicly.
- (4) Matters Relating to Collective Bargaining Agreements: Any collective bargaining agreement, or the terms and conditions which are proposed for inclusion in any collective bargaining agreement, including the negotiation of the terms and conditions thereof with employees or representatives of employees of the public body.
- (5) Matters Relating to the Purchase, Lease or Acquisition of Real Property or the Investment of Public Funds: Any matter involving the purchase, lease or acquisition of real property with public funds, the setting of banking rates

or investment of public funds, where it could adversely affect the public interest if discussion of such matters were disclosed.

- (6) Matters Relating to Public Safety and Property: Any tactics and techniques utilized in protecting the safety and property of the public, provided that their disclosure could impair such protection. Any investigations of violations of possible violations of the law.
- (7) Matters Relating to Litigation, Negotiations and the Attorney-Client Privileges. Any pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation in which the public body is, or may become, a party. Any matters falling within the attorney-client privilege, to the extent that confidentiality is required in order for the attorney to exercise his ethical duties as a lawyer.
- (8) Matters Relating to the Employment Relationship: Any matter involving the employment, appointment, termination of employment, terms and conditions of employment, evaluation of the performance of promotion or disciplining of any specific prospective public officer or employee or current public officer or employee employed or appointed by the public body, unless all the individual employees or appointees whose rights could be adversely affected request in writing that such matter or matters be discussed at a public meeting.
- (9) Matters Relating to Potential Imposition of a Penalty: Any deliberations of a public body occurring after a public hearing that may result in the imposition of a specific civil penalty upon the responding party or the suspension or loss of a license or permit belonging to the responding party bears responsibility.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Burlington County Bridge Commission, County of Burlington, State of New Jersey, assembled in public session, that an Executive Session executive to the public shall be held in the Administration Building of the Commission, 1300 Route 73 North, Palmyra, New Jersey, for the discussion of matters relating to the specific items designated above.

It is anticipated that the deliberations conducted in executive session may be disclosed to the public upon the determination of the Commission that the public interest will no longer be served by such confidentiality.

Vice-Chairman Riggins moved to approve. Commissioner Comegno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

Vice-Chairman Riggins moved to approve. Commissioner Comegno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Vice-Chairman Riggins moved to approve the minutes of March 9, 2020. Commissioner Comegno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

DISBURSEMENTS LIST

Vice-Chairman Riggins moved to approve disbursements made from March 10, 2020 through April 14, 2020 as included in the list as presented. Commissioner Comegno seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following abstentions:

Chairman Singleton abstained from Voucher Numbers 20-01026, 20-00864, 20-01006, 20-00050, 20-00047, 20-00049, 20-00048, 20-00829, 20-01024, 20-01041, 20-01044, 20-01043 and 20-01042.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Joseph Andl asked the Commission to consider the following resolutions:

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-28

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE A SALARY REDUCTION FOR MANAGEMENT AND SENIOR STAFF NOT COVERED BY A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

WHEREAS, beginning in March, 2020 various federal and state officials began to issue directives aimed at mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Governor Murphy, signed various executive orders which include restrictions on travel, business operations and other measures aimed at addressing COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Burlington County Bridge Commission ("Commission") experienced an immediate, negative impact to its revenue collections following the circumstances evolving from COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Commission relies on revenue from toll collections to support its Operating and Capital Budget, (the "Budget"); and

WHEREAS, the Commission has closely monitored the impact of the reduced traffic on the revenue that supports the Budget, and has determined that there has been a significant shortfall in revenue realized beginning in March, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Commission recognizes the immediate need to implement cost saving measures to insure there are responsible levels of funding available to support the safe operation of the bridges and for the funding of debt service payments; and

WHEREAS, administration has been instructed to identify areas in the budget that can absorb immediate cost savings in order to preserve funding for the continued, responsible operation of the bridges; and

WHEREAS, consistent therewith, administration has recommended that the Commission reduce the salaries of all management and senior staff employees not covered by a bargaining unit by 10%; and

WHEREAS, the Commission deems it reasonable to provide an exception to the salary reduction for management and administrative employees who retire or resign from the Commission on or before August 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Commission recognizes the importance of balancing the Budget shortfall that is presently experienced as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Commission approves administration's recommendation to reduce the salaries of all management and senior staff employees by 10%; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission remains optimistic that the conditions surrounding the pandemic will improve, and the Commission thereby authorizes the Executive Director to revisit these salary reductions and to adjust them, on a case by case basis, as the Executive Director deems appropriate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission approves of an exception to the 10% pay reduction for management or senior staff employees that retire or resign from the Commission on or before August 1, 2020 for any eligible employee that submits a letter of resignation or retirement to the Commission on or before May 1, 2020.

Commissioner Comegno noted that he recognizes the somewhat perilous financial situation that the region and the Commission find ourselves in right now and the concerns that motivate this Resolution. Commissioner Comegno further noted that he respects very much the administrative recommendation, respects Executive Director Andl's thoughts and insights, as well as CFO Christine Nociti's, and all the folks that daily, not just weekly or monthly but daily, are working to get the information to us that they are. Commissioner Comegno stated that he is very concerned that we are, with this Resolution, taking incremental action to address this financial situation and that all of our employees have very important and essential jobs in different ways. He further noted that he is very concerned that this hits leadership and executive level folks that we rely upon day to day and for whom we need their ownership and we need them to be all hands on deck right now more than ever. Commissioner Comegno hopes that each of them,

particularly those who are on the call, know that this is a Resolution that was recommended administratively, not lightly, but made with a thought that we have a cash situation which is perilous. We have obligations obviously and with our fundamental position of safe transport across the rivers, as well as all the other responsibilities we have and that ongoing operations are a necessity and that administration is doing what it can do to get us through this. Commissioner Comegno stressed that these votes are not taken lightly, his vote that he is giving is not taken lightly, and again he is concerned that there is an impression that this is the only thing we are doing. Commissioner Comegno hopes everyone understands that we as Commissioners, under the Chairman's direction and leadership, are directing administration to get to us quickly and hopefully within the next week or so, a mitigation plan that is going to be more global and look at this financial crisis situation in a more global way; not just reduce compensation of certain folks who are very important to us. That said, with tremendous reservation, Commissioner Comegno supported this Resolution, with all his comments noted, and as a show of confidence in the Executive Director and in his colleague Commissioners.

Vice-Chairman Riggins noted that he has not been with the organization too long and that the first thing that struck him as he walked through the doors was how passionate people were about our mission, and that what we do matters. Vice-Chairman Riggins acknowledged that everything we do each day means that people can travel safely over our bridges and roads. He further noted that the Commissioners appreciate the work done to make this happen. Vice-Chairman Riggins acknowledged that we are all in this together; that we are going through a tough stretch as our region, our nation and our world are going through as well, and we are going to do what needs to be done to make sure that we do the job that we have been sent here to do. Vice-Chairman expressed his thanks to all of our team members and management teams.

Chairman Singleton acknowledged both of his fellow Commissioners who gave such heartfelt comments; stating he associates himself with their comments. Chairman Singleton further stated there is nothing more he can add as former Chairman, Commissioner Comegno, said a lot of how he thinks and feels on this; Commissioner Comegno has agonized over this as well Commissioner Riggins has agonized over this; not just as a Commissioner here but also at his own personal business dealings with similar conclusion. Chairman Singleton noted that he has found himself in this situation on a personal level and that the Commissioners do not take lightly the work that the senior staff does and their ability they need to help weather this. Chairman stated that this unfortunate situation that was not designed because of any budgetary malfeasance or any "not watching the store." Chairman stated that we find ourselves put in this situation by circumstances beyond our control; noting that we have an obligation to make sure that the solvency of this Bridge remains intact and that we need to do what is necessary to keep it moving. Chairman stressed it is our hope, that as we continue through this process, we will be able to see brighter days ahead; but unfortunately, this is an action that we as Commissioners, based on the administration's recommendation, feel that it is prudent and appropriate to take at this time.

Vice-Chairman Riggins moved to approve. Chairman Singleton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-29

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING BCBC ADMINISTRATION
TO GENERATE BUDGET MITIGATION PLAN**

WHEREAS, beginning in March, 2020 various federal and state officials began to issue directives aimed at mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Governor Murphy signed various executive orders which include restrictions on travel, business operations and other measures aimed at addressing COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Burlington County Bridge Commission (“Commission”) experienced an immediate, negative impact to its revenue collections following the circumstances evolving from COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Commission relies on revenue from toll collections to support its Operating and Capital Budget, (the “Budget”); and

WHEREAS, the Commission has closely monitored the impact of the reduced traffic on the revenue that supports the Budget, and has determined that there has been a significant shortfall in revenue realized beginning in March, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Commission recognizes the need to implement a plan to address the shortfall that is expected to increase through meaningful budget expenditure reductions to insure there are responsible levels of funding available to support the safe operation of the bridges and for the Commission’s obligation to fund debt service payments; and

WHEREAS, the administration has been instructed to evaluate cash flow requirements and identify non-essential expenditures or cost saving measures that should be implemented in order to preserve the continued, responsible operation of the bridges; and

WHEREAS, the Commission recognizes the importance of balancing the broad and significant Budget shortfall expected as result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Commission hereby directs the Executive Director to develop a plan and recommendation (“Budget Mitigation Plan and Recommendation”) that shall address cash flow requirements, debt service

obligations, and identify specific and feasible cost savings, including, as appropriate: staff reductions, salary adjustments, and/or other measures that will serve as an offset to estimated budget shortfalls for an eighteen-month period; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Executive Director is hereby authorized and directed to communicate the Budget Mitigation Recommendation to the Burlington County Bridge Commission.

Vice-Chairman Riggins moved to approve. Commissioner Comegno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Director Constance Borman reported on the following personnel issues for Commission approval:

<u>PROMOTIONS – Requires Commission Approval</u>		<u>Effective</u>
Melissa Velez	Floater	02/01/2020
Linda Alburger	Floater	02/01/2020
Robert E. Settimio	FT Police	03/22/2020

<u>RESIGNATIONS – Requires Commission Approval</u>		<u>Effective</u>
John D. Atzert	PT Tolls	04/01/2020

Chairman Singleton requested to approve the Promotions. Vice-Chairman Riggins moved to approve. Commissioner Comegno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Singleton requested to approve the resignation of John D. Atzert. Vice-Chairman Riggins moved to approve. Chairman Singleton seconded the motion.

VOTE: **Yeas - Singleton**
 Riggins
 Abstain - Comegno

OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Singleton called for any old business to come before the Commission.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Singleton called for any new business to come before the Commission.

Commissioner Comegno inquired as to any available action by way of a Cares Act Application or any effort that FEMA could provide in way of federal assistance.

Commissioner Comegno suggested addressing this possibility in the mitigation plan and noting same if there is an applicability to the Commission. Commissioner Comegno thanked all participants on the call; especially Executive Director Joseph Andl for his great leadership exhibited at this difficult and dire time and assured him that he has the support of the Commissioners.

Executive Director Joseph Andl requested permissions: 1) to obtain a Violation Enforcement System (VES) and Image-Based Tolling (IBT) solution; and 2) ratification of the Commission's policy instituted in response to COVID-19, which authorized a two-week Special Health Allowance, paid benefit, to all Commission employees.

Chairman Singleton requested to approve by block. Vice-Chairman Riggins moved to approve. Commissioner Comegno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Singleton called for any additional public comment to come before the Commission.

Chairman Singleton asked for any further business to come before the Commission. Hearing none, Vice-Chairman Riggins moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Comegno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Kathleen M. Wiseman
Secretary