

**THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE PORT OF NEW ORLEANS  
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2020**

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**A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE PORT OF NEW ORLEANS, PROPERLY NOTICED AND AUTHORIZED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCLAMATION 135 JBE 2020, CONVENED REMOTELY VIA ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE AT 1:34 P.M. ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2020.**

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**MEMBERS**

Darryl D. Berger, Chairman

**PRESENT:**

William H. Langenstein, III, Vice-Chairman

Charles H. Ponstein, Secretary-Treasurer

Tara C. Hernandez, Member

Jack C. Jensen, Jr., Member

Joseph F. Toomy, Member

Walter J. Leger, Jr., Member

**STAFF:**

B. Christian, President and Chief Executive Officer

B. Landry, Vice President, Commercial

R. Wendel, Chief Financial Officer

A. Evett, Vice President, Chief Engineer

J. Escudier, Executive Counsel

M. Scelson, General Counsel

C. Coats, Director, Real Estate

S. Gauthier, Director, Cruise

A. Pellegrin, Director, Sustainable Development

R. Aragon Dolese, Director, Marketing and Communications

J. Guidry, Director, Maintenance

M. Verderame, Director, Records

E. Pansano, Director, Internal Audit

T. Carter, Director, Procurement

J. Crist, Deputy Director, Terminal Operations

G. Palermo, Deputy General Counsel

M. Gresham, Director, External Affairs

D. Cordell, Chief Information Officer

J. Sholar, Director, Human Resources

A. Coates, Commercial

J. Swartout, Commercial

J. Ragusa, Public Affairs

C. Alfonso, Manager, Community Engagement

A. Taylor, Procurement

C. Falgoust, Procurement

J. Woodward, Sustainable Development

E. Federer, Manager, Environmental

M. Cloos, Sustainable Development

A. Madere, Manager, Records

M. Singley, Board Secretariat

Capt. M. Montroll, Harbor Police Department  
K. Chinn, Administrative Services

**GUESTS:** M. Stolzman, NOPB  
C. Kocur, NOPB  
J. Oldham, NOPB  
F. Hasbun, NOPB  
T. Wells  
J. Dunlop  
H. Chien  
M. Valenti  
W. Wachel  
L. Barback  
K. Galloway  
K. Price  
B. Adams

### **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 1:34 p.m.

### **II. Approval of Meeting Minutes for September 2020**

Chairman Berger called for a motion to approve the public meeting minutes for September 2020, as previously circulated.

Commissioner Leger moved to accept the minutes and Commissioner Hernandez seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

### **III. Action Items:**

#### **A. Acceptance of the Consolidated Financial Statements for September 2020.**

Mr. Wendel presented the consolidated financial statements for September 2020, a copy of which is made a part of these minutes. Mr. Landry provided an overview of the Board's cargo volumes and emphasized the positive upward trends for breakbulk and containers during the month of September. Mr. Stolzman gave an overview of the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad Commission for the Port of New Orleans' ("NOPB") operating volumes.

Mr. Wendel presented the operating revenues and fiscal year-to-date figures for gross revenues, labor costs, operating costs, and revenue for the Board, as well as on a consolidated basis for NOPB. He confirmed that Board breakbulk revenue was above budget for the month, while other operational revenue continues to be negatively impacted by the pandemic and, in September, significant weather disruptions.

Commissioner Toomy asked for clarification on the specific factors influencing container revenue. Mr. Landry noted significant ongoing impacts to import cargo volumes in connection with tariffs, as well as recent impacts due to several major weather events.

Commissioner Leger asked for clarification on the timing of the 2021 Fiscal Year Budget and projected revenues. Mr. Landry stated that the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Plan, adopted by the Board in June, was based on early assumptions of COVID-19 business impacts, which underestimated the duration of impacts.

Commissioner Leger inquired if the budget would be updated to reflect current predictions regarding business impacts. Mr. Wendel stated that staff are currently reassessing the budget and anticipate presenting an adjusted fiscal year plan for Board approval soon. He also noted that staff have endeavored to reduce operating expenses, while some other controllable expenses, such as maintenance projects, have been delayed.

Commissioner Langenstein moved to accept the consolidated financial statements and Commissioner Jensen seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**B. Consider Approval of a Resolution Authorizing the President and 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, long-term disability, accidental death and dismemberment, and life insurance coverages, as well as an overview of the different benefit coverages for which the Board received marketplace quotes. Mr. Wendel highlighted the plan design changes as well as the proposed cost analysis for each effective change.

The proposed coverage options for 2021 include the continuation of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana for healthcare benefits. Additionally, staff recommends continuing contracts with United Healthcare for vision and dental coverages and Aflac, Inc. for Life, AD&D and LTD coverages, both with no effective rate increases. Mr. Wendel noted the recommended cost-saving adjustments for the 2021 coverage period, including restructuring of healthcare benefits to include two (2) high-deductible and two (2) preferred provider plan options, as well as an increase in the employee cost share for family preferred provider plan from 20% to 25%. These modifications would save the Board approximately \$1.14 million in annual expenses. The proposed benefit coverages would be effective January 1, 2021.

Commissioner Toomy asked if any Employee Committee was involved in decisions related to health insurance benefits. Mr. Wendel responded that management and Human Resources staff evaluated the options and conferred to provide the proposed recommendations.

Commissioner Jensen asked if Board employees' health insurance contributions are in the same range as other state agencies. Mr. Wendel responded that the cost-share for Board employees is less than the contribution requirements for employees on state-sponsored benefit plans.

Commissioner Toomy moved to approve the resolution and Commissioner Jensen seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**C. Consider Approval of a Resolution Adopting the 2020 Port of New Orleans Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.**

Ms. Pellegrin presented and recommended approval of the resolution. The Board originally adopted the Hazard Mitigation Plan ("HMP") in 2010 and published an update in 2015. In accordance with Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA") requirements, the HMP must be updated every five (5) years in order to qualify for FEMA and other public assistance funding. The 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update ("2020 HMP Update") was authored by the Board's Planning staff and incorporates considerations reflective of the Board's alignment with NOPB. The 2020 HMP Update focuses on identifying and mitigating risks to Board infrastructure through effective planning, diverse preventative strategies, and collaborative partnerships.

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

**D. Consider Approval of a Resolution Authorizing the President and Chief Executive Officer to Enter into an Agreement with the United States Environmental Protection Agency to Receive Grant Funds for the Clean Truck Replacement Incentive Program (Clean TRIP).**

Ms. Pellegrin presented and recommended approval of the resolution. This United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") grant of \$1,240,247 ("2020 EPA Grant") is the fourth and largest grant received by the Board to fund the Clean Truck Replacement Incentive Program ("Clean TRIP"). Administered by Board staff, Clean TRIP provides matching funds for up to 50% of the cost, not to exceed \$35,000 per truck, of replacing older model drayage trucks with newer, cleaner-engine trucks. Since its inception in 2016, Clean TRIP has helped small, local businesses replace 58 trucks, reducing local air pollutants by over 90%. The new grant period is anticipated to be effective November 1, 2020 through October 31, 2023. The 2020 EPA Grant will support a minimum of 34 additional truck replacements, up to an estimated 42 total.

Commissioner Jensen reinforced the importance and the benefits of the Clean TRIP program for the local trucking community and thanked staff for promoting the continuation of the program.

Commissioner Toomy praised the Sustainable Development team for their ongoing focus to align the Board's commitment to environmental initiatives.

Commissioner Toomy moved to approve the resolution and Commissioner Jensen seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

#### **IV. Report by the President and Chief Executive Officer**

Ms. Christian thanked Mr. Wendel and Mr. Landry for their encouraging financial updates in the midst of the pandemic and a very active hurricane season. She confirmed the recent announcement hailing the anticipated return of Disney Cruise Line to New Orleans in 2021, with itineraries released for 2022 as well. Additionally, staff are working closely with cruise industry partners to strategize the resumption of cruise business as soon as feasibly possible.

Ms. Christian welcomed Gulf Stream Marine as a new tenant at the Board's Alabo Street Wharf and expressed her enthusiasm about working in partnership with a company so highly respected in the breakbulk and heavy-lift cargo services.

Ms. Christian noted that Harbor Police Chief Robert Hecker was honored with the Global Maritime Ministries' 2020 *Rev. John P. Vandercook Service Award* for his humanitarian efforts within the maritime community. She celebrated Chief Hecker's 25-year career with the Harbor Police Department and congratulated him for such a well-deserved award.

Chairman Berger praised the efficiency of conducting virtual Board meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic and noted that the Board will continue to assess health and safety considerations on an ongoing basis to determine the platform of future meetings.

#### **V. Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Berger called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Langenstein so moved and Commissioner Jensen seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY** and Chairman Berger adjourned the meeting at 2:13 p.m.