

MARYLAND TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
BOARD MEETING  
THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2015  
881 OCEANIC DRIVE, ANNAPOLIS, MD 21409

OPEN SESSION

Pete K. Rahn, Chairman

MEMBERS ATTENDING:

P. Jack Basso  
Rev. Dr. William C. Calhoun, Sr.  
Katrina J. Dennis, Esq.  
W. Lee Gaines, Jr.  
Mary Beyer Halsey  
William K. Hellmann  
Arthur Hock  
Michael Whitson

STAFF ATTENDING:

David Chapin  
Trudy Edwards  
Thomas Gugel  
Gordon Garrettson  
Bruce Gartner  
Chantelle Greene  
Jaclyn Hartman  
Derek Jones  
Colonel Mike Kundrat  
Kelly Melhem  
Kimberly Millender, Esq.  
Will Pines  
Deborah Sharpless  
Cheryl Sparks  
Dan Williams

OTHERS ATTENDING:

Ari Ashe – WTOP Radio	John Rydell – WBFF TV
Brad Bell – WJLA TV	Senator John R. Salling – District 6
John Fiastro – Senator Hershey’s District 36	Bryan Sears – Daily Record
Duane Keenan – Red Maryland	Jack Shaum – Bay Times
Ara Laughlin – CTV – Prince George’s County	Kelly Sisk – VP MD Prof. Driving School Assoc.
Thomas Lofland – City of Havre de Grace	Cam Thompson – WNEW Radio
Delegate Bob Long – District 6	Tom Truant – WJZ TV
Ed McDonald – Chief of Staff, MDOT	Patricia Villone – CTV News
Bridget McGealy – WBAL TV	Ovetta Wiggins – Washington Post
Lowell Melser – WBAL TV	Brian Witte – Associated Press
Kevin Rector – Baltimore Sun	Unidentified Citizen

At 8:18 a.m., Chairman Pete K. Rahn called the Special Public Meeting of the Maryland Transportation Authority (“MDTA”) Board to order. The Chairman thanked the Members for attending this special meeting and indicated that the information to be considered was an important decision for the Board.

Executive Director Bruce Gartner reviewed the four goals that were approved by the Board at the March 26, 2015 Board meeting, which goals were used to guide the development of the toll reduction recommendations. Staff then presented the Chairman and Members information regarding the current financial forecast; MDTA’s financial position with toll and budget reductions, toll reduction recommendations; impacts to operating and capital budgets and debt service; public communications; and the proposed toll rates to be set by the Executive Director for the ICC and ETLs.

The Chairman and Members reviewed and discussed the materials presented by staff. The Members stated that staff has been conservative in developing the budget, revenue projections and spend rates, which has aided the fiscal health of the MDTA. Staff emphasized that proposed budget reductions were to “right size” the budget without any loss of services to the public. The Members expressed that the reductions to the capital budget were prudent and MDTA continues to make a considerable investment into its assets, including keeping major system preservation projects moving forward.

The Members raised questions about the impact of the reductions to the Nice Bridge project. In particular, Member Whitson discussed his concerns about the impact of the reductions, the speed with which the Board was asked to vote on the toll reduction recommendations, and the process being followed to review and approve the reductions. The Members then inquired as to the extent of reductions to the Nice Bridge and whether it was possible to shift monies in the budget in order to maintain funding for the project.

Member Arthur Hock expressed concerns about the Bay Bridge reductions recognizing that the Bridge is a vital asset to the Eastern Shore. Member Hock asked if the Board would be going into closed session and the Chairman indicated that no closed session would be held. Member Hock then asked the Chairman and Members if the Board could vote on each recommendation individually. The Chairman and Members concurred.

The Chairman and Members then reviewed and voted on each recommendation as follows:

**Recommendation One – Reduce the toll rate on the Bay Bridge to \$4.00 for 2-axle vehicles and associated reductions for all other vehicle classes, commuter and shoppers’ plans. The E-ZPass<sup>®</sup> commuter rate would decrease from \$2.10 to \$1.40 and shoppers’ from \$3.00 to \$2.00.**

Upon motion by Member P. Jack Basso and seconded by Member Rev. Dr. William C. Calhoun, Members Mary Beyer Halsey, William Hellmann, Katrina Dennis, Esq., and W. Lee Gaines, Jr. voted in favor of the recommendation and Members Mike Whitson and Arthur Hock voted against the recommendation.

**Recommendation Two** – Increase the Maryland *E-ZPass* discount from ten percent (10%) to thirty-seven point five percent (37.5%) at the Bay Bridge, resulting in the toll decreasing from \$5.40 to \$2.50 per round trip.

Upon motion by Member Basso and seconded by Member Halsey, Members Calhoun, Hellmann, Dennis and Gaines voted in favor of the recommendation, and Members Whitson and Hock voted against the recommendation.

**Recommendation Three** – Increase the *E-ZPass* Maryland discount from ten percent (10%) to twenty-five percent (25%) for the Baltimore Harbor (I-895) and Fort McHenry (I-95) tunnels, the Francis Scott Key Bridge (I-695), the Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge (US 301), the Thomas J. Hatem Memorial Bridge (US 40) and the John F. Kennedy Memorial Highway (I-95), resulting in the Harbor Crossings tolls decreasing to \$3.00 per trip, the Nice Bridge to \$4.50 per round trip, and I-95 and Hatem Bridge to \$6.00 per round trip.

Upon motion by Member Hellmann and seconded by Member Dennis, Members Basso, Calhoun, Halsey, Gaines voted in favor of the recommendation, and Members Whitson and Hock voted against the recommendation.

**Recommendation Four** – Eliminating the *E-ZPass* Maryland monthly \$1.50 account fee for Maryland residents.

Upon motion by Member Hellmann and seconded by Member Calhoun, the Members unanimously approved the recommendation.

**Recommendation Five** – Reduce the lower end of the two-axle per-mile the Intercounty Connector (ICC)/MD200 and I-95 ETL mileage rate range by \$.03 as well as modify the 3+ axle multipliers to the multipliers used on all other MDTA facilities and utilize a standard rounding rule to the penny.

Upon motion by Member Dennis and seconded by Member Basso, the Members unanimously approved the recommendation.

**Recommendation Six** – Establish a 30% discount at the Hatem Bridge for three- and four-axle vehicles with *E-ZPass* Maryland – three-axle toll drops from \$16.00 to \$11.20, while four-axle toll drops from \$24.00 to \$16.80.

Upon motion by Member Halsey and seconded by Member Hock, the Members unanimously approved the recommendation.

**Recommendation Seven** – Increase *E-ZPass* Maryland supplemental rebate program for vehicles with five or more axles by five percentage points per trip level.

Upon motion by Member Dennis and seconded by Member Hellmann, the Members unanimously approved the recommendation.

**Recommendation Eight** – EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2016 – Decrease toll rates by \$2.00 per axle for vehicles with three or more axles using the Childs Street and I-695 turnaround exits as the Baltimore Harbor Tunnel and Key Bridge respectively.

Upon motion by Member Hock and seconded by Member Halsey, the Members unanimously approved the recommendation.

Based on the concerns expressed by the Board, the Chairman asked staff to come back to the Board in June with a financial forecast and capital program that would allow continued exploration of the Nice Bridge Replacement Project.

There being no further business, the meeting of the MDTA Board was adjourned by general consensus at 10:21 a.m.

The next MDTA Board Meeting will be held on May 28, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. at the Point Breeze Headquarters, 2310 Broening Highway, Baltimore, Maryland 21224.

APPROVED AND CONCURRED IN:

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Jim Ports, Jr., Acting Chair