



# Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation

## Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 6, 2018 (2:00 p.m.)

Meeting Held Via Teleconference

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**PRESENT** David McMillan (Advisory Board Chairperson), William Mielke (Advisory Board Member), Dr. Arthur Sulzer (Advisory Board Member), Nancy Alcalde (Director of Congressional and Public Relations), Chris Guimond (Director of Lock Operations and Marine Services), Carrie Lavigne (Chief Counsel), Tom Lavigne (Associate Administrator), Kevin O'Malley (Director of Budget and Economic Development), Adam Schlicht (Great Lakes Regional Representative), and Wayne Williams (Chief of Staff) were present. Deputy Administrator Craig Middlebrook was absent from the meeting. Chelsea Champlin (Program Support Specialist) was also in attendance. Mr. McMillan chaired the meeting and Ms. Champlin recorded the minutes.

### I. CALL TO ORDER

In his capacity as Board Chairperson, David McMillan welcomed all participants to the Advisory Board meeting and, noting the presence of quorum and the absence of Deputy Administrator Craig Middlebrook, called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

### II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On a motion by Mr. Mielke and seconded by Dr. Sulzer, the Board approved the minutes for the March 19, 2018 Advisory Board meeting. Without objection, the motion passed unanimously, and the March 2018 meeting minutes were approved.

### III. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Associate Administrator Tom Lavigne provided a quarterly update to the Advisory Board membership, on behalf of Deputy Administrator Middlebrook, including a general overview of SLSDC activities following the previous Advisory Board meeting in March 2018:

- Mr. Lavigne remarked on the SLSDC's Annual Report and its cover photo, which displayed Canada Steamship Line's *St-Laurent*, the first ship of the previous navigation season. The ship boasts a colorful mural which was commissioned by CSL as a tribute to Canada's 150th anniversary and the 375th anniversary of the City of Montreal.
- He went on to announce personnel changes, including the selection of Adam Schlicht as the upcoming Port Director for Milwaukee and the selection of Michael Howard as the new Executive Officer for the SLSDC in Massena.
- He reported that he and Deputy Administrator Middlebrook recently met with the SLSMC senior staff and Board of Directors. He shared that the SLSMC board chair, Tim Dool, expressed an interest in meeting with the SLSDC Advisory Board in the near future.



- He also provided brief highlights across all business areas:
  - On March 29, the Seaway opened for navigation.
  - On May 24, the Employee Recognition, Fallen Workers, and Community Day event was held in conjunction with the opening of the Visitor’s Center in Massena. He remarked that the event was well attended and went off very well.
  - The SLSDC has started meeting with its union leadership regarding hands-free mooring (HFM) implementation at the U.S. locks.
  - The SLSDC’s FY 2018 enacted appropriation came in at \$40 million.
  - The OIG has begun its work for the FY 2018 SLSDC financial statements audit.
  - This year’s winners of the SLSDC Pacesetter Awards have been announced.
  - The updated Great Lakes Seaway System economic impact study is nearly complete.
  - HFM work is ongoing at both locks, for completion at Eisenhower in 2018 and at Snell in 2019.
  - Construction on the new ice class tugboat has commenced.
- Mr. Mielke asked who would cover the status of the Seaway commercialization study. Mr. O’Malley responded that he would report out on it.

#### IV. QUARTERLY UPDATES

Chris Guimond provided an update on Seaway Operations, starting with accomplishments for the previous quarter. The opening of the 60<sup>th</sup> season and the buoy commissioning run went smoothly with mild conditions. Following the *Federal Biscay* event, multiple divisions convened to respond to the Fednav “post mortem” report. The division is preparing for operational changes for Hands Free Mooring implementation, including documentation for presentation to AFGE on modified operational procedures, and working with engineering to modify lock wall markings for vessel positioning. Lastly, Ryan Chatland has reviewed and completed revisions to Quality Assurance Program to meet compliance with ISO 9001-2015 standard.

Coming challenges include the continuation of HFM implementation, restructuring lock crew personnel and training of personnel, filling personnel vacancies, completing the Waterways Analysis Management Study (WAMS), and mitigating BWWG coverage for USCG. Finally, Mr. Guimond provided an outlook on the next 90 days. He reported in August 2018 the Quality Assurance ISO re-certification to 9001-2015 Standard will take place and SLSDC will host the 2018 Emergency Response and Boom Deployment Exercise. Ongoing over the summer, repairs will be made to the Gatelifter and the Lt 199 base, which has been postponed twice.

- Mr. Mielke asked if the HFM technology would allow for any staff reductions. Mr. Guimond replied that there would not be a decrease, and the same 32 positions on the lock wall would be reorganized for different purposes. Mr. Lavigne added that the positions advertised are less specified positions so individuals can have more varied roles. He does not see cutting staff any time soon.
- Mr. McMillan asked if Mr. Guimond felt it difficult to fill roles as the labor market tightens. Mr. Guimond responded that the geographic area of Massena, N.Y. makes it harder to fill the roles, not the positions themselves.



Kevin O'Malley provided an update on the budget. Since the previous Board meeting, the FY 2018 omnibus bill passed with \$40 million for the SLSDC. He commented that it affirmed Congress's support for the agency in general and specifically the ARP. Mr. McMillan interjected to congratulate the SLSDC leadership team, remarking that this budget passage was a "big deal." Mr. O'Malley agreed and shared his thanks for the Congressional support. For the FY 2019 President's Budget request of \$28.37 million, the House came back to SLSDC with \$40 million. The bill was expected to receive markup by the Senate the following day.

Mr. O'Malley covered current year financial highlights and anticipated spending, with which SLSDC expects to meet its budget goals. He also gave an outlook on the next 90 days, and reported that the FY 2020 request will be going to the Secretary of Transportation on June 11. He commented that this budget is the first in which the Secretary could have real input and impact, and that the SLSDC fits well into the Secretary's priorities of infrastructure, safety, innovation, and focusing on rural America. He is hopeful that the replacement of the Eisenhower Lock Visitors' Center can be included as part of the FY 2019 or FY 2020 budget. Two other items of note are the upcoming labor relations / CBA negotiations, as well as the Seaway commercialization feasibility study, which is still on hold. Lastly, he reported that this year's OIG's financial statements audit has begun with an entrance conference in May and additional trips coming in July and October.

- Mr. Mielke asked about the increase in appropriated funds, plans to use them, and if there are any high priority items. Mr. O'Malley responded that the SLSDC would like to fully fund the *Robinson Bay* tugboat, build the new visitors' center, and complete other deferred or reduced ARP projects including dredging and concrete rehabilitation.

Mr. O'Malley also provided the Board with an update on Trade and Economic Development, beginning with the announcement of Adam Schlicht's impending departure to the Port of Milwaukee as its new Director. He commented that Mr. Schlicht would be greatly missed, and any next steps for his replacement have yet to be determined. He shared a recent tweet by Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur, who applauded the SLSDC and recommended contacting the SLSDC Trade Development team to take advantage of their expertise and support.

Adam Schlicht discussed efforts of the Trade and Economic development, and "getting the good word out" about the Seaway. He commented briefly on the cargo numbers for the month of May, and expects the numbers for June to be even more successful. Mr. O'Malley interjected to point out that the "through May" numbers are only down 3.7 percent. Mr. Schlicht listed some upcoming events, including presentations of the six Pacesetter awards, the release of the Great Lakes Seaway System economic impact study, and the completion of the Geographix map, and the American Great Lakes Ports Association (AGLPA) meeting in July. He added a personal note of thanks to the Board for their support during his transition to the role of Port Director at the Port of Milwaukee.

Associate Administrator Tom Lavigne updated the Board on the Asset Renewal Program (ARP). For the HFM project, work continues for the design and implementation at Snell Lock. A project to install and program a data logging system to provide historical trending for the lock control status systems at both locks is approximately 65 percent complete. The Engineering Division is reviewing the results of an analysis by the valve manufacturer of the knife gate thickness for



valves for the ice flushing system. Construction has begun on the new ice class tugboat, vessel self-spotting is on hold pending Canadian testing, and renovations were completed on the Eisenhower Lock Visitors' Center. Mr. Lavigne complimented the hard work, cost-efficiency, and results of the team who completed the renovations. Additional maintenance has been performed on the stoplogs, tunnel and lock wall gratings, and installation of two Osprey nesting platforms. Lastly, one of the all-season buoys was severely damaged over the winter season, and the steel appear to be the choice for the future.

Mr. Lavigne discussed current challenges and the upcoming 90 days, commenting that the remaining issues around the ice flushing system at Snell Lock need to be resolved. He expects to keep working on the ongoing projects he discussed, and he plans to hire a contractor to do on-site construction period services and inspections at Gulf Island shipyard.

- Mr. Mielke asked about the ice flushing system and whether the SLSDC is under a "warranty." Mr. Lavigne replied that the SLSDC has not accepted the project nor paid the final billing, and the issue lies between the contractor who did the job and the valve manufacturer. The completed analysis provided more information, but a decision to move forward has not been made.
- Dr. Sulzer asked what the tentative launch and on-station date is for the new tugboat to replace the *Robinson Bay* tugboat in Massena. Mr. Lavigne replied that the date has not changed, with delivery expected in mid-July of 2019.

Ms. Alcalde gave an update on Congressional and Public Relations. She started out by saying that her team, shark&minnow (public relations contractor), and the Secretary's office have tried to get press coverage of most of the events highlighted in today's Board meeting. She reported on an interview by Associate Administrator Tom Lavigne about the season's opening with a local news outlet, and a Congressional hearing in which Deputy Administrator Craig Middlebrook testified before the Senate Commerce Committee. Senator Gary Peters specifically requested a witness from the SLSDC, which provided an opportunity to talk about ARP, trade and economic development, and U.S. Great Lakes/Seaway pilotage.

Separately, Ms. Alcalde's team has written several press releases for the Pacesetter awards, the Visitors' Center opening, and the new osprey pole installation. She commented that the Employee/Community Day/Worker's Memorial/Visitors' Center opening was a great event which had participation from the Mayor's office, the town supervisor, and tribal representatives. The publications continue to be rolled out, including the Seaway Soundings and Seaway Compass newsletters, as well as this year's Annual Report.

Ms. Alcalde explained current challenges in her division, noting that the biggest one is the rollout of the Great Lakes Seaway System economic impact study in July, the media involvement that it will entail, and engagement with the DOT Secretary's office. Looking ahead, the first of the monthly tonnage statistics press releases is expected this month, her team is drafting public educational information pieces with the Great Lakes Seaway Partnership team and working on press coverage for SLSDC Pacesetter Award presentations. Lastly, she shared that SLSDC is working together with a Watertown Daily Times reporter, PBS, and the SLSMC on a television production piece about transiting the Seaway and the "human element."



## **V. OLD AND NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman McMillan noted the time and date of the next quarterly Advisory Board meeting, to be held on Monday, July 23, 2018 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. (EST) via teleconference. He also mentioned that members of the Board and the SLSDC would be convening for the AGLPA meeting in Erie.

Dr. Sulzer discussed his plans to discuss and promote maritime education during sessions at the AGLPA meeting.

## **VI. CLOSING DISCUSSION AND ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:13 p.m., with a motion to adjourn from Mr. Mielke and seconded by Chairman McMillan.

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