



Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation

Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

September 28, 2021

Meeting Held via Teleconference

PRESENT

David McMillan (Advisory Board Chairperson), William Mielke (Advisory Board Member), Dr. Arthur Sulzer (Advisory Board Member), Craig H. Middlebrook (Deputy Administrator), Martin Welles (Executive Officer), Carrie Lavigne (Chief Counsel), Kevin O'Malley (Strategic Advisor for Financial and Resource Management), Rebecca Yackley (Director of Trade and Economic Development), Nancy Alcalde (Director of Congressional and Public Relations), Christopher Guimond (Director of Lock Operations and Marine Services), Jeffrey Scharf (Director of Maintenance and Engineering), Lisa Healy (Director of Financial Management/CFO), Elizabeth Fox (Policy and Program Specialist).

CALL TO ORDER

In his capacity as Board Chairperson, David McMillan welcomed all participants to the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (GLS) Advisory Board meeting, noting the presence of quorum, he called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. (Eastern).

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Board member Dr. Arthur Sulzer, which was seconded by Board member William Mielke, the Board approved the minutes without objection, the motion passed, and the minutes for the June 24, 2021 meeting were approved as drafted.

III. DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

- Deputy Administrator Craig Middlebrook reported on how COVID-19 and the Delta variant have impacted Seaway operations. He noted that the Delta variant has affected St. Lawrence County, which is experiencing a dramatic rise in positive COVID cases. In terms of the President's recent vaccine mandate, Mr. Middlebrook noted that all Federal employees must be fully vaccinated by November 22, 2021. He added that the Department is taking a firm stand on requiring and enforcing the vaccine mandate. He mentioned that the Department is putting together a review team to provide guidance on accommodations for employees who file for an exemption and that the Department will review any and all exemption requests. Mr. Middlebrook also said that he speaks regularly with GLS union officials to update them on Federal and Departmental guidance and discuss COVID issues.
- Mr. Middlebrook noted that the recruitment for a new GLS Associate Administrator is proceeding and he expects to receive a list of candidates from the Department's human resources office shortly. He also said he has not received notice from the Department's political leadership of an appointee for a new GLS Administrator.



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- Mr. Middlebrook reported that he testified in front of the House Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment on the GLS's FY 2022 budget request in July, and he testified before OMB examiners on the GLS FY 2023 request on September 27, 2021.
- Finally, Mr. Middlebrook provided updates on several GLS initiatives, including the new Eisenhower Lock Visitors' Center, U.S.-Canada border restrictions and the impact on Seaway International Bridge toll revenues, and Lake Ontario/St. Lawrence River water levels.

IV. QUARTERLY UPDATES

- Rebecca Yackley, Director of Office of Trade and Economic Development, reported on the American Great Lakes Ports Association (AGLPA) annual meeting that she and her staff attended in Burns Harbor, Ind. They presented the GLS's new trade and economic development strategic plan and discussed Great Lakes cruising in 2022/2023 to AGLPA members. She also reported on the upcoming SeaTrade cruise conference in Miami and the Antwerp XL Breakbulk conference in Europe in December.
- Christopher Guimond, Director of Lock Operations and Marine Services, reported that the *GRASSE RIVER* gatelifter is back in Massena after spending the past four years in Montreal. In terms of workplace safety, Mr. Guimond reported that this summer the Lock Operations division focused on training all staff on rescue skiffs. He also reported that the GLS participated in a local boom deployment exercise in late August with other Federal, state, and local response agencies. Mr. Guimond also provided updates on the GLS's foreign-flag inspection program, tugboat training, and all-season buoys.
- Jeffrey Scharf, Director of Engineering and Maintenance, reported that the dredging in the Grasse River was completed and GLS now has achieved navigational depth for the *SEAWAY GUARDIAN* tugboat from the St. Lawrence River to Snug Harbor. He said construction of the *SEAWAY TRIDENT* tugboat is ongoing and delivery of the new tug is anticipated in early 2022. He also reported that the GLS is just about finished with the public exhibit plans for the new Eisenhower Lock Visitors' Center and is moving forward on wrapping up the revised construction documents and continuing with bid solicitations. Finally, Mr. Scharf reported that the GLS recently awarded two contracts for major studies on the radio communication systems and a facilities master plan.
- Kevin O'Malley, Strategic Advisor for Financial and Resource Management, noted that GLS is wrapping up the financials for FY 2021 and is working with the OIG on the FY 2021 financial statements audit. In terms of FY 2022 funding, Mr. O'Malley reported that a Continuing Resolution is expected for the first few months of the fiscal year. For FY 2023, the GLS recently submitted its funding request to OMB. Mr. O'Malley also reported on Seaway International Bridge funding, GLS performance metrics, and the completion of GLS reports to Congress on infrastructure and trade development.



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- Nancy Alcalde, Director of Congressional and Public Relations, reported that she continues to distribute regular publications – the quarterly *Seaway Compass* for stakeholders and the monthly *Seaway Soundings* for GLS employees. She noted that her staff is also working with the GLS Office Trade and Economic Development to develop promotional materials and ensure placement in various trade publications. Ms. Alcalde also provided updates on Eisenhower Lock Visitors' Center operations in 2021, GLS Pacesetter Award recipients, collaboration with the Great Lakes Seaway Partnership on short educational films, and on-going work for the new Visitors' Center exhibits.

V. OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Middlebrook reminded the group of the need to schedule dates for Advisory Board meetings.

VI. CLOSING DISCUSSION AND ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:41 p.m. (Eastern), with a motion to adjourn from Mr. Mielke and seconded by Dr. Sulzer.

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