



Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation

Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

May 24, 2022

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), Jeffrey Scharf (Acting Associate Administrator and Director of Maintenance and Engineering), Carrie Lavigne (Chief Counsel), Martin Welles (Executive Officer), Elizabeth Fox (Director of Congressional and Public Relations), Chris Guimond (Director of Lock Operations and Marine Services), Lisa Healy (CFO and Director of Financial Management), and Rebecca Yackley (Director of Trade and Economic Development).

I. 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 2:04 p.m. (Eastern).

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Board member Mr. William Mielke, which was seconded by Board member Dr. Arthur Sulzer, the Board approved the minutes without objection, the motion passed, and the minutes from the March 24, 2022, meeting were approved as drafted.

III. DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

- Deputy Administrator Craig Middlebrook began the meeting on a very somber and sad note, by acknowledging that long-time GLS employee Kyle Savage, and his wife, Charlie, passed away unexpectedly on May 21. Craig reported that Kyle had worked for the GLS for almost 20 years, was respected and loved by everyone he worked with, and was well known and beloved throughout the Department. He noted that these tragic deaths have hit everyone at the GLS very hard, and the organization is still grieving this terrible loss. Kyle and Charlie leave behind two amazing sons – Kyle, Jr., and Knico.
- Mr. Middlebrook reported that an Associate Administrator has been selected and he will inform the Board members of the selection as soon as the announcement is made. He also added that the Department has begun the interview process of potential candidates for a new GLS Administrator.
- Deputy Administrator Middlebrook also provided short summaries on the 2022 navigation season, the GLS's FY 2022 enacted appropriations that included authorization for providing funding for the continued operations of the Seaway International Bridge, and the on-going development of the Seaway's Voyage Information System (VIS) project to modernize the Seaway's Vessel Traffic Management System.



IV. QUARTERLY UPDATES

- Mr. Middlebrook began the quarterly updates by briefing the Board on water levels. He reported that water levels on Lake Ontario are higher this year than 2021 (43 cm on Lake Ontario or about 17 inches), but they are still significantly lower than in 2019 and 2017. Currently, there has been no impact to commercial trade on the Seaway.
- Mr. Middlebrook stated that the GLS continues to aggressively address what it feels is the International Joint Commission's (IJC) attempts to alter the oversight and implementation of Plan 2014 to the detriment of the GLS's authorities and the rights and interests of commercial navigation. He reported that he testified at the April biannual meeting between the IJC and the U.S. and Canadian Governments and reiterated that the IJC is methodically working to ensure a "balancing of the interests" test to determine water outflows in the future. He said that this approach is not consistent with the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty and the Plan 2014 water regulation plan that was implemented in 2017. This will come to a head when we find ourselves in another water level crisis moment, either at high or low water. Craig mentioned that he and Terry Bowles along with staff, met with the U.S. and Canadian IJC Chairs and representatives of the State Department and Global Affairs Canada. He said minimal progress was made, but the GLS and Canadian SLSMC remain committed to staying engaged with the IJC to ensure an appropriate and satisfactory outcome. Mr. Middlebrook also noted that President Biden recently nominated Gerald Acker to become the new U.S. Chair of the IJC. Mr. Acker is a lawyer in Michigan specializing in dispute resolution.
- Finally, Mr. Middlebrook mentioned a recent scientific published paper on the efficacy of the Seaway's ballast water inspection program. The paper, entitled "Vector control reduces the rate of species invasion in the world's largest freshwater ecosystem", was published by Dr. Anthony Ricciardi and R. Hugh MacIsaac, two of the most prominent biologists working in the field of aquatic invasive species and ballast water. Both have been involved in ballast water issues in the Great Lakes Seaway System for many years. The research conducted and paper presented substantiate the Seaway's regulatory and inspection efforts as directly responsible for a dramatic reduction in the invasion rate through the Seaway. Among their findings is this statement: "This case is an encouraging example of a binational response to a transboundary problem, whose apparent success was achieved through rigorous application of an evidence-based, operationally feasible management solution involving participation by governments, the shipping industry, and academia from both countries."
- Chris Guimond, Director of Lock Operations and Marine Services, reported on the GLS's spring buoy run, which was completed in eight days, highlighted recent hirings in the division, and provided an update on the Seaway Enhanced Ship Inspection program for foreign-flagged commercial vessels.



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- Jeffrey Scharf, Acting Associate Administrator and Director of Engineering and Maintenance, reported that he expects delivery of the new *Seaway Trident* tugboat in August based on the current construction schedule. Mr. Scharf also reported on a successful finish to the winter work projects at the two U.S. locks. Mr. Scharf mentioned that the current challenges in the division include the construction and delivery of the *Seaway Trident* tugboat and the recruitment of a civil engineer. He reported that recent hires include a mechanical engineer, facilities planner, and crane operator.
- Lisa Healy, CFO/Director of Financial Management, reported on the status of the GLS's budget and spending, acquisitions, staffing in her division, and the on-going FY 2022 financial statements audit conducted by the Department's Office of the Inspector General.
- Rebecca Yackley, Director of Trade and Economic Development provided an update on recent marketing and economic development activities. She reported on the GLS's attendance and participation at SeaTrade Transportation Go Conference in March and the Breakbulk Americas Conference in April. She also discussed the GLS's plans to attend and exhibit at the Posidonia Trade Show in Athens, Greece, in June. She also spoke about Great Lakes/Seaway cruising, noting that Viking recently made its maiden voyage into the Great Lakes this year.
- Elizabeth Fox, Director of Congressional and Public Relations, reported that her office had produced and distributed the quarterly newsletter *Seaway Compass*, sharing the latest information about the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway System. Her office also produced and distributed the January-April issues of the monthly *Seaway Soundings* employee newsletter, completed the printing and distribution of the GLS's FY 2021 annual report, and produced and distributed press releases on the opening of the Seaway's 2022 navigation season. Additionally, Ms. Fox reported on her office's work on the Seaway's 2022 opening ceremony, coordination of the 2021 GLS Port Pacesetter Awards, and implementing the activities of the Great Lakes Seaway Partnership. She also mentioned her work on Departmental issues related to Covid-19 response and recovery, climate change, safety, international policy, supply chain, equity, and other policy areas, as needed.

V. OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Martin Welles, Executive Officer, briefly discussed details for the September 6, 2022, Advisory Board meeting at DOT Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

VI. CLOSING DISCUSSION AND ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:34 p.m. (Eastern), with a motion to adjourn from Mr. McMillan and seconded by Mr. Mielke.

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