



Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation

Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

November 17, 2020

Meeting Held via Teleconference

PRESENT

David McMillan (Advisory Board Chairperson), William Mielke (Advisory Board Member), Dr. Arthur Sulzer (Advisory Board Member), Craig Middlebrook (Deputy Administrator), Martin Welles (Executive Officer), Gary Croot (Associate Administrator), Kevin O'Malley (Budget Officer/ CIO), Rebecca Yackley (Director of Trade and Economic Development), Nancy Alcalde (Director of Congressional and Public Relations), Nancy Scott (CFO/Director of Finance), Christopher Guimond (Director of Lock Operations and Marine Services), Carrie Lavigne (Chief Counsel), Jeffrey Scharf (Director of Maintenance and Engineering), and invited guest speaker Dr. John Martin (Martin Associates)

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion by Board member William Mielke, the Board approved the minutes without objection, the motion passed, and the minutes for September 24, 2020 were approved as drafted.

III. DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Deputy Administrator Craig Middlebrook formally introduced Dr. John Martin, an internationally recognized transportation economist with Martin Associates. Dr. Martin provided a detailed presentation to the Board and meeting attendees titled, "Tale of Two Port Ranges and Their Challenges," that looked at West Coast and Great Lakes commercial maritime transportation. Dr. Martin accepted questions during the presentation and provided answers.

Following Dr. Martin's presentation, Mr. Middlebrook spoke on how the SLSDC continues to operate during the pandemic. He noted that the SLSDC has not had a positive COVID case to date and reported that three Massena employees in the vulnerable category are on weather and safety leave. Mr. Middlebrook also talked about his concerns for Massena staff due to the increase of positive cases of COVID locally and nationally. He stated that the Corporation is vigilant in trying to reduce the risk of transmission in Massena.

Mr. Middlebrook also reported on a personnel transition in the SLSDC's Washington office. He introduced Martin Welles, who will replace the Chief of Staff as Executive Officer and provided some background information on Mr. Welles. He also announced that SLSDC CFO Nancy Scott would retire at the end of the year and commended her good work over the years.



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Lastly, Mr. Middlebrook provided the Board with an update on water levels. He reported there had been no major flooding on Lake America or in the St. Lawrence River this year. He noted that Lake America was only two inches above average, and almost 18 inches below where it was the same time last year, and with these conditions the U.S. and Canadian Seaway Corporations can announce the closing of the Seaway.

IV. QUARTERLY UPDATES

- Associate Administrator Gary Croot briefly discussed his concerns about the pandemic and the increases of positive COVID cases both locally and nationally. He reported that Massena is trying to keep up to date with county and state guidelines. They are constantly re-evaluating plans and terms on what to do in the event they need to quarantine some folks as a result of contact tracing. Mr. Croot spoke about his concern with adjusting winter work schedules if there is a significant event. He stated that everybody is brainstorming trying to figure out the best way to move forward.
- Chris Guimond, Director of Operations and Marine Services, reported one employee still out on weather and safety leave in the Operations division. He also reported that two handlers had transferred out of Operations and replacements have been picked for those positions and will be boarding after their background checks are in place. He also briefly discussed ballast water exams and tug training. Mr. Guimond noted that five individuals had participated in training. He also stated that the SLSDC will be using the *Robinson Bay* for decommissioning buoys this year and will use Randy Gilmer as our Master. He said the crew is fairly green, so extra caution and safety is going to be key. Mr. Guimond also noted that they had been preparing everyone for emergencies throughout the year, riding the vessels, and conducting drills getting set for the run. Finally, he gave a brief report on the Marine Services Division, noting that he is reviewing applications for the master and deputy mater positions.
- Kevin O'Malley, Budget Officer and CIO, spoke briefly about the FY 2021 continuing resolution and provided an overview on the House and Senate Seaway appropriations bills. Kevin reported that there is quite a differential between the House mark (\$40 million) and the Senate mark (\$30.7 million). Mr. O'Malley noted that the Senate came up with a number that matches the President's budget request, whereas the House mark included some additional infrastructure and trade and economic development funding.
- Jeff Scharf, Director of Engineering and Maintenance, reported that the intermediate pool dredging contract had been awarded and the contractor has prepped the spoil site near Snell Lock. He stated that while enroute to Massena, the contractor experienced some weather complications trying to cross Lake America. Mr. Scharf also reported on the lock diffuser repair replacement project at Eisenhower Lock and he and his team have received and evaluated proposals and are anticipating making an award for that work soon. Jeff concluded his update by discussing the Snell Lock ice flushing system, Grasse



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River dredging, and his team's preparation for the closing of the navigation season and the start of winter work.

- Nancy Scott, Director of Finance/CFO, reported that the SLSDC received its 57th consecutive unqualified (clean) financial statements audit for FY 2020 in November with no recommendations and no findings. Ms. Scott also confirmed that she is retiring on January 1, 2021.
- Nancy Alcalde, Director of Congressional and Public Relations, reported that the *Seaway Compass* and the *Seaway Soundings* newsletters had been recently completed and distributed and the Corporation has been receiving rave reviews. Ms. Alcalde also reported that the SLSDC hosted a film crew in Massena that is producing an agricultural promotional video for the Great Lakes Seaway Partnership (GLSP). She also noted that her office is distributing monthly Seaway tonnage statistics and press releases. Finally, Ms. Alcalde noted that she has heard back from the New York State Museum in Albany, and they are interested in curating the Seaway exhibit and are most interested in a number of Seaway and SLSDC artifacts. Ms. Alcalde will continue to work with the museum on the Seaway exhibit.
- Rebecca Yackley, Director of Trade and Economic Development, reminded the group of the kickoff for the annual Highway H₂O Conference (virtually) and provided instructions on how to register. She reported that she and her team have spent nine months in planning the conference with the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation (SLSMC) and provided a list of topics for discussion at the conference, including short sea shipping, liquid bulk, and growth through infrastructure investments. Ms. Yackley noted that the SLSDC continues to perform regular outreach with stakeholders, albeit virtually during the pandemic. She added that the SLSDC outreach efforts have greatly benefited from SLSDC Great Lakes Regional Representative, Peter Hirthe, as well as the SLSMC's Ken Carey.

V. OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Middlebrook reminded the group that the next meeting will be February 9, 2021.

VI. CLOSING DISCUSSION AND ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:11 p.m. (Eastern), with a motion to adjourn from Mr. Mielke and seconded by Mr. McMillan.

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