

Bridge

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Williams, DOT director, is one of board's five members committed to keeping the two bridges over Narragansett Bay "in great shape." The other three authority members are Richard Eannarino of Jamestown, Mayor Stephen Waluk of Newport and Arthur Fletcher of Lincoln.

Inspections

Darlington and Peter Janaros, RITBA engineering director, quoted from inspection reports that the authority's bridges were in good condition. They distributed sections from the 2006 annual report.

Debra Moolin Taylor, project engineer for the international consulting and engineering firm, PB (Parsons Brinckerhoff) Americas based in New York, spoke about the inspections she oversees and the excellence of its maintenance. Her firm also designed the bridge.

They emphasized that inspections are conducted annually and repairs are performed on an on-going basis. Darlington said the authority spent \$10 million in repairs during the past year and a total of \$50 million on the two bridges during the past ten years. He explained that funds come from tolls of about 21,000 vehicles a day on the Newport Bridge, where tolls

totaled \$13 million last year.

The Mount Hope Bridge, without tolls since 1998, accounts for about 16,000 vehicles a day.

The chairman said that about 60-percent of the income is used for repairs, and that the remaining 40-percent is split between bond payments and staff costs. He also reported an estimated \$120 million will be spent on maintenance and repairs during the coming decade.

Pell bridge report

Inspection summaries for the bridges covered different elements of each structure in various years and did not cover inspection of all bridge elements every year. Janaros said full reports are not public

because of the security data they contain.

Newport Bridge inspectors found the bridge was in "generally good condition... identifying recommended repairs, upgrades and areas that warrant special monitoring."

Because a two-inch horizontal crack in a part of the main suspension was found in 2005, a special inspection was completed on all such suspension parts. The last check also covered seven other elements: main and floor trusses, rope sockets, expansion joints, cable bents, compression links and wind locks.

"Consistent with the age of the bridge (built in 1969), several areas require attention, owing to age, wear, fatigue, or corrosion. Based on the findings of this (2006) inspection, items to be addressed on a priority basis (in the next construction season)" include: debris and corrosion in and around stiffeners for the suspender rope sockets, and continued monitoring of links and locks, the summary listed.

Main span concerns are: stringer and diaphragm details at the expansion joints; expansion joint seals; loose concrete deck haunches; paint condition; and various repairs to maintenance platforms, according to the public record.

The summary added that other elements of the structure require attention on a non-priority basis and may be addressed as RITBA's budget and construction schedule permits.

RITBA also distributed summaries of its 10-year repair plan adopted in 2005, including electrical updates underway. It was amended some months ago for bridge deck evaluation and engineering, and steel superstructure retrofits, in years to be determined. Also to be scheduled in the next decade are main cable repairs, bearing work, and possibly adding a median barrier. The authority announced just a few weeks ago it was looking into a new electronic toll collection system, commonly known as EZPass.

Work definitely scheduled to be done in the coming decade, for an expected \$69 million at the Newport Bridge, includes office

renovations, pier repairs, deck and paving projects, tower repairs and painting.

Mount Hope report

The Parsons company of engineers of New York City, inspectors of the 78-year-old Mount Hope Bridge, stated that the structure is also in "generally good condition," described some parts of the bridge as "excellent," outlined work over the past ten years and summarized work to finish the complete rebuilding of that bridge. Steel repairs and tower painting are due to be finished this fall, rocker links will be lubricated to eliminate squeaks, and grease ports will be replaced to complete the project, before a new series of projects is started.

The new work, expected to total \$50 million in the coming decade, at Mount Hope involves electrical upgrade; extensive pier repairs, and major painting.

Darlington and Janaros emphasized that age was not a relevant factor, but the amount of monitoring and repair mattered. They specified that Mount Hope has been rebuilt completely, and can be maintained indefinitely, without reaching an end-life status.

They said vigilance was needed and difficult in relation to the "harsh conditions of ocean and weather" that coastal structures face.

Darlington also noted that RITBA bridges are suspension structures, different than the truss engineering used on the Minneapolis bridge, and other structures.

The officials noted that RITBA does not rely on taxpayer funds, but it is subject to the federally-mandated National Bridge Inventory.

Boat

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current in the water was so strong that it was a safety hazard. He said that Lombardi used a multi-meter, which tests for both alternating and direct current, but he wasn't clear about the type of current that tested so high.

Provenzano explained that the harbor needed to be analyzed in order to find the source of the problem because the damage to the boat was so severe. "The boat is two months old and shouldn't have sustained that much damage in its lifetime," he said. He said that damage to the boat was certainly a concern, "but the biggest issue should be a safety issue. The area where it is docked is dangerous and unsafe," he said.

He went on to clarify that the problem could be intermittent if it is caused by another boat using electricity at different times and leaking current into the water, or faulty shore service could cause an intermittent problem because it is not always in use. He also said that several people in the area indicated there had been intermittent electrical problems for years. He added that finding the source is going to take time and expertise, because it is a complex problem.

When asked how much the repairs would cost, he said that he

had no idea. "It will be well over \$10,000, but how much over, I don't know," Provenzano said.

Chief Tighe asked town electrical inspector Angus MacColl to test the area and MacColl reported no problematic readings. According to the chief, MacColl's report concurred with Provenzano's claims and could mean that the electrical current problem was intermittent, or didn't originate from the area where the boat was docked.

The chief added, "any assumptions are pure speculation because tests have to be performed to give us conclusive proof of where the problem originated." He continued to say that the town engaged Professor Otto Gregory, a chemical engineer teaching at the University of Rhode Island, as a consultant to work with Ribcraft on the problem.

Professor Gregory was scheduled to "look at the boat for the first time on Wednesday (Aug. 8)," but said that he would not even begin to speculate what caused the corrosion problems until he thoroughly inspected the vessel. "There are many kinds of corrosion," Gregory said. "Each kind tells a different story about what the cause could be," he added.

Chief Tighe said that Rhode Island Interlocal Trust, the town insurance company, is also involved

in resolving the matter. "Until the experts finish their work, everybody is just guessing," the chief said. "We are working hard to get to the source of the problem and between Ribcraft, the insurance company, and the expertise of our consultants, I am sure the boat will be back in service and performing properly as soon as possible. This is not a backburner issue. We are doing all we can, as quickly as we can," the chief said.

The 21-foot, 3-inch long by 8-foot, 6-inch beamed patrol boat was made by Ribcraft at a cost of \$97,920. The price included a two-axle trailer and the engine, as well as the boat and electronics. The boat was ordered with an aluminum hull, tow posts on bow and stern, and a T-top with all available reinforcements to the tubes for durability. "The idea was that this boat should be able to serve our needs for a long time," said Mike de Angeli, chairman of the Harbor Management Commission.

The boat's specs include a Honda 150 horsepower engine, an ICOM 422 VHF radio, Garmin 298 GPS chart plotter and bottom imaging sonar depth finder, police VHF and Whelen hailer/light bar. An 800 MHZ police radio was recently added. The top speed of the craft is approximately 45 knots per hour.

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ATTENTION JAMESTOWN VOTERS!

RI - Local 69 The Jamestown Public Works Union needs your support.

We ask your support in rejecting the August 28th referendum in placing a Highway Barn at the Newport Bridge site.

We feel the site is not operationally functional for our needs. Please support us and vote NO on August 28th.

Thanks,
 The Jamestown Public Works Union

rilocal69@cox.net