

Approved - Harsens Island Transportation Authority Meeting Minutes

Meeting held December 10, 2022 at the Lions Club

Meeting called to order at 10:33AM by Harold Bain

Roll Call – Harold Bain – Present
Gary Beaulac – Present
Paul Cassidy - Present
Dennis Szymanski – Present
Wayne (Skip) Tornow – Present

Treasurer's Report – Gary Beaulac

Cash on Hand: As of November 30, 2022 we have \$96,536.58 in our Huntington Bank account. Since the last board meeting, we did not receive any additional revenues from any sources. We incurred \$9635.70 in expenses in October and \$16,713.39 in expenses in November. The expenses were primarily for the Traffic Study, Web Page design and administrative support Payroll. As an FYI we still have an additional \$125,000 in Michigan Enhancement grant monies still available until December 31, 2023. This is provided we use the current fund balance. Dennis Szymanski motion to file treasurer's report, seconded by Harold Bain. Motion passed.

Gary Beaulac inquires whether HITA has had any additional communication with Champion Ferry regarding participation with HITA. Harold answers that Champion Ferry must agree to work with HITA and we have not had any response from Champion Ferry. Per HITA board we are done talking to David Bryson.

Approval of Minutes from October 8, 2022 - Motion by Dennis Szymanski to approve minutes as written, seconded by Tornow. Motion passed.

New Business

Bridge Update:

DIBC will still not share rate estimates and is not moving forward. At this point we are not moving forward with the bridge company.

SEMCOG: Update from Harold Bain and Maureen Boury

HITA has attended 2 SEMCOG meetings (Southeastern Michigan Council of Government) They are willing to speak with us and now HITA and our ferry situation is on their radar. SEMCOG has funding available TIP with is a Transportation Improvement Program on the state level and FAC Federal Aid Program with funds available for St. Clair County. SCCOTS (St. Clair County Office of Transportation Study) also develops their own TIP and fall within SEMCOG. They have assured us that they will be able to help us with funding. HITA will be attending their January meeting. Will need a business plan.

Website: Update from Harold Bain and Maureen Boury

The website is finished with just some final tweaks to go. Member emails will be transferred over from the old website to the new site for communications. Text capabilities will be available. Will also be able to record the HITA meetings from an IPAD and upload the video to the website. Promoting the new website on social which Ray is creating, i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor and local Harsens Island Facebook groups. We will also keep the old website live for another 2 years and provide a link to the new site when it is accessed.

Secretary update:

In addition to SEMCOG and website updates.

Contact list update, Senator Peters office has been very helpful and working with a contact from his office. Eisen's office recommended getting a petition signed to validate the community's concerns, the petitions available at the meeting. Continue to make these contacts.

MSU research study provided with the traffic study conducted by HITA. Over 9 weeks of study the one week one way average is 5853 & 304,356 annually. Both way weekly average 11,702 & 608,504 annually.

Supervisor Bryson is getting prices from 2 airboat companies and looking at Homeland Port Authority grants, to purchase an airboat for HITA. HITA would own the airboat, maintained and housed by Champion Ferry under a yearly agreement.

Master Plan is currently underway by St. Clair County and it is important that our intentions for alternative transportation, whether a bridge or alternate ferry be included on the Master Plan.

Re-Appointments of HITA Board Members – Contact list provided at meeting to contact HISFCA and Clay Township to re-appoint current members.

Gary Beaulac asks if anyone else from the community wants to serve on the board

Paul Cassidy suggests that HISFCA provide a deadline for any interested parties

Next Steps:

Focus on petitions

Continue attendance at SEMCOG & SCCOTS meetings

Feasibility study needs to advance obtain quote

Contact Grant Writer

Work with John DeBoyer and Lisa McClain on budget

Quote from Berger Boat Company

Meet with DVM Utilities

Follow up with EUPTA

Berger Boat Company – Skip Tornow

Skip met with the Berger Boat Company in Wisconsin. Berger has build 1st class ferries for EUPTA both

Ice breaking ferries and non-ice breaking ferries. Specs – 92' Long 33' beam 7'.4" draft. 2 CAT engines, 10 knots, 1500 fuel holding up to 15 cars. 5.5 – 6.5 million per ferry with a 1.5 year lead time. Annual Coast Guard Inspections, every 5 years pulled out of the water for inspection. Maintenance costs vary. In addition, EUPTA will allow HITA to use their design plans at a cost of 50% of the design cost (approx. \$75,000) for the 1st ferry, 30% for the 2nd ferry and 15% for the 3rd ferry and a designer fee of \$10,000. To get our own design could cost \$175,000 - \$250,000. These are preliminary costs, would have to have hard costs by end of December.

Paul Cassidy makes a motion to amend the agenda to discuss retaining an attorney, seconded by Gary Beaulau, motion passed.

Paul Cassidy made a motion to contact a law firm to get a legal written opinion on what our rights are regarding funding, bonding, etc for new ferry and review HITA by-laws. Allow spending of \$25,000, if there is a purchase agreement \$50,000. Seconded by Harold Bain, motion passed.

Paul Cassidy made a motion to present to the Clay Township Board and place on their agenda, to amend the HITA by-laws to increase all HITA Board members terms to 4 years at time of reappointment at the 12/19 Clay Township board meeting. Seconded by Harold Bain, motion passed.

2023 Calendar

Gary Beaulac made a motion to accept the 2023 HITA meeting calendar. Harold Bain seconded. Motion passed.

Public Comments:

Reminder that the Clay Township Fire Department has an airboat for emergencies and will provide pick up of medication on the mainland as well as mail and any other emergencies.

What will the role of the Coast Guard be with the new ferry as it pertains to running 2 ferry operations? Do they have any concerns? Also do you anticipate any staffing issues? The Coast Guard will inspect ferries as required, there are no limitations on ferries, safe boating rules apply. No foreseeable staffing issues.

Is there a ferry build already? No the ferry will be built to our specs. HITA will own the ferry.

Have any other Bridge companies been pursued? MDOT has shown an interest in constructing a bridge at a cost of \$180 million dollars which would take 10 years to complete.

Motion to adjourn by Paul Cassidy, seconded by Skip Tornow at 12:05PM

