

The Illinois State Toll Highway Authority  
Minutes of the  
Customer Service Working Group Committee Meeting

August 23, 2010

The Illinois State Toll Highway Authority held a Customer Service Working Group Committee Meeting on Monday, August 23, 2010 at approximately 10:00 a.m. at the Central Administration Building in Downers Grove, Illinois. Directors in attendance were as follows:

Committee Chairman Bill Morris  
Director George Pradel  
Director Maria Saldaña  
Director Carl Towns

Director Morris called the meeting to order.

Director Morris requested a motion to approve the Minutes of the Customer Service Working Group Committee Meeting held on June 17, 2010. Director Pradel moved for approval; seconded by Director Towns. The motion was approved unanimously.

Director Bill Morris stated there will be a Customer Service report compiled for the Board to review and regarding the actions and recommendations of the Customer Service Working Group. Director Morris encouraged those present to notify members of the committee if there are any areas that were not discussed regarding Customer Service. The Tollway Transition Team meeting Customer Service recommendations will also be reviewed for inclusion.

Executive Director Lafleur provided an update on the Electronic Tolling RFP, which is about 10-weeks behind schedule. Since the RFP is to have only two or three bidders, which is currently costing the Tollway approximately \$11 million annually, the Executive Director's office is examining whether it is appropriate to break the contract into a few smaller contracts to encourage a greater number of bidders and a more efficient delivery system to Tollway users. The Working Group agreed with this process and will conduct a further review in October. Director Morris requested a revised timeline be presented at that time.

Director Morris concurred with Director Lafleur and added he believes this would also increase DBE participation. He stated that he would approve a slight delay in order to achieve this goal as long as the contract is not delayed too long and the contract is in the best interest of the Tollway. Director Saldaña concurred.

Stan Ryniewski provided an update on the four customer service contracts: 1) Transponder Fulfillment, which should receive proposals in September; 2) Call and Mail Processing, which should be posted for bid in September; 3) Printing and Mailing Services, which should be posted for bid in late September; and Image Review, which should have a plan in place by October. Mr. Ryniewski provided a brief overview of the definition of each of the contract parts. Director Morris asked when we can expect the Office of Management and Budget approval (OMB). Tollway Staff is working with OMB closely to obtain approval. A timeline of efforts thus far were provided.

For Image Review, due to concerns raised by Directors Towns and Morris that the services were being performed out of state (Texas), and their desire to have these services performed in Illinois thus creating jobs in Illinois, Executive Director Lafleur has been working with three Illinois based not-for-profit disability organizations, in particular disabled veterans, to perform these services in Illinois. She reported progress both in terms of cost savings and having the services performed in Illinois.

Director Morris stated the committee appreciates the efforts to have this function in Illinois or within the Tollway. Director Towns concurred. Mr. Ryniewski committed to providing the Board ongoing status on the Image Review RFP.

Christine Benn provided an update on the transponder replacement program, which has been modeled on the successful pilot program in the South Suburbs. It is not in full operational mode, with only 500 notices being sent weekly at this time, but expects to ramp up to full operational mode for the first 300,000 outdated transponders by November, at which point 5,000 notices will be sent weekly. Individuals who have older transponders with batteries expected to fail within the next few months are being notified by mail to go to a Jewel store or a Tollway customer service location to receive a free replacement. A special program is being implemented in Rockford where there are no Jewel locations; replacement transponders can be picked up at a mobile facility that will be working out of the Secretary of State's offices. All customers have a mail-in option for transponder replacement and batch exchanges are being scheduled for large commercial accounts. The transponder replacement notice indicates the transponder will be turned off 45 days after the notice is received. One reminder notice is sent if there is no response within the first two weeks and bad addresses are followed up with phone calls. Executive Director Lafleur added that a new envelope is being used to warn notice recipients that there is a timeframe for response. To date, there has been approximately a 70% replacement rate. Director Morris requested that the Tollway staff illustrate the replacement cycle over the coming years since a larger and larger number of transponders is becoming eligible for replacement.

Teri Sieg'l provided an update on measures to improve the accuracy of addresses on violation notices. In order to improve the ability of the Tollway to find toll violators, Business Systems is now utilizing the National Change of Address Database to pre-screen notice addresses. When more recent addresses are located, the notices are

updated with these more recent addresses prior to being mailed. It is expected this will result in a slight increase in violations collections. With the first effort the Violations office utilized this Database and found 5% more addresses. Director Saldaña suggested that we work our Secretary of State to improve their address database. Director Morris requested that we continue tracking the success of this new effort.

Wendy Maka provided an update on progress around online violation images. At present, technology is being put in place that will allow toll violators to view their violation images (license plate photos) online and to dispute images they believe to be inaccurate due to plate number, plate type, or plate state. This new functionality is expected to be operational in the first quarter of 2011. Violators visiting our webpage can already pay their toll or fine and request a hearing. Director Saldaña requested that the Tollway provide a cost estimate for this effort. Director Morris requested that Senator Schoenberg and Representative Chapin Rose be notified of these efforts, in which they had expressed interest in previous years. Director Morris also requested an evaluation of this initiative's success in 2011.

Stan Ryniewski provided an update on Violations Collections with Indiana License Plates. Due to miscommunication between the Tollway staff and the Electronic Tolling contractor, approximately 116,000 violations notices to Indiana violators failed to be sent for the period beginning in May 2008 through July 2010. The problem was reported to Executive Director Lafleur several weeks ago and was presented to the Working Group August 23. Mr. Ryniewski provided background: When Indiana changed its license plates, adding two new types of plates in 2008, the same license plate number was assigned to each of the two new plate types, causing our Electronic Tolling system to send notices in many cases to the wrong individual. As a result, the Tollway staff and contractor agreed to adjust the system to stop sending violation notices to Indiana violators so the problem could be corrected. Through a series of miscommunications, the revised system was not turned back on until earlier this year, allowing approximately 116,000 violators from Indiana

to escape without notices of violations. The staff reported the problem has now been corrected and the Tollway is prepared to begin sending notices to those individuals who escaped the notice system dating back to May 2008. It is anticipated that the Tollway lost \$1.6 million in toll revenue due to this communications problem. Further, it is expected by beginning the notice procedure on these 116,000 violators with just under 2 million violations, the Tollway will collect approximately \$7 million in missed tolls and the fines associated with skipping the toll. The two-year “look-back” is how we addressed similar problems with electronic tolling several years ago.

The Directors voted 4 to 0 to recommend the Board direct the staff to immediately institute a program to send notices to toll violators from Indiana.

Directors Morris and Saldana expressed disappointment in the Tollway staff, which oversees the electronic tolling operation, for allowing this problem to occur and continue until just recently. The committee was very critical of the Electronic Tolling contractor, asking that the firm be asked to explain how this problem occurred from their perspective (they did not attend the meeting) and outline steps they have taken to avoid future problems. Directors Morris and Saldana thanked the staff for being very open when discussing the problems. Directors Pradel and Towns both said they agreed with Morris and Saldana.

Executive Director Lafleur indicated that a preliminary review of the Electronic Tolling operation has resulted in changes to more clearly define reporting and contact points both at the Tollway and the Electronic Tolling contractor to avoid future miscommunications.

Executive Direct Lafleur also called for an audit of the system by an independent third party to determine other potential issues and to analyze options for avoiding such issues in the future. The Directors voted 4 to 0 to recommend Senior Management begin the process of selecting an independent firm to audit the electronic toll violations

system to help establish procedures to prevent similar problems in the future, as well as to determine if violators from other states have not been noticed.

The Working Group will examine the "look-back" policy and recommendation at its next meeting in October to determine an appropriate period of time to seek collection of violations when there are system failures. The Working Group hopes to have a recommendation by the December Board meeting. At this time, there is no policy, and the Working Group's recommendation of a two-year look back in relation to the Indiana situation is based on past practice.

Shana Whitehead provided a summary of the proposed final report structure, 1) Improvement Programs Underway such as address change process and on-line violation images, 2) New Improvement Programs Proposed such as audit information and 3) Future Considerations such as bigger picture items. Director Morris encouraged those present to notify Ms. Whitehead if there are any additional topics that should be included in the report. The Tollway Transition Team Customer Service recommendations will also be reviewed for inclusion.

There being no further business, Director Morris called for a motion to adjourn. Director Pradel moved to adjourn; seconded by Director Towns. The motion was approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:03 p.m.

Minutes taken by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Marlene Y. Vick