
FY20 Board Briefing Materials

April 10, 2020

Virtual Meeting

10:00am Public Session

V3

For More Information

 207-780-1000 x 105

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**NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND
PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY**

NNEPRA FY2020 Action Plan

Core Objectives:

- Support and maintain a culture of safety.
- Maintain compliance with all regulations
- Enhance public benefits associated with the Downeaster.
- Work to secure a stable, dedicated and equitable funding mechanisms to sustain Downeaster operations and continued capital investments in the Downeaster Corridor.

Meet or exceed projected Downeaster Performance Benchmarks

- 50% Total Cost Recovery
- 85% On Time Performance
- 87% Café Cost Recovery in Café
- 93% Overall Customer Satisfaction

Improve Downeaster Service Efficiency

- Increase revenue on peak trains
- Explore new schedule options
- Increase performance on off-peak trains
- Improve cost recovery in Café

Improve Passenger Services & Communication

- Promote and improve connectivity to Amtrak network
- Seek ways to improve bicycle access
- Improve/promote last mile connectivity
- Enhance Station experience for passengers

Sponsor Capital Projects to improve safety, service quality and efficiency

- Royal Siding
- Dover Yard Siding
- Rockingham Siding
- Wells Siding

Explore Options for Service Improvement/Expansions

- Explore Portland Station improvement options and alternatives
- Implement a pilot for seasonal service on the Rockland Branch
- Develop a service plan for WEM-POR inbound commuter trip.
- Explore shuttle service between Westbrook/Rock Row development and Portland
- Explore feasibility of a platform at West Falmouth Crossing
- Support next steps of L/A Service Plan



NNEPRA BOARD of DIRECTORS

April 10, 2020

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority

Virtual Zoom Meeting

10:00am Vote to open meeting

- Welcome and Introductions
 - Ground rules for new virtual format
- Approval of Minutes from January 2020 Board Meeting
- Performance Update
 - FY2020 to Date
- Finance Update
- Impacts of COVID 19
- Project Updates
- Other Business
- Public Comment

Next Meeting: TBD

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority

January 27, 2020

Directors in attendance:

Mr. John Melrose, Chairman; Mr. Dana Connors, Vice Chairman; Mr. Ron McKinnon, Treasurer; Mr. Brian Hobart; Mr. Charles Large; Mr. Nathan Moulton

Staff in attendance:

Ms. Patricia Quinn, Mr. Brian Beeler, Ms. Natalie Bogart, Ms. Jennifer Crosby, Mr. William Gayle, Ms. Leslie Guerrette, Mr. Stephen Houdlette, Mr. Jim Russell.

Interested parties:

Mr. Bruce Sleeper, TrainRiders Northeast; Mr. Stanley Koski, Maine Rail Group; Mr. Dana Knapp, Concord Coach Lines; Mr. Tony Donovan, Maine Rail Transit Coalition; Mr. Richard Rudolph, Maine Rail Group; Mr. Stephen Corcoran, Amtrak; Allison Harris, Brunswick citizen.

Opening Remarks

Motion to open Public Session at 12:16pm

Motion: Mr. Hobart

Seconded: Mr. McKinnon

Accepted: All

Motion to enter Executive Session at 12:17pm

- 1 MRS § 405(6)(E) and 23 MRS § 8115-A to discuss counsel negotiations with Amtrak regarding Amtrak's possible acquisition of new trainsets and the Amtrak-NNEPRA service agreement.
- 1 MRS § 405(6)(C), 1 MRS § 405(6)(E), and 23 MRS § 8115-A to discuss with counsel negotiations regarding municipal station agreements.
- 1 MRS § 405(6)(C) to discuss the potential acquisition or use of property for a station location in Portland.
- 1 MRS § 405(6)(C) to discuss with counsel the exchange of property on Thompson's Point. development strategy.

Motion:

Seconded:

Accepted: All

Motion to reopen Public Session at 1:09pm

Motion: Mr. Connors, Vice-Chairman

Seconded: Mr. Hobart

Accepted: All

Vote to accept minutes as amended to reflect vote by board on approval of financial audit by the Board of Directors at the January 27, 2020 meeting

Motion: Mr. McKinnon

Seconded: Mr. Hobart

Accepted: All

Vote to approve 2019 Financial Audit

Motion: Mr. McKinnon

Seconded: Mr. Hobart

Accepted: All

Vote to appoint William Gayle as Clerk of the Board

Motion: Mr. Hobart

Seconded: Mr. McKinnon

Accepted: All

Vote to approve Thompson's Point Resolution on Phase II

Motion: Mr. Hobart

Seconded: Mr. McKinnon

Accepted: All

Vote to approve 2019 Legislative Council Report

Motion: Mr. Hobart

Seconded: Mr. McKinnon

Accepted: All

DECEMBER PERFORMANCE UPDATE – Patricia Quinn

- Best December in Downeaster history with 46,260 riders travelling on the Downeaster. This exceeded the target set for December by 5,241 or 13 percent.
- Through December ridership totals 308,12, an increase of 27,399 from the same time last year and 10,838 or four percent above the established target for FY20.
- December revenue totaled \$925,716 exceeding the target by \$111,483 or 14 percent.
- Through December, total revenue is \$5.9 million, an increase of \$650,995 from the same time last year and \$107,890 or two percent above the target for FY20. The record ridership led to record revenue for the month of \$5.9 million which exceeded the target.
- The average fare per passenger also set a record in December.
- Customer satisfaction continues to be rated higher than Amtrak overall. Overall Customer Satisfaction was 90 compared to 85 for Amtrak as a whole.

MARKETING UPDATE – Natalie Bogart

Ms. Bogart stated the following:

- NNEPRA will be issuing a press release announcing that calendar year 2019 was a record-breaking ridership year setting records in nine out of 12 months.

- The Downeaster transported 574,404 passengers, which represents a 7.8 percent increase over 2018. Revenues of \$10.9 million represented a 9.4 percent increase in revenues.
- Ridership success was attributable to a combination of factors including a successful paid media strategy which resulted in a 20 percent increase in traffic to *AmtrakDowneaster.com* in 2019, strong repeat ridership, increased grassroots outreach as well as the development of targeted flash sales designed to supplement low ridership periods, and increased service to Freeport and Brunswick.
- The Medical Travel Discount has been expanded and in December a partnership with LogistiCare was developed.
- In response to Governor Mills Executive Order for State Agencies to lead by example in reducing carbon emissions, a 15 percent discount on a for all Maine State Employees who use the Amtrak Downeaster for travel within or outside the State of Maine was introduced.
- During the winter months, NNEPRA has remained focused on generating ridership on off peak trains with the following upcoming initiatives:
 - In January, \$15 anywhere fares will be introduced again. Through January 25 over 3,000 passengers have purchased this deal representing \$45,000 in revenue.
 - Moving into February, the focus will be actively promoting Downeaster Family Friendly Travel Packages to Legoland, the Museum of Science, and overnight stays in Boston during Maine and New Hampshire school vacation weeks.
 - NNEPRA is also offering a School Vacation Week Buy one adult ticket, bring a child ages 2 through 12 for free flash sale. This flash sale is available for purchase the week of January 27th only and valid for travel during Maine and New Hampshire School vacation weeks (Monday, February 17 - Saturday, February 29, 2020).
 - Additionally, NNEPRA continues to promote a variety of new products including Medical, Corporate, and Group travel discounts.
- The Biddeford Saco Chamber of Commerce awarded the Amtrak Downeaster with the Business Excellence Award for our commitment to community and for providing reliable daily rail transportation service from the Saco Transportation Center since 2001.
- Jennifer Crosby was recognized by the Freeport Chamber of Commerce with the Above and Beyond Staff Member award. Last Fiscal Year, Jennifer made presentations to 10 rotary clubs, participated in 17 tradeshow, and represented the Amtrak Downeaster and Freeport brand at over 50 meetings/conferences. Jennifer always strives to improve the Downeaster passenger experience and truly deserves this recognition.

PROJECT UPDATE – Patricia Quinn and James Russell

Mr. Russell provided the following update:

- Royal Junction Siding Project – The construction has been completed with speed restrictions lifted as of the weekend of January 25th. There were no delays reported over the weekend. With the Royal Junction project now complete, the weekend scheduled meet of train 693 and 694 should no longer have any delays at this location.
- Continue to move forward on work to replace bridge timbers on the Fore River Bridge. The project is scheduled to begin April 2020.
- The 2019 Capital Improvement Program is finishing up with work scheduled on the replacement of switch components and minor work on Rockingham siding project to be completed when the weather is favorable.
- The design has been completed on the overflow parking lot at Brunswick Station as part of Phase I which will provide sidewalks and 110 additional parking spaces. Work is expected to be completed in 2020. Phase II of the project will include additional new sidewalk and trail and is still in design.

- NNEPRA continues to look for opportunities for adding solar panel to facilities starting with the Brunswick Layover Facility. An onsite consultation with a solar panel provided is scheduled for the week of February 3rd as a first step in the evaluation process.
- Patricia Quinn noted NNEPRA continues to wait to hear back from the Federal Railroad Administration on the awarding of the Wells CRISI grant.
- Patricia Quinn provided an overview on the status of the Rockland service advising that currently the transfer awaits the Surface Transportation Board approval, likely in mid-June. At this time no further decisions can be made pending the approval. Despite the delay, NNEPRA is trying to move forward with all the pieces to be ready to provide service as soon as possible.
- Mr. Nate Moulton, MaineDOT, provided an update regarding the Portland Transportation Center study. Phase I of the project is wrapping up that will highlight locations and entities impacted by any future decision to relocate the PTC. A series of briefings will be held with the City of Portland's Sustainability Committee in February as well as PACTS on the progress of Phase I. With the completion of Phase I, Phase II of the study will begin to narrow down alternative locations.
- Patricia Quinn provided an overview of recent public meeting in Falmouth to discuss a land use planning including a potential station at Exit 53. Roughly 30 members of the public participated in a planning charrette to identify needs and suggestions for the parcel of land around Exit 53 and the Park-and-Ride. Roughly 71% of the participants responded in the positive regarding the idea of a station platform. The presentation is available on the town's website and additional public meetings are planned.
- Patricia Quinn provided a status update on the Amtrak equipment procurement noting that the Request for Proposals was issued. The timeline for new Amfleet equipment is between three to five years.
- Patricia Quinn noted the Mitchell Award was presented to Kevin Southerland at the Saco City Council Meeting for his commitment to the Downeaster as City Administrator.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Melrose discussed a letter addressed to the Board regarding suggested changes to the Board of Director's Meeting format and dissatisfaction of oversight role. Mr. Melrose noted to Board members they are encouraged to reach out to NNEPRA staff regarding any questions or comments they may have. Additionally if there were any performance metrics they would like to see reported that staff would work to provide the information moving forward.

Mr. Melrose suggested the Board adopt a recommendation in the letter to move Executive Session to the end of the meeting rather than the beginning in an effort to encourage greater public participation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Richard Rudolph asked if the inspection for the Rockland branch was completed and if there were any issues identified to prohibit weekend service to Rockland. Mr. Rudolph also requested clarification regarding the Wells Station improvements included in the CRISI grant.

Steve Corcoran, Amtrak responded that the evaluation for the Rockland service was completed and it showed there were no issues identified with the condition of the track on the Rockland line. Patricia Quinn noted that the Wells Station improvements included an additional platform as well as the six miles of double track noted in the grant request.

Mr. Tony Donovan requested clarification of NNEPRA's role in the rail to Westbrook concept, what is NNEPRA's role and where did the \$50,000 in funding for the study come from? Patricia Quinn responded that NNEPRA's role was to conduct the study and that \$40,000 in funding came from PACTS and the \$10,000 required match came from the developer.

Discussion was held regarding additional funding to advance other rail planning studies and how to obtain Federal funding in the future.

Vote to adjourn at 3:45pm

Motion: Mr. Hobart

Seconded: Mr. Lyons

Accepted: All

NEXT MEETING: TBD





FY2020 Downeaster Performance Update

Fiscal Year 2020 to Date: July 2019 – March 2020

Downeaster Ridership FY20 to Date						
	FY2019 Actual	FY2020 Actual	FY2020 Target	Variance to Target	Var %	Passenger Miles
July	57,912	55,168	57,552	(2,384)	-4%	4,515,558
August	56,332	60,944	56,332	4,612	8%	5,055,002
September	39,730	47,817	50,926	(3,109)	-7%	3,820,523
October	43,784	50,363	48,104	2,259	4%	4,055,899
November	42,753	47,573	43,353	4,220	9%	3,948,559
December	40,215	46,260	41,019	5,241	11%	3,839,580
January	37,963	42,431	38,722	3,709	9%	3,521,773
February	40,460	42,817	41,269	1,548	4%	3,553,811
Pre Covid SubTotal	359,149	393,373	377,278	16,095	4%	32,310,705
March	46,787	18,278	47,723	(29,445)	-161%	
FY To Date Total	405,936	411,651	425,001	(13,350)	-3%	

Downeaster Revenue FY20 to Date						
	FY2019 Actual	FY2020 Actual	FY2020 Target	Variance to Target	Var %	Average Fare
July	\$1,134,781	\$ 1,041,369	\$1,128,024	\$ (86,655)	-8%	\$ 18.88
August	\$1,088,275	\$ 1,160,971	\$1,090,024	\$ 70,947	7%	\$ 19.05
September	\$ 647,318	\$ 902,068	\$ 998,156	\$ (96,088)	-10%	\$ 18.87
October	\$ 779,541	\$ 963,346	\$ 940,433	\$ 22,913	2%	\$ 19.13
November	\$ 826,526	\$ 930,673	\$ 845,384	\$ 85,290	9%	\$ 19.56
December	\$ 796,707	\$ 925,716	\$ 814,233	\$ 111,483	12%	\$ 20.01
January	\$ 703,697	\$ 787,480	\$ 717,911	\$ 69,569	9%	\$ 18.56
February	\$ 774,464	\$ 827,930	\$ 789,892	\$ 38,038	5%	\$ 19.34
Pre Covid SubTotal	\$6,751,309	\$ 7,539,554	\$7,324,057	\$ 215,497	3%	\$ 19.41
March	\$ 886,504	\$ 403,535	\$ 904,346	\$ (500,811)	-124%	\$ 22.08
FY To Date Total	7,637,813	7,943,089	8,228,403	(285,314)	-4%	\$ 19.30

Customer Satisfaction

January	Downeaster	Amtrak	FY to Date
Overall Customer Satisfaction	93	87	91
Value of Amtrak Service for Price Paid	92	83	89
Reliability or On Time Performance of the Train	92	87	87
Information Given About Problems Delays While on the Train	87	84	86
Clarity of Announcements	87	81	85
Friendliness/Helpfulness of Train Conductor	92	91	93
Overall Cleanliness of Train	91	87	91
Cleanliness of Train Windows	88	84	88
Cleanliness of the Restrooms on the Train	82	75	82
Overall Experience in Café Car	85	81	87
Friendliness/Helpfulness of Café Car Personnel	90	90	91
Quality/Freshness of Food in Café Car	93	87	91
Overall WiFi Service	75	64	71

Performance

On Time Performance	October	November	December	January	February	March
Train OTP 2020	45%	79%	74%	86%	83%	66%
Train OTP 2019	45%	72%	81%	84%	78%	78%
Passenger OTP 2020	72%	91%	84%	94%	91%	93%

Delay Causes

<i># of Trains Scheduled</i>	310	296	304	310	290	236
<i># of Trains Operated</i>	309	292	298	310	290	162
<i># of Trains Late</i>	168	65	84	42	50	104
Primary Cause of Delay:						
Commuter Train (CTI)	24	10	9	4	3	0
Engine Failure (ENG)	1	1	1	1	3	0
Freight Train (FTI)	11	3	3	2	12	7
MoW Work (DMW)	6	7	1	4	0	0
Police (POL)	3	0	0	1	2	1
Signals (DCS)	15	10	9	11	7	1
Speed Restriction (DSR)	59	6	5	3	3	2
Weather (WTR)	5	1	3	0	0	0
Late Turn of Equipment (ITI)	6	0	1	1	4	1
Passenger Train (PTI)	24	20	27	10	2	6
Other	14	7	25	5	14	86



NNEPRA Draft FY2020 Board Variance Report

July 1, 2019 - February 29, 2020

Revenues	Current Month				Fiscal Year to Date			
	February Actual	February Budget	Variance	Percent	Actual	Budget	Variance	%
Operating Revenue								
Amtrak Ticket Revenue	\$ 827,930	\$ 789,892	\$ 38,038	5%	\$ 7,539,554	\$ 7,324,057	\$ 215,497	2.9%
Food Service Revenue	\$ 64,635	\$ 78,768	\$ (14,133)	-22%	\$ 620,432	\$ 630,148	\$ (9,716)	-1.6%
Advertising Revenue	\$ -	\$ 83	\$ (83)	#DIV/0!	\$ 667	\$ 583	\$ 83	12.5%
Parking Lot Revenue	\$ 40,820	\$ 40,833	\$ (13)	0%	\$ 409,509	\$ 326,667	\$ 82,842	20.2%
Interest and Other Revenue	\$ 26,639	\$ 26,418	\$ 220	1%	\$ 252,339	\$ 211,348	\$ 40,991	16.2%
Total Operating Revenues	\$ 960,024	\$ 935,996	\$ 24,028	3%	\$ 8,822,500	\$ 8,492,802	\$ 329,698	3.7%
Expenses								
Administration								
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 66,836	\$ 59,649	\$ 7,187	11%	\$ 448,923	\$ 477,192	\$ (28,269)	-6.3%
Office Expenses	\$ 14,591	\$ 9,956	\$ 4,635	32%	\$ 75,831	\$ 79,645	\$ (3,815)	-5.0%
Professional Services	\$ 7,877	\$ 5,333	\$ 2,544	32%	\$ 113,916	\$ 42,667	\$ 71,250	62.5%
Insurance	\$ 2,544	\$ 2,180	\$ 363	14%	\$ 17,443	\$ 17,443	\$ (0)	0.0%
Board Operations	\$ 998	\$ 1,705	\$ (707)	-71%	\$ 9,966	\$ 13,641	\$ (3,675)	-37%
Total Administration Expenses	\$ 92,845	\$ 78,823	\$ 14,022	15%	\$ 666,078	\$ 630,587	\$ 35,491	5.3%
Train Operations								
Amtrak Operations	\$ 1,541,006	\$ 1,452,648	\$ 88,358	6%	\$ 11,184,114	\$ 11,621,181	\$ (437,068)	-3.9%
Train Fuel Cost	\$ 116,648	\$ 176,158	\$ (59,510)	-51%	\$ 1,167,191	\$ 1,409,265	\$ (242,074)	-20.7%
PanAm	\$ 127,013	\$ 114,618	\$ 12,395	10%	\$ 1,107,701	\$ 916,944	\$ 190,757	17.2%
Other Train Operations	\$ 3,574	\$ 5,661	\$ (2,087)	-58%	\$ 31,931	\$ 45,291	\$ (13,360)	-41.8%
Facilities	\$ 36,140	\$ 24,567	\$ 11,573	32%	\$ 239,886	\$ 197,262	\$ 42,624	17.8%
Capital Maintenance	\$ 3,652	\$ 69,491	\$ (65,839)	-1803%	\$ 431,401	\$ 555,925	\$ (124,524)	-28.9%
Total Train Operations	\$ 1,828,033	\$ 1,843,143	\$ (15,110)	-1%	\$ 14,162,222	\$ 14,745,867	\$ (583,645)	-4.1%
Station Operations								
Portland Station	\$ 30,900	\$ 30,900	\$ -	0%	\$ 247,200	\$ 247,200	\$ -	0.0%
Platform Ins	\$ 11,721	\$ 11,145	\$ 576	5%	\$ 82,044	\$ 89,164	\$ (7,120)	-8.7%
Station Platform Leases	\$ 3,906	\$ 3,906	\$ -	0%	\$ 27,341	\$ 31,247	\$ (3,906)	-14.3%
Other Station Improvements	\$ -	\$ 833	\$ (833)		\$ 6,667	\$ 6,667	\$ 0	0.0%
Total Station Operations	\$ 46,526	\$ 46,784	\$ (258)	-1%	\$ 363,251	\$ 374,277	\$ (11,026)	-3.0%
Food Service	\$ 76,504	\$ 86,073	\$ (9,569)	-13%	\$ 707,551	\$ 688,587	\$ 18,964	2.7%
Marketing	\$ 40,364	\$ 43,333	\$ (2,969)	-7%	\$ 309,291	\$ 346,667	\$ (37,375)	-12.1%
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 2,084,272	\$ 2,098,157	\$ (13,885)	-1%	\$ 16,208,395	\$ 16,785,985	\$ (577,591)	-3.6%
Additional Funding Required	\$ 1,124,250	\$ 1,162,162	\$ (37,913)	-3%	\$ 7,385,895	\$ 8,293,184	\$ (907,287)	-12.3%
Overall Cost Recovery	46%	45%	1%		54%	51%	4%	
Café Cost Recovery	84%	92%	-7%		88%	92%	-4%	
Ridership	42,817	41,269	1,548	4%	391,556	377,278	14,278	3.6%

IMPACTS of COVID-19

Downeaster Ridership – With Covid19 Timeline

