

# Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority



## February 2017

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### Board of Directors Briefing Materials

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March 1, 2017

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**NNEPRA Office**  
**75 W. Commercial Street, Suite 104**  
**Portland, Maine**

# FY2017 Draft Action Plan

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority 75 W. Commercial Street, Portland, ME 04101 207-780-1000

Draft July 28, 2016

## Meet or exceed projected Performance Benchmarks

- Achieve 45% total cost recovery
- Achieve 85% OTP
- Achieve 80% Café Cost Recovery in Café.
- Exceed 90% in specified CSI categories

## Improve Service Efficiency

- Eliminate Deadhead Trips.
- Improve equipment utilization.
- Increase performance on peak trains.
- Increase performance of off-peak trains.
- Seek cost saving measures in Café.

## Improve Passenger Services & Communication

- Initiate 3<sup>rd</sup> Round Trip to Brunswick
- Improve Group process & Sales
- Implement PIDS
- Develop Station Ambassador Standards
- Improve Station Communication
- Explore ways to improve bicycle access

## Sponsor Capital Projects to improve service quality and efficiency

- Complete Brunswick Layover
- Replace 15,000 Ties Portland-Wells
- Support implementation of Kennebunk Station
- Develop Wells Siding/Platform concept into a potential program.
- Significantly complete MBTA Project
- Initiate Royal Junction Siding Project
- Participate in Portland Station improvements

## Explore Options for Service Expansions

- Continue work on L/A Study

## Maintain Compliance with all Regulations

- Improve and enhance written Policies & Procedures
- Improve and enhance data collection & reporting
- Improve internal documentation processes.

## Identify and Promote Economic and Public Benefits associated with the Downeaster.

Work to secure a stable and dedicated funding mechanism to sustain Downeaster operations and continued capital investments in the Downeaster Corridor.



## **BOARD of DIRECTORS MEETING AGENDA**

March 1, 2017

12:30pm      Vote to open meeting  
Vote to enter Executive Session

1. Motion to go into executive session pursuant to 1 MRS § 405(6)(E) and 23 MRS § 8115-A to discuss legal rights and duties.
2. Motion to go into executive session pursuant to 1 MRS § 405(6)(C) and 23 MRS § 8115-A to discuss negotiations with Amtrak.

1:00pm (time approximate)

- Approval of Minutes from January 23, 2017 Board Meeting
- Performance Update
  - Downeaster performance
  - Marketing update
- Finance Report
  - January 2017 Budget Variance Report
- Project Updates
- Other Business
  - Special Event Trains
- Executive Director's Report/Other Business
- Public Comment

Next Meeting: March 27, 2017



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

January 23, 2017  
Portland, Maine

**Directors in attendance:**

Mr. Martin Eisenstein, Mr. Dana Connors, Mr. Ron McKinnon, Mr. John Melrose, Ms. Sue Moreau and Mr. John Bubier

**Staff in attendance:**

Ms. Patricia Quinn, Ms. Marina Douglass, Ms. Natalie Bogart, Mr. James Russell, Mr. Stephen Houdlette and Ms. Jennifer Crosby

**Interested parties:**

Mr. Stephen Corcoran, Amtrak; Mr. Wayne Davis, TrainRiders Northeast; Mr. George O'Keefe, TrainRiders Northeast; Ms. Deb Novak, Tri-County Literacy; Ms. Lucille Stott, Tri-County Literacy; Ms. Kelly Edwards, Freeport USA

**Opening Remarks**

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**Motion to open Public Session**

Motion: Mr. McKinnon  
Seconded: Mr. Melrose  
Accepted: All

**Motion to go into Executive Session pursuant to 1 MRS § 405(6)(C) and 23 MRS § 8115-A to discuss negotiations with Amtrak regarding the FY2017 agreement.**

Motion: Mr. Bubier  
Seconded: Mr. Melrose  
Accepted: All

**Motion to reopen Public Session 1:05pm**

Motion: Mr. Bubier  
Seconded: Mr. Melrose  
Accepted: All

**Vote to accept minutes as presented by the staff**

Motion: Mr. Connors  
Seconded: Mr. McKinnon  
Accepted: All

Chairman Eisenstein welcomed Mr. George O'Keefe to the meeting. Mr. O'Keefe is the first Executive Director of TrainRiders Northeast.

## **DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE REPORT**

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- Ms. Quinn reviewed the performance report noting that month to date both ridership and revenue are ahead of target.
- Ms. Quinn thanked Ms. Bogart and Mr. Beeler for their organization and marketing efforts in the January \$15 fare marketing initiative and its success.
- Ms. Quinn noted that on time performance is still not meeting expectations. Mr. Corcoran noted that he is working with the MBTA and Pan Am and that these issues are operation and not mechanical.

## **FINANCE REPORT – Marina Douglass**

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- Ms. Douglass presented the December 2016 Variance report.

### **Vote to accept December 2016 Variance Report**

Motion: Mr. Bubier

Seconded: Mr. McKinnon

Accepted: All

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND STAFF REPORTS**

Staff provided an update of the following:

- Ms. Bogart provided a marketing update noting that the focus of the Downeaster marketing campaign remains to increase awareness of the new schedule and generate ridership on off peak trains, during off peak season. Through the month of January, the Downeaster has been offering special \$15 one-way fares in conjunction with the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Downeaster service.
- Ms. Bogart also noted that the NNEPRA staff, in conjunction with the Greater Freeport Chamber of Commerce, hosted the first Business-After-Hours held on the train on January 12, 2017. Seventy-five local business owners and residents attended and the event was well received.
- Ms. Crosby provided a group sales update noting that she has been working to develop new sales leads by participating with various organizations to discuss the benefits of group travel on the Downeaster.
- Mr. Beeler noted that the transition to a new food service vendor, NexDine, has been quite smooth.
- Mr. Russell provided a brief status on capital projects, highlighting that the MBTA project is progressing well and that the Royal Junctions Siding project will begin in the summer of 2017.
- Steve Corcoran from Amtrak noted that the Layover facility is performing well.

### **Other Business**

Ms. Quinn informed the board of the following:

- Lewiston Auburn Rail Study: Leadership from each community has designated three community members to serve on the project committee. A kick-off meeting will be scheduled. MaineDOT will transfer funding to NNEPRA to manage the study.
- John Melrose was re-nominated to the Board and received unanimous confirmation to remain on the NNEPRA Board. Congratulations, John!
- The NNEPRA staff has planned a Legislative Train Trip on January 31, 2017.

- Mr. Eisenstein provided an overview of two draft policies which had been circulated to Board members for consideration:
  - NNEPRA Board Policy on Board Member Requests for Records/Information
  - NNEPRA Board Policy on Protection of Confidential Information

**Vote to accept NNEPRA Board Policy on Board Member Requests for Records/Information**

Motion: Mr. Bubier  
 Seconded: Mr. McKinnon  
 Accepted: All

**Vote to accept NNEPRA Board Policy on Protection of Confidential Information with Mr. Melrose’s change to the last sentence in the first paragraph to ending the paragraph at “...advance his or her own financial or private interest.”**

Motion: Mr. Bubier  
 Seconded: Mr. McKinnon  
 Accepted: All

**Vote to accept the reports due to OPEGA in response to Section 12023 to include:**

- Per subsection A: A list of procurements exceeding \$10000 for which the competitive procurement process was waived;**
- Per subsection B: A list of contributions exceeding \$1,000; and,**
- Per subsection C: A description of changes made to applicable written policies and procedures.**

Motion: Mr. Connors  
 Seconded: Mr. Bubier  
 Accepted: All

- Special Event Trains  
 Ms. Quinn stated that a policy approved by the board needs to be in place to ensure that all special events are fair and equitable for all. Ms. Kelly Edwards, Freeport USA, and Ms. Deb Novak, Tri-County Literacy, both spoke about the importance of special event trains, which had been operated as fundraisers in the past, to their organizations. Ms. Quinn was asked by the board to make a recommendation regarding event trains at the next board meeting.

**Public Comment:**

- Wayne Davis commented on the excellent food that NexDine is providing now in the Downeaster Café.

**Vote to adjourn: 2:30pm**

Motion: Mr. Melrose  
 Seconded: Mr. McKinnon  
 Accepted: All

**NEXT MEETING: February 27, 2017**

PRELIMINARY VARIANCE REPORT - JANUARY 2017							
	Current Month Actual	Current Month Budget	Current Month Variance	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Year to Date Variance	Year to Date Percent
<b>Revenues</b>							
<b>Operating Revenue</b>							
Amtrak Ticket Revenue	651,837	561,125	90,712	5,019,788	4,515,350	504,438	11%
Food Service Revenue	51,437	46,900	4,537	380,885	365,886	15,000	4%
Advertising Revenue	0	0	0	2,669	1,000	1,669	167%
Parking Lot Revenue	48,800	42,059	6,741	270,640	218,575	52,065	24%
Interest on Accounts	114	295	(181)	920	2,065	(1,145)	-55%
Other Revenue	20,527	21,225	(698)	175,330	144,595	30,735	21%
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>772,715</b>	<b>671,604</b>	<b>101,111</b>	<b>5,850,232</b>	<b>5,247,471</b>	<b>602,761</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>							
<b>Wages and Benefits</b>							
Permanent Full-Time	30,350	30,520	(170)	215,833	217,968	(2,135)	(0)
Benefits	19,292	19,418	(126)	130,446	131,726	(1,280)	(0)
<b>Total Wages and Benefits</b>	<b>49,642</b>	<b>49,938</b>	<b>(296)</b>	<b>346,278</b>	<b>349,694</b>	<b>(3,416)</b>	<b>-1%</b>
<b>Administration</b>							
Office Expenses	8,755	10,375	(1,620)	68,438	70,635	(2,197)	(0)
Professional Services	10,346	9,750	596	93,389	88,500	4,889	0
Insurance	2,478	2,595	(117)	17,329	17,415	(86)	(0)
Board Operations	1,202	1,416	(214)	10,427	9,648	779	0
<b>Total Administration Expenses</b>	<b>22,780</b>	<b>24,136</b>	<b>(1,356)</b>	<b>189,584</b>	<b>186,198</b>	<b>3,386</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Train Operations</b>							
Amtrak Operations	1,168,454	1,227,863	(59,410)	8,120,520	8,158,627	(38,107)	0%
Train Fuel Cost	142,646	171,000	(28,354)	892,099	1,197,000	(304,901)	-25%
PanAm	114,360	114,360	0	647,894	774,216	(126,322)	-16%
Other Train Operations	628	3,276	(2,648)	13,251	23,432	(10,181)	(2)
Insurance	0	2,300	(2,300)	2,000	13,500	(11,500)	-85%
Layover Facility	41,764	27,489	14,275	135,338	134,585	753	1%
Capital Maintenance	1,109	1,250	(141)	196,257	201,450	(5,193)	-3%
<b>Total Train Operations</b>	<b>1,468,961</b>	<b>1,547,538</b>	<b>(78,577)</b>	<b>10,007,360</b>	<b>10,502,810</b>	<b>(495,451)</b>	<b>-5%</b>
<b>Station Operations</b>							
Portland Station	34,601	34,742	(141)	238,615	238,142	473	0%
Platform Ins	10,972	11,325	(353)	76,429	76,575	(146)	0%
Station Platform Leases	0	0	0	32,004	33,404	(1,400)	-4%
Other Station Improvements	0	0	0	2,100	2,100	0	0
<b>Total Station Operations</b>	<b>45,573</b>	<b>46,067</b>	<b>(494)</b>	<b>349,148</b>	<b>350,221</b>	<b>(1,073)</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Food Service</b>							
Regular	71,529	58,625	12,904	475,905	457,476	18,428	4%
<b>Total Food Service</b>	<b>71,529</b>	<b>58,625</b>	<b>12,904</b>	<b>475,905</b>	<b>457,476</b>	<b>18,428</b>	<b>4%</b>
Marketing	22,999	22,945	54	258,785	258,500	285	0%
<b>Total Marketing</b>	<b>22,999</b>	<b>22,945</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>258,785</b>	<b>258,500</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,681,483</b>	<b>1,749,249</b>	<b>(67,767)</b>	<b>11,627,058</b>	<b>12,104,899</b>	<b>(477,841)</b>	<b>-4%</b>
<b>Additional Funding Required</b>	<b>908,768</b>	<b>1,077,645</b>	<b>(168,878)</b>	<b>5,776,826</b>	<b>6,857,428</b>	<b>(1,080,602)</b>	<b>-16%</b>
<b>Cost Recovery</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>7%</b>	
<b>Ridership</b>	<b>37,915</b>	<b>33,500</b>	<b>4,415</b>	<b>301,036</b>	<b>262,895</b>	<b>38,141</b>	

**Downeaster Performance Overview**  
**Fiscal Year 2017 to Date July 2016 – January 2017**

<b>Ridership</b>						
	<b>FY2017</b>	<b>FY2017</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Var</b>	<b>FY2016</b>	<b>Passenger</b>
	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>to Target</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Miles</b>
July	51,402	51,305	97	0%	37,349	4,376,310
August	53,627	53,165	462	1%	46,215	4,532,238
September	45,315	34,330	10,985	32%	40,622	3,661,021
October	38,979	26,000	12,979	50%	41,868	2,529,061
November	35,599	25,000	10,599	42%	39,588	2,396,395
December	38,259	39,750	(1,491)	-4%	38,010	3,107,583
January	37,915	33,500	4,415	13%	30,949	3,093,267
<b>Total</b>	<b>301,096</b>	<b>263,050</b>	<b>38,046</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>274,601</b>	<b>23,695,875</b>

<b>Revenue</b>						
	<b>FY2017</b>	<b>FY2017</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Var</b>	<b>FY2016</b>	<b>Average</b>
	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>to Target</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Fare</b>
July	\$ 921,482	\$ 897,838	\$ 23,645	3%	\$ 587,570	\$ 17.93
August	\$ 942,790	\$ 943,679	\$ (889)	0%	\$ 819,638	\$ 17.58
September	\$ 752,830	\$ 585,498	\$ 167,332	29%	\$ 696,095	\$ 16.61
October	\$ 550,988	\$ 418,860	\$ 132,128	32%	\$ 707,151	\$ 14.14
November	\$ 539,612	\$ 408,750	\$ 130,862	32%	\$ 689,592	\$ 15.16
December	\$ 660,248	\$ 699,600	\$ (39,352)	-6%	\$ 670,971	\$ 17.26
January	\$ 651,837	\$ 561,125	\$ 90,712	16%	\$ 523,381	\$ 17.19
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 5,019,787</b>	<b>\$ 4,515,349</b>	<b>\$ 504,438</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>\$ 4,694,397</b>	<b>\$ 16.67</b>

<b>Customer Satisfaction</b>			
<b>December</b>	<b>Downeaster</b>	<b>Amtrak</b>	<b>FY to Date</b>
Overall Customer Satisfaction	89	86	89
Value of Amtrak Service for Price Paid	87	82	88
Overall Cleanliness of Train	91	85	91
Clarity of Announcements	83	80	83
Friendliness/Helpfulness of Train Conductor	93	90	91
Friendliness/Helpfulness of Café Car Personnel	94	87	93
Quality/Freshness of Food in Café Car	84	78	84
Overall Experience in Café Car	85	80	84

<b>Performance</b>						
<b>Calendar</b>	<b>August</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>November</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>January</b>
2017	66%	51%	75%	66%	61%	82%
2016	66%	71%	67%	85%	86%	79%