

# Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority



## May 2017

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### **Board of Directors Briefing Materials**

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May 22, 2017

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

**AmtrakDowneaster.com**

# FY2017 Draft Action Plan

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

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

May 22, 2017

12:00pm      Vote to open meeting  
Vote to enter Executive Session

Motion to go into executive session pursuant to:

1. 1 MRS § 405(6)(A) and 1 MRS § 405(6)(E) to discuss the duties of NNEPRA Board members and NNEPRA staff, and to discuss with counsel NNEPRA's legal rights and duties, in light of the recent appointment of new Board members.
2. 1 MRS § 405(6)(C) and 23 MRS § 8115-A to discuss negotiations with Amtrak regarding the FY2017 and FY2018 agreement.
3. 1 MRS § 405(6)(F) and 23 MRS §8115-A(1)(A) to discuss proposals for audit services.

1:00pm (time approximate)

- Introductions & Slate of Officers
- Approval of Minutes from March 27, 2017 Board Meeting
- Performance Update
  - Downeaster performance
  - Marketing update
- Finance Report
  - March and April 2017 Budget Variance Report
  - Preliminary FY18 Budget Proposal
  - Draft Fare Plan
- Project Updates
- Executive Director's Report
- Other Business
- Public Comment

Next Meeting: June 26, 2017



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

March 27, 2017  
Portland, Maine

### **Directors in attendance:**

Mr. Martin Eisenstein, Mr. Ron McKinnon, Mr. John Melrose and Mr. John Bubier

### **Staff in attendance:**

Ms. Patricia Quinn, Ms. Natalie Bogart, Mr. James Russell, Mr. Brian Beeler, Mr. Stephen Houdlette and Ms. Jennifer Crosby

### **Interested parties:**

Mr. Stephen Corcoran, Amtrak; Mr. Wayne Davis, TrainRiders Northeast; Mr. George O'Keefe, TrainRiders Northeast; Mr. Tony Donovan; MRTC; Mr. Bill Lord, TrainRiders Northeast; Juliette Laake, The Brunswick Times Record.

### **Opening Remarks**

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#### **Motion to open Public Session 12:15 pm**

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

#### **Vote to go into Executive Session 12:17 pm**

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

#### **Motion to reopen Public Session 1:04 pm**

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

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

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

### **DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE REPORT**

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- Ms. Quinn reviewed the Performance Report highlighting the following:
  - Ridership and revenue in February 2017 was greater than any previous February in Downeaster history;
  - On time performance has been negatively impacted by weather.

- Due to weather-related cancellations, March ridership is lagging slightly behind projections;
- The modified departure time of Train 689 on game nights has had a positive impact on ridership. .

#### **FINANCE REPORT – Marina Douglass**

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- Ms. Douglass presented the February 2017 variance report
  - Cost recovery remains at 50%.
  - Staff continues to work with Nexdine to finalize invoicing. Cost recover for the Downeaster Café in February was 72%.

#### **Vote to accept February 2017 Variance Report**

Motion: Mr. Melrose

Seconded: Mr. Bubier

Accepted: All

#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND STAFF REPORTS**

- Ms. Bogart provided a marketing update:
  - The focus remains on increasing ridership on off-peak trains.
  - The Train to Maine campaign is begin finalized for the summer 2017 season. :
  - The Downeaster website is being redesigned to utilize updated technology and will be mobile friendly. The launch is scheduled for early July.
  - Ms. Bogart and Ms. Quinn met with Freeport USA and Tri-county literacy to discuss special event trains moving forward. NNEPRA is brainstorming ways to continue special event trains.
  - Mr. Russell reported that the Haverhill Line Project is progressing and that preparations for the Royal Junction Siding Project are moving forward as scheduled.

#### **Other Business**

Ms. Quinn informed the board of the following:

- Mr. Beeler is working with Amtrak to expedite the installation of Passenger Information Display System (PIDS) signs in Maine stations. The signs, which are ADA compliant, will greatly benefit Downeaster passengers.
- A communication plan has been developed to inform passengers about service outages and interruptions in May. The MBTA has scheduled outages for May 6 and 7 and May 20 and 21. On those days, passengers will be transported by bus between Haverhill and Boston North Station.
- A new Downeaster schedule will take effect on May 22, 2017. Changes include the variable departure of Train 689/Train 699, which will depart North Station at 11:25pm on evenings when there are major events at Fenway Park or TD Garden and will depart at 10:30pm on nights when there are no major events at those venues.
- The Dome Car will return to Downeaster service August 19<sup>th</sup> - September 24<sup>th</sup>.
- The Government Oversight Committee voted (7 to 3) to remove further reviews of NNEPRA from their work plan.
- A fare increase is being planned for FY 2018 (July 1, 2017)

- A request for proposals for the Lewiston Auburn Study has been advertised. Proposals are due on April 14.
- Mr. Beeler mentioned that the cost of parking at the Portland station will increase from \$4.00 per day to \$5.00 per day on April 1, 2017.
- Ms. Quinn explained that lease agreements with Concord Coach Lines for use of the Portland Transportation Center (PTC) were up for renewal and that costs would be increasing according.

**Vote to accept the proposed increase in the monthly rent paid to Concord Coach Lines for the Portland Transportation Center from \$8,100 per month to \$9,100 per month.**

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

**Vote to accept the proposed increase in the fee for the ground lease payments to Concord Coach Lines for the trainway property from \$0.89 per square foot to \$0.94 per square foot**

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

**The Board requested that the Executive Director continue to negotiate the monthly fee for operation of the PTC with Concord Coach Lines and report back at the next board meeting for a public vote.**

**Public Comment:**

- Mr. Donovan asked about the preliminary engineering and survey work being done by VHB for possible future doubletrack at the Wells station. Ms. Quinn said that doubletrack is included in the Downeaster Service Development Plan.
- Mr. Donovan requested to see the Downeaster Service Development Plan. Ms. Quinn said the final report will be published when the FRA completes its environmental review and documentation.
- Mr. Donovan noted that there is a bill in the legislature that would, among other aspects, change NNEPRA's budget approval from the MaineDOT to the Maine Legislature.
- Mr. O'Keefe commented on the cleanliness of the Downeaster train further stating that the NNEPRA staff and Downeaster crew were all people with integrity and would always have the support of TrainRiders Northeast.

**Vote to adjourn at 2:03 pm, 1 hour 48 minutes duration.**

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

**NEXT MEETING: May 22, 2017**

## FY17 Performance Update July 1, 2016 – March 2017

Ridership						
	FY2016	FY2017	FY2017	Variance	Var	Passenger
	Actual	Actual	Target	to Target	%	Miles
July	37,349	51,402	51,305	97	0%	4,376,310
August	46,215	53,627	53,165	462	1%	4,532,238
September	40,622	45,315	34,330	10,985	32%	3,661,021
October	41,868	38,979	26,000	12,979	50%	2,529,061
November	39,588	35,599	25,000	10,599	42%	2,396,395
December	38,010	38,259	39,750	(1,491)	-4%	3,107,583
January	30,949	37,915	33,500	4,415	13%	3,093,267
February	35,954	37,275	36,000	1,275	4%	2,980,081
March	39,820	41,829	42,900	(1,071)	-2%	3,368,114
April	42,189	46,318	43,800	2,518	6%	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>392,564</b>	<b>426,518</b>	<b>385,750</b>	<b>40,768</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>30,044,070</b>

  

Revenue						
	FY2016	FY2017	FY2017	Variance	Var	Average
	Actual	Actual	Target	to Target	%	Fare
July	\$ 587,570	\$ 921,482	\$ 897,838	\$ 23,645	3%	\$ 17.93
August	\$ 819,638	\$ 942,790	\$ 943,679	\$ (889)	0%	\$ 17.58
September	\$ 696,095	\$ 752,830	\$ 585,498	\$ 167,332	29%	\$ 16.61
October	\$ 707,151	\$ 550,988	\$ 418,860	\$ 132,128	32%	\$ 14.14
November	\$ 689,592	\$ 539,612	\$ 408,750	\$ 130,862	32%	\$ 15.16
December	\$ 670,971	\$ 660,248	\$ 699,600	\$ (39,352)	-6%	\$ 17.26
January	\$ 523,381	\$ 651,837	\$ 561,125	\$ 90,712	16%	\$ 17.19
February	\$ 618,814	\$ 675,094	\$ 621,000	\$ 54,094	9%	\$ 18.11
March	\$ 677,322	\$ 730,978	\$ 742,170	\$ (11,192)	-2%	\$ 17.48
April	\$ 721,169	\$ 822,495	\$ 751,170	\$ 71,325	9%	\$ 17.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,711,702</b>	<b>\$7,248,354</b>	<b>\$6,629,689</b>	<b>\$ 618,665</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>169</b>

  

Customer Satisfaction						
February				Downeaster	Amtrak	FY to Date
Overall Customer Satisfaction				89	85	90
Value of Amtrak Service for Price Paid				86	81	88
Overall Cleanliness of Train				89	85	90
Clarity of Announcements				80	80	83
Friendliness/Helpfulness of Train Conductor				90	89	91
Friendliness/Helpfulness of Café Car Personnel				95	87	93
Quality/Freshness of Food in Café Car				86	78	85
Overall Experience in Café Car				87	80	85

  

Performance						
Calendar	November	December	January	February	March	April
2017	66%	61%	82%	74%	78%	88%
2016	85%	86%	79%	78%	93%	93%

PRELIMINARY VARIANCE REPORT - APRIL 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	822,495	751,170	71,325	7,248,355	6,629,690	618,665	9%
Food Service Revenue	67,029	62,017	5,011	587,277	539,291	47,985	9%
Advertising Revenue	333	0	333	4,678	1,000	3,678	368%
Parking Lot Revenue	62,060	44,322	17,738	405,706	319,587	86,119	27%
Interest on Accounts	104	295	(191)	1,372	2,950	(1,578)	-54%
Other Revenue	20,867	21,225	(358)	262,610	208,270	54,340	26%
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>972,887</b>	<b>879,029</b>	<b>93,858</b>	<b>8,509,997</b>	<b>7,700,788</b>	<b>809,209</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>							
<b>Wages and Benefits</b>							
Permanent Full-Time	31,123	31,123	0	308,161	310,890	(2,729)	(0)
Benefits	18,954	18,718	236	187,111	188,274	(1,163)	(0)
<b>Total Wages and Benefits</b>	<b>50,077</b>	<b>49,841</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>495,272</b>	<b>499,164</b>	<b>(3,892)</b>	<b>-1%</b>
<b>Administration</b>							
Office Expenses	8,118	9,750	(1,632)	95,232	100,135	(4,904)	(0)
Professional Services	4,954	10,000	(5,046)	121,895	118,250	3,645	0
Insurance	2,478	2,595	(117)	24,762	25,200	(438)	(0)
Board Operations	928	1,416	(488)	15,465	13,896	1,569	0
<b>Total Administration Expenses</b>	<b>16,478</b>	<b>23,761</b>	<b>(7,283)</b>	<b>257,353</b>	<b>257,481</b>	<b>(128)</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Train Operations</b>							
Amtrak Operations	1,229,191	1,231,796	(2,605)	11,871,271	11,873,136	(1,865)	0%
Train Fuel Cost	142,646	171,000	(28,354)	1,334,354	1,710,000	(375,646)	-22%
PanAm	112,685	112,685	0	910,602	1,115,621	(205,019)	-18%
Other Train Operations	2,773	3,276	(503)	27,250	33,260	(6,010)	(2)
Insurance	0	2,300	(2,300)	2,000	20,400	(18,400)	-90%
Layover Facility	29,737	13,318	16,419	234,653	190,999	43,654	23%
Capital Maintenance	8,667	11,000	(2,333)	211,047	218,500	(7,453)	-3%
<b>Total Train Operations</b>	<b>1,525,699</b>	<b>1,545,375</b>	<b>(19,676)</b>	<b>14,591,177</b>	<b>15,161,916</b>	<b>(570,738)</b>	<b>-4%</b>
<b>Station Operations</b>							
Portland Station	29,900	29,900	0	334,854	327,842	7,012	2%
Platform Ins	10,972	11,325	(353)	109,345	110,550	(1,205)	-1%
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>40,872</b>	<b>41,225</b>	<b>(353)</b>	<b>478,303</b>	<b>473,896</b>	<b>4,407</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Food Service</b>							
Regular	75,060	77,522	(2,462)	720,553	674,233	46,320	7%
<b>Total Food Service</b>	<b>75,060</b>	<b>77,522</b>	<b>(2,462)</b>	<b>720,553</b>	<b>674,233</b>	<b>46,320</b>	<b>7%</b>
Marketing	29,238	29,230	8	350,137	350,830	(693)	0%
<b>Total Marketing</b>	<b>29,238</b>	<b>29,230</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>350,137</b>	<b>350,830</b>	<b>(693)</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,737,423</b>	<b>1,766,953</b>	<b>(29,530)</b>	<b>16,892,795</b>	<b>17,417,519</b>	<b>(524,724)</b>	<b>-3%</b>
<b>Additional Funding Required</b>	<b>764,535</b>	<b>887,924</b>	<b>(123,388)</b>	<b>8,382,798</b>	<b>9,716,731</b>	<b>(1,333,932)</b>	<b>-14%</b>
<b>Ridership</b>	<b>46,318</b>	<b>43,800</b>		<b>425,477</b>	<b>385,750</b>		
Revenue Per Passenger	\$ 21.00	\$ 20.07		\$ 20.00	\$ 19.96		
Cost Per Passenger	\$ 37.51	\$ 40.34		\$ 39.70	\$ 45.15		
Subsidy Per Passenger	\$ 16.51	\$ 20.27		\$ 19.70	\$ 25.19		
Cost Recovery	56%	50%		50%	44%		