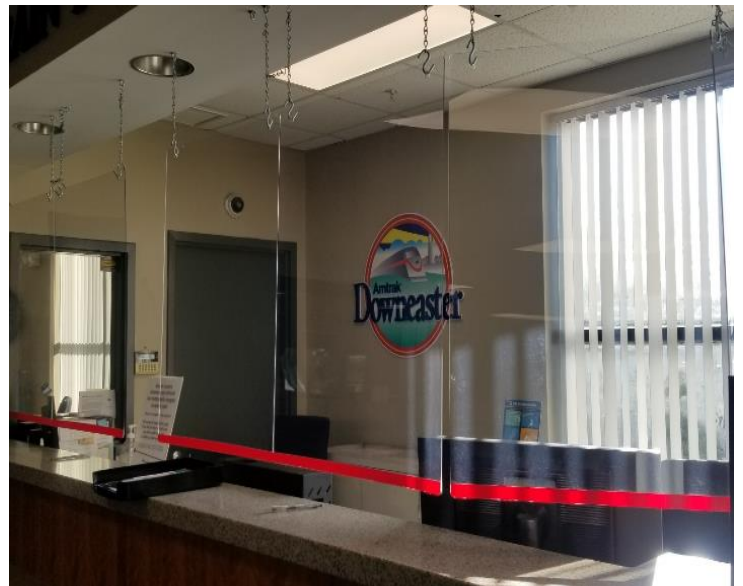
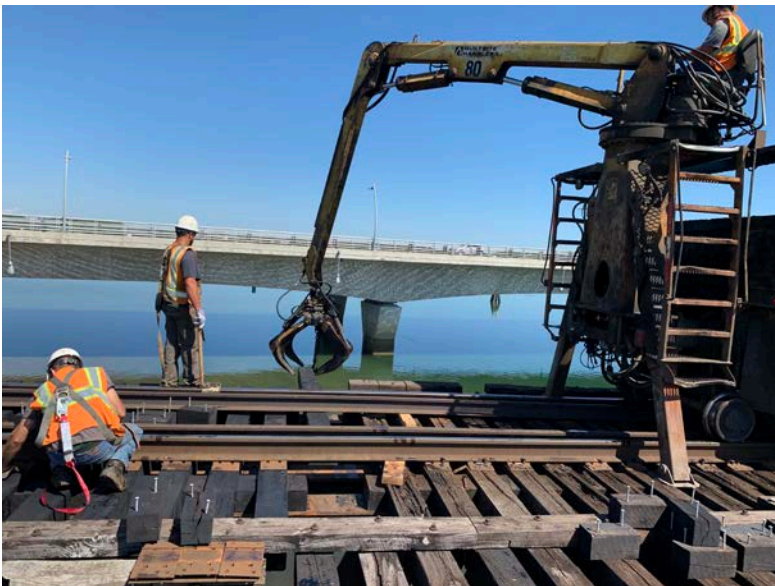


# Board Briefing Materials

## September 28, 2020

Virtual Meeting

10:00am Public Session



For More Information

 207-780-1000 x 105

 [info@nnepra.com](mailto:info@nnepra.com)



**NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND  
PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY**



## NNEPRA FY2021 *Draft* Action Plan

FY21 will focus on weathering the COVID-19 pandemic, recovering from its impacts, and preparing for an unknown and new “normal” going forward.

### Core Objectives:

- **Support and maintain a culture of health and safety.**
- **Provide a high-quality service at levels which meet the needs of the travelling public.**
- **Seek and secure funding opportunities to support operations and service improvement projects.**
- **Remain informed, nimble and positioned to adjust and adapt to changing circumstances.**

### Goals/Action Items:

- **Continue to implement, support and/or communicate practices which maximize the health and safety of our riders, our front-line service providers, and our team.**
- **Develop a Business Plan and strategic framework to address the challenges and opportunities in the post-pandemic world.**
- **Improve communication with riders and keep our partners and stakeholders engaged with efforts to enhance service.**
- **Advance Capital Projects to Improve Safety, Service Quality and Efficiency**
  - Wells Siding Project
  - State of Good Repair Projects
  - Positive Train Control
- **Explore Options for Service Improvement/Expansions**
  - Portland Station options and alternatives on the Mainline
  - A platform at West Falmouth Crossing
  - Enhanced connectivity to Amtrak’s national network
  - L/A Service Planning efforts

## **NNEPRA BOARD of DIRECTORS**

*September 28, 2020*

**Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority**

**Virtual Zoom Meeting**

### **10:00am      Vote to open meeting**

- Welcome and Introductions
  - Ground rules for virtual format
- Approval of Minutes from July 27, 2020 Board Meeting
- Performance Update
  - Phase 2 Preliminary results
- Finance Update
  - FY2021 Budget
- Project Updates
- Other Business
- Public Comment

**Next Meeting: TBD**



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

July 27, 2020

### Directors in Attendance via Zoom Teleconference:

Mr. John Melrose, Chair; Mr. Brian Hobart; Mr. Steve Lyons; Mr. Ron McKinnon, Mr. Nate Moulton

### Staff in Attendance via Zoom Teleconference:

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

### Interested Parties via Zoom Teleconference:

Mr. Stanley Koski, Maine Rail Group; Mr. Wayne Davis, TrainRiders Northeast; Mr. William Lord, Maine Rail Group; Mr. Steve Corcoran, Amtrak; Ms. Kathleen DeSilva, Rinck; Mr. Eben Sweetser, VHB; Mr. Richard Rudolph, Maine Rail Group; Mr. Paul Weiss, Maine Rail Transit Coalition; Mr. Tony Donovan, Maine Rail Transit Coalition; Mr. Rob Beland, NexDine; Mr. Dana Knapp, Concord Coach Lines

### Opening Remarks

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#### Motion to Open Public Session at 1:00pm

Motion: Mr. Hobart  
Seconded: Mr. Lyons  
Accepted: All

#### Motion to Approve the June 22, 2020 Minutes

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

### OVERVIEW OF DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE IN JULY – Patricia Quinn

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FY20 Recap: Had COVID not occurred, it is anticipated that both ridership and revenue would have exceeded budgeted amounts for FY20 resulting in roughly 586,000 passengers and roughly \$3.6 million in additional revenue.

FY21 to Date:

- Downeaster service expanded into a Phase 2 re-opening operating plan on July 20, increasing service from one to four daily round-trips.

### VARIANCE REPORT– Patricia Quinn

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Patricia Quinn provided an overview of the June variance report.

#### Motion to Approve Variance Report as Presented

Motion: Mr. Hobart  
Seconded: Mr. Lyons  
Accepted: All

**MARKETING UPDATE – Natalie Bogart**

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Natalie Bogart provided an overview of recent media campaign for return to service. Media included television, digital, and social advertising. Paid media is focused only in Maine to stay in line with the Maine Office of Tourism and State COVID guidelines and directs customers to *AmtrakDowneaster.com* for safety, schedule, and detailed COVID messaging. A sample of the ad was provided.

Chairman Melrose asked how ridership is affected by Amtrak's policy of capping reservations at 50 percent capacity. Patricia Quinn responded that trains continue to have capacity to meet the cap.

**DOWNEASTER STATION UPDATE –Brian Beeler**

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Brian Beeler provided an update on the station staffing and enhanced safety items. Downeaster stations are open to varying degrees, but all stations have been equipped with required signage and markers to promote social distancing. Hand sanitizers have been installed on platforms. Massachusetts stations are under guidance of MBTA and are using transit ambassadors to answer questions regarding facemasks, social distancing, and operations. NNEPRA staff continues to stay in touch with each station community to assist in compliance with state requirements.

Chairman Melrose commented that while ridership per train may have gone down with additional service, we do not want ridership to grow too fast. Patricia Quinn noted that the ten to 15 percent of budgeted ridership is roughly what Amtrak is experience nationwide. Steve Corcoran from Amtrak noted that there has been no customer pushback on mask policy and has heard positive feedback regarding the resumption of service.

Patricia Quinn added that Concord Coach Lines has continued to make the Portland station facility available to Downeaster passengers. NNEPRA is working with other transit providers in the PACTS region to finalize a second allocation of CARES Act funding to bridge operating expenses through December 2020. Based on estimates from Amtrak, continued assistance provided through the CARES Act to Amtrak could continue through October or November.

Chairman Melrose asked if there were any differences with the assumptions of the approved budget on ridership and revenue figures? Patricia Quinn commented that figures are largely in line with estimates, budgeted for 20 passengers per train and are currently around 26.

**PROJECT UPDATES – Jim Russell**

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Jim Russell provided an update on the completion of the tie replacement project that was completed during the service outage as well as the bridge timber replacement on the Fore River Bridge. The Wells CRISI grant is still in the NEPA process with final Plan, Specifications, and Estimate being finalized by VHB before entering into grant agreement. The intent will be to advertise the earthwork and drainage elements of the project as part of a first phase next year.

Patricia Quinn noted NNEPRA's intent to submit an application to the Federal Railroad Administration's *Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair* competitive grant program to advance the replacement of address

several items that have been identified as needing replacement. Work elements include tie replacement between Portland and Brunswick as well as several grade crossings and signal/communications upgrades along the corridor.

**Motion to Approve FY20 Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair Grant Application:**

Motion: Mr. Hobart  
Seconded: Mr. Lyons  
Accepted: All

Nate Moulton provided an update on the Portland Transportation Center Study conducted by Maine Department of Transportation noting that work continues with Concord and NNEPRA providing comments to the consultant team. A final report is tentatively expected in late August or early September. Patricia Quinn commented that the resumption of limited service has already experienced delays with the current location of the Portland station highlighting the importance of relocation for the service.

**OTHER BUSINESS – Patricia Quinn**

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Chairman Melrose requested an update on Amtrak’s new equipment procurement. Brian Beeler noted that Amtrak is in the final decision-making process but details could not be shared.

Chairman Melrose discussed the difficulty in setting goals and objectives for this year given the circumstance however would like the Board to continue to think about this topic.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

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Wayne Davis, TrainRiders Northeast commented that in watching train 685 he overheard a passenger getting off thanking the conductor for making the trip possible. TrainRiders is currently working with congressional delegation highlighting the importance of the Downeaster’s independence in selecting a food service vendor. Patricia Quinn noted the ability of the Downeaster to provide its own food service is an important aspect of the service and allows the showcasing of Maine products.

Paul Weiss, Maine Rail Transit Coalition, asked if there was any intent to apply for any Federal funding for the Portland Transportation Center Relocation, West Falmouth Station, or Rock Row and, if so, what public input opportunities would be available. Patricia Quinn responded that planning for West Falmouth has been put on hold, and that the Portland Transportation Center Study was not yet complete.

**Motion to Adjourn at 1:57pm**

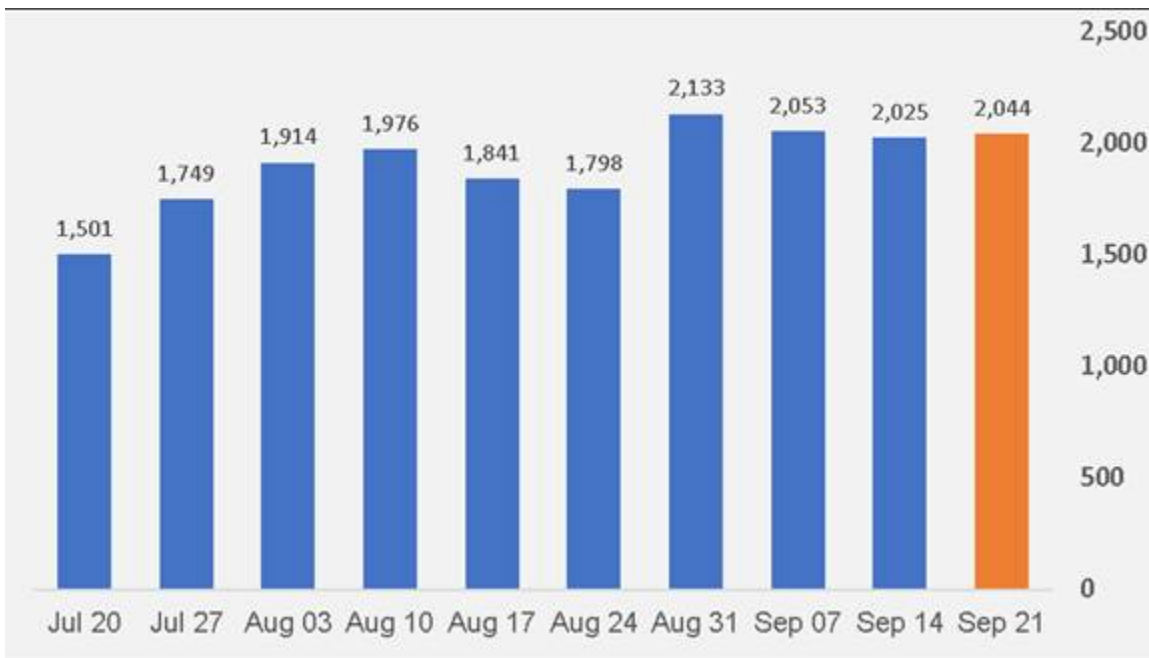
Motion: Mr. Hobart  
Seconded: Mr. Lyons  
Accepted: All

**Pandemic Recovery Period Summary**

<b>Phase 1</b>			
One round trip Brunswick-Boston Monday-Friday			
Period	Trains Operated	Riders	Ticket Revenue
June 15-30	24	768	\$ 26,133
July 1 -19	26	1,372	\$ 32,808
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>2,140</b>	<b>\$ 58,941</b>

<b>Phase 2</b>			
Four daily round trips Brunswick-Boston			
Period	Trains Operated	Riders	Ticket Revenue
July 20-31	96	2654	\$ 23,091
August	248	8,099	\$ 55,899
<b>Total</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>10,753</b>	<b>\$ 78,990</b>

**Total Ridership by Week**





## FY2021 Draft Budget Variance Report August 2020

Revenues	Current Month				Fiscal Year to Date			
	August Actual	August Budget	Variance	Percent	Actual	Budget	Variance	%
<b>Operating Revenue</b>								
*Amtrak Ticket Revenue			\$ -		\$ -		\$ -	
Food Service Revenue	\$ 11,436	\$ 6,200	\$ 5,236	84%	\$ 13,193	\$ 8,600	\$ 4,593	34.8%
Advertising Revenue	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Parking Lot Revenue	\$ 9,923	\$ 6,100	\$ 3,823	63%	\$ 9,923	\$ 6,100	\$ 3,823	0.0%
Interest and Other Revenue	\$ 7,084	\$ 15,000	\$ (7,916)	-53%	\$ 15,124	\$ 30,000	\$ (14,876)	-98.4%
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 28,443</b>	<b>\$ 27,300</b>	<b>\$ 1,143</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>\$ 38,240</b>	<b>\$ 44,700</b>	<b>\$ (6,460)</b>	<b>-16.9%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>								
<b>Administration</b>								
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 67,754	\$ 69,000	\$ (1,246)	-2%	\$ 136,754	\$ 136,754	\$ -	0.0%
Office Expenses	\$ 11,500	\$ 9,000	\$ 2,500	22%	\$ 21,134	\$ 19,636	\$ 1,498	7.1%
Professional Services	\$ 15,500	\$ 10,000	\$ 5,500	35%	\$ 30,941	\$ 21,818	\$ 9,123	29.5%
Insurance	\$ 5,000	\$ 2,246	\$ 2,754	55%	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,900	\$ 100	2.0%
Board Operations	\$ 360	\$ 1,000	\$ (640)	-178%	\$ 1,192	\$ 2,182	\$ (990)	-83%
<b>Total Administration Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 100,114</b>	<b>\$ 91,246</b>	<b>\$ 8,868</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>\$ 195,021</b>	<b>\$ 185,290</b>	<b>\$ 9,731</b>	<b>5.0%</b>
<b>Train Operations</b>								
*Amtrak Operations	\$ 649,429	\$ 649,429	\$ 0	0%	\$ 1,298,858	\$ 1,298,858	\$ -	0.0%
*Train Fuel Cost	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
*Other Train Operations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%
Facilities	\$ 36,761	\$ 20,000	\$ 16,761	46%	\$ 52,164	\$ 43,636	\$ 8,528	16.3%
Capital Maintenance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
<b>Total Train Operations</b>	<b>\$ 686,190</b>	<b>\$ 669,429</b>	<b>\$ 16,761</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>\$ 1,351,022</b>	<b>\$ 1,342,494</b>	<b>\$ 8,528</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
<b>Station Operations</b>								
Portland Station Rent	\$ 9,100	\$ 9,300	\$ (200)	-2%	\$ 18,200	\$ 20,400	\$ (2,200)	-12.1%
Portland Station CAMS	\$ 21,800	\$ 22,100	\$ (300)	-1%	\$ 43,600	\$ 48,327	\$ (4,727)	-10.8%
Platform Ins.	\$ 11,145	\$ 11,145	\$ -	0%	\$ 22,291	\$ 24,317	\$ (2,026)	-9.1%
Station Platform Leases	\$ 3,813	\$ 3,813	\$ -	0%	\$ 7,626	\$ 8,319	\$ (693)	-9.1%
Station Improvements	\$ -	\$ 3,500	\$ -		\$ -	\$ 7,636	\$ (7,636)	0.0%
<b>Total Station Operations</b>	<b>\$ 45,858</b>	<b>\$ 49,858</b>	<b>\$ (4,000)</b>	<b>-9%</b>	<b>\$ 91,716</b>	<b>\$ 109,000</b>	<b>\$ (17,283)</b>	<b>-18.8%</b>
<b>Food Service</b>	<b>\$ 40,351</b>	<b>\$ 63,697</b>	<b>\$ (23,346)</b>	<b>-58%</b>	<b>\$ 57,977</b>	<b>\$ 82,160</b>	<b>\$ (24,183)</b>	<b>-41.7%</b>
<b>Marketing</b>	<b>\$ 35,345</b>	<b>\$ 41,667</b>	<b>\$ (6,322)</b>	<b>-18%</b>	<b>\$ 60,235</b>	<b>\$ 90,909</b>	<b>\$ (30,674)</b>	<b>-50.9%</b>
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 936,301</b>	<b>\$ 943,196</b>	<b>\$ (6,895)</b>	<b>-1%</b>	<b>\$ 1,794,212</b>	<b>\$ 1,854,553</b>	<b>\$ (60,341)</b>	<b>-3.4%</b>
<b>Additional Funding Required</b>	<b>\$ 907,859</b>	<b>\$ 915,897</b>	<b>\$ (8,038)</b>	<b>-1%</b>	<b>\$ 1,755,973</b>	<b>\$ 1,809,854</b>	<b>\$ (53,880)</b>	<b>-3.1%</b>

\*Covered by Amtrak CARES Act fixed fee payment schedule