
Board Briefing Materials

January 11, 2021

Virtual Meeting

10:00am Public Session



For More Information

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**NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND
PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY**



NNEPRA FY2021 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
 - Other planning initiatives as appropriate

NNEPRA BOARD of DIRECTORS

January 11, 2021

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 November 23, 2020 Board Meeting
- Performance Update
- Finance Update
 - Approval of Variance Report
 - Approval of FY20 Audit
- Project Updates
- Other Business
 - Approval of FY20 Legislative Council Report Approval of Annual Legislative Council Report response to Section 12023 to include:
 - Per subsection A: A list of procurements exceeding \$10,000 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.
- Public Comment

Next Meeting: February 22, 2021



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

November 23rd, 2020

Directors in Attendance via Zoom Teleconference:

Chairman John Melrose, Chair; Mr. Dana Connors; Mr. Brian Hobart; Mr. Steve Lyons; Mr. Bruce Van Note

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

Interested Parties via Zoom Teleconference:

Mr. Ralph Cusack, Nextdine; Mr. Greg Girard, Nextdine; Ms. Kathleen DeSilva, Rinck Advertising; Mr. Tony Donovan, Maine Rail Transit Coalition; Mr. Richard Rudolph, Maine Rail Group; Mr. Stan Koski, Maine Rail Group; Mr. Dana Knapp, Concord Coach Lines

Opening Remarks

Motion to Open Public Session at 10:00am

Motion: Mr. Hobart

Seconded: Mr. Connors

Accepted: All

Motion to Approve the September 28th, 2020 Minutes

Motion: Mr. Hobart

Seconded: Mr. McKinnon

Accepted: All

OVERVIEW OF DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE – Patricia Quinn

Patricia Quinn provided an overview of the performance report of both phases since reintroduction of service. A recap of the ridership and revenue for FY21 performance was provided fiscal year to date.

An overview of On-Time Performance (OTP) during this time was provided by Patricia Quinn. Steve Corcoran, Amtrak, discussed the challenges with implementation of Positive Train Control between Amtrak and MBTA's equipment leading to reduced OTP. Steve Corcoran also noted the addition of bike service has been a positive experience with crews and passengers.

MARKETING UPDATE – Natalie Bogart

Natalie Bogart provide an update on the marketing efforts focusing on a strategy to balance the Downeaster's safety message and inspiring travel when passengers are ready to travel all while focusing on travel within Maine.

Steve Lyons noted NNEPRA's messaging is consistent with managing capacity and messaging from the Office of Tourism while noting that by Spring 2021 could see some recovery.

UPDATE ON DOWNEASTER OPERATIONS – Brian Beeler

Brian Beeler provided an overview of the station experience highlighting the communication and signage as well as the information requirements for passengers while on-board and booking tickets.

Director Brian Hobart and Patricia Quinn provided an update on the recent Station Community Meeting. Director Hobart noted that attendees were generally optimistic and that discussion was centered around future plans, any needs from NNEPRA. No station community anticipated any reductions in station service levels in the near future.

VARIANCE REPORT– Patricia Quinn

Patricia Quinn provided an overview of the variance report.

Chairman Melrose requested a status of NNEPRA's annual audit. Patricia Quinn noted copies of the audit had been mailed out to the Board Members and discussed two minor finding related to expenses incurred in FY20 which were inadvertently booked FY21. Chairman Melrose encouraged the Board Members to read the audit for acceptance at the next meeting.

PROJECT UPDATES – Patricia Quinn

Patricia Quinn provided an update on various projects including the capital maintenance program and efforts to extend positive train control further along the line in Maine. William Gayle provided an update on the Wells CRISI Grant project. Patricia Quinn noted that NNEPRA and the States remain in discussions with Amtrak on new equipment but no public information is available yet.

OTHER BUSINESS – Patricia Quinn

Patricia Quinn provided an overview of the draft action plan and future initiatives such as developing a framework for a business plan to move forward with both operations and capital projects.

Chairman Melrose noted that the Board should adopt the action plan.

Motion to Approve the NNEPRA FY2021 Action Plan

Motion: Mr. Connors

Seconded: Mr. Hobart

Accepted: All

Paul Weiss commented that focus in the future should be made simultaneously with the potential for federal funding and expansion into other areas of the state.

Chairman Melrose noted that expansion into other areas could be considered after the Portland Station is relocated, however if opportunities present themselves, they should be examined.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mary Heath asked if there were any plans to replace older locomotives in the future or if there is any federal funding available for research into alternative methods to power passenger trains. Brian Beeler responded that Amtrak is currently looking at replacing all equipment used on the Downeaster decreasing emission by 80-95%. The current timeline estimates the new equipment will arrive in 5-6 years.

Tony Donovan, Maine Rail Transit, requested information regarding PTC, air filtration onboard the train, additional federal funding needs, and the status of the Portland Station Relocation Study. Patricia Quin noted that PTC has been installed by MBTA on their lines. It was noted that air on Downeaster coaches is exchanged every 5-6 minutes noting additional resources located on Amtrak's website. Current CARES Act funding has helped to offset significant revenue decline and that the Portland Study had yet to be released by MaineDOT.

Richard Rudolph, Maine Rail Group, asked what the status of the Maine DOT's State Rail Plan update is and whether NNEPRA would participate. Patricia Quinn responded that the expectation is that NNEPRA will be involved in the drafting of the next plan however she is unaware of a timeline.



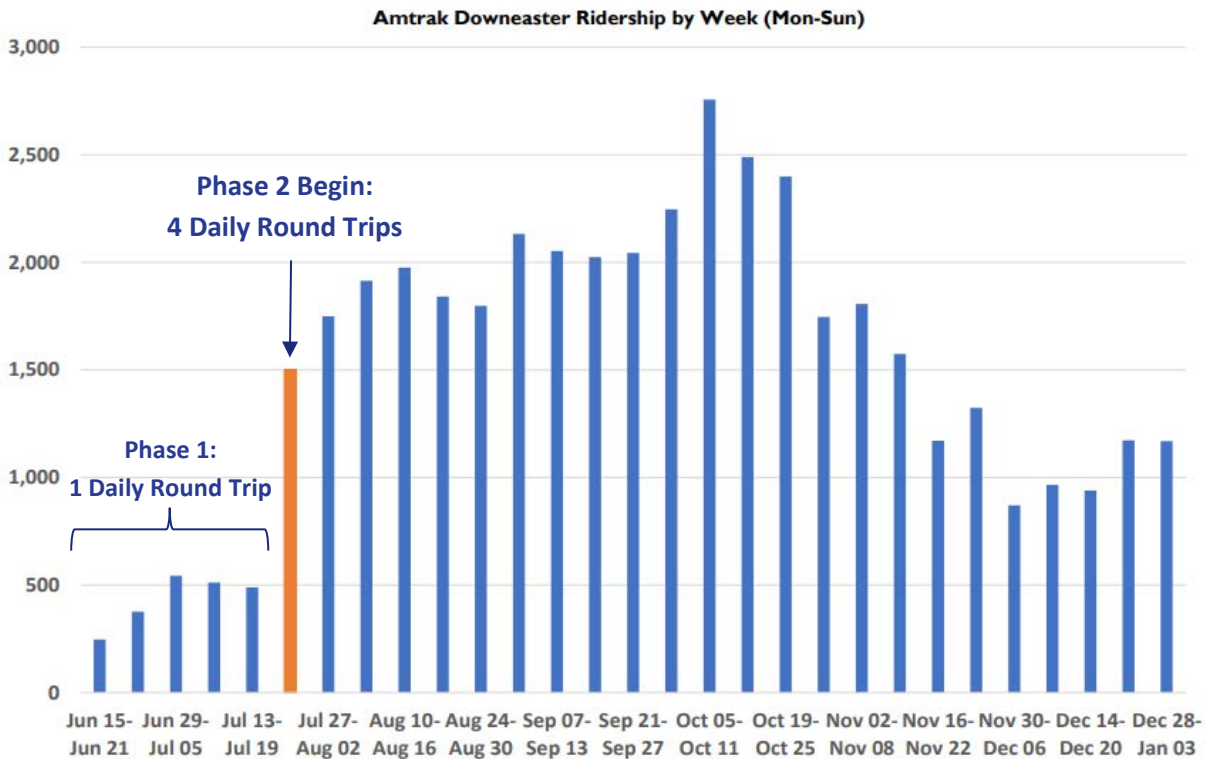
Downeaster Pandemic Recovery Period Summary

FY21 Performance			
Period	Trains Operated	Riders	Ticket Revenue
July	122	4,028	\$ 99,832.51
August	248	8,099	\$ 187,759.38
September	240	8,538	\$ 189,765.33
October	248	10,383	\$ 234,441.90
November	240	6,233	\$ 140,089.72
Total	1,098	37,281	\$ 851,888.84

Note: 2 daily trains operated weekdays only July 1-19.

8 daily trains started operating July 20.

Weekly Ridership Summary



On Time Performance

FY2021 Draft Budget Variance Report

July 2020 – November 2020

Revenues	Current Month				Fiscal Year to Date			
	Nov. Actual	Nov. Budget	Variance	Percent	Actual	Budget	Variance	%
Operating Revenue								
Amtrak Ticket Revenue			\$ -		\$ -		\$ -	
Food Service Revenue	\$ 11,259	\$ 18,000	\$ (6,741)	-37%	\$ 54,068	\$ 55,650	\$ (1,582)	-2.9%
Advertising Revenue		\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Parking Lot Revenue	\$ 1,211	\$ 12,000	\$ (10,789)	-90%	\$ 13,566	\$ 38,625	\$ (25,059)	0.0%
Interest and Other Revenue	\$ 5,700	\$ 15,000	\$ (9,300)	-62%	\$ 35,464	\$ 75,000	\$ (39,536)	-111.5%
Total Operating Revenues	\$ 18,170	\$ 45,000	\$ (26,830)	-60%	\$ 103,098	\$ 169,275	\$ (66,177)	-64.2%
Expenses								
Administration								
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 73,131	\$ 69,000	\$ 4,131	6%	\$ 347,501	\$ 345,000	\$ 2,501	0.7%
Office Expenses	\$ 10,547	\$ 9,000	\$ 1,547	15%	\$ 49,681	\$ 45,000	\$ 4,681	9.4%
Professional Services	\$ 9,130	\$ 15,000	\$ (5,870)	-64%	\$ 54,071	\$ 55,000	\$ (929)	-1.7%
Insurance	\$ 2,393	\$ 2,246	\$ 147	6%	\$ 11,889	\$ 11,230	\$ 659	5.5%
Board Operations	\$ 496	\$ 1,000	\$ (504)	-102%	\$ 2,538	\$ 5,000	\$ (2,462)	-97%
Total Administration Expenses	\$ 95,697	\$ 96,246	\$ (549)	-1%	\$ 465,680	\$ 461,230	\$ 4,450	1.0%
Train Operations								
Amtrak Operations	\$ 669,457	\$ 669,457	\$ -	0%	\$ 3,287,201	\$ 3,287,201	\$ -	0.0%
Train Fuel Cost	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	#DIV/0!
Other Train Operations	\$ 376	\$ 750	\$ (374)		\$ 1,406	\$ 1,400	\$ 6	0.0%
Facilities	\$ 22,421	\$ 20,000	\$ 2,421	11%	\$ 104,585	\$ 100,000	\$ 4,585	4.4%
Capital Maintenance	\$ 9,940	\$ 73,023	\$ (63,083)	-635%	\$ 9,940	\$ 365,115	\$ (355,175)	-3573.2%
Total Train Operations	\$ 702,194	\$ 763,230	\$ (61,036)	-9%	\$ 3,403,132	\$ 3,753,716	\$ (350,584)	-10.3%
Station Operations								
Portland Station Rent	\$ 9,100	\$ 9,300	\$ (200)	-2%	\$ 45,500	\$ 46,500	\$ (1,000)	-2.2%
Portland Station CAMS	\$ 22,100	\$ 22,100	\$ -	0%	\$ 110,500	\$ 110,500	\$ -	0.0%
Platform Ins.	\$ 10,000	\$ 11,145	\$ (1,145)	-11%	\$ 55,725	\$ 55,725	\$ -	0.0%
Station Platform Leases	\$ 3,813	\$ 3,813	\$ -	0%	\$ 19,065	\$ 19,065	\$ -	0.0%
Station Improvements	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,500	\$ -	0%	\$ 17,500	\$ 17,500	\$ -	0.0%
Total Station Operations	\$ 48,513	\$ 49,858	\$ (1,345)	-3%	\$ 248,290	\$ 249,290	\$ (1,000)	-0.4%
Food Service	\$ 36,411	\$ 66,800	\$ (30,389)	-83%	\$ 194,787	\$ 273,390	\$ (78,603)	-40.4%
Marketing	\$ 29,858	\$ 41,667	\$ (11,809)	-40%	\$ 178,361	\$ 208,335	\$ (29,974)	-16.8%
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 930,843	\$ 1,062,800	\$ (131,957)	-14%	\$ 4,593,348	\$ 5,115,236	\$ (521,888)	-11.4%
Additional Funding Required	\$ 912,674	\$ 1,017,801	\$ (105,127)	-12%	\$ 4,490,251	\$ 4,945,962	\$ (455,710)	-10.1%

Note: NNEPRA has a net fixed-price agreement with Amtrak through December 2020 based on a national formula derived to allocated Amtrak CARES Act funding among Amtrak state partners. As such, Amtrak ticket revenue and some other train-related expenses are not reflected in this report.