

Board Briefing Materials

September 27, 2021

Location:
Virtual Meeting

1:00pm Public Session



For More Information

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**NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND
PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY**

Draft NNEPRA FY2022 Strategic Workplan

NNEPRA was established under Maine law for the general purpose of supporting the operation of passenger rail service. (Section 8111). To accomplish this purpose, NNEPRA shall in part:

1. Take all actions reasonably necessary to initiate, establish, or reinstate regularly scheduled passenger rail service between points within this State and points within and outside this State. (Section 8003)
2. Seek and use all funds necessary to pay all expenses of this passenger rail service that are not met by fares and other funds or revenues. (Section 8006)
3. Set fares at reasonable levels to encourage the use of this service. (Section 8009)
4. Adopt a budget, make allocations and account transfers subject to the approval of Maine's Transportation Commissioner. (Section 8116)

In fulfillment of these statutory expectations, and in recognition of the 20th Anniversary of Downeaster service, the NNEPRA Board of Directors adopts the following FY2022 workplan:

1. Meet high standards for transportation safety including the provision of robust public health safeguards.
2. Maximize public awareness of the Downeaster service, attract new riders and retain existing riders through advertising, promotions, digital, traditional and earned media.
3. Support efforts to provide customers with a travel experience that consistently exceeds their expectations, delivers value and benefit, and contributes to a modern, integrated public transportation system.
4. Support the reduction of vehicle miles travelled and State climate change initiatives by improving service accessibility and quality by taking steps necessary to accomplish the following:
 - a. Extend double track and construct station improvements in Wells to improve service reliability, increase frequency and enhance efficiency.
 - b. Relocate the station in Portland to the railroad mainline to reduce travel times, improve access and operating efficiency.
 - c. Build a new station in Falmouth to improve access to I-95 and communities north of Portland.
 - d. Initiate passenger rail service on the Rockland Branch to expand access and provide traffic relief alternatives to coastal Route 1.
 - e. Prepare for new trainsets purchased by Amtrak which will replace legacy equipment and significantly reduce air emissions.
 - f. Collaborate with MaineDOT on studies and planning efforts associated with rail improvements and service expansions.
 - g. Participate as appropriate in national and regional planning initiatives to enhance access and connectivity.
5. Secure favorable terms for the continuation and expansion of passenger rail service to include the following:
 - a. Surface Transportation Board proceedings related to the Pan Am merger with CSX Transportation
 - b. Amtrak/NNEPRA operating agreement renewal
 - c. Downeaster Municipal Station agreement renewals
 - d. Portland Transportation Center agreement extension/renewal
6. Increase state and federal operational and capital funding opportunities:
 - a. Maximize the benefit of COVID-related assistance
 - b. Monitor federal discretionary grant opportunities including CRISI, RAISE, and State of Good Repair to supplement needs for applicable projects
 - c. Ensure NNEPRA is positioned to receive eligible federal funding made available through surface transportation reauthorization or supplemental infrastructure bills
 - d. Collaborate with MaineDOT to secure resources needed to leverage federal funding opportunities.

NNEPRA BOARD of DIRECTORS

September 27, 2021

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority

Draft Agenda

1:00pm Public Session

- Welcome and Introductions
- Approval of Limited Emergency Resolution
- Public Comment
- Approval of Minutes from August 30, 2021 Board Meeting
- Performance Update
- Finance Update
 - Approval of Variance Report
- Project Updates
- FY22 Workplan
- Other Business

Next Meeting: October 25, 2021



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

August 30th, 2021

Directors in Attendance:

Chairman John Melrose, Chair; Mr. Jim Cohen; Mr. Brian Hobart; Mr. Steve Lyons; Mr. Nate Moulton; Ms. Carol Murray

NNEPRA Staff in Attendance:

Ms. Patricia Quinn; Mr. Brian Beeler; Ms. Leslie Guerrette; Mr. James Russell

Interested Parties:

Mr. Wayne Davis, TrainRiders Northeast; Mr. Bob Rodman, TrainRiders Northeast; Mr. Bill Lord, TrainRiders Northeast; Mr. Steve Corcoran, Amtrak; Mr. Kevin Chittenden, Amtrak; Ms. Jane Brophy, Amtrak

Opening Remarks

Opened meeting to Public at 1:00pm.

Motion to Enter into Executive Session – N/A

Motion to Exit Executive Session and open Public Session – N/A

Motion to Approve the August 2, 2021 Minutes

Motion: Mr. Hobart

Seconded: Mr. Lyons

Accepted: All

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Melrose open the floor to public comment. No public comments made.

OVERVIEW OF DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE – Patricia Quinn

Patricia Quinn provided an overview of Downeaster performance for July 2021. Chairman Melrose asked if we are on track to meet the projected ridership goal of 55% of 2019 ridership? Ms. Quinn responded yes, noting that it is early in the fiscal year and that travel trends remain unpredictable. Patricia noted that maintenance projects relating to track work has negatively impact On Time Performance of trains and that overall customer satisfaction remained high.

Brian Beeler provided an overview of the Café performance for July 2021.

VARIANCE REPORT– Leslie Guerrette

Leslie Guerrette provided an overview of the variance report.

Total additional funding required of \$1,382,340 was \$3,814 more than had been projected in the budget.

Carol Murray asked where the additional funding would come from? Patricia Quinn explained that various state and federal funding sources are used by NNEPRA to meet financial obligations including CARES and CRRSA relief funding, FTA formula funds and funds allocated by MaineDOT.

John Melrose asked how long the CRSSA money will last? Patricia Quinn answered that it was currently projected to last through mid-April.

Motion to Approve the Variance Report

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

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES – Patricia Quinn

Patricia Quinn provided an overview of capital project budget status. Jim Russel provided additional details regarding the work elements within the individual projects.

Patricia Quinn provided a summary of the following:

- NNEPRA completed an agreement with CSX pending their acquisition of Pan Am Railways; the Amtrak operating agreement and municipal station agreements are in the process of being renewed. Nate Moulton mentioned that MaineDOT is negotiating an agreement with Concord Coach Lines for use of the Portland Transportation Center.
- It is likely that insurance costs will be greater than had been projected in the budget due to significant increases in insurance premiums nationally.
- Letters of support for the CSX acquisition of Pan Am Railways have been provided to the Surface Transportation Board by Governor Mills, Senator Collins, Senator King and by NNEPRA. Amtrak and other states and organizations have expressed concerns with the merger. Nate Moulton expressed optimism that the acquisition will go through, but anticipates it would take more time.
- Various compliance reviews are pending this year to include the annual financial audit, scheduled for the first week of September, the potential for an FTA Triennial audit and an FRA review of the SAIPRC Grant.
- Staff continues to participate in various state and regional planning efforts, as well as federal funding and policy initiatives.
- The Town of Kennebunk has requested that NNEPRA reconsider a Downeaster stop in Kennebunk. It was discussed that there should be a process and a policy for such requests and that it might best be addressed in the state Rail Plan currently under development. Nate Moulton discussed that there will be a new operator on the Rockland Branch on or about September 8th. It will be the Finger Lakes Railroad.
- Amtrak has announced that Siemens is the successful bidder in Amtrak's procurement of that will ultimately replace the current Downeaster equipment. The new trainsets will be more environmentally friendly than the existing. Brian Beeler and Patricia Quinn are actively involved with the committee made up of Amtrak, FRA and other State Partners in determining the final layout and set-up of this equipment.
- MBTA has scheduled bridgework for Sept 17-20 in Lawrence, MA and will provide bus transportation for Downeaster passengers travelling between Haverhill and Boston during that time period. MBTA anticipates to begin a tie replacement project on October 4 that is scheduled to take about 5 to 6 weeks. A modified interim schedule will be developed for the Downeaster during this time to minimize passenger delays. The Downeaster fall schedule is anticipated to take effect in November.

NNEPRA Remote Meeting Policy – Patricia Quinn

Patricia Quinn reviewed a policy regarding in-person and remote meetings. Steve Lyons asked why ZOOM could not be used for hybrid meeting. Patricia Quinn noted that NNEPRA did not have the technology or staff to effectively manage a hybrid meeting which assured full access for all attendees both virtual and live. NNEPRA will continue to research venues and opportunities to support the hybrid meeting format. Jim Cohen offered an amendment to the policy allowing either the Vice Chair of the Board or the Chair to authorize a virtual meeting.

Motion to Approve the Remote Meeting Policy as amended

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

SECOND PUBLIC COMMENT

Jane Brophy, Amtrak Senior Manager of Government Affairs, introduced herself and provided a brief summary of the Amtrak Connects US 2045 vision to increase the Amtrak network nationally. She expressed that Amtrak has included expanded Downeaster service to Rockland in this vision.

Meeting adjourned at 2:32pm.



Resolution Declaring a Limited Emergency

WHEREAS, since August 1, 2021 the rate of COVID-19 infections confirmed by testing in the State of Maine has increased at a significant rate to due to the Delta variant; and

WHEREAS, the Delta variant has increased the transmission, the severity, and infection rates of COVID-19 in Maine; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the continue high rate of transmission of COVID-19, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced on July 27, 2021, that fully vaccinated individuals should wear masks in indoor public settings in parts of the country that are experiencing a substantial or high transmission of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention announced on July 28, 2021, that masks are recommended to be worn by fully vaccinated individuals in public indoor settings in most Maine counties including York and Cumberland Counties as of September 20, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the risk of COVID-19 virus transmission from vaccinated to unvaccinated individuals remains unknown; and

WHEREAS, the Conference Room at NNEPRA continues to be limited in occupancy due to lack of adequate space and ventilation for hosting public meetings; and

WHEREAS, technology currently exist to continue to allow remote participation by Board members in meetings and a process exists to ensure public participation via remote means in accordance with Maine law and NNEPRA's Remote Participation Policy; and

WHEREAS, NNEPRA is committed to providing opportunities for public engagement that are accessible and safe;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the NNEPRA Board of Directors that a limited emergency exists within the as a result of the existence of the "emergency or urgent issue" as described above, pursuant to 1 MSR Section 403-B and NNEPRA's recently adopted Remote Participation Policy, being physically present for Board Meetings is not practicable at this time therefore the Board will conduct meetings by remote methods only until the limited emergency is terminated; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution is enacted as an Emergency so that it may take effect immediately.

Downeaster FY2022 Performance

Downeaster Performance Metrics - Last 12 Months									
Period	FY	Ridership				Revenue			
		Actual	Budget	Variance	vs. 2019	Actual	Budget	Variance	\$/Rider
Aug 21	FY22	38,534	32,632	5,902	63%	\$ 751,210	\$ 611,859	\$ 139,351	\$19.49
Jul 21	FY22	37,260	30,536	6,724	68%	\$ 726,323	\$ 572,553	\$ 153,770	\$19.49
FY22 To Date		75,794	63,169	12,625	65%	\$1,477,533	\$ 1,184,413	\$ 293,121	\$19.49
Jun 21	FY21	25,668	27,000	-1,332	53%	\$ 515,857	\$ 459,000	\$ 56,857	\$ 20.10
May 21	FY21	18,643	26,350	-7,707	42%	\$ 379,959	\$ 447,950	\$ (67,991)	\$ 20.38
Apr 21	FY21	13,054	25,500	-12,446	27%	\$ 256,539	\$ 433,500	\$ (176,961)	\$ 19.65
Mar 21	FY21	8,606	23,250	-14,644	18%	\$ 170,785	\$ 395,250	\$ (224,465)	\$ 19.84
Feb 21	FY21	5,756	21,000	-15,244	14%	\$ 127,509	\$ 357,000	\$ (229,491)	\$ 22.15
Jan 21	FY21	4,447	21,700	-17,253	12%	\$ 96,657	\$ 368,900	\$ (272,243)	\$ 21.74
Dec 20	FY21	4,408	20,150	-15,742	10%	\$ 98,587	\$ 342,550	\$ (243,963)	\$ 22.37
Nov 20	FY21	6,233	18,000	-11,767	13%	\$ 140,090	\$ 306,000	\$ (165,910)	\$ 22.48
Oct 20	FY21	10,383	17,050	-6,667	21%	\$ 234,442	\$ 289,850	\$ (55,408)	\$ 22.58
Sep 20	FY21	8,538	12,000	-3,462	18%	\$ 189,765	\$ 204,000	\$ (14,235)	\$ 22.23

Downeaster Performance Metrics - Last 12 Months								
Period	FY	Trains Operated	Passenger Miles	On Time Performance		Downeaster Café		CSI
				End Point	Customer	Capture Ratio	Check AVG	
Aug-21	FY22	306	3,287,802	66%	77%	20%	\$ 8.27	89
Jul 21	FY22	298	3,208,359	64%	73%	19%	\$ 8.38	89
FY22 To Date		604	0	65%	75%	20%	\$ 8.32	89
Jun 21	FY21	296	2,200,782	58%	67%	22%	\$ 7.69	86
May 21	FY21	306	1,610,195	60%	71%	21%	\$ 7.63	90
Apr 21	FY21	236	1,100,506	75%	83%	20%	\$ 6.80	88
Mar 21	FY21	248	685,967	71%	82%	20%	\$ 7.28	93
Feb 21	FY21	224	449,228	76%	85%	21%	\$ 6.69	93
Jan 21	FY21	248	355,362	79%	84%	23%	\$ 6.77	93
Dec 20	FY21	244	367,574	62%	74%	23%	\$ 7.01	88
Nov 20	FY21	240	519,168	62%	78%	20%	\$ 6.39	88
Oct 20	FY21	248	865,300	52%	65%	18%	\$ 7.04	89
Sep 20	FY21	240	694,680	81%	88%	21%	\$ 6.69	92

NNEPRA FY22 Draft Budget Variance Report


July 2021-August 2021

Revenues	Current Month				Fiscal Year to Date			
	August Actual	August Budget	Variance	%	Actual	Budget	Variance	%
Operating Revenue								
Amtrak Ticket Revenue	\$ 751,210	\$ 611,859	\$ 139,351	23%	\$ 1,477,533	\$ 1,184,413	\$ 293,120	25%
Food Service Revenue	\$ 58,596	\$ 47,094	\$ 11,502	24%	\$ 111,754	\$ 91,162	\$ 20,592	23%
Advertising Revenue		\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Parking Lot Revenue	\$ 47,038	\$ 24,095	\$ 22,943	95%	\$ 75,515	\$ 49,003	\$ 26,512	54%
Interest and Other Revenue	\$ 41,841	\$ 13,400	\$ 28,441	212%	\$ 67,888	\$ 26,800	\$ 41,088	153%
Total Operating Revenues	\$ 898,685	\$ 696,448	\$ 202,237	29%	\$ 1,732,690	\$ 1,351,378	\$ 381,312	28%
Expenses								
Administration								
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 66,464	\$ 68,000	\$ (1,536)	-2%	\$ 129,842	\$ 136,000	\$ (6,158)	-5%
Office Expenses	\$ 7,942	\$ 8,000	\$ (59)	-1%	\$ 16,186	\$ 16,000	\$ 186	1%
Professional Services	\$ 28,730	\$ 24,000	\$ 4,730	20%	\$ 52,304	\$ 48,000	\$ 4,304	9%
Insurance	\$ 2,776	\$ -	\$ 2,776		\$ 2,776	\$ -	\$ 2,776	
Board Operations	\$ 1,227	\$ 1,250	\$ (23)	-2%	\$ 2,083	\$ 2,500	\$ (417)	-17%
Total Administration Expenses	\$ 107,138	\$ 101,250	\$ 5,888	6%	\$ 203,191	\$ 202,500	\$ 691	0%
Train Operations								
Amtrak Operations	\$ 1,260,694	\$ 1,312,632	\$ (51,938)	-4%	\$ 2,579,348	\$ 2,354,773	\$ 224,575	8.7%
Train Fuel Cost	\$ 157,435	\$ 162,026	\$ (4,591)	-3%	\$ 325,606	\$ 320,284	\$ 5,322	1.6%
Other Train Operations	\$ 117,891	\$ 142,500	\$ (24,609)	-21%	\$ 257,929	\$ 285,000	\$ (27,071)	0.0%
CRSSA Relief Credit	\$ (500,000)	\$ (500,000)	\$ -	0%	\$ (1,000,000)	\$ (1,000,000)	\$ -	0.0%
Facilities	\$ 24,790	\$ 32,000	\$ (7,210)	-29%	\$ 47,381	\$ 58,784	\$ (11,402)	-24.1%
FY22 Capital Maintenance	\$ 28,655	\$ 150,000	\$ (121,345)		\$ 28,655	\$ 300,000	\$ (271,345)	
Total Train Operations	\$ 1,089,465	\$ 1,299,159	\$ (209,694)	-19%	\$ 2,238,919	\$ 2,318,841	\$ (79,922)	-3.6%
Station Operations								
Portland Station Rent	\$ 9,100	\$ 9,200	\$ (100)	-1%	\$ 18,200	\$ 18,400	\$ (200)	-1.1%
Portland Station CAMS	\$ 21,800	\$ 22,000	\$ (200)	-1%	\$ 43,600	\$ 44,000	\$ (400)	-0.9%
Platform Ins.	\$ 14,298	\$ -	\$ 14,298		\$ 14,298	\$ -	\$ 14,298	
Station Platform Leases	\$ 1,295	\$ 10,000	\$ -		\$ 1,295	\$ 20,000	\$ (18,705)	
Station Improvements	\$ -	\$ 2,000	\$ (2,000)		\$ 1,574	\$ 4,000	\$ (2,426)	0.0%
Total Station Operations	\$ 46,492	\$ 43,200	\$ 3,292	7%	\$ 78,966	\$ 86,400	\$ (7,434)	-9.4%
Food Service	\$ 71,722	\$ 68,820	\$ 2,901	4%	\$ 146,434	\$ 135,982	\$ 10,452	7.1%
Marketing	\$ 23,616	\$ 45,000	\$ (21,384)	-91%	\$ 53,262	\$ 90,000	\$ (36,738)	-69.0%
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 2,237,118	\$ 2,253,877	\$ (16,759)	-1%	\$ 4,453,462	\$ 4,185,101	\$ 268,361	6.0%
Additional Funding Required	\$ 1,338,434	\$ 1,557,430	\$ (218,996)	-16%	\$ 2,720,773	\$ 2,833,724	\$ (112,950)	-4.2%
<i>Overall Cost Recovery</i>	40%	31%	9%		39%	32%	7%	
<i>Café Cost Recovery</i>	82%	-64%	146%		76%	-61%	137%	
<i>Ridership</i>	38,534	32,632	5,902	15%	75,794	63,169	12,625	16.7%
<i>Ticket Revenue Per Passenger</i>	\$ 19.49	\$ 21.34	\$ (1.85)		\$ 22.86	\$ 21.39	\$ 1.47	

Maintenance Project Budget Variance

Open Projects	Original Project Budget	Expended through FY21	Expenses incurred in August 2021	Expenses incurred FY22 To Date	Project Balance
Former Tie Replacements	\$ 4,500,000	\$ 4,185,000			\$ 315,000
FY20 Tie Replacement	\$ 2,287,478	\$ 1,984,885			\$ 302,593
CM2016	\$ 744,179	\$ 735,662			\$ 8,517
CM2017	\$ 763,199	\$ 688,199			\$ 52,012
2018/2019	\$ 1,523,701	\$ 1,367,767			\$ 155,934
CM2020	\$ 833,887	\$ 587,456			\$ 246,431
CM2021	\$ 876,270	\$ 194,314	\$ 164,277	\$ 287,358	\$ 394,598
CM2022	\$ 826,400	\$ -	\$ 28,655	\$ 28,655	\$ 797,745
P North	\$ 1,096,525	0	\$ 101,010	\$ 101,010	\$ 995,515
Project Total	\$ 13,451,639	\$ 9,743,283	\$ 293,941	\$ 440,011	\$ 3,268,345

The Budget Variance may reflect work elements items complete but not yet invoiced.

2021 Construction Season Maintenance Project Status						
1 Trackwork			Location	Scheduled	Status	
CM 21	1a	Spot Rail Replacement	Exeter, NH	MP 252	8/17/21	Complete
PNS 21	1a-c	POR-BRK Tie Replace & Surface	POR-BRK	7,850 EA	Oct-21	Materials Ordered
CM 22	1a	Spot Rail Replacement	POR-State Line	1000 LF		as needed
Various		Tie Pick up	POR-EXR			
2 Special Trackwork					Scheduled	Status
CM17	2a	Solar Flange Lubricator	Newfields, NH	MP 256.7		1 to be installed
CM21	2a	Switch Timber Replacement	Various Locations	200 EA		Materials on hand
CM21	2c	#10 Frog Replacement	Monson Switch	MP 199.5		Materials ordered
CM21	2d	#10 Frog Replacement	Cooks Switch	MP 201.3		Materials ordered
CM21	2f	#15 Frog Replacement (2 Frogs)	Dover, NH	CPF 241		Materials rec'd 8/23/21
CM21	2g	#20 Frog Replacement	Kingston, NH	CPF 273		Materials ordered
CM21	2h	Switch Points & Stock Rail Repl.	Portland, ME	CPF 201		Materials ordered
PNS21	2a	#10 Frog Replacement	Portland, ME Mtn Br	CPF 196		Materials ordered
CM22	2a	Joint Elimination Welding (100)	BRK to State Line			Locations Pending
3 Grade Crossing Upgrades					Scheduled	Status
CM21	3b	Arundel, ME	Log Cabin Road		9/28/21	
CM21	3c	Plaistow, NH	Main Street	MP253	8/17/21	Complete
CM21	3d	East Kingston, NH	Sanborn Road	MP262	8/25/21	Complete
CM22	3a	Berwick, ME	Main St.		10/14/21	Slow Order
CM22	3b	Old Orchard Beach, ME	Old Orchard St	MP 207.16		
CM22	3c	Berwick, ME	Blackmore's Crossing	MP 239.26		
CM22	3d	Berwick, ME	Berwick Rd/Route 236	MP239.57	10/6/21	Slow Order
CM22	3e	Exeter, NH	Salem St, MP	MP260.27		
CM22	3f	Exeter, NH	Powder Mill Rd.	MP262.4	9/14/21	Complete
TBD		Scarborough, ME	Cooks #1	MP 201.37		
4 ROW Improvements					Scheduled	Status
CM22	4a	Culvert Rehabilitation	Freeport, ME	1 EA	Oct-21	