
Board Briefing Materials

February 28, 2022

Location:
Virtual Meeting

1:00pm Public Session



For More Information

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**NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND
PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY**

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

February 28, 2022

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority

Draft Agenda

1:00pm Public Session

- Welcome and Introductions
- Public Comment
- Approval of Minutes from January 24, 2022 Board Meeting
- Performance Update
- Finance Update
 - Approval of November Variance Report
- Marketing Update
- Project Updates
- Other Business
 - NNEPRA Board Composition
 - NNEPRA Support for MBTA FY22 State of Good Repair Grant Request

Next Meeting: March 28, 2022

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

January 24, 2022

Directors in Attendance via Zoom Teleconference:

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

NNEPRA Staff in Attendance via Zoom Teleconference:

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

Interested Parties via Zoom Teleconference:

Mr. Dana Knapp, Concord Coach Lines; Mr. Wayne Davis, TrainRiders Northeast; Mr. Nat Rosenblatt, Farrell, Rosenblatt & Russell; Mr. Steve Corcoran, Amtrak; Mr. Kevin Chittenden, Amtrak; Mr. Irwin Gratz, Maine Public Radio; Mr. Alison Harris; Mr. George Betke, Finger Lakes Railroad; Mr. Mike Smith, Finger Lakes Railroad, Mr. Blaise Dupuy; Ms. Kathleen DeSilva, Rinck Advertising; Mr. Richard Rudolph, Maine Rail Transit Coalition; Mr. Tony Donovan, Maine Rail Transit Coalition.

OPENING REMARKS

Opened meeting at 1:00pm.

Mr. William Gayle conducted the roll call.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to Approve the November 22, 2021 Minutes with Corrections to Titles.

Motion: Mr. Hobart
Seconded: Ms. Murray
Accepted: All

OVERVIEW OF DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE – Patricia Quinn

Patricia Quinn provided an overview of the ridership and revenue for December noting that December 2021 ridership was 63 percent of FY19 levels.

Patricia Quinn reviewed the performance report noting that both Customer On-Time Performance (OTP) and End-Point OTP improved significantly to 91 percent and 87 percent respectively. Kevin Chittenden, Amtrak, noted that Amtrak is focused on staffing levels in January to mitigate service interruptions due to COVID.

VARIANCE REPORT– Leslie Guerrette

Leslie Guerrette provided an update on the November 2021 budget variance report noting that Amtrak ticket revenue is more than projected for the month and fiscal year-to-date is 35 percent over projections. Food Service revenue is pacing ahead year-to-date as well.

Expenses included professional services are lower due to timing of our invoices. Train operations were \$1.3M compared to \$1.5M budget, 16 percent under budget for the month and year-to-date is roughly 10 percent under. Train and fuel costs were a little less than budgeted and year-to-date are on track. NNEPRA is applying the \$300,000 ARPA Amtrak credit to the Amtrak invoice each month. Capital maintenance expenses appear under-budget, but that it due to construction timing.

Chairman Melrose asked how long the ARPA credit will last. Patricia Quinn noted it will last through the rest of the fiscal year.

Motion to Approve the November Variance Report

Motion: Mr. Hobart
Seconded: Ms. Murray
Accepted: All

MARKETING UPDATE – Natalie Bogart

Natalie Bogart provided the marketing update noting that NNEPRA continues to promote the 20-year Anniversary message. The 20-year Anniversary Sweepstakes had over 7,000 unique entries. NNEPRA is continuing to evaluate our websites to better display information for first time riders. A station experience project to strengthen brand presence around communities is underway.

Patricia Quinn provided a brief overview of the Downeaster 20th Anniversary and Wells Siding Improvement Project press event and ground-breaking.

PROJECT UPDATE – Patricia Quinn

Patricia Quinn provided a project budget status report. A number of work items have been billed and invoiced to reduce the outstanding balances. NNEPRA's goal is to resolve all outstanding balances and complete work from remaining from previous project workplans.

Chairman Melrose noted the reduction in outstanding balances.

OTHER BUSINESS – Patricia Quinn

Chairman Melrose asked if Directors wanted to make any changes to NNEPRA's Code of Ethics Policy which had been circulated. There were no suggested changes to the policy. Chairman Melrose asked that Directors sign the Policy and return to William Gayle.

Patricia Quinn presented the annual FY21 Legislative Council Report for review and approval before submission.

Motion to Approve the FY21 Legislative Council Report

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

Nathaniel Rosenblatt provided an update on the CSX acquisition of Pan Am estimating a mid-April decision date.

Nathaniel Rosenblatt provided an update on station agreements and noted the current ongoing negotiation with MaineDOT and Concord Coach Lines.

Motion to Authorize the Executive Director of NNEPRA to Enter into the Agreement with CCL upon Concurrence with the Chairman and MaineDOT.

Motion: Mr. Cohen

Seconded: Mr. Connors

Accepted: All

Patricia Quinn reviewed the status of the System Safety Plan required by FRA noting that Amtrak and NNEPRA have worked together to comply with the FRA regulations.

On funding, Patricia Quinn noted that PACTs has put out a call for project for the remaining \$8 million in ARPA funds that have not been allocated to the transit providers. Because the region's transit providers have an unmet operating fund needs of approximately \$3.8 million more than the available balance of CARES funding, Patricia recommended that ARPA funds be prioritized to first backfill operations funding then be applied to capital projects.

Chairman Melrose asked what would happen if there was an unmet need for operating funds. Patricia Quinn responded that it would likely result in service cuts or requests for additional State funds. Nate Moulton, MaineDOT, noted that it is important for the transit service providers be kept whole before any expansion of service. Chairman Melrose noted that there is consensus among the NNEPRA Board to support prioritizing ARPA relief funding to sustain existing service.

Nate Moulton, MaineDOT, George Betke, and Michael Smith, Finger Lakes Railroad provided an update on the potential for a pilot passenger service between Brunswick and Rockland. Patricia Quinn noted that Amtrak has been a tremendously supportive partner, and that, given current constraints, exploring an alternative approach to test the market could make sense. She further noted, however, that more information was needed and that many questions needed to be answered before a service could begin.

Chairman Melrose discussed the need to evaluate NNEPRA staffing levels given the increase in planning and other work. Directors Murray and Connors agreed that a conversation on staffing levels would be valuable.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Meeting adjourned via roll call vote.

Downeaster FY2022 Performance to Date



Downeaster Performance Metrics - Last 12 Months								
Period	FY	Trains Operated	Passenger Miles	On Time Performance		Downeaster Café		CSI
				End Point	Customer	Capture	Check AVG	
Jan-22	FY22	310	1,858,131	79%	88%	19%	\$ 8.78	88
Dec 21	FY22	308	2,568,592	87%	91%	18%	\$ 8.60	94
Nov-21	FY22	297	2,566,478	66%	76%	16%	\$ 7.85	85
Oct 21	FY22	306	3,257,121	71%	79%	17%	\$ 8.03	88
Sep-21	FY22	296	2,730,658	70%	81%	17%	\$ 8.43	88
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		2,121	19,477,141	72%	81%	18%	\$ 8.33	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

NNEPRA Draft FY22 Budget Variance Report

July 2021- December 2021

Revenues	Dec-21				Fiscal Year to Date			
	December Actual	December Budget	Variance	%	Actual	Budget	Variance	%
Operating Revenue								
Amtrak Ticket Revenue	\$ 604,116	\$ 434,406	\$ 169,710	39%	\$ 4,080,341	\$ 3,009,645	\$ 1,070,696	36%
Food Service Revenue	\$ 48,713	\$ 33,887	\$ 14,826	44%	\$ 290,422	\$ 232,591	\$ 57,831	25%
Advertising Revenue	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-
Parking Lot Revenue	\$ 35,350	\$ 22,842	\$ 12,508	55%	\$ 161,585	\$ 140,893	\$ 20,692	15%
Interest and Other Revenue	\$ 44,420	\$ 13,400	\$ 31,020	231%	\$ 304,496	\$ 205,400	\$ 99,096	48%
Total Operating Revenues	\$ 732,599	\$ 504,535	\$ 228,064	45%	\$ 4,836,844	\$ 3,588,528	\$ 1,248,315	35%
Expenses								
Administration								
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 68,620	\$ 68,000	\$ 620	1%	\$ 398,157	\$ 408,000	\$ (9,843)	-2%
Office Expenses	\$ 9,100	\$ 8,000	\$ 1,100	14%	\$ 48,676	\$ 48,000	\$ 676	1%
Professional Services	\$ 6,081	\$ 14,500	\$ (8,420)	-58%	\$ 149,810	\$ 149,000	\$ 810	1%
Insurance	\$ 49,628	\$ 50,374	\$ (746)	-	\$ 55,371	\$ 50,374	\$ 4,997	10%
Board Operations	\$ 914	\$ 1,250	\$ (336)	-27%	\$ 5,358	\$ 7,500	\$ (2,142)	-29%
Total Administration Expenses	\$ 134,342	\$ 142,124	\$ (7,782)	-5%	\$ 657,371	\$ 662,874	\$ (5,503)	-1%
Train Operations								
Amtrak Operations	\$ 1,291,973	\$ 1,515,658	\$ (223,685)	-17%	\$ 7,627,442	\$ 8,473,300	\$ (845,858)	-11.1%
Train Fuel Cost	\$ 183,497	\$ 173,330	\$ 10,167	6%	\$ 1,035,581	\$ 991,362	\$ 44,219	4.3%
Other Train Operations	\$ 140,000	\$ 142,500	\$ (2,500)	-2%	\$ 782,321	\$ 855,000	\$ (72,679)	-9.3%
ARPA Relief Credit	\$ (300,000)	\$ (300,000)	\$ -	0%	\$ (2,116,034)	\$ (2,116,034)	\$ -	0.0%
Facilities	\$ 30,429	\$ 32,000	\$ (1,571)	-5%	\$ 160,943	\$ 186,784	\$ (25,841)	-16.1%
FY22 Capital Maintenance	\$ 66,000	\$ 125,000	\$ (59,000)	-89%	\$ 235,970	\$ 801,400	\$ (565,430)	-239.6%
Total Train Operations	\$ 1,411,899	\$ 1,688,488	\$ (276,589)	-20%	\$ 7,726,223	\$ 9,191,811	\$ (1,465,588)	-19.0%
Station Operations								
Portland Station Rent	\$ 9,100	\$ 9,200	\$ (100)	-1%	\$ 54,600	\$ 55,200	\$ (600)	-1.1%
Portland Station CAMS	\$ 21,800	\$ 22,000	\$ (200)	-1%	\$ 130,800	\$ 132,000	\$ (1,200)	-0.9%
Platform Ins.	\$ 167,114	\$ 197,012	\$ (29,898)	-15%	\$ 181,412	\$ 197,012	\$ (15,600)	-8.6%
Station Platform Leases	\$ 27,950	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ 43,857	\$ 52,000	\$ (8,143)	-18.6%
Station Improvements	\$ 71	\$ 2,000	\$ (1,929)	-2724%	\$ 3,855	\$ 12,000	\$ (8,145)	-211.3%
Total Station Operations	\$ 226,035	\$ 230,212	\$ (4,177)	-2%	\$ 414,524	\$ 448,212	\$ (33,688)	-8.1%
Food Service	\$ 78,227	\$ 61,580	\$ 16,647	21%	\$ 448,246	\$ 388,525	\$ 59,721	13.3%
Marketing	\$ 39,507	\$ 45,000	\$ (5,493)	-14%	\$ 189,212	\$ 280,000	\$ (90,788)	-48.0%
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 1,890,010	\$ 2,167,403	\$ (277,394)	-15%	\$ 9,435,576	\$ 10,971,422	\$ (1,535,846)	-16.3%
Additional Funding Required	\$ 1,157,412	\$ 1,662,869	\$ (505,457)	-44%	\$ 4,598,733	\$ 7,382,895	\$ (2,784,161)	-60.5%
<i>Overall Cost Recovery</i>	39%	23%	15%		51%	33%	19%	
<i>Café Cost Recovery</i>	62%	55%	7%		65%	60%	5%	
<i>Ridership</i>	28,966	23,481	5,485	19%	66,226	63,169	3,057	4.6%

Maintenance Project Budget Variance				
	Original Project Budget	Expended through FY21	Expenses incurred FY22 To Date	Project Balance
Former Tie Replacements	\$ 4,500,000	\$ 4,185,000		\$ 315,000
CM2016	\$ 744,179	\$ 735,662		\$ 8,517
CM2017	\$ 763,199	\$ 688,199	\$ 22,988	\$ 52,012
CM2020	\$ 833,887	\$ 587,456	\$ 197,330	\$ 49,101
CM2021	\$ 876,270	\$ 194,314	\$ 143,563	\$ 538,393
CM2022	\$ 801,400	\$ -	\$ 235,970	\$ 565,430
P North	\$ 1,096,525	0	\$ 825,416	\$ 271,109
Project Total	\$ 9,615,460	\$ 6,390,631	\$ 1,425,267	\$ 1,799,562

