
Board Briefing Materials

March 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

March 28, 2022

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority

Draft Agenda

1:00pm Public Session

- Welcome and Introductions
- Public Comment
- Approval of Minutes from February 28, 2022 Board Meeting
- Selection of Treasurer
- Performance Update
- Finance Update
 - Approval of December Variance Report
- Marketing Update
- Project Updates
- Other Business

Next Meeting: April 25, 2022



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

February 28, 2022

Directors in Attendance via Zoom Teleconference:

Chairman John Melrose, Chair; Mr. Dana Connors; Mr. Jim Cohen; Mr. Brian Hobart; Mr. Steve Lyons; Mr. Nate Moulton; 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. Patrick Barber, MBTA; Ms. Sonja Boet-Whitaker, MBTA; Mr. John Kangus, MBTA; Mr. Stephen Betts; Mr. Ralph Cuzack, NexDine; Ms. Kathleen DeSilva, Rinck Advertising; Mr. Richard Rudolph, Maine Rail Transit Coalition; Mr. Peter Cole.

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 January 24, 2022 Minutes.

Motion: Mr. Hobart

Seconded: Mr. Cohen

Accepted: All

OVERVIEW OF DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE – Patricia Quinn

Patricia Quinn provided an overview of the ridership and revenue for January noting that January 2022 ridership was 54 percent of FY19 levels.

Patricia Quinn reviewed Downeaster performance report noting that both Customer On-Time Performance (OTP) and End-Point OTP improved significantly to 88 percent and 79 percent respectively. Steve Corcoran, Amtrak, noted that the service has benefited from the construction that occurred last year and that Amtrak is in the process of hiring staff.

VARIANCE REPORT– Leslie Guerrette

Leslie Guerrette provided an update on the January 2022 budget variance report. noting that fuel costs are anticipated to increase in the coming months and that capital maintenance will start to increase with the transition to construction season.

Director Cohen asked a question regarding marketing and expectations of increased spending as a result of changes to guidelines. Patricia Quinn noted that will be covered in the marketing update.

Motion to Approve the December Variance Report

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

MARKETING UPDATE – Natalie Bogart

Natalie Bogart provided the marketing update noting that the \$20 round-trip fare promotion in January and February was well received. Upcoming initiatives under way to further target markets include refreshing of the AmtrakDowneaster.com and strengthening the Downeaster brand presence in and around stations to improve the overall customer experience. A request for proposals for procurement of a marketing agency is being developed.

PROJECT UPDATE– Patricia Quinn

Patricia Quinn provided a project budget status report. NNEPRA continues to process older invoices that have been received, however there has not been a big change since last month. Work on the Wells Area Improvement Project has begun with earthwork to clear the right of way for the construction of new track underway.

James Russell provided an overview of the work that began on subgrade preparation.

OTHER BUSINESS – Patricia Quinn

Patricia Quinn noted that the CSX and Pan Am merger is still pending and that the new Amtrak service agreement is nearing finalization as are the remaining station agreements. NNEPRA has met the FRA's System Safety Plan deadline and is finalizing the designation of Amtrak as the entity responsible for its System Safety Plan.

Patricia Quinn provided an update on the PACTS allocation of ARPA funding to the region. PACTS has scheduled an RTAC meeting to discuss a recommendation for how to allocate the ARPA funding. It is the intention of NNEPRA to vote to first provide the transit agencies with the unmet funding needs identified in the CARES process. Chairman Melrose asked if the Board had any issues and all noted that the Board is comfortable staying the course for these funds.

Patricia Quinn provided an overview of request by MBTA to partner on a joint application to the FRA State of Good Repair discretionary grant program. Ms. Sonja Boet-Whitaker provided an overview of the project and the request for NNEPRA to participate as a joint applicant, without any fiscal responsibility.

Chairman Melrose requested a motion to authorize NNEPRA to participate as a joint applicant in the MBTA South Elm Street Bridge project, without any fiscal responsibility.

Motion to authorize NNEPRA to partner with MBTA as a joint applicant on the South Elm Street State of Good Repair Grant.

Motion: Ms. Murray

Seconded: Mr. Hobart

Accepted: All

Patricia Quinn provided an update on the recent nomination hearings for the NNEPRA Board: Alan Casavant, Alison Harris, and Marguerite Fleming. She also thanked the three members whose terms have expired for their service including Chairman John Melrose, Treasurer Dana Connors, and Director Brian Hobart.

Chairman Melrose noted the incoming Directors will be great contributors to the Board. Director Connors thanked everyone involved at NNEPRA over the last 20 years noting the hard work of staff and the outstanding leadership of the Chair. Chairman Melrose noted that staff over the years has been the key to success making a solid foundation to capitalize on the opportunities ahead. Director Hobart noted that he had really enjoyed his time and thanked everyone. Director Cohen thanked all three members and noted it was a pleasure to serve with them.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Melrose opened the floor to public comment.

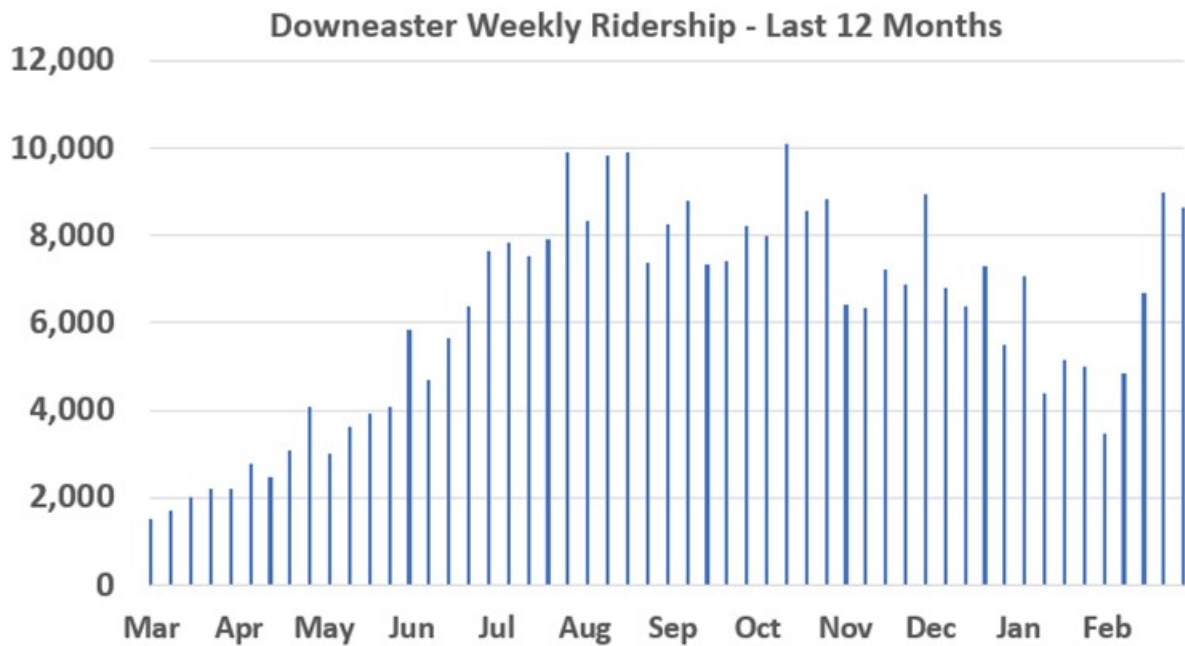
Richard Rudolph thanked the crew of Amtrak for proactively following up with him after he lost his phone on the Downeaster.

Wayne Davis thanked the three outgoing Board members and thanked the acknowledgement for the plaque presented to him by NNEPRA which is now hanging in Brunswick Station.

Meeting adjourned via roll call vote.

Downeaster FY2022 Performance to Date

Downeaster Performance Metrics - Last 12 Months									
Period	FY	Ridership				Revenue			
		Actual	Budget	Variance	vs. 2019	Actual	Budget	Variance	\$/Rider
Feb 22	FY22	27,600	24,653	2,947	68%	\$ 527,474	\$ 456,072	\$ 71,402	\$ 19.11
Jan 22	FY22	20,396	22,594	-2,198	54%	\$ 407,690	\$ 417,993	\$ (10,303)	\$ 19.99
Dec 21	FY22	28,966	23,481	5,485	63%	\$ 604,116	\$ 434,406	\$ 169,710	\$ 20.86
Nov 21	FY22	32,722	25,562	7,160	69%	\$ 617,699	\$ 472,905	\$ 144,794	\$ 18.88
Oct 21	FY22	37,383	25,308	12,075	74%	\$ 748,767	\$ 474,517	\$ 274,250	\$ 20.03
Sep 21	FY22	32,682	23,648	9,034	68%	\$ 632,226	\$ 443,404	\$ 188,822	\$ 19.34
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		255,543	208,415	47,128	66%	\$ 5,015,506	\$ 3,883,710	\$ 1,131,796	\$ 19.63
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



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	
Feb-22	FY22	280	2,521,546	75%	81%	16%	\$ 8.66	91
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		2,401	21,998,687	72%	81%	18%	\$ 8.37	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

NNEPRA Draft FY22 Budget Variance Report

July 2021-February 2022

Revenues	Feb-22				Fiscal Year to Date			
	February Actual	February Budget	Variance	%	Actual	Budget	Variance	%
Operating Revenue								
Amtrak Ticket Revenue	\$ 527,474	\$ 456,072	\$ 71,402	16%	\$ 5,015,506	\$ 3,883,710	\$ 1,131,796	29%
Food Service Revenue	\$ 36,625	\$ 35,577	\$ 1,047	3%	\$ 360,172	\$ 300,775	\$ 59,397	20%
Advertising Revenue		\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -	
Parking Lot Revenue	\$ 17,174	\$ 27,419	\$ (10,245)	-37%	\$ 195,701	\$ 195,094	\$ 607	0%
Interest and Other Revenue	\$ 38,545	\$ 13,400	\$ 25,145	188%	\$ 384,710	\$ 232,200	\$ 152,510	66%
Total Operating Revenues	\$ 619,818	\$ 532,468	\$ 87,350	16%	\$ 5,956,089	\$ 4,611,779	\$ 1,344,310	29%
Expenses								
Administration								
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 66,750	\$ 68,000	\$ (1,250)	-2%	\$ 533,906	\$ 544,000	\$ (10,094)	-2%
Office Expenses	\$ 9,813	\$ 8,000	\$ 1,813	23%	\$ 67,423	\$ 64,000	\$ 3,423	5%
Professional Services	\$ 7,680	\$ 13,500	\$ (5,820)	-43%	\$ 164,057	\$ 176,000	\$ (11,943)	-7%
Insurance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ 58,147	\$ 50,374	\$ 7,773	
Board Operations	\$ 975	\$ 1,250	\$ (275)	-22%	\$ 7,492	\$ 10,000	\$ (2,508)	-25%
Total Administration Expenses	\$ 85,218	\$ 90,750	\$ (5,532)	-6%	\$ 831,025	\$ 844,374	\$ (13,349)	-2%
Train Operations								
Amtrak Operations	\$ 1,135,632	\$ 1,514,552	\$ (378,920)	-33%	\$ 10,137,294	\$ 11,496,247	\$ (1,358,953)	-13.4%
Train Fuel Cost	\$ 206,199	\$ 156,556	\$ 49,643	24%	\$ 1,440,171	\$ 1,321,247	\$ 118,924	8.3%
Other Train Operations	\$ 142,531	\$ 142,500	\$ 31	0%	\$ 1,064,852	\$ 1,140,000	\$ (75,148)	-7.1%
ARPA Relief Credit	\$ (300,000)	\$ (300,000)	\$ -	0%	\$ (2,716,034)	\$ (3,016,034)	\$ -	0.0%
Facilities	\$ 29,607	\$ 32,000	\$ (2,393)	-8%	\$ 207,681	\$ 73,600	\$ 134,081	64.6%
FY22 Capital Maintenance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ 235,970	\$ 680,000	\$ (444,030)	-188.2%
Total Train Operations	\$ 1,213,969	\$ 1,545,608	\$ (331,639)	-27%	\$ 10,369,934	\$ 11,695,060	\$ (1,625,126)	-15.7%
Station Operations								
Portland Station Rent	\$ 9,200	\$ 9,200	\$ -	0%	\$ 73,000	\$ 73,600	\$ (600)	-0.8%
Portland Station CAMS	\$ 22,000	\$ 22,000	\$ -	0%	\$ 179,800	\$ 176,000	\$ 3,800	2.1%
Platform Ins.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ 197,740	\$ 197,012	\$ 728	0.4%
Station Platform Leases	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ 46,853	\$ 52,000	\$ (5,147)	-11.0%
Station Improvements	\$ -	\$ 2,000	\$ (2,000)	#####	\$ 3,855	\$ 16,000	\$ (12,145)	
Total Station Operations	\$ 31,200	\$ 33,200	\$ (2,000)	-6%	\$ 501,248	\$ 514,612	\$ (13,364)	-2.7%
Food Service	\$ 44,213	\$ 62,506	\$ (18,293)	-41%	\$ 538,967	\$ 508,908	\$ 30,059	5.6%
Marketing	\$ 23,715	\$ 40,000	\$ (16,285)	-69%	\$ 239,173	\$ 360,000	\$ (120,827)	-50.5%
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 1,398,315	\$ 1,772,064	\$ (373,749)	-27%	\$ 12,480,347	\$ 13,922,954	\$ (1,442,607)	-11.6%
Additional Funding Required	\$ 778,498	\$ 1,239,597	\$ (461,100)	-59%	\$ 6,524,259	\$ 9,311,176	\$ (2,786,916)	-42.7%