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# Board Briefing Materials

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## August 14, 2023

**Location:**

**Regional Transportation Program (RTP) Conference Room  
1 Ledgeview Drive, Westbrook, ME 04092**

1:00pm Public Session



For More Information

 207-780-1000 x 105

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**NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND  
PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY**

## FY2023 NNEPRA Strategic Workplan:

As approved by 7/25/22

1. **The safety of passengers, crews and employees remains our first priority. Meet and exceed high standards for transportation safety including the provision of robust public health safeguards.**
  - Elevate safety awareness by expanding information, communication and training efforts.
  - Remain at the forefront of emerging opportunities.
2. **Maximize public awareness of the Downeaster service, attract new riders and retain existing riders through advertising, promotions, digital, traditional and earned media.**
  - **Meet and exceed ridership goals and strive for 50% cost recovery.**
    - Optimize fare potential while maintaining cost controls and efficiencies.
    - Monitor and analyze travel trends to aligned train schedules with consumer travel patterns.
    - Participate in activities to assure that Downeaster service remains accessible to all.
    - Support efforts to provide and promote last mile connections and transit connectivity.
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.**
  - **Maintain 90%+ Customer Satisfaction**
    - Implement programs and initiatives to improve station experience including wayfinding and customer service
    - Improve website utility and information access
    - Collaborate with Amtrak enhance technology associated with reservations and customer information.
  - **Target OTP of 85% and COTP of 90%+**
    - Continue collaboration with Amtrak and host railroads to support investments and activities to maintain reliability.
  - **Assure NNEPRA owned and Downeaster-related facilities remain in a state of good repair.**
    - Develop programs and procedures to assure efficient and effective operation.
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:**
  - Complete extension of double track and construct station improvements in Wells to improve service reliability, increase frequency and enhance efficiency.
  - Relocate the station in Portland to the railroad mainline to reduce travel times, improve access and operating efficiency.
  - Build a new station in Falmouth to improve access to I-95 and communities north of Portland.
  - Initiate passenger rail service on the Rockland Branch to expand access and provide traffic relief alternatives to coastal Route
  - Prepare for new trainsets purchased by Amtrak which will replace legacy equipment and significantly reduce air emissions.
  - Collaborate with MaineDOT on studies and planning efforts associated with rail improvements and service expansions.
  - 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:**
  - Finalize Durham Municipal Station agreement
  - Review and updated contracts as needed
  - Monitor pending legislation and initiatives related to passenger transportation including those that put restrictions on state sponsors of rail activity.
6. **Increase state and federal operational and capital funding opportunities:**
  - Maximize the benefit of COVID-related assistance
  - Monitor federal discretionary grant opportunities including CRISI, RAISE, and State of Good Repair to supplement needs for applicable projects
  - Ensure NNEPRA is positioned to receive eligible federal funding made available through surface transportation reauthorization or supplemental infrastructure bills
  - Collaborate with MaineDOT to secure resources needed to leverage federal funding opportunities
  - Assure project funding is sufficient to meet project needs.
  - Streamline internal accounting, procurement, project delivery and reporting protocols to maximize efficiency, accuracy and transparency.
7. **Remain engaged and involved with transportation planning studies, organizations and initiatives in support of transportation access, expansion and connectivity on the local, state and national level.**



## NNEPRA BOARD of DIRECTORS

*August 14, 2023*

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority

### Draft Agenda

#### 1:00pm Public Session

- Welcome and Introductions
  - Vote to approve new Board Secretary
- Public Comment
- Approval of Minutes from June 29, 2023 Board Meeting
- Downeaster Performance Update
  - Operating Statistics
  - Amtrak rolling stock
  - Marketing Initiatives
- Finance Report
  - Review and Approval of July Variance Report
- FY24 Fare Plan
  - Review and approve for public comment
- FY23 Workplan Final Report
- Draft FY24 Workplan Review
- Project Updates
- Other Business

**Next Meeting: TBD**



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

**June 29, 2023**

**Directors in Attendance:**

Chairman Jim Cohen; Mr. Alan Casavant, Vice Chair; Ms. Carol Murray, Treasurer; Ms. Alison Harris; Ms. Maggie Fleming; Mr. Nate Moulton

**NNEPRA Staff in Attendance:**

Ms. Patricia Quinn; Ms. Natalie Bogart; Mr. Brian Beeler; Mr. James Russell; Mr. William Gayle; Ms. Olivia Richmond; Ms. Taylor Belanger; Ms. Belle Askinasi

**Interested Parties:**

Mr. Bruce Sleeper, Trainriders NE; Mr. Frank Menair, Amtrak

**OPENING REMARKS**

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Opened meeting at 1:00pm

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

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Chairman Cohen opened the floor to public comment.

There was no public comment.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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**Motion to approve May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Minutes**

Motion: Ms. Carol Murray

Seconded: Ms. Allison Harris

Approved: All

**OVERVIEW OF DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE – Patricia Quinn**

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Patricia Quinn began with a review and discussion of performance for April and preliminary review for June. She reviewed the Performance Report noting that it reflected the corrected revenue figures. Fiscal year to date, ridership is 90 percent of FY19. Patricia noted that overall the railroad is in a state of good repair. Café continues to perform well. On Time Performance continues to be challenged by one-time events. Overall, riders are satisfied with services as evidenced by a CSI score of 88 percent.

**MARKETING UPDATE – Taylor Belanger**

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Taylor Belanger provided an update of the rapid response campaign developed by new agency, Blaze. Taylor gave an overview of the campaign noting that there are three themes aimed at targeting heartfelt responses with the tagline of “Just a stop away”.

Taylor also provided an update on various workshops and outreach the marketing department has been involved with.

There was a discussion regarding the campaign images and the Board agreed they are happy with what was provided. Chairman Cohen commented that the commuter market was not highlighted in the marketing material and Taylor explained that commuter campaigns would be included.

## **AMTRAK EQUIPMENT PROPOSAL – Patricia Quinn**

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Patricia provided background and the proposal of Amtrak’s request to change the coaches used for Downeaster service from Amfleets to the Horizon fleet. Patricia explained that there would be several concerns if the equipment were to change, including maintenance of equipment, service disruptions during the transition. Amtrak also proposed limiting Downeaster trains to 3 passenger coaches instead of 4. This would have a negative impact on ridership and revenue.

Chairman Cohen moved to public comment. Mr. Bruce Sleeper noted that TrainRiders Northeast would be opposed to the fleet change, reminding the board that when operations began in 2001, the Downeaster was promised Amfleet equipment.

End of public comment.

Patricia requested that the Board provide a letter regarding their official position on Amtrak’s proposal.

### **Motion to send a letter to Amtrak formally objecting to their proposals to change Downeaster fleet and reduce train set size.**

Motion: Ms. Carol Murray  
Seconded: Ms. Allison Harris  
Accepted: All

## **FINANCE REPORT – Olivia Richmond**

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Olivia Richmond provided a review of FY23 Budget Variance Report through May 2023 and noted that overall cost recovery is ahead of projections. Olivia also noted that staff is preparing for the annual financial audit by Wipfli which will begin in August.

### **Motion to approve May Variance Report**

Motion: Ms. Carol Murray  
Seconded: Mr. Alison Harris  
Accepted: All

## **FY24 BUDGET DISCUSSION – Patricia Quinn**

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William Gayle provided the Board with an update on his transition from his role as Director of Policy and Administration at NNEPRA to MaineDOT effective July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Patricia explained that the recommendation was to create more redundancy within the NNEPRA staff as it related to the financial and compliance oversight and management of grants. She noted that the FY24 budget proposed in May

had been amended to reflect one additional position. If approved, NNEPRA would plan to recruit Grant Program and Compliance Specialist and Manager of Budget and Administration.

Mr. Nate Moulton noted that the Commissioner has reviewed the budget is is prepared to sign once the Board has given approval. Natalie Bogart mentioned that she has been working with Amtrak regarding revenue managed fairs and plans to have more information for the Board at the August meeting.

**Motion to approve the amended FY24 Budget**

Motion: Ms. Carol Murray  
Seconded: Ms. Allison Harris  
Accepted: All

**PROJECT UPDATES – Jim Russell**

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Jim Russell provided an update regarding the Wells Area Improvement Project noting that there has been a slight delay due to lingering agreements related to the transition between CSX and PanAm.

**WORKPLAN UPDATE – Patricia Quinn**

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Patricia provided an update on the Portland / Falmouth station projects noting that NNEPRA is working with MaineDOT and VHB to complete and site alternatives analysis for these projects.

Patricia noted there would be a meeting in July with Amtrak to discuss operations of three roundtrips a day between Rockland and Brunswick.

Brian Beeler informed the Board that the Customer Service Experience project had been complete with the installation of all ticketing kiosk. Ms. Allison Harris commented on the kiosk in Brunswick noting that it looks great and is a valuable marketing tool.

**OTHER BUSINESS – Patricia Quinn**

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Patricia provided legislature updates and informed the Board that the bills they had taken a position on pertaining to rail on were not passed.

The Board agreed that there would not be a July meeting due to holidays and scheduling. The next meeting would be scheduled for August.

**Meeting Adjourned at 2:24pm.**

Downeaster FY2023 Performance Report

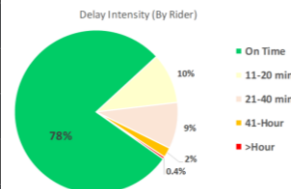
Downeaster Performance Metrics - Last 12 Months									
Period	FY	Ridership				Revenue			
		Actual	Budget	Variance	vs. 2019	Actual	Budget	Variance	\$/Rider
Jun 23	FY23	45,027	43,411	1,616	93%	\$ 900,524	\$ 835,654	\$ 64,870	\$20.00
May 23	FY23	39,276	39,986	-710	88%	\$ 754,624	\$ 769,732	\$ (15,108)	\$19.21
Apr 23	FY23	44,730	41,390	3,340	92%	\$ 831,278	\$ 796,756	\$ 34,522	\$18.58
Mar 23	FY23	38,277	37,430	847	80%	\$ 778,241	\$ 720,520	\$ 57,721	\$20.33
Feb 23	FY23	33,402	32,368	1,034	83%	\$ 636,652	\$ 623,084	\$ 13,568	\$19.06
Jan 23	FY23	35,435	30,370	5,065	93%	\$ 701,691	\$ 584,630	\$ 117,061	\$19.80
Dec 22	FY23	39,649	37,008	2,641	86%	\$ 830,010	\$ 712,404	\$ 117,606	\$20.93
Nov 22	FY23	43,636	38,058	5,578	92%	\$ 882,688	\$ 732,624	\$ 150,064	\$20.23
Oct 22	FY23	47,822	40,290	7,532	95%	\$ 1,009,651	\$ 775,590	\$ 234,061	\$21.11
Sep 22	FY23	45,677	40,644	5,033	96%	\$ 941,548	\$ 782,406	\$ 159,142	\$20.61
Aug 22	FY23	51,736	51,802	-66	85%	\$ 1,080,956	\$ 997,196	\$ 83,760	\$20.89
Jul 22	FY23	52,056	46,893	5,163	94%	\$ 1,072,818	\$ 902,686	\$ 170,132	\$20.61
<b>FY23 Final</b>		<b>516,723</b>	<b>479,651</b>	<b>35,456</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>\$ 10,420,681</b>	<b>\$ 9,233,283</b>	<b>1,137,637</b>	<b>\$20.17</b>
<b>FY22 Final</b>		<b>403,775</b>	<b>323,157</b>	<b>80,618</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>\$ 8,106,919</b>	<b>\$ 5,932,202</b>	<b>\$ 2,174,717</b>	<b>\$20.08</b>

Fiscal Year 2023 To Date			
	3,768		4,492
	925		2,099

FY23 Performance Goals:

- Avg Fare: \$19.25
- Ridership vs 2019: 85%
- Café Check Avg: \$7.95
- Café Capture Ratio: 18%
- OTP: 85%
- COTP: 90%
- Customer Satisfaction: 90%

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	
Jun 23	FY23	300	3,737,241	80%	83%	18%	\$ 9.97	90
May 23	FY23	310	2,827,872	76%	87%	17%	\$ 9.46	88
Apr 23	FY23	300	3,513,832	85%	88%	18%	\$ 9.60	87
Mar 23	FY23	302	2,985,606	83%	90%	19%	\$ 9.49	88
Feb 23	FY23	240	2,701,879	70%	77%	17%	\$ 9.38	89
Jan 23	FY23	307	3,047,410	70%	84%	18%	\$ 9.11	90
Dec 22	FY23	308	3,548,669	69%	80%	19%	\$ 9.26	90
Nov 22	FY23	296	3,744,739	82%	92%	16%	\$ 8.76	88
Oct 22	FY23	310	4,094,733	60%	75%	16%	\$ 8.46	89
Sep 22	FY23	300	3,894,054	73%	85%	16%	\$ 8.88	91
Aug 22	FY23	310	4,551,810	57%	70%	18%	\$ 9.03	90
Jul 22	FY23	310	4,500,638	65%	83%	17%	\$ 8.64	91
<b>FY23 Final</b>		<b>3,593</b>	<b>43,148,483</b>	<b>73%</b> 🚫	<b>83%</b>	<b>17%</b> 👍	<b>\$ 9.17</b>	<b>89%</b> 🗣️
<b>FY22 Final</b>		<b>3,621</b>	<b>35,080,346</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>\$ 7.98</b>	<b>90%</b>



FY 2023 Downeaster Customer Satisfaction											
	Sample Size	Overall Score	Train Comfort	Train Cleanliness	Train Crew	OTP	Train Status Info	Café	WiFi	Station Staff	Station Overall
Jun	1,175	89.7	9.0	9.0	9.3	8.7	8.7	8.3	7.9	9.2	8.7
May	853	87.7	9.0	9.0	9.3	8.7	8.4	7.9	8.0	9.1	8.6
Apr	784	86.7	9.1	9.0	9.2	8.7	8.6	8.0	8.0	9.1	8.7
Mar	315	90.0	9.0	8.9	9.3	8.9	8.7	8.2	8.1	9.2	8.8
Feb	706	88.9	9.1	9.0	9.3	8.4	8.3	9.4	9.0	9.5	8.5
Jan	422	90.1	9.1	9.1	9.2	8.6	8.5	8.2	8.0	9.2	8.8
Dec	513	90.4	8.9	9.0	9.2	8.1	8.0	8.0	7.4	9.0	8.7
Nov	447	87.8	9.0	9.0	9.1	8.8	8.5	8.2	7.4	9.1	8.8
Oct	538	88.8	7.8	9.1	9.1	8.2	9.0	7.4	9.1	9.1	8.2
Sep	230	90.2	9.1	9.1	9.2	8.9	8.9	8.1	8	9.2	8.8
Aug	1,281	89.6	9.1	9.0	9.3	8.2	8.4	8.2	7.5	9.2	8.7
Jul	1,346	91.1	9.1	9.2	9.4	8.9	8.7	8.2	7.4	9.3	8.8
<b>FY23</b>	<b>8,610</b>	<b>89.3</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>8.7</b>



NNEPRA Fiscal Year 2023  
 Operating Budget Variance Report  
 July 2022 - June 2023

	June-23			Fiscal Year to Date Jul 22-June 23			
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance	%
<b>Operating Revenue</b>							
Amtrak Ticket Revenue	\$ 900,524	\$ 835,654	\$ 64,870	\$ 10,420,681	\$ 9,233,283	\$ 1,187,398	13%
Food Service Revenue	\$ 95,860	\$ 63,112	\$ 32,748	\$ 823,041	\$ 697,336	\$ 125,705	18%
Parking Lot Revenue	\$ 97,739	\$ 24,000	\$ 73,739	\$ 602,349	\$ 365,250	\$ 237,099	65%
Interest & Other Revenue	\$ 38,850	\$ 28,400	\$ 10,450	\$ 621,874	\$ 406,649	\$ 215,225	53%
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 1,132,972</b>	<b>\$ 951,166</b>	<b>\$ 181,806</b>	<b>\$ 12,467,944</b>	<b>\$ 10,702,518</b>	<b>\$ 1,765,427</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>							
<b>Administration</b>							
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 90,867	\$ 79,000	\$ 11,867	\$ 903,982	\$ 948,000	\$ (44,018)	-5%
Office Expenses	\$ 12,374	\$ 12,501	\$ (127)	\$ 120,384	\$ 134,406	\$ (14,022)	-10%
Professional Services	\$ 15,557	\$ 7,280	\$ 8,277	\$ 118,040	\$ 142,200	\$ (24,160)	-17%
Insurance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 64,817	\$ 53,868	\$ 10,949	20%
Board Operations	\$ 1,294	\$ 1,250	\$ 44	\$ 13,837	\$ 21,624	\$ (7,788)	-36%
<b>Total Admin Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 120,092</b>	<b>\$ 100,031</b>	<b>\$ 20,062</b>	<b>\$ 1,221,059</b>	<b>\$ 1,300,098</b>	<b>\$ (79,039)</b>	<b>-6%</b>
<b>Train Operations</b>							
Amtrak Train Operations	\$ 603,117	\$ 610,300	\$ (7,183)	\$ 7,225,909	\$ 7,220,550	\$ 5,359	0%
Amtrak Equipment Maintenance	\$ 1,188,922	\$ 780,850	\$ 408,072	\$ 8,388,969	\$ 8,912,892	\$ (523,923)	-6%
Amtrak Support Services	\$ 179,755	\$ 173,677	\$ 6,079	\$ 1,896,540	\$ 2,000,636	\$ (104,096)	-5%
Train Fuel Cost	\$ 204,899	\$ 270,270	\$ (65,371)	\$ 2,872,660	\$ 3,462,159	\$ (589,499)	-17%
Other Train Operations	\$ 152,593	\$ 182,592	\$ (29,999)	\$ 1,743,490	\$ 2,201,381	\$ (457,891)	-21%
ARPA Relief Credit	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (1,016,034)	\$ (1,016,034)	\$ 0	0%
Facilities	\$ 102,948	\$ 45,035	\$ 57,913	\$ 617,525	\$ 630,180	\$ (12,655)	-2%
FY23 Capital Maintenance	\$ 862,482	\$ -	\$ 862,482	\$ 868,451	\$ 883,553	\$ (15,102)	-2%
<b>Total Train Operations</b>	<b>\$ 3,294,717</b>	<b>\$ 2,062,724</b>	<b>\$ 1,231,993</b>	<b>\$ 22,597,510</b>	<b>\$ 24,295,317</b>	<b>\$ (1,697,807)</b>	<b>-7%</b>
<b>Station Operations</b>							
Portland Station	\$ 40,663	\$ 38,907	\$ 1,756	\$ 480,205	\$ 463,256	\$ 16,949	4%
Platform Insurance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 209,410	\$ 225,000	\$ (15,590)	-7%
Station Platform Leases	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 46,741	\$ 46,010	\$ 731	2%
Station Improvements	\$ 69,787	\$ 250	\$ 69,537	\$ 96,335	\$ 50,000	\$ 46,335	93%
<b>Total Station Operations</b>	<b>\$ 110,450</b>	<b>\$ 39,157</b>	<b>\$ 71,293</b>	<b>\$ 832,691</b>	<b>\$ 784,266</b>	<b>\$ 48,425</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Total Food Service</b>	<b>\$ 112,893</b>	<b>\$ 96,473</b>	<b>\$ 16,420</b>	<b>\$ 1,128,096</b>	<b>\$ 1,040,060</b>	<b>\$ 88,036</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Total Marketing</b>	<b>\$ 93,951</b>	<b>\$ 40,000</b>	<b>\$ 53,951</b>	<b>\$ 482,148</b>	<b>\$ 520,000</b>	<b>\$ (37,852)</b>	<b>-7%</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 3,732,104</b>	<b>\$ 2,338,384</b>	<b>\$ 1,393,719</b>	<b>\$ 26,261,505</b>	<b>\$ 27,939,741</b>	<b>\$ (1,678,236)</b>	<b>-6%</b>
<b>Add'l Funding Required</b>	<b>\$ 2,599,132</b>	<b>\$ 1,387,218</b>	<b>\$ 1,211,914</b>	<b>\$ 13,793,561</b>	<b>\$ 17,237,223</b>	<b>\$ (3,443,662)</b>	<b>-20%</b>
Downeaster Ridership	45,027	43,411	1,616	516,723	479,651	37,072	
Overall cost recovery	30%	41%		47%	38%		