
Board Briefing Materials

November 27, 2023

Location:

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

3:00pm Public Session

For More Information

 207-780-1000 x 105

 info@nnepra.com



**NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND
PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY**

FY2024 NNEPRA Strategic Workplan Summary:

Safety and Health

The safety and health of passengers, crews and employees remains our first priority.

Performance Measures

Meet and exceed Performance Targets identified in the approved FY24 Operating Budget and 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.

FY24 Performance Targets					
Ridership	555,899	Train On Time Performance	85%	Café Cost Recovery	75%
Revenue	\$ 10,840,029	Customer On Time Performance	90%	Café Capture Ratio	19%
Average Fare	\$ 19.50	Overall Customer Satisfaction	90%	Café Check Average	\$8.85
Overall Cost Recovery	50%				

Service Improvement and Planning

Support the reduction of vehicle miles travelled and State climate change initiatives by improving service accessibility and quality and by taking steps necessary to:

- Complete Wells Area Improvement Project
- Relocate Portland Station and build a new station in Falmouth
- Build a new station in Falmouth to improve access to I-95 and communities north of Portland.
- Initiate a *regularly scheduled* passenger rail service *pilot program* on the Rockland Branch
- Update the Downeaster Service Development Plan
- Collaborate with Amtrak and MassDOT to improve connectivity between North Station and NEC
- Collaborate with CSX and Amtrak to seek to reduce overall travel time and maximize utility of positive train control (PTC).
- Prepare for new Amtrak trainsets to replace legacy equipment and significantly reduce air emissions.
- Collaborate with MaineDOT on studies and planning efforts.
- Assure NNEPRA owned and Downeaster-related facilities remain in a state of good repair.

Funding Resources

Pursue state and federal operational and capital funding opportunities to meet operation and project needs.

Information and Education

Support and participate in policy efforts to maintain and secure favorable terms for the continuation and expansion of passenger rail service on the local, state and national level.

- Remain engaged and involved with transportation planning studies, organizations and initiatives in support of transportation access, expansion and connectivity.

NNEPRA BOARD of DIRECTORS

November 27, 2023

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority

Draft Agenda

3:00pm Public Session

- Welcome and Safety Briefing
- Public Comment
- Approval of Minutes from October 23, 2023 Board Meeting
- Downeaster Performance Update
 - Operating Statistics
 - Marketing Initiatives
- Finance Update
 - New Amtrak Cost Methodology
- Project Updates
- Other Business
 - Downeaster Train Consist Change proposal
 - Insurance Policy Renewals
 - Rockland Service

Next Meeting: TBD

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

October 23, 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. Tom Hild; Mr. James Russell; Ms. Olivia Richmond; Ms. Belle Askinasi; Ms. Catherine Davidson; Ms. Taylor Belanger

Interested Parties:

Mr. Christina Smith, Wipfli; Ms. Patricia Berber, NNE; Mr. Dana Knapp, Concord Coach Lines; Mr. Luke Irvine, Amtrak; Mr. Bruce Sleeper, TrainRiders Northeast

OPENING REMARKS

Meeting called to order at 3:00 pm and a safety briefing was provided.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Cohen opened the floor to public comment.

There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve September 18, 2023, Minutes

Motion: Ms. Carol Murray
Seconded: Ms. Alison Harris
Approved: All

FY2023 Audit Report and Overview – Patricia Quinn

Ms. Patricia Quinn began by introducing NNEPRA’s newest staff member, Mr. Tom Hild, to the Board, noting that Tom would be filling the role of Finance Manager.

Patricia additionally introduced Mr. Christian Smith, who attended from NNEPRA’s auditing firm, Wipfli, to provide a high-level review of the FY23 Financial Audit.

Christian provided an overview of Wipfli’s relationship to NNEPRA and the Board, noting that Wipfli is a firm of independent auditors that assist NNEPRA with financial management and yearly audit preparation.

Christian stated that the FY23 audit was considered a “clean audit” and there were no adjustments or items of concern highlighted.

Chairman Cohen led the Board in a discussion regarding the audit results, during which the Board agreed they were satisfied with the outcome.

Motion to accept FY23 Financial Audit

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

OVERVIEW OF DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE – Patricia Quinn

Patricia provided an overview of the first quarter of FY24, noting that the Downeaster service had three (3) record-breaking months of ridership and revenue.

Patricia acknowledged that ridership typically fluctuates in the fall as kids return to school, and commuter ridership remains low compared to pre-COVID numbers; however, those riders are slowly returning.

Patricia updated the Board on weather-related issues in August and September, which impacted overall OTP, noting support and efforts made by local Amtrak officials to assist in restoring service in a timely fashion.

Additionally, Patricia noted that for the month of October, the service is progressing to meet and exceed the anticipated budget.

MARKETING UPDATE – Taylor Belanger

Ms. Taylor Belanger provided an update on recent community outreach participation in Freeport and Brunswick geared towards targeting the senior market. Taylor also noted that paid media is set to transition to seasonally appropriate ads, and commented that NNEPRA’s advertising agency, Blaze, provides a smart marketing approach that is strong and budget friendly.

FINANCE REPORT – Olivia Richmond

Ms. Olivia Richmond provided a review of the September variance report. Patricia provided a review of Amtrak expenses.

Motion to approve July Variance Report

Motion: Ms. Carol Murray
Seconded: Ms. Maggie Fleming
Accepted: All

FARE PLAN – Natalie Bogart

Ms. Natalie Bogart provided a summary of the comments received regarding the Fare Plan during the public comment period. The Fare Plan was open for public comment for fourteen (14) days and received 25 comments. Natalie reported that the staff recommendation is to move ahead with the Fare Plan as presented as it gives staff the ability to manage fares within the dynamic pricing range and will be a tool to maximize ridership and revenue.

Chairman Cohen lead the Board in a discussion regarding the public comment summary. The Board discussed the dynamic pricing methodology, and it was noted that deals and discounts would still be available.

Patricia explained that next steps would be to work with Amtrak to implement the fare plan.

Motion to approve FY24 Fare Plan

Motion: Ms. Carol Murray

Second: Ms. Maggie Fleming

Accepted: All

PROJECT UPDATES – Jim Russell

Mr. Jim Russell provided an update regarding the Wells Area Improvement Project noting that there would be no construction on the siding or platform until spring of 2024.

Jim provided an update on the FY24 Capital Maintenance Program noting that CSX had provided draft work elements and has yet to send back a signed agreement.

Jim noted that CSX crews have begun brush cutting along the right of way to address the significant vegetation concerns from Amtrak crews.

Jim also provided an update regarding the Request for Quotes recently advertised for improvements to the BLF access road. Jim noted that the lowest quote was from St. Laurent and Son and although the quote was higher than budget, he and the VHB partners felt it was fair and reasonable. The work is expected to be completed in the coming weeks.

Insurance Request for Proposals – Belle Askinasi

Ms. Belle Askinasi provided a high-level overview of the RFP process for Insurance Services, noting that although eight (8) local firms were directly solicited, and the RFP was extensively advertised in local newspapers, NNEPRA only received a single proposal from the current insurance company, Clark Insurance.

Belle explained that NNEPRA staff followed the procedures for single bid response, completing responsiveness and responsibility determination forms as well as completing a single bid justification form.

Motion to award single bid contract to Clark Insurance for Insurance Brokerage Services

Motion: Ms. Carol Murray

Second: Mr. Alan Cassavant

Accepted: All

STATION UPDATES – Brian Beeler

Brian Beeler provided an update on Station Security. Brian noted that the town of Saco is taking swift action to assist in addressing concerns at the station such as approving a budget for private security and custodial services. Additionally, the station will have abbreviated hours of operation effective November 1, 2023, and a pay by plate parking implementation effective November 6, 2023.

Brian briefly discussed the success of the Downeaster Ambassador program noting that there continues to be efforts to expand and increase volunteers.

Mitchel Award – Patricia Quinn

Patricia provided an overview of the Mitchel Award that NNEPRA distributes yearly. Patricia noted that this award is presented to an individual or group of individuals who have gone above and beyond to support Downeaster passenger rail service. Mr. Rico Gomes has been nominated to receive the award this year. Mr. Gomes is the Superintendent of Railroad Operations at the MBTA and was a tremendous asset to the Downeaster service this past year, specifically assisting with coordinating bus bridges during the service outages.

Motion to accept nomination of Rico Gomes for the 2023 Mitchel Award

Motion: Ms. Carol Murray

Second: Ms. Alison Harris

Accepted: All

OTHER BUSINESS – Patricia Quinn

Patricia reported that Amtrak had not yet responded to Chairman Cohen's memo regarding Amtrak's proposed equipment change. Additionally, Patricia updated the Board regarding the SAIPRC 209 Policy scheduled for review in October.

Patricia informed the Board that Amtrak's long-time police officer, Detective Mike Lee, plans to retire by the end of the year and that NNEPRA Staff plan to meet with replacement officer in Dover, NH.

Patricia also noted that all NTD reporting had been submitted prior to the October 31st deadline, and all reporting is up to date.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Cohen opened the floor to public comment.


Mr. Bruce Sleeper noted that TrainRiders Northeast is working to relocate their office to the Saco station, which could help provide additional support to the station.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:32 pm.




Downeaster Performance Metrics - Last 12 Months									
Period	FY	Ridership				Revenue			
		Actual	Budget	Variance	vs. FY23	Actual	Budget	Variance	\$/Rider
Oct 23	FY24	54,816	50,213	4,603	115%	\$1,093,794	\$ 979,155	\$ 114,639	\$19.95
Sep 23	FY24	52,994	47,961	5,033	116%	\$1,060,397	\$ 935,237	\$ 125,160	\$20.01
Aug 23	FY24	61,769	54,323	7,446	119%	\$1,241,359	\$ 1,059,295	\$ 182,064	\$20.10
Jul 23	FY24	57,876	54,659	3,217	111%	\$1,171,407	\$ 1,065,847	\$ 105,560	\$20.24
FY24 To Date		227,455	207,156	20,299	115%	\$4,566,957	\$ 4,039,534	\$ 527,423	\$20.08
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
FY23 Final		516,723	479,651	37,072	90%	\$10,420,681	\$ 9,233,283	\$ 1,137,637	\$20.17


Fiscal Year 2024 To Date




2,240



2,439

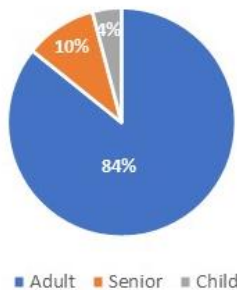


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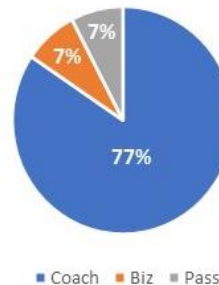


1,416

FY24 Riders by Passenger Type



FY24 Riders by Ticket Type



FY24 Performance Targets

Ridership	555,899	Train On Time Performance	85%	Café Cost Recovery	75%
Revenue	\$ 10,840,029	Customer On Time Performance	90%	Café Capture Ratio	19%
Average Fare	\$ 19.50	Overall Customer Satisfaction	90%	Café Check Average	\$8.85
Overall Cost Recovery	50%				

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	
Oct 23	FY24	306	4,714,176	69%	80%	16%	\$ 9.77	92
Sep 23	FY24	297	4,521,123	60%	73%	18%	\$ 10.35	89
Aug 23	FY24	300	5,444,093	65%	78%	18%	\$ 10.47	90
Jul 23	FY24	310	5,072,263	55%	68%	19%	\$ 10.10	91
FY24 To Date		1,213	19,751,655	62%	75%	14%	\$ 7.73	90%
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
FY23 Final		3,593	43,148,483	73%	83%	17%	\$ 9.17	89%

Delay Intensity (By Rider)

