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# Board Briefing Materials

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February 26, 2024

**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](mailto: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.

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

**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

*February 26, 2024*

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority

### Draft Agenda

#### 3:00pm Public Session

- Welcome and Safety Briefing
- Public Comment
- Approval of Minutes from January 22, 2023 Board Meeting
- Downeaster Performance Update
  - Operating Statistics
  - Marketing Initiatives
- Finance Update
  - Review of Budget Variance Report
- Project Updates
  - Wells Area Improvement Project
- Other Business
  - Portland Station Security
  - Amtrak Proposed Fleet Reassignment
- Public Comment

**Next Meeting: March 25, 2024**

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

**January 22, 2024**

**Directors in Attendance:**

Chairman Jim Cohen; Mr. Steve Lyons; Ms. Alison Harris; Ms. Maggie Fleming; Mr. Nate Moulton

**NNEPRA Staff in Attendance:**

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

**Interested Parties:**

Mr. Irwin Gratz, Maine Public Radio; Mr. Tom Wilhite, Camden Resident; Mr. Luke Irvine, Amtrak; Kevin Chittenden, Amtrak

**OPENING REMARKS**

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Meeting called to order at 3:01 pm and a safety briefing was provided.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

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Chairman Cohen opened the floor to public comment.

Mr. Tom Wilhite of Camden Maine, inquired regarding the status of service to Rockland, noting that organizations in the area are eager to help and promote expansion. Patricia Quinn responded that an update on Rockland would be provided during the meeting.

End public comment.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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**Motion to approve November 27, 2023, Minutes**

Motion: Ms. Alison Harris

Seconded: Mr. Steve Lyons

Approved: All

**OVERVIEW OF DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE – Patricia Quinn**

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Ms. Patricia Quinn provided an overview of performance for July 2023 through December 2023 noting that ridership and revenue had broken records every month in that time.

Ms. Natalie Bogart reported that the FY24 Fare Plan recommendations had been implemented in December and January. Natalie noted that NNEPRA offers the lowest discount of \$24.00 / round trip fare during the month of January.

Patricia commented on the improved OTP over the past few months and the strong CSI scores. Additionally, the Café has been performing well.

**MARKETING UPDATE – Taylor Belanger**

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Ms. Taylor Belanger provided an update on NNEPRA marketing initiatives and gave an overview of paid, visual, and traditional media efforts.

### **FINANCE REPORT – Patricia Quinn**

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Patricia noted that there was no variance report due to the transition to a new Amtrak cost methodology and the delay in receiving invoices for October – December 2023. Invoices reflecting the new cost methodology are being finalized and should be available by the next meeting. Patricia provided an update that expenses outside of Amtrak were pacing as expected.

Ms. Olivia Richmond provided a review of the variance report without the Amtrak data, specifically explaining the insurance variance.

### **Motion to accept December 2023 Variance Report**

Motion: Mr. Steve Lyons

Second: Ms. Maggie Fleming

Approved: All

### **PROJECT UPDATES – Jim Russell**

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Mr. Jim Russell reported some progress had been made on the Wells project, but that NNEPRA was still waiting on FRA for final approvals for construction to proceed.

Jim noted that the Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA) and the town of Wells were finalizing necessary agreement to allow NNEPRA to access their respective properties to move the project forward.

Mr. Nate Moulton inquired when NNEPRA would be going out to bid for construction and Jim answered the plan was for late February to early March of 2024.

Natalie provided an update on service to Rockland noting that NNEPRA and MaineDOT were working closely. Natalie commented that a request had been made to Amtrak to provide three (3) round trips a day to Rockland. Two daily round trips could be operated with the existing equipment pool, but additional equipment would be needed to operate the third daily round trip. A pilot program for summer 2024 is anticipated. Additionally, Natalie noted that Bath Iron Works expressed interest in rail transportation to alleviate BIW staff parking issues.

### **OTHER BUSINESS – Patricia Quinn**

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Mr. Brian Beeler provided an overview of the differences between the Downeaster’s current Amfleet equipment and the Horizon fleet proposed by Amtrak. Brian noted that passengers would likely not notice much of a difference because the Horizon seats are the same as the seats in the Amfleets. He also noted differences including that there are fewer seats in the Horizon coaches, there are no bike racks, and the boarding plates need to be redesigned. Mr. Jeff Mann joined the meeting via Zoom to provide Amtrak’s position regarding the need to transition Downeaster equipment from Amfleet coaches to Horizon coaches.

Chairman Cohen led the Board in a discussion with Mr. Mann regarding concerns specific to mechanical constraints associated with an isolated fleet and costs. Mr. Mann noted Amtrak was confident that mechanical forces would be

prepared to handle the fleet, further noting that Amtrak was getting new bridge plates to fit the Horizon coaches and adding bike racks. Amtrak projects the equipment transition would happen in two phases beginning in May of 2024.

Patricia inquired what logical next steps would be and how costs and contractual agreements would be addressed. Mr. Mann responded that Amtrak would put together a business plan and an official proposal within the coming weeks for NNEPRA's consideration.

Ms. Belle Askinasi provided the Board an overview of the annual report to OPEGA requiring Board approval, noting that the report was due February 1, 2024.

**Motion to approve and submit the report to OPEGA as presented**

Motion: Ms. Alison Harris

Second: Ms. Maggie Fleming

Approved: All

Patrica provided an update regarding LD 860 which directed NNEPRA to submit an application to designate Portland/Auburn/Bangor as a high priority corridor. Patricia noted that results of studies on the corridor would likely not qualify it for federal funding.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

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Chairman Cohen opened the floor to public comment.

No public comment.


**Meeting Adjourned at 4:58 pm.**

Downeaster Performance Metrics - Last 12 Months									
Period	FY	Ridership				Revenue			
		Actual	Budget	Variance	vs. FY23	Actual	Budget	Variance	\$/Rider
Jan 24	FY24	41,238	38,979	2,259	116%	897,352	\$ 750,336	\$ 147,016	\$21.76
Dec 23	FY24	46,905	41,631	5,274	118%	\$ 1,020,290	\$ 811,813	\$ 208,477	\$21.75
Nov 23	FY24	48,005	45,818	2,187	110%	\$ 1,003,399	\$ 893,447	\$ 109,952	\$20.90
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
<b>FY24 To Date</b>		<b>363,603</b>	<b>333,584</b>	<b>30,019</b>	<b>115%</b>	<b>\$ 7,487,998</b>	<b>\$ 6,495,130</b>	<b>\$ 992,868</b>	<b>\$20.59</b>
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
<b>FY23 Final</b>		<b>516,723</b>	<b>479,651</b>	<b>37,072</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>\$ 10,420,681</b>	<b>\$ 9,233,283</b>	<b>1,137,637</b>	<b>\$20.17</b>


**Fiscal Year 2024 To Date**




**3,488**



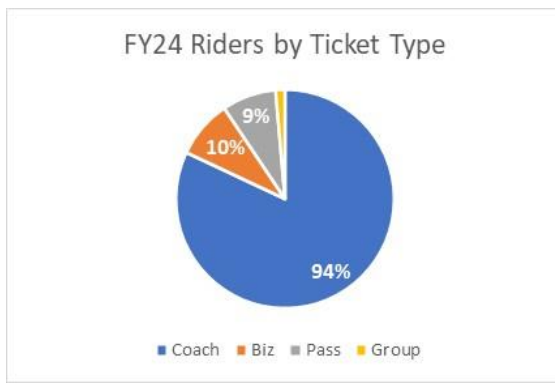
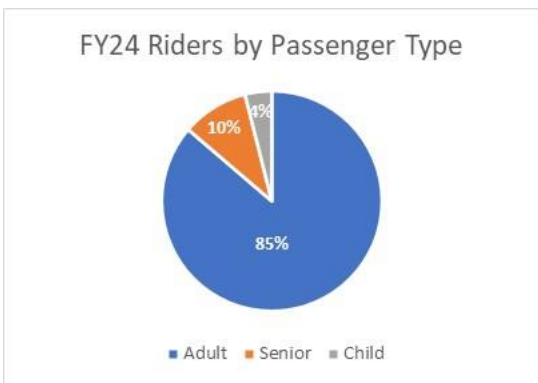
**3,557**



**670**

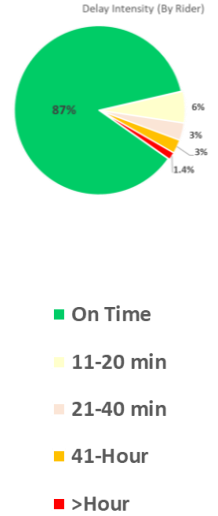


**1,655**



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

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	
Jan 24	FY24	308	3,716,256	78%	87%	18%	\$ 10.76	94
Dec 23	FY24	305	4,137,821	82%	89%	17%	\$ 10.85	92
Nov 23	FY24	298	4,137,882	80%	86%	16%	\$ 10.37	90
Oct 23	FY24	306	4,711,135	69%	80%	16%	\$ 9.77	92
Sep 23	FY24	297	4,524,931	60%	73%	16%	\$ 8.88	91
Aug 23	FY24	310	5,439,692	65%	78%	18%	\$ 9.03	90
Jul 23	FY24	310	5,075,219	55%	68%	17%	\$ 8.64	91
<b>FY24 To Date</b>		<b>2,134</b>	<b>31,742,936</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>\$ 9.76</b>	<b>91</b>
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
<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>



FY 2024 Downeaster Customer Satisfaction											
	Sample Size	Overall Score	Train Comfort	Train Cleanliness	Train Crew	OTP	Train Status Info	Café	WiFi	Station Staff	Station Overall
Jan	635	88.6	87	83	92	82	82	76	72	91	87
Dec	751	92.0	87	87	94	92	88	78	74	91	83
Nov	680	90.0	87	87	92	84	83	76	72	88	85
Oct	1,477	92.0	89	88	94	84	83	79	68	89	82
Sep	1,654	89.1	88	87	90	75	77	79	74	89	86
Aug	1,807	89.5	90	89	93	83	84	82	80	92	87
Jul	1,335	92.2	91	90	94	81	85	79	81	92	86
<b>FY24</b>	<b>7,704</b>	<b>90.8</b>	<b>88.6</b>	<b>87.9</b>	<b>92.8</b>	<b>83.2</b>	<b>83.3</b>	<b>78.8</b>	<b>74.8</b>	<b>90.2</b>	<b>84.8</b>
Jun	1,175	89.7	90	90	92	87	87	83.0	79.0	92.0	87.0
May	853	87.7	9	9	93	87	84	79.0	80.0	91.0	86.0
Apr	784	86.7	91	90	92	87	86	80.0	80.0	91.0	87.0
Mar	315	90.0	90	89	93	89	87	82.0	81.0	92.0	88.0
Feb	706	88.9	91	90	93	84	83	94.0	90.0	95.0	85.0
<b>FY23 Year End</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 2024**  
**Operating Budget Variance Report**  
July 2023 - December 2023

	December-23			Fiscal Year to Date December 23			
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance	%
<b>Operating Revenue</b>							
Amtrak Ticket Revenue	\$ 1,020,290	\$ 811,813	\$ 208,477	6,590,646.00	\$ 5,744,794	\$ 845,852	15%
Food Service Revenue	\$ 88,624	\$ 70,794	\$ 17,830	555,040.00	\$ 500,975	\$ 54,065	11%
Parking Lot Revenue	\$ 44,576	\$ 38,000	\$ 6,576	346,188.00	\$ 278,500	\$ 67,688	24%
Interest & Other Revenue	\$ 66,188	\$ 37,000	\$ 29,188	410,683.00	\$ 222,000	\$ 188,683	85%
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 1,219,678</b>	<b>\$ 957,608</b>	<b>\$ 262,070</b>	<b>\$ 7,902,557</b>	<b>\$ 6,746,269</b>	<b>\$ 1,156,288</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>							
<b>Administration</b>							
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 96,850	\$ 95,833	\$ 1,017	\$ 510,489	\$ 574,998	\$ (64,509)	-11%
Office Expenses	\$ 9,167	\$ 12,290	\$ (3,123)	\$ 79,191	\$ 85,765	\$ (6,574)	-8%
Professional Services	\$ 6,265	\$ 11,130	\$ (4,865)	\$ 63,959	\$ 85,560	\$ (21,601)	-25%
Insurance	\$ 4,355	\$ 4,250	\$ 105	\$ 30,679	\$ 25,500	\$ 5,179	N/A
Board Operations	\$ 1,282	\$ 8,073	\$ (6,791)	\$ 7,692	\$ 14,323	\$ (6,631)	-46%
<b>Total Admin Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 117,919</b>	<b>\$ 131,576</b>	<b>\$ (13,657)</b>	<b>\$ 692,010</b>	<b>\$ 786,146</b>	<b>\$ (94,136)</b>	<b>-12%</b>
<b>Train Operations</b>							
Amtrak Train Operations	\$ 558,042	\$ 656,884	\$ (98,842)	\$ 3,736,597	\$ 3,786,552	\$ (49,955)	-1%
Amtrak Equipment Maintenance	\$ 619,612	\$ 791,162	\$ (171,550)	\$ 3,947,006	\$ 4,437,286	\$ (490,280)	-11%
Amtrak Support Services	\$ 133,552	\$ 164,731	\$ (31,179)	\$ 1,064,596	\$ 1,034,883	\$ 29,713	3%
Train Fuel Cost	\$ 202,294	\$ 239,382	\$ (37,088)	\$ 1,410,431	\$ 1,373,486	\$ 36,945	3%
Other Train Operations	\$ 235,938	\$ 170,443	\$ 65,495	\$ 1,095,899	\$ 1,022,658	\$ 73,241	7%
Facilities	\$ 52,668	\$ 59,132	\$ (6,464)	\$ 267,342	\$ 340,680	\$ (73,338)	-22%
FY24 Capital Maintenance	\$ 685	\$ -	\$ 685	\$ 30,276	\$ -	\$ 30,276	N/A
<b>Total Train Operations</b>	<b>\$ 1,802,791</b>	<b>\$ 2,081,734</b>	<b>\$ (278,943)</b>	<b>\$ 11,552,147</b>	<b>\$ 11,995,546</b>	<b>\$ (443,399)</b>	<b>-4%</b>
<b>Station Operations</b>							
Portland Station	\$ 40,448	\$ 39,671	\$ 777	\$ 259,945	\$ 241,462	\$ 18,483	8%
Platform Insurance	\$ 16,518	\$ 17,076	\$ (558)	\$ 101,148	\$ 102,456	\$ (1,308)	-1%
Station Platform Leases	\$ 3,798	\$ 4,020	\$ (222)	\$ 22,994	\$ 24,122	\$ (1,128)	-5%
Station Improvements	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 321	\$ -	\$ 321	N/A
<b>Total Station Operations</b>	<b>\$ 60,764</b>	<b>\$ 60,767</b>	<b>\$ (3)</b>	<b>\$ 384,408</b>	<b>\$ 368,040</b>	<b>\$ 16,368</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Total Food Service</b>	<b>\$ 106,015</b>	<b>\$ 108,285</b>	<b>\$ (2,270)</b>	<b>\$ 636,993</b>	<b>\$ 652,590</b>	<b>\$ (15,597)</b>	<b>-2%</b>
<b>Total Marketing</b>	<b>\$ 43,825</b>	<b>\$ 53,698</b>	<b>\$ (9,873)</b>	<b>\$ 209,152</b>	<b>\$ 259,276</b>	<b>\$ (50,124)</b>	<b>-19%</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 2,131,314</b>	<b>\$ 2,436,060</b>	<b>\$ (304,746)</b>	<b>\$ 13,474,710</b>	<b>\$ 14,061,597</b>	<b>\$ (586,887)</b>	<b>-4%</b>
<b>Add'l Funding Required</b>	<b>\$ 911,636</b>	<b>\$ 1,478,453</b>	<b>\$ (566,817)</b>	<b>\$ 5,572,153</b>	<b>\$ 7,315,328</b>	<b>\$ (1,743,175)</b>	<b>-24%</b>
Downeaster Ridership	46,905	41,631	5,274	322,365	294,605	27,760	
Overall cost recovery	57%	39%		59%	48%		
Café Recovery	84%	65%		87%	77%		