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# Board Briefing Materials

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April 22, 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

*April 22, 2024*

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority

### Draft Agenda

#### 3:00pm Public Session

- Welcome and Safety Briefing
- Public Comment
- Approval of Minutes from February 26, 2024 Board Meeting
- Downeaster Performance Update
  - Operating Statistics
  - Marketing Initiatives
- Corridor ID Initiatives
  - Portland Station Relocation Public Meeting
  - West Falmouth Station (Maggie)
  - Rockland Service
- Finance Update
  - Review of Budget Variance Report
  - FY25 Budget Schedule
- Amtrak Agreement Amendments
  - Transition to Horizon Coaches
  - New Cost Methodology
- Project Updates
  - Wells Area Improvement Project
  - CSX Tie Replacement Project
- Other Business
  - Downeaster Station Updates
    - Freeport
    - Old Orchard Beach
    - Saco
    - Dover
- Public Comment

**Next Meeting: TBD**



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

**February 26, 2024**

**Directors in Attendance:**

Chairman Jim Cohen; Mr. Alan Cassavant, Vice Chari; Ms. Carol Murray, Treasurer; Mr. Steve Lyons; Ms. Alison Harris; Ms. Maggie Fleming; Mr. Nathan Howard

**NNEPRA Staff in Attendance:**

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

**Interested Parties:**

Mr. Tom Wilhite, Camden Resident; Det. Joshua Roberts, Amtrak Police; Mr. Luke Irvine, Amtrak; Mr. Bruce Sleeper, TrainRiders NE; Patty Barber, Rail Passengers Association; Mr. Dana Knapp, Concord Coach Lines

**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.  
No public comment.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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**Motion to approve January 22, 2024 Minutes**

Motion: Mr. Steve Lyons  
Seconded: Ms. Alison Harris  
Abstain: Ms. Carol Murray  
Approved: All

**OVERVIEW OF DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE – Patricia Quinn**

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Ms. Patricia Quinn introduced Det. Joshua Roberts, who explained that he is replacing Det. Mike Lee, who recently retired. Det. Roberts provided an overview of Amtrak’s efforts to be more visible onboard and in stations.

Patricia provided an overview of performance for January 2024, noting another month of record-breaking ridership and revenue. Patricia commented on the continued improvements to OTP and COTP, recognizing the great partnerships with Amtrak, CSX and the MBTA. CSI scores remain high.

Chairman Cohen inquired about the continued low scores for on board Wi-Fi. Patricia explained that connectivity can be impaired when trains are full, and many users are connected to the WIFI, that there are several “dead spots” along the route.

### **MARKETING UPDATE – Taylor Belanger**

Ms. Taylor Belanger provided an update on marketing initiatives to grow Downeaster ridership and revenue and gave an overview of paid, visual, and traditional media efforts. Taylor presented the winter broadcast spot, noting it had received rave reviews from staff and riders.

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

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Patricia provided an overview of the operating budget report through January, noting that the new Amtrak cost methodology was implemented in October 2023 and that October-December costs reflect those new calculations. Patricia said that modifications to the new cost methodology are still underway, noting that these are likely to be changes and even increases in certain cost categories going forward, but that Amtrak costs for FY2024 are expected to be close to projections.

Patricia reported that Concord Coach had submitted a letter to MaineDOT requesting additional funding to support full-time security to be on-site at the Portland Transportation Center (PTC). Mr. Dana Knapp of Concord Coach explained that increased security has helped create a sense of safety for passengers and PTC staff. Patricia explained that increasing full-time security adds cost but is necessary.

Patricia provided an overview of Café sales, noting that NexDine staff consistently exceed expectations and have been an asset to the service.

Additionally, Patricia noted that revenue is running 11% ahead of budget.

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

Motion: Ms. Carol Murray  
Second: Mr. Steve Lyons  
Approved: All

### **PROJECT UPDATES – Jim Russell**

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Mr. Jim Russell reported that the Wells Area Improvement Project, specifically the track work, will resume in the summer (2024).

The Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA) and the town of Wells have finalized the necessary agreements to allow NNEPRA to access their respective properties to move the project forward. NNEPRA is waiting for an amended agreement from CSX, a permit from the MaineDEP, and confirmation from the FRA to proceed.

Jim noted that the bid request for the construction of the Wells platform is anticipated to be publicized in March of 2024, with construction expected to be underway as early as fall of 2024.

Patricia provided an update on the FRA Corridor ID Program (CID) and Fed/State Partnership, noting that Ms. Catherine Davidson had submitted all necessary paperwork for the CID program and is preparing to submit post-award paperwork for the Fed/State Partnership.

Patricia noted that a pilot program for service to Rockland is expected to launch in the summer of 2024. Additionally, Amtrak has put together a team and endorsed the project. Patricia said that a proposal with costs will be forthcoming.

Patricia reported that the Portland Station Relocation and Falmouth Station Project was progressing, noting discussions with the City of Portland and Town of Falmouth. A public meeting is anticipated to take place at the end of March 2024.

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

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Patricia updated the Board on the status of Amtrak’s proposal to change the Downeaster coaches to the Horizon fleet, noting that a written Amtrak proposal had not yet been received. Patricia explained that Amtrak had assembled a working group of local, national, and mechanical staff to develop an implementation plan for the Horizon cars.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

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Chairman Cohen opened the floor to public comment.

Mr. Bruce Sleeper of TrainRiders Northeast inquired about the Wells project, specific to the signal work. Bruce asked what would happen if the signal work was completed after the track work. Patricia responded that the work schedule was expected to align.

Bruce additionally inquired about the proposal from AmeriStarRail regarding service on the Rockland Branch and if that would impact what Amtrak is looking to accomplish. Patricia responded that NNEPRA is only working with Amtrak to provide service on the Rockland branch.

Mr. Tom Wilhite of Camden, Maine, inquired about the most significant “hurdles” in expanding service to Rockland. Patricia explained that the Rockland branch does not have positive train control (PTC) and that a waiver was required from the FRA. Amtrak has begun the process of applying for the waiver. Patricia also stated that equipment is another challenge, noting it was NNEPRA’s recommendation to operate a 3<sup>rd</sup> daily round trip would require an additional trainset, which Amtrak is not yet able to provide.

End public comment.

#### **Motion adjourned meeting**

Motion: Ms. Carol Murray


Second: Mr. Alison Harris

Approved: All


**Meeting Adjourned at 4:01 pm.**

Downeaster Performance Metrics - Last 12 Months									
Period	FY	Ridership				Revenue			
		Actual	Budget	Variance	vs. FY23	Actual	Budget	Variance	\$/Rider
Mar 24	FY24	46,537	40,191	6,346	122%	\$ 1,105,299	\$ 783,722	\$ 321,577	\$ 23.75
Feb 24	FY24	42,045	36,742	5,303	126%	\$ 1,009,621	\$ 707,287	\$ 302,334	\$ 24.01
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>452,185</b>	<b>410,517</b>	<b>41,668</b>	<b>117%</b>	<b>9,602,918</b>	<b>\$ 7,986,139</b>	<b>\$ 1,616,779</b>	<b>\$ 21.24</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
<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**




**4,345**



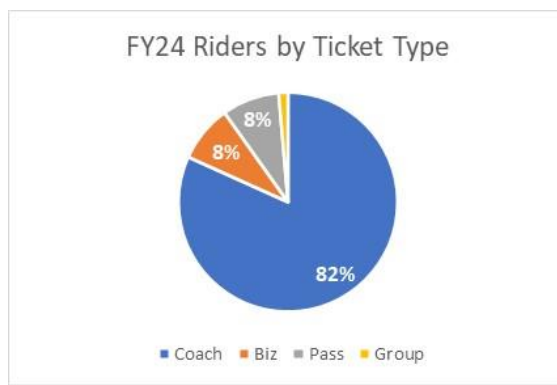
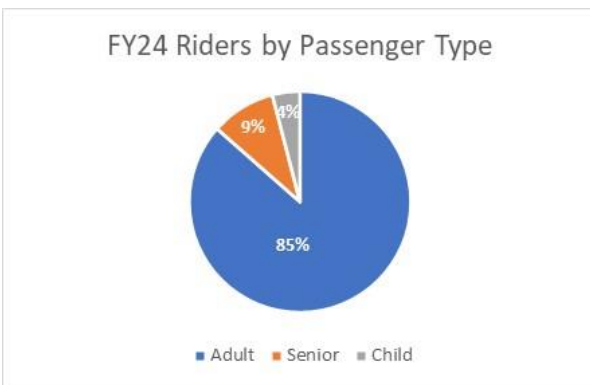
**4,303**



**740**

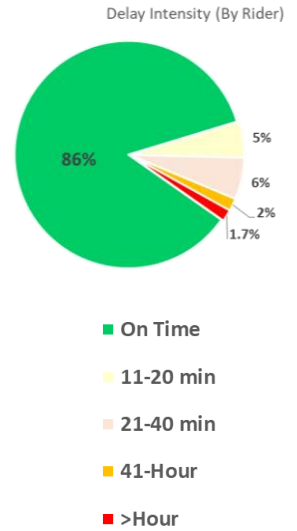


**1,800**



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	
Mar 24	FY24	306	4,058,625	82%	86%	19%	\$ 10.88	88
Feb 24	FY24	290	3,655,150	83%	89%	18%	\$ 10.79	90
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>2,730</b>	<b>39,456,711</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>\$ 10.00</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
<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			OTP	Train Status Info		Café	WiFi	Station Staff	Station Overall
			Train Comfort	Train Cleanliness	Train Crew		OTP	Train Status Info				
Mar	529	88.2	86	85	94	83	79	76	70	91	88	
Feb	528	90.3	86	84	93	86	84	75	72	91	88	
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>8,867</b>	<b>90.5</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>85</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	
<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 - February 2024**

	February-24			Fiscal Year to Date July 2023 - February 2024			
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance	%
<b>Operating Revenue</b>							
Amtrak Ticket Revenue	\$ 1,009,621	\$ 707,287	\$ 302,334	8,497,619	\$ 7,202,417	\$ 1,295,202	18%
Food Service Revenue	\$ 78,352	\$ 62,480	\$ 15,872	710,937	\$ 629,739	\$ 81,198	13%
Parking Lot Revenue	\$ 59,985	\$ 38,000	\$ 21,985	460,051	\$ 368,000	\$ 92,051	25%
Interest & Other Revenue	\$ 52,158	\$ 37,000	\$ 15,158	489,038	\$ 296,000	\$ 193,038	65%
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 1,200,116</b>	<b>\$ 844,767</b>	<b>\$ 355,349</b>	<b>\$ 10,157,645</b>	<b>\$ 8,496,156</b>	<b>\$ 1,661,489</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>							
<b>Administration</b>							
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 86,121	\$ 95,833	\$ (9,712)	\$ 684,474	\$ 766,664	\$ (82,190)	-11%
Office Expenses	\$ 18,605	\$ 12,540	\$ 6,065	\$ 107,545	\$ 118,095	\$ (10,550)	-9%
Professional Services	\$ 7,163	\$ 13,630	\$ (6,467)	\$ 81,135	\$ 110,820	\$ (29,685)	-27%
Insurance	\$ 4,355	\$ 4,250	\$ 105	\$ 39,389	\$ 34,750	\$ 4,639	N/A
Board Operations	\$ 2,135	\$ 1,250	\$ 885	\$ 11,609	\$ 16,823	\$ (5,214)	-31%
<b>Total Admin Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 118,379</b>	<b>\$ 127,503</b>	<b>\$ (9,124)</b>	<b>\$ 924,152</b>	<b>\$ 1,047,152</b>	<b>\$ (123,000)</b>	<b>-12%</b>
<b>Train Operations</b>							
Amtrak Train Operations	\$ 540,097	\$ 656,884	\$ (116,787)	\$ 4,849,839	\$ 5,100,320	\$ (250,481)	-5%
Amtrak Equipment Maintenance	\$ 629,593	\$ 791,162	\$ (161,569)	\$ 5,728,725	\$ 6,516,861	\$ (788,136)	-12%
Amtrak Support Services	\$ 136,853	\$ 160,549	\$ (23,696)	\$ 1,346,742	\$ 1,354,284	\$ (7,542)	-1%
Train Fuel Cost	\$ 208,185	\$ 216,216	\$ (8,031)	\$ 1,845,429	\$ 1,829,084	\$ 16,345	1%
Other Train Operations	\$ 194,154	\$ 186,365	\$ 7,789	\$ 1,392,216	\$ 1,395,388	\$ (3,172)	0%
Facilities	\$ 62,836	\$ 82,428	\$ (19,592)	\$ 396,658	\$ 496,039	\$ (99,381)	-20%
FY24 Capital Maintenance	\$ 480	\$ -	\$ 480	\$ 31,647	\$ 31,647	\$ -	N/A
<b>Total Train Operations</b>	<b>\$ 1,772,198</b>	<b>\$ 2,093,603</b>	<b>\$ (321,405)</b>	<b>\$ 15,591,256</b>	<b>\$ 16,723,624</b>	<b>\$ (1,132,368)</b>	<b>-7%</b>
<b>Station Operations</b>							
Portland Station	\$ 41,684	\$ 39,671	\$ 2,013	\$ 341,467	\$ 320,804	\$ 20,663	6%
Platform Insurance	\$ 16,518	\$ 17,076	\$ (558)	\$ 134,183	\$ 136,607	\$ (2,424)	-2%
Station Platform Leases	\$ 3,798	\$ 4,020	\$ (222)	\$ 30,590	\$ 32,163	\$ (1,573)	-5%
Station Improvements	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,121	\$ -	\$ 3,121	N/A
<b>Total Station Operations</b>	<b>\$ 62,000</b>	<b>\$ 60,767</b>	<b>\$ 1,233</b>	<b>\$ 509,361</b>	<b>\$ 489,575</b>	<b>\$ 19,786</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Total Food Service</b>	<b>\$ 94,558</b>	<b>\$ 91,961</b>	<b>\$ 2,597</b>	<b>\$ 837,204</b>	<b>\$ 838,880</b>	<b>\$ (1,676)</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total Marketing</b>	<b>\$ 22,022</b>	<b>\$ 43,438</b>	<b>\$ (21,416)</b>	<b>\$ 260,929</b>	<b>\$ 336,143</b>	<b>\$ (75,214)</b>	<b>-22%</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 2,069,157</b>	<b>\$ 2,417,272</b>	<b>\$ (348,115)</b>	<b>\$ 18,122,902</b>	<b>\$ 19,435,373</b>	<b>\$ (1,312,471)</b>	<b>-7%</b>
<b>Add'l Funding Required</b>	<b>\$ 869,041</b>	<b>\$ 1,572,505</b>	<b>\$ (703,464)</b>	<b>\$ 7,965,257</b>	<b>\$ 10,939,218</b>	<b>\$ (2,973,961)</b>	<b>-27%</b>
Downeaster Ridership	42,045	36,742	5,303	405,648	370,324	35,324	
Overall cost recovery	58%	35%		56%	44%		
Café Recovery	83%	68%		85%	75%		