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# Board Briefing Materials

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March 23, 2026

**Location:**

*International Marine Terminal | Training Room 112  
454 Commercial Street  
Portland, ME 04101*

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**

# NNEPRA FY2026 Priorities

## Core Objectives:

- Support and maintain a culture of safety.
- Maximize Downeaster ridership, revenue and cost recovery
- Enhance public benefits associated with the Downeaster.
- Maintain compliance with all regulations
- Secure funding mechanisms to sustain Downeaster operations and continued capital investments in the Downeaster Corridor.

## Meet or exceed projected Downeaster Performance Benchmarks

FY26 Performance Targets					
Ridership	562,039	Train On Time Performance	80%	Café Cost Recovery	79%
Revenue	\$ 13,186,221	Customer On Time Performance	85%	Café Capture Ratio	18%
Average Fare	\$ 23.46	Overall Customer Satisfaction	90%	Café Check Average	\$10.95
Overall Cost Recovery	51%				

## Improve Downeaster Service Efficiency

- Increase revenue on peak trains
- Maximize equipment utilization
- Pursue opportunities to restore fourth coach to Downeaster trainsets
- Increase Ridership on off-peak trains
- Improve cost recovery in Café

## Improve Passenger Services & Communication

- Enhance Station experience for passengers
- Promote and improve connectivity to Amtrak network
- Improve/promote last mile connectivity at Downeaster stations

## Sponsor Capital Projects to improve safety, service quality and efficiency

- Wells Area Improvement Project
- 2025 Tie Replacement Program
- Monitor Positive Train Control install
- 2025-2026 Capital Maintenance Program
- Portland Platform Repair

## Plan for Service Improvement/Expansions

- Portland Station Relocation
- West Falmouth Station
- 6<sup>th</sup> Round Trip Brunswick-Wells
- Monitor Rockland Branch potential
- Service Development Plan
  - Additional Frequencies
  - Reduced Travel Time
  - Improved Reliability
  - Prepare for AIRO Fleet

## **NNEPRA BOARD of DIRECTORS**

*March 23, 2026*

**Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority**

### **Agenda**

#### **3:00pm Public Session**

- Welcome & Safety Briefing
- Public Comment
- Approval of Minutes from February 23, 2026 Board Meeting
- Downeaster Performance Fiscal Year to Date
- Budget Variance Report
- FY2026 Work Plan Review
  - Service Efficiency
  - Passenger Services and Communication
  - Improved Connectivity
  - Capital Projects
  - Service Planning
- Other Business & Updates
- Public Comment
- Motion to Enter Executive Session pursuant to 1 MRS § 405(6)(E) for the purpose of discussing the acquisition of real property.

**Next Meeting: April 27, 2026**



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

**February 23, 2026 – Virtual Meeting**

**Directors in Attendance:**

Chairman Jim Cohen; Vice Chairman Cassavant; Mr. Nate Howard; Ms. Alison Harris; Ms. Maggie Edson; Ms. Carolann Ouellette

**NNEPRA Staff in Attendance:**

Ms. Patricia Quinn; Ms. Emily Bedard; Ms. Catherine Kruglak, Ms. Taylor Auclair; Mr. Brian Beeler II; Mr. Jim Russell; Ms. Belle Askinasi

**Interested Parties:**

Mr. Irwin Gratz, Maine Public Radio; Ms. Patty Barber, Rail Passenger Association; Mr. Peter Cole, Maine Rail Group; Mr. David Choi, LiRo-Hill; Ms. Heather Ivester, LiRo-Hill; Mr. F. Bruce Sleeper, TrainRiders Northeast; Mr. Dana Knapp, Concord Coach; Mr. Donnie Maley, DWM; and Mr. Kevin Chittenden, Amtrak; and Mr. Steve Betts, Midcoast Villager

**OPENING REMARKS**

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The meeting was called to order at 3:02pm.

Roll call was taken with all directors present except for Director Murray. A safety briefing and an Operation Lifesaver rail fact were presented.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chairman Cohen opened the floor to public comment. Mr. Steve Betts of The Midcoast Villager inquired about service on the Rockland Branch. Director Howard responded that the new operator intends to operate excursion service between Brunswick and Rockland.

Public Comment closed.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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**Motion to approve January 26, 2026 Minutes**

Motion: Mr. Alan Cassavant

Second: Ms. Maggie Edson

Approved: All

**Maine Department of Transportation Designee Update – Patricia Quinn**

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Ms. Patricia Quinn informed the Board that Mr. Nate Howard had been officially designated as the MaineDOT alternate. She thanked Mr. Nate Moulton for his service and welcomed Mr. Howard to the Board.

**FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERFORMANCE REVIEW – Patricia Quinn**

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Ms. Quinn provided an overview of Fiscal Year 2026 through January, reporting that ridership has remained strong and that ticket revenue is running ahead of budget. She also reviewed a delay analysis and overview of train operations. In January, 14 trains were canceled and on-time performance was impacted by mechanical and weather-related issues. Ms. Quinn noted that delays and cancellations can significantly affect Customer Satisfaction Index

(CSI) scores; however, the overall CSI score for January was reported at 88.8%.

Ms. Taylor Auclair provided an update on the January fare sale, reporting that approximately 3,300 riders took advantage of the promotion. Ridership increased on off-peak trains due to the targeted structure of the sale.

Ms. Auclair also reported that the partnership with University of New Hampshire Wildcat student-athletes has received positive feedback and is helping promote the College 6Tix and student discount programs.

Ms. Auclair further reported that she has been working with NNEPRA's advertising agency, Blaze, to explore how artificial intelligence (AI) can be leveraged in transportation marketing. She explained that Blaze is coding the Downeaster website to provide information such as train schedules and fares to AI platforms, which will help improve riders' access to travel information. Ms. Auclair noted that she expects to report on AI-related metrics in the future.

Ms. Quinn presented the FY26 budget variance report for July through December 2025 and a forecast for the remainder of the fiscal year. She reported that NNEPRA is expected to remain within budget. Overall cost recovery is currently 59%, compared to a budgeted rate of 55%.

**Motion to accept financial report**

Motion: Ms. Maggie Edson

Second: Ms. Allison Harris

Approved: All

**CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATES – Jim Russell**

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- **Wells Area Improvement Project:** Mr. James Russell updated the Board on the Wells Area Improvement Project, reporting that NNEPRA continues to work with VHB on project improvements and enhancements.

**SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS/ EXPANSION PLANNING – Patricia Quinn**

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Ms. Quinn updated the Board on progress toward implementing a sixth Downeaster round trip between Brunswick and Wells, reporting that NNEPRA staff are coordinating outreach to local businesses and communities. She also noted that NNEPRA is working with METRO and identifying additional ways to maximize the benefit of this additional service. One potential benefit highlighted is that the additional trip may reduce stress on Portland parking by providing commuters with an alternative transportation option.

**PROJECT UPDATES – Patricia Quinn**

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Ms. Patricia Quinn provided an update on the Portland Station Relocation project, reporting that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) discretionary grant application for a station at Site 3 was submitted before the deadline. However, she noted that the City of Portland continues to support a station at Site 2, located at Union Station Plaza on St. John Street. Without City support, MaineDOT is not able to commit to providing matching funds for the project.

Ms. Quinn also reported that NNEPRA has continued community outreach through meetings and presentations to raise awareness of the project and generate support.

She further noted that a meeting with the City has been scheduled for early March to determine next steps for advancing the project through a facilitated process.

#### **AIRO Train – Patricia Quinn**

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Ms. Quinn reported that the new AIRO trains are actively being tested and that she, Ms. Natalie Bogart and Mr. Brian Beeler recently had the opportunity to tour an AIRO trainset in Washington DC. She noted that the first deployment of the equipment is scheduled for the Pacific Northwest later this year and that the trains are expected to enter service on the Downeaster route by 2030.

#### **Service Development Plan – Patricia Quinn**

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Ms. Quinn provided an overview of the Service Development Program (SDP) and its objectives, including improving reliability, reducing travel time, and increasing service frequency. She noted that, in order to add additional trips, the Portland Station must be relocated to the mainline. NNEPRA continues to work with consultants to explore how service could operate with seven or eight round trips; however, railroad improvements are required to achieve these goals.

Ms. Quinn further reported that public meetings are anticipated in early spring to raise awareness of the program and gather community feedback.

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

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No other business reported.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chairman Cohen opened the floor to public comment. Mr. Bruce Sleeper inquired about café seating on the AIRO trainsets. Mr. Beeler responded that there is dedicated seating in the café, although the seats resemble revenue seats rather than bench-style seats.

Public comment was then closed.

There was no Executive Session.

#### **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

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##### **Motion to adjourn**

Motion: Ms. Carolann Ouellette

Second: Ms. Maggie Edson

Approved: All

**Meeting Adjourned at 4:06PM**

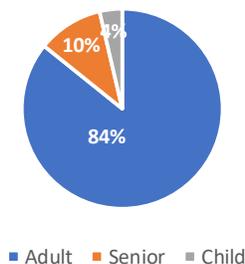


Downeaster Performance Metrics - FY26 To Date									
Period	FY	Ridership				Revenue			
		Actual	Budget	Variance	vs. FY24	Actual	Budget	Variance	\$/Rider
Feb 26	FY26	34,195	40,363	-6,168	81%	\$ 888,758	\$ 948,535	\$ (59,777)	\$25.99
Jan 26	FY26	38,023	39,588	-1,565	92%	\$ 919,662	\$ 930,329	\$ (10,667)	\$24.19
Dec 25	FY26	43,927	45,029	-1,102	94%	\$ 1,081,093	\$ 1,058,177	\$ 22,916	\$24.61
Nov 25	FY26	45,515	46,085	-570	95%	\$ 1,106,242	\$ 1,082,993	\$ 23,249	\$24.31
Oct 25	FY26	49,539	52,623	-3,084	90%	\$ 1,168,211	\$ 1,236,649	\$ (68,438)	\$23.58
Sep 25	FY26	48,735	50,874	-2,139	92%	\$ 1,151,876	\$ 1,195,545	\$ (43,669)	\$23.64
Aug 25	FY26	59,386	59,298	88	96%	\$ 1,419,540	\$ 1,393,509	\$ 26,031	\$23.90
Jul 25	FY26	55,074	43,407	11,667	96%	\$ 1,344,261	\$ 998,361	\$ 345,900	\$24.41
<b>FY26 To Date</b>		<b>374,394</b>	<b>377,267</b>	<b>-2,873</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>9,079,644</b>	<b>8,844,098</b>	<b>235,546</b>	<b>\$ 24.25</b>
Jun 25	FY25	43,033	35,597	7,436	85%	\$ 800,066	\$ 831,339	\$ (31,273)	\$18.59
May 25	FY25	35,176	32,466	2,710	76%	\$ 846,440	\$ 756,467	\$ 89,973	\$24.06
Apr 25	FY25	39,909	33,581	6,328	81%	\$ 857,673	\$ 779,436	\$ 78,237	\$21.49
Mar 25	FY25	44,131	44,876	-745	95%	\$ 1,148,249	\$ 1,050,087	\$ 98,162	\$26.02
Feb 25	FY25	38,894	40,784	-1,890	93%	\$ 924,774	\$ 954,337	\$ (29,563)	\$23.78
<b>FY25 Final</b>		<b>552,649</b>	<b>542,462</b>	<b>10,187</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>12,992,599</b>	<b>12,639,493</b>	<b>\$ 353,106</b>	<b>\$23.51</b>

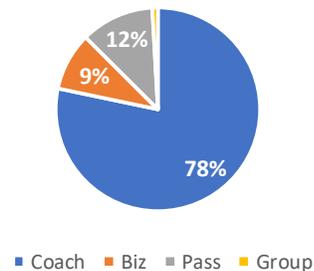
**FY26 Performance Targets**

	Target		Target		Target
Ridership	562,039	Train On Time Performance	80%	Café Cost Recovery	79%
Revenue	\$ 13,186,221	Customer On Time Performance	85%	Café Capture Ratio	18%
Average Fare	\$ 23.46	Over Customer Satisfaction	90%	Café Check Average	\$ 10.95
Overall Cost Recovery	51%				

FY26 Riders by Passenger Type



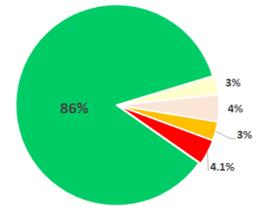
FY26 Riders by Ticket Type



Downeaster Performance Metrics - FY26 To Date								
Period	FY	Trains Operated	Passenger Miles	On Time Performance		Downeaster Café		CSI
				End Point	Customer	Capture Ratio	Check AVG	
Feb 26	FY26	269	2,915,273	60%	78%	16%	\$ 11.21	0
Jan 26	FY26	296	3,364,360	78%	86%	17%	\$ 11.21	89
Dec 25	FY26	308	3,900,405	82%	87%	18%	\$ 11.66	88
Nov 25	FY26	292	3,913,097	88%	95%	15%	\$ 10.94	94
Oct 25	FY26	282	3,916,117	70%	80%	14%	\$ 10.73	89
Sep 25	FY26	298	4,223,537	89%	94%	16%	\$ 10.96	91
Aug 25	FY26	310	5,199,036	71%	83%	17%	\$ 11.02	90
Jul 25	FY26	306	4,692,348	63%	79%	17%	\$ 10.64	88
<b>FY26 To Date</b>		<b>2,361</b>	<b>32,124,173</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>\$ 11.05</b>	<b>79</b>
Jun 25	FY25	240	3,461,297	50%	61%	16%	\$ 9.83	89
May 25	FY25	258	3,004,451	64%	77%	18%	\$ 9.66	89
Apr 25	FY25	264	3,332,815	64%	74%	17%	\$ 10.07	88
Mar 25	FY25	310	3,973,101	87%	79%	18%	\$ 11.02	91
Feb 25	FY25	274	3,392,887	59%	74%	18%	\$ 11.02	86
<b>FY25 Total</b>		<b>3,457</b>	<b>48,270,709</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>\$ 10.45</b>	<b>89%</b>

Delay Intensity

January



- On Time
- 11-20 min
- 21-40 min
- 41-Hour
- >Hour

FY 2026 Downeaster Customer Satisfaction 3.1										
	Sample Size	Overall Satisfaction	Train Comfort	Train Cleanliness	Train Crew	OTP	Train Status Info	Café	WiFi	Station Staff
Jan	1,023	88.8	89	88	94	86	85	84	80	91
Dec	1,150	90.0	89	89	94	90	90	86	80	93
Nov	1,076	93.0	90	90	95	94	92	86	82	95
Oct	1,079	89.0	89	88	94	88	88	83	75	92
Sep	1,363	92.0	90	89	94	92	91	84	80	93
Aug	1,518	90.0	90	89	94	89	90	86	81	92
Jul	1,342	88.4	89	89	93	86	86	85	78	92
<b>FY26 to Date</b>	<b>8,551</b>	<b>90.2</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>93</b>
Jun	953	86.0	84	81	94	74	76	72	68	90
May	930	88.9	87	85	93	78	81	77	73	91
Apr	855	88.4	87	85	92	77	80	77	71	91
Mar	1,060	91.1	88	84	94	86	85	81	74	94
Feb	891	86.1	81	80	92	73	76	76	73	90
<b>FY25 Year End</b>	<b>11,292</b>	<b>90.4</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>91</b>

**NNEPRA Fiscal Year 2026**  
**Operating Budget Variance Report**  
 July 2025 - January 2026  
 Cash-Based Financial Reporting

	January-26			Fiscal Year to Date January 26			
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance	%
<b>Operating Revenue</b>							
Amtrak Ticket Revenue	\$ 919,662	\$ 930,329	\$ (10,667)	\$ 8,190,885	\$ 7,895,562	\$ 295,323	4%
Food Service Revenue	\$ 62,254	\$ 76,825	\$ (14,571)	\$ 571,435	\$ 625,718	\$ (54,283)	-9%
Parking Lot Revenue	\$ 67,469	\$ 62,500	\$ 4,969	\$ 405,218	\$ 402,500	\$ 2,718	1%
Interest & Other Revenue	\$ 144,145	\$ 39,600	\$ 104,545	\$ 389,436	\$ 277,200	\$ 112,236	40%
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 1,193,530</b>	<b>\$ 1,109,254</b>	<b>\$ 84,276</b>	<b>\$ 9,556,974</b>	<b>\$ 9,200,980</b>	<b>\$ 355,994</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>							
<b>Administration</b>							
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 90,855	\$ 101,297	\$ (10,442)	\$ 636,632	\$ 690,436	\$ (53,804)	-8%
Office Expenses	\$ 9,323	\$ 10,947	\$ (1,624)	\$ 80,363	\$ 80,619	\$ (256)	0%
Professional Services	\$ 20,870	\$ 20,900	\$ (30)	\$ 134,859	\$ 131,800	\$ 3,059	2%
Insurance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 60,361	\$ 60,980	\$ (619)	-1%
Board Operations	\$ 331	\$ 1,274	\$ (943)	\$ 15,155	\$ 23,785	\$ (8,630)	-36%
<b>Total Admin Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 121,379</b>	<b>\$ 134,418</b>	<b>\$ (13,039)</b>	<b>\$ 927,370</b>	<b>\$ 987,620</b>	<b>\$ (60,250)</b>	<b>-6%</b>
<b>Train Operations</b>							
Amtrak Train Operations	\$ 663,172	\$ 687,201	\$ (24,029)	\$ 4,843,200	\$ 4,701,988	\$ 141,212	3%
Amtrak Equipment Maintenance	\$ 792,951	\$ 803,307	\$ (10,356)	\$ 5,382,103	\$ 5,513,508	\$ (131,405)	-2%
Amtrak Support Services	\$ 95,055	\$ 98,472	\$ (3,417)	\$ 690,740	\$ 719,147	\$ (28,407)	-4%
Train Fuel Cost	\$ 183,040	\$ 220,653	\$ (37,613)	\$ 1,216,548	\$ 1,491,660	\$ (275,112)	-18%
Other Train Operations	\$ 132,120	\$ 196,564	\$ (64,444)	\$ 1,009,824	\$ 1,351,830	\$ (342,006)	-25%
Facilities	\$ 72,757	\$ 75,505	\$ (2,748)	\$ 363,440	\$ 370,038	\$ (6,598)	-2%
FY26 Capital Maintenance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18,489	\$ 18,489	\$ -	0%
<b>Total Train Operations</b>	<b>\$ 1,939,095</b>	<b>\$ 2,081,702</b>	<b>\$ (142,607)</b>	<b>\$ 13,524,344</b>	<b>\$ 14,166,660</b>	<b>\$ (642,316)</b>	<b>-5%</b>
<b>Station Operations</b>							
Portland Station	\$ 44,923	\$ 45,256	\$ (333)	\$ 347,898	\$ 318,792	\$ 29,106	9%
Platform Insurance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 333,908	\$ 336,009	\$ (2,101)	-1%
Station Platform Leases	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 39,042	\$ 38,822	\$ 220	1%
Station Improvements	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 227,765	\$ 105,500	\$ 122,265	116%
<b>Total Station Operations</b>	<b>\$ 44,923</b>	<b>\$ 45,256</b>	<b>\$ (333)</b>	<b>\$ 948,613</b>	<b>\$ 799,123</b>	<b>\$ 149,490</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Total Food Service</b>	<b>\$ 99,890</b>	<b>\$ 101,081</b>	<b>\$ (1,191)</b>	<b>\$ 764,270</b>	<b>\$ 786,725</b>	<b>\$ (22,455)</b>	<b>-3%</b>
<b>Total Marketing</b>	<b>\$ 45,181</b>	<b>\$ 45,453</b>	<b>\$ (272)</b>	<b>\$ 281,293</b>	<b>\$ 282,196</b>	<b>\$ (903)</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 2,250,468</b>	<b>\$ 2,407,910</b>	<b>\$ (157,442)</b>	<b>\$ 16,445,890</b>	<b>\$ 17,022,324</b>	<b>\$ (576,434)</b>	<b>-3%</b>
<b>Add'l Funding Required</b>	<b>\$ 1,056,938</b>	<b>\$ 1,298,656</b>	<b>\$ (241,718)</b>	<b>\$ 6,888,916</b>	<b>\$ 7,821,344</b>	<b>\$ (932,428)</b>	<b>-12%</b>
Downeaster Ridership	38,023	39,588	(1,565)	\$ 340,199	\$ 336,904	3,295	
Overall cost recovery	53%	46%		58%	54%		
Café Recovery	62%	76%		75%	80%		