

# Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority



## January 2014

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### **Board of Directors Briefing Materials**

January 27, 2014

**NNEPRA Office  
75 West Commercial Street  
Suite 104  
Portland, Maine 04101**



# **BOARD of DIRECTORS MEETING AGENDA**

January 27, 2014

12:15pm

- I. Open Public Session
  
- II. Motion to go into executive session pursuant to 1 MRS Section 405(6)(E):
  - a. To consult with counsel concerning pending litigation; and
  - b. To consult with counsel concerning NNEPRA's legal rights and duties.
  
- III. Motion to re-open Public Session
  
- IV. Approval of Minutes from November 25, 2013 Meeting
  
- V. Staff Updates
  - a. Downeaster Performance Update
  - b. Budget Status Report
  
- VI. Proposed Update of NNEPRA Strategic Goals
  
- VII. Other Business
  
- VIII. Public Comment



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

November 25, 2013  
Portland, Maine

**Directors in attendance:**

Mr. Martin Eisenstein, Mr. Dana Connors, Mr. John Bubier, Ms. Sue Moreau, Mr. Matt Jacobson  
and  
Mr. Ron McKinnon

**Staff in attendance:**

Ms. Patricia Quinn, Ms. Marina Douglass, Mr. Brian Beeler, Mr. James Russell, Ms. Natalie Allen,  
Ms. Angela Smith and Ms. Theresa Diffin

**Interested parties:**

Mr. Steve Corcoran, Amtrak; Mr. Wayne Davis, TrainRiders NE; Mr. Bill Lord, TrainRiders NE;  
Mr. Jeff Reynolds, Brunswick; Mr. Dana Knapp, Concord Coach; Mr. Tony Donovan, Maine Rail  
Transit Coalition; and Mr. Robert Morrison, Brunswick

**Commencement:**

Vote to open Public Session at 11:08am  
Motion: Mr. Jacobson  
Seconded: Mr. Bubier  
Accepted: All

Per 1 MRS Section 405(6)(F) and 23 MRS Section 8115-A(1)(A), the negotiation of an  
amendment to the service agreement with Amtrak, and Per 1 MRS Section 405(6)(F) and 23  
MRS Section 8115-A(1)(A), the condition or development of the property at the Brunswick Rail  
Yard,

Vote to go into Executive Session at 11:10am  
Motion: Mr. Jacobson  
Seconded: Mr. Bubier  
Accepted: All

Per 1 MRS Section 405(6)(F) and 23 MRS Section 8115-A(1)(A), the negotiation of an  
amendment to the service agreement with Amtrak, and Per 1 MRS Section 405(6)(F) and 23  
MRS Section 8115-A(1)(A), the condition or development of the property at the Brunswick Rail  
Yard,

Executive Session closed and Public Session opened at 12:58 am

**Minutes of October 16, 2013 Meeting**

- Vote to accept minutes as presented by the staff.  
Motion: Mr. Jacobson

Seconded: Mr. Bubier  
Accepted: All

## **DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE REPORT**

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### **A. Staff Presentations**

- October ridership was 45,681 with revenue of \$683,818
- November ridership is averaging 1,408 passengers per day. Three five car train sets are in operation during the Thanksgiving travel period.
- Ms. Bogart noted that Train 697 and Train 699 and will operate to Freeport and Brunswick on Thanksgiving evening and that Train 680 will depart from Freeport on Black Friday to support Freeport's holiday shopping promotion.
- Ms. Bogart mentioned she is on the Board of Freeport USA and that her involvement has helped to coordinate with various events. Two special "Sparkle Trains" will operate between Freeport and Brunswick in December. Santa and carolers will be on the trains and Amtrak Conductor Jim will read the Polar Express. The event is sold out with over 400 passengers and is a fundraiser for Freeport USA and the local food pantry.
- NNEPRA's annual Toys for Tots trains will run for a full week in December.
- Over 500 Downeaster Travel Packages were sold during 2013 and reservations are already on hand 135 in 2014.

## **FINANCE REPORT – Marina Douglass**

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### **Budget Variance Report**

#### **A. Staff Presentations**

- Ms. Douglass reviewed the October 2013 Variance Report.
- Mr. Beeler complimented Epicurean Feast for their good work.
- Mr. Jacobson inquired if we had information on what percentage of passengers use the café. Mr. Beeler noted that survey data suggests that about 30% of passengers use the Downeaster Café.

Vote to accept performance report

Motion: Mr. Jacobson

Seconded: Mr. Bubier

Accepted: All

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

- Amtrak Superintendent, Fred Fournier, has been promoted to Deputy General Manager for the Northeast Corridor, but will remain involved in the Downeaster service.
- The Federal Railroad Administration is in the process of reviewing responses to Public Comment provided related to the Brunswick Layover Environmental Assessment.
- The MBTA project is moving ahead. The statement of work is being updated to reflect minor changes in the project.
- The final pieces of the Downeaster Expansion Project are underway The final pieces of the Downeaster Expansion Project are underway. A new # 15 Turnout was installed at the east end of Walnut siding as part of the new interlocking. The new Walnut interlocking signal equipment has been installed, and will be tested for service upon final electrical and communication hook-up from CMP and Verizon, respectively Work was also completed as part of the Reed Street yard improvements, with the removal of

an existing turnout east of Reed street and installation of a new turnout just east of Walton Street, which allowed extending the yard track 1,300 to better accommodate freight switching outside the mainline. The rehabilitation of an existing culvert in Cumberland through the process of sliplining was also completed.

- A tie replacement project on the Pan Am line between Portland and Plaistow is expected to begin next spring. Approximately 30,000 ties will be replaced.
- Ms. Quinn and Mr. Beeler met with representatives of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine and had a good discussion about the constraints associated with handling bikes on the Downeaster. While the Downeaster is the only train in the Northeast Corridor which accepts bikes at all, there is wide interest in expanding bike accessibility.
- NNEPRA is participating with other states on committees related to the implementation of PRIIA Section 209. Ms Quinn is the chair of the Operating Cost Working Group and participates on the Equipment Capital Plan Working Group along with Mr. Beeler.
- There is an interest in developing new rail services in Maine and several different initiatives are being proposed. Ms. Quinn participated in a meeting with Commissioner Bernhardt regarding a proposal to establish commuter service between the Portland waterfront and Auburn. Ms. Quinn and Mr. Russell have also met with parties regarding a proposal for a Hotel Train which would operate overnight service between Montreal and Boston. Mr. Jacobson expressed concern regarding NNEPRA's involvement, stating that private proposals would need to include a business plan to demonstrate viability. Mr. Eisenstein said our role is undefined. Mr. Jacobson stated we need to think of our process to be fair with everyone and see what our role is. Mr. Bubier noted that NNEPRA should develop minimum standards for considering proposals. Ms. Moreau agreed adding that the criteria for federal funding needs to be met. Mr. Eisenstein noted that a planning session would be held before the end of the year to better define NNEPRA's role in the development of private proposals.

#### **Public Comment**

Mr. Morrison of the Brunswick West Coalition requested the draft responses to EA comments which were sent to the FRA. Mr. Eisenstein stated that NNEPRA will respond to his request.

Mr. Donovan recommended that the Board consider setting up an advisory group during the board planning session and stated that there is a very high probability of success for the Hotel Train. Mr. Donovan believes NNEPRA needs additional resources. Ms. Quinn noted that MaineDOT and NNEPRA were actively working on establishing an Advisory Council.

Mr. Davis reported that the next Train Host training class included about a dozen new people.

Vote to adjourn: 1:43pm

Motion: Mr. Bubier

Seconded: Mr. Jacobson

Accepted: All

**NEXT MEETING: January 27, 2014**

<b>DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE STATISTICS</b>				Note: Incomplete due to delay in receipt of Amtrak data	
<b>October 2013</b>					
<b>Performance Stats</b>	Ridership	Revenue	Fare/Pax	Pass Mi	Mi/Pax
Actual October 2013	45,681	\$ 683,818	\$ 14.97	3,677,603	81
Actual October 2012	45,877	\$ 611,305	\$ 13.32	3,510,071	77
FY2014 Year to date	209,295	\$3,164,059	\$ 15.12	17,229,471	82
FY2013 Year to date	205,861	\$2,997,074	\$ 14.56	16,812,709	82
<b>City Pair Ridership</b>	<b># Riders</b>	<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Avg Fare</b>	<b>% Total Riders</b>	<b>% Total Revenue</b>
<b>October 2013</b>					
Boston - Portland	10,836	\$205,730	\$ 18.99	24%	30%
Boston- Exeter	6,157	\$70,214	\$ 11.40	13%	10%
Boston- - Saco	3,065	\$52,494	\$ 17.13	7%	8%
Boston - Dover	3,262	\$44,881	\$ 13.76	7%	7%
Boston-Wells	3,026	\$49,280	\$ 16.29	7%	7%
Boston-Brunswick	1,904	\$41,539	\$ 21.82	4%	6%
Boston-Durham	4,286	\$68,983	\$ 16.09	9%	10%
Boston-Haverhill	1,997	\$18,151	\$ 9.09	4%	3%
Boston-Freeport	517	\$11,072	\$ 21.42	1%	2%
Total	35,050	562,344	\$ 16.04	77%	82%
<b>On Time Performance</b>	<b>Average overall OTP for October 2013</b>				
	<b>71.50%</b>				
100%	n/a				
90-99%	n/a				
80-89%	n/a				
Below 80%	n/a				
<b>Customer Satisfaction Score</b>	<b>Downeaster September 2013</b>		<b>Amtrak September 2013</b>		
Overall CSI	93%		87%		
Overall Cleanliness of Train	90%		85%		
Friend. /Helpful of Conductors	91%		89%		
Friendliness of Café Attendent	91%		85%		
Quality of Café Food	82%		78%		
Overall Café Experience	83%		80%		

<b>DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE STATISTICS</b>					Note: Incomplete due to delay in receipt of Amtrak data
<b>November 2013</b>					
<b>Performance Stats</b>	Ridership	Revenue	Fare/Pax	Pass Mi	Mi/Pax
Actual November 2013	44,730	\$ 748,036	\$ 16.72	3,652,980	82
Actual November 2012	46,808	\$ 695,661	\$ 14.86	3,730,862	80
FY2014 Year to date	254,025	\$3,912,095	\$ 15.40	20,882,451	82
FY2013 Year to date	252,669	\$3,692,735	\$ 14.61	20,543,571	81
<b>City Pair Ridership</b>	<b># Riders</b>	<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Avg Fare</b>	<b>% Total Riders</b>	<b>% Total Revenue</b>
<b>November 2013</b>					
Boston - Portland	10,904	\$218,677	\$ 20.05	24%	29%
Boston- Exeter	3,013	\$79,201	\$ 26.29	7%	11%
Boston- - Saco	3,679	\$67,445	\$ 18.33	8%	9%
Boston - Dover	3,464	\$54,879	\$ 15.84	8%	7%
Boston-Wells	3,314	\$57,574	\$ 17.37	7%	8%
Boston-Brunswick	1,856	\$43,204	\$ 23.28	4%	6%
Boston-Durham	5,320	\$90,210	\$ 16.96	12%	12%
Boston-Haverhill	1,827	\$19,266	\$ 10.55	4%	3%
Boston-Freeport	663	\$13,759	\$ 20.75	1%	2%
Total	34,040	644,215	\$ 18.93	76%	86%
<b>On Time Performance</b>	<b>Average overall OTP for November 2013</b>				
	<b>74.70%</b>				
100%	n/a				
90-99%	n/a				
80-89%	n/a				
Below 80%					
<b>Customer Satisfaction Score</b>	Downeaster October 2013		Amtrak October 2013		
Overall CSI					
Overall Cleanliness of Train					
Friend. /Helpful of Conductors					
Friendliness of Café Attendant					
Quality of Café Food					
Overall Café Experience					

<b>DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE STATISTICS</b>					
<b>December 2013</b>				Note: Incomplete due to delay in receipt of Amtrak data	
<b>Performance Stats</b>	Ridership	Revenue	Fare/Pax	Pass Mi	Mi/Pax
Actual December 2013	41,044	\$ 719,740	\$ 17.54		
Actual December 2012	38,689	\$ 655,555	\$ 16.94		
FY2014 Year to date	277,122	\$4,631,835	\$ 16.71		
FY2013 Year to date	263,112	\$4,348,290	\$ 16.53		
<b>City Pair Ridership</b>	# Riders	Revenue	Avg Fare	% Total Riders	% Total Revenue
<b>December 2013</b>					
Boston - Portland					
Boston- Exeter					
Boston- - Saco					
Boston - Dover					
Boston-Wells					
Boston-Brunswick					
Boston-Durham					
Boston-Haverhill					
Boston-Freeport					
Total					
<b>On Time Performance</b>	<b>Average overall OTP for December 2013</b>				
100%	n/a				
90-99%	n/a				
80-89%	n/a				
Below 80%	n/a				
<b>Customer Satisfaction Score</b>		Downeaster November 2013	Amtrak November 2013		
Overall CSI		96%			
Overall Cleanliness of Train		92%			
Friend. /Helpful of Conductors		98%			
Friendliness of Café Attendent		94%			
Quality of Café Food		90%			
Overall Café Experience		92%			



<b>VARIANCE REPORT - December 2013</b>							
	Current Month Actual	Current Month Budget	Current Month Variance	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Year to Date Variance	Year to Date Percent
<b>Revenues</b>							
<b>Operating Revenue</b>							
Amtrak Ticket Revenue	719,740	668,861	50,879	4,631,835	4,309,527	322,308	7%
Food Service Revenue	51,233	47,455	3,778	348,155	331,812	16,343	5%
Advertising Revenue	560	0	560	11,996	7,500	4,496	60%
Parking Lot Revenue	23,088	21,000	2,088	188,134	191,800	(3,666)	-2%
Interest on Accounts	285	236	50	1,196	1,414	(218)	-15%
Other Revenue	4,250	4,206	44	25,059	25,015	44	0%
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>799,156</b>	<b>741,758</b>	<b>57,398</b>	<b>5,206,375</b>	<b>4,867,067</b>	<b>339,307</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>							
<b>Wages and Benefits</b>							
Permanent Full-Time	29,866	29,866	0	169,416	169,416	(0)	(0)
Benefits	12,942	12,942	0	75,504	75,504	(0)	(0)
<b>Total Wages and Benefits</b>	<b>42,808</b>	<b>42,808</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>244,919</b>	<b>244,920</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Administration</b>							
Office Expenses	7,130	11,922	(4,792)	55,693	67,824	(12,131)	-18%
Professional Services	1,031	1,558	(527)	20,553	27,772	(7,219)	-26%
Insurance	2,485	2,700	(215)	14,094	13,925	168	1%
Board Operations	922	1,170	(248)	6,058	6,584	(526)	-8%
<b>Total Administration Expense</b>	<b>11,568</b>	<b>17,350</b>	<b>(5,782)</b>	<b>96,397</b>	<b>116,105</b>	<b>(19,707)</b>	<b>-17%</b>
<b>Train Operations</b>							
Amtrak Operations	887,036	883,333	3,703	5,147,652	5,137,002	10,650	0%
Train Fuel Cost	280,000	314,000	(34,000)	1,663,685	1,884,000	(220,315)	-12%
PanAm	106,399	106,295	104	624,009	637,768	(13,759)	-2%
Other Train Operations	2,475	3,125	(650)	21,891	18,750	3,141	17%
Insurance	1,160	1,160	0	6,960	6,960	0	0%
Layover Facility	11,168	12,907	(1,739)	56,503	71,566	(15,063)	-21%
Capital Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
<b>Total Train Operations</b>	<b>1,288,237</b>	<b>1,320,820</b>	<b>(32,582)</b>	<b>7,520,700</b>	<b>7,756,047</b>	<b>(235,346)</b>	<b>-3%</b>
<b>Station Operations</b>							
Portland Station	28,100	28,100	0	178,763	181,885	(3,122)	-2%
Platform Ins	10,748	12,491	(1,743)	64,184	65,976	(1,792)	-3%
Station Platform Leases	0	0	0	31,009	31,742	(733)	-2%
Other Station Improvements	0	817	(817)	75	4,900	(4,825)	100%
<b>Total Station Operations</b>	<b>38,848</b>	<b>41,408</b>	<b>(2,560)</b>	<b>274,032</b>	<b>284,503</b>	<b>(10,472)</b>	<b>-4%</b>
<b>Food Service</b>							
Regular	62,150	61,692	458	417,397	431,356	(13,958)	-3%
<b>Total Food Service</b>	<b>62,150</b>	<b>61,692</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>417,397</b>	<b>431,356</b>	<b>(13,958)</b>	<b>-3%</b>
Marketing	22,391	22,391	0	166,407	166,404	3	0%
<b>Total Marketing</b>	<b>22,391</b>	<b>22,391</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>166,407</b>	<b>166,404</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,466,002</b>	<b>1,506,468</b>	<b>(40,466)</b>	<b>8,719,853</b>	<b>8,999,333</b>	<b>(279,481)</b>	<b>-3%</b>
<b>Additional Funding Required</b>	<b>666,846</b>	<b>764,710</b>	<b>(97,864)</b>	<b>3,513,478</b>	<b>4,132,266</b>	<b>(618,788)</b>	<b>-15%</b>

## Proposed NNEPRA Strategic Goals

Updated December 2013

- **Strengthen and maximize the efficiency of the existing core (Brunswick to Boston) Downeaster service.**
  - Complete Priority Projects
  - Explore feasibility of a seasonal station stop in Kennebunk.
  - Reduce travel time
  - Increase POR-BON frequency to 6 or 7 daily round trips.
- **Facilitate the development and operation of feeder services which enhance Downeaster efficiency.**
  - Lewiston/Auburn
  - Mid-coast Maine (Wiscasset / Rockland)
  - Augusta
  - Gorham/Standish
- **Work with stakeholders to support the development of a new multi-modal transportation center on Thompson's Point in Portland.**
- **Explore the feasibility of developing new passenger rail services or service to additional communities as appropriate.**
  - Montreal
  - Worcester/New York City

## Determining feasibility of project consideration or development

- **NNEPRA will determine project feasibility based on the following criteria:**
  - The level of enhancement it provides to core or existing service(s) and verification that it is not detrimental to core or existing service(s) in any way.
  - Transportation benefit provided
  - Consistency with State and/or regional Rail Plans
  - Demonstration of positive economic return and public benefit
  - Financial sustainability
- **Proposals submitted to NNEPRA for consideration of development must:**
  - Demonstrate how the project will enhance core or existing service(s) and/or will not be a detriment to core or existing service(s).
  - Outline transportation and public or other economic benefits expected to be created as a result.
  - Include a detailed operating plan and explanation of the service proposed including frequency, rolling stock, schedule, stations, management plan and equipment maintenance plan.
  - Include detailed capital plan and operating plans supported by Host Railroads and operating partners.
  - Include a detailed financial pro-forma which includes the required investments in infrastructure, rolling stock and facilities, stations and other assets and identifies all private and public funding sources.
  - Include a detailed financial pro-forma which includes revenue projections, operating costs and a plan for the sustained funding of operating costs, including private and public funding sources.