

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority



March 2013



Board of Directors Briefing Materials

March 25, 2013

**NNEPRA Office
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Portland, Maine 04101**

AmtrakDowneaster.com

NNEPRA FY13 Action Plan

FY2013 Action Plan

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority 75 W. Commercial Street, Portland, ME 04101 207-780-1000

Meet Performance Goals & Standards

- Ridership
- Revenue
- On Time Performance
- Budget Targets
- Customer Satisfaction

Improve Passenger Services & Communication

- Develop PIDS implementation plan
- Explore bike share program
- Develop Café Branding
- Minimize Shawsheen River Bridge outage impacts
- Update marketing materials
- Simplify Group Sales Process
- Continue Safety Outreach
- Increase Community Involvement

Implement Brunswick Service

- Complete Construction
- Implement Marketing Plan
- Plan and Host Inaugural Celebration
- Initiate Service
- Upgrade Portland Layover
- Pursue Brunswick Layover

Complete Service Development Plan

- Complete Work Elements
- Conduct Public Outreach
- Complete Report

Begin MBTA Infrastructure Improvement Project

- Finalize scope & budget
- Begin Construction

Maintain Compliance with all Regulations

Work to secure a stable and dedicated funding mechanism to sustain Downeaster operations and continued capital investments in the Downeaster Corridor.



BOARD of DIRECTORS MEETING AGENDA

March 25, 2013

12:15pm Meeting Called to Order
Vote to enter Executive Session

1:00pm

- I. Vote to open Public Session
- II. Approval of Minutes, March 4, 2013 Meeting
- III. Staff Updates –
 - a. Downeaster Performance Update
 - b. Budget Status Report
 - c. Special Projects Update
- IV. Brunswick Layover
- V. Executive Director's Report
- VI. Other Business
- VII. Public Comment

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

March 4, 2013
Portland, Maine

Directors in attendance:

Mr. Martin Eisenstein, Mr. Dana Connors, Commissioner David Bernhardt, Mr. John Bubier, Mr. Matt Jacobson and Mr. Ron McKinnon

Staff in attendance:

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

Interested parties:

Mr. Steve Corcoran, Amtrak; Mr. B.J. White, Amtrak; Ms. Sue Moreau, MaineDOT; Mr. Wayne Davis, TrainRiders NE; Ms. Nicole Vinal, Brunswick

Commencement:

The meeting was called to order at 1:06 pm.

Minutes of January 2, 2013 Meeting

The minutes were accepted as presented by the staff

Motion: Mr. Bubier

Seconded: Mr. McKinnon

Accepted: All

STAFF UPDATES

Downeaster Performance Update

- Ms. Quinn reviewed the Performance Report for the second quarter of FY2013 indicating that ridership through that time was 10% greater than the previous year and that revenues were 17% higher than the previous year.
- She noted that January ridership was 3% higher than the previous year, but that February ridership was 10% less than the previous year. She noted that staff had projected ridership to be 5% less than the previous year due to weekend outages associated with the Shawsheen River Bridge reconstruction. The Blizzard forced service to be shut down one full and two half days. In total, 28 trains were cancelled during the month of February.
- Mr. Beeler noted that ridership during February vacation week exceeded the previous year by 6%.
- The spring schedule change will take effect on April 1, 2013. Train 687 will return to its 5:40 pm departure slot from Boston, Train 688 will depart out of Brunswick at 7:00 pm. Train 689 will leave Boston at 11:20 pm. Old Orchard Beach seasonal stop will also begin April 1st.
- Ms. Quinn has proposed a weekend shuttle between Brunswick and Freeport during the afternoon on Saturdays and Sundays. Amtrak has agreed and she is waiting for a final response from Pan Am. If it is approved, Ms. Allen stated she could market that shuttle to tourists, senior groups, youth groups and others so they can visit both Freeport and Brunswick in a day. Mr. Beeler said food service received very high customer service

scores in January. New products are being brought in and tested on board such as new soda, champagne and wines. Epicurean Feast has installed their own point-of-sale registers on board Downeaster trains to provide faster service and better tracking of sales and product inventory. Ms. Quinn stated that the Café is no longer open on Train 691 between Portland and Brunswick. This decision was made to reduce costs.

OTHER BUSINESS

NNEPRA Policies

- Written NNEPRA policies on Travel, Procurement and Contributions have been circulated to the Board of Directors for review.

Vote to accept NNEPRA Policies on Travel, Procurement and Contributions.

Motion: Mr. Bubier

Seconded: Commissioner Bernhardt

Accepted: All

Finance Report – MS. QUINN

Budget Variance Report

- Ms. Quinn reviewed the January 2013 Variance Report.
- Mr. Jacobson stressed the importance of focusing on the fiscal performance of the Downeaster Café.
- Fiscal year to date cost recovery for the entire budget is 58%. Café cost recovery fiscal year to date is 85%.

Vote to accept the variance report

Motion: Mr. Jacobson

Seconded: Mr. Bernhardt

Accepted: All

Marketing Report – MS. ALLEN

- Marketing for the upcoming month will include television and print ads to increase awareness of the “Kids Ride Free” and Senior Discounts. There is also a new “Flash Pass” promotion which will enable pass holders to use their Boston commuter passes to experience Freeport and Brunswick.
- The focus during the fourth quarter will be on tourism and off-peak train travel with a particular focus on Old Orchard Beach, Portland, Freeport and Brunswick as well as increasing groups.
- NNEPRA recently received two awards including the 2012 Southern Maine Mid Coast Chamber Nonprofit Business Award and the 2012 Freeport USA “Go Freeport Award” for marketing efforts in their community.

Special Projects Update – JAMES RUSSELL

- The Portland layover crew base, commissary and maintenance building is nearly ready and Drummac has already moved in. Improvements are ongoing and should be completed this week. A commissary storage area has been built for Epicurean as well as document storage for Amtrak. The target is to move everyone in by the 11th of March. Emergency exit lighting has been added for egress safety.

- Walkway lights have been installed along track 9 to provide safety for the conductors when going to and returning from the track 9 switch.
- The culvert extension project to provide a safe walkway and maintenance vehicle access along track 9 is scheduled to be done mid to late fall in cooperation with MDOT.
- The MBTA project is moving ahead. A formalized contract with HNTB and has completed. The onsite topographic survey is nearly complete. HNTB will be moving to the design phase. Most of the construction work will be scheduled for the summer of 2014 (double tracking – Lowell area).
- The Brunswick expansion project is continuing with Pan Am picking up ties throughout the winter and will continue until complete.
- Pan Am is developing a construction schedule to complete the remaining work on the Expansion Project, as well as the planned capital projects.

Service Development Plan – PATRICIA QUINN

- The consultant has completed preliminary findings concerning potential improvements which meet the Board objectives of improving efficiency, increasing frequency, reducing travel time and ultimately expanding service to Auburn. The next step is to coordinate with the railroads to get their input and then to prioritize a plan. At that point, NNEPRA plans to have a couple of public meetings to get additional feedback. There has already been quite a bit of public outreach including presentations to the PACTS committee, the Portland City Council Transportation Committee and the Downeaster Station Committee. Staff will also be working with FRA to get high level demand estimates for future expansions to Rockland, Augusta and Bangor, and even explore the potential for service connecting to the Northeast Corridor via the Lowell Line. Lowell line.
- It was suggested to have a strategy session following the next board meeting, March 25th. It is necessary to evaluate the long term goals. Mr. Jacobson felt this should hold a very high priority.
- Ms Quinn mentioned the Brunswick Layover is the priority project. NNEPRA hopes to send out bids soon for a holding track which would include head-end power so trains can be shut down during their hold-over time in Brunswick. . Amtrak has offered to provide a cab car equipped with a head end power unit to be used for the Downeaster service. It's unclear whether that unit is any quieter than the idling locomotive, but it will be tested in Brunswick. Ms. Quinn informed the Board that PACTS has formed a Steering Committee to look at consolidating transit providers in the region. NNEPRA is participating in that effort.
Ms. Quinn requested the use of funds from the Restricted Cash Account for an update of the economic impact study completed in 2008 by the Center for Neighborhood Technology. Given the increase in ridership, service expansion and the development which has occurred, a 5-year update seems warranted. The cost of the update would be \$22,500. Mr. Eisenstein requested that impacts of service expansion to Auburn be included in the Scope. Ms. Quinn agreed and will send a letter to Commission Bernhardt making the request of the funds from the restricted cash account to fund the update study.
- Ms. Quinn noted that a recent report by the Brookings institute "Strengthening America's Commitment to Passenger Rail" favorably mentioned the Downeaster and NNEPRA several times.

Public Comment

None

Motion to adjourn 1:50 pm

Motion: Mr. Jacobson

Seconded: Mr. McKinnon

Accepted: All

NEXT MEETING: March 25, 2013

DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE STATISTICS					
February 2013					
Performance Stats	Ridership	Revenue	Fare/Pax	Pass Mi	Mi/Pax
Actual February 2013	36,137	\$ 525,199	\$ 14.53	2,884,647	80
Actual February 2012	40,122	\$ 566,618	\$ 14.12	3,185,756	79
FY2013 Year to date	370,552	\$5,430,634	\$ 14.66	30,068,741	81
FY2012 Year to date	346,538	\$4,815,161	\$ 13.90	27,990,228	81
City Pair Ridership February 2013	# Riders	Revenue	Avg Fare	% Total Riders	% Total Revenue
Boston - Portland	8,810	\$164,898	\$ 18.72	24%	31%
Boston- Exeter	6,264	\$61,598	\$ 9.83	17%	12%
Boston- - Saco	2,490	\$42,943	\$ 17.25	7%	8%
Boston - Dover	3,188	\$38,716	\$ 12.14	9%	7%
Boston-Wells	2,401	\$34,259	\$ 14.27	7%	7%
Boston-Brunswick	1,404	\$33,055	\$ 23.54	4%	6%
Boston-Durham	3,248	\$46,556	\$ 14.33	9%	9%
Boston-Haverhill	1,924	\$16,461	\$ 8.56	5%	3%
Boston-Freeport	434	\$9,890	\$ 22.79	1%	2%
Total	30,163	448,376	\$ 14.87	83%	85%
On Time Performance	Average overall OTP for February 2013				
	83.90%				
100%	678,682,689,695				
90-99%	679,685				
80-89%	680,681,683,690,691,696,699				
Below 80%	676,684,686,687,688,692,693,694,697,698				
Customer Satisfaction Score	Downeaster January 2013		Amtrak January 2013		
Overall CSI	93%		86%		
Overall Cleanliness of Train	88%		83%		
Friend. /Helpful of Conductors	94%		88%		
Friendliness of Café Attendent	94%		88%		
Quality of Café Food	87%		80%		
Overall Café Experience	91%		81%		

VARIANCE REPORT - February 2013							
	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
Revenues							
Operating Revenue							
Amtrak Ticket Revenue	525,199	521,769	3,430	5,430,634	5,102,512	328,122	6%
Food Service Revenue	39,212	41,670	(2,458)	386,870	394,721	(7,851)	-2%
Advertising Revenue	0	417	(417)	840	3,333	(2,493)	-75%
Parking Lot Revenue	27,784	28,951	(1,167)	249,692	255,131	(5,439)	-2%
Interest on Accounts	254	250	4	2,057	2,000	57	3%
Other Revenue	4,162	4,186	(24)	33,138	33,210	(72)	0%
Total Operating Revenues	596,611	597,243	(632)	6,103,231	5,790,908	312,323	5%
Expenses							
Wages and Benefits							
Permanent Full-Time	27,150	27,150	0	220,409	220,409	0	0
Benefits	12,363	12,363	0	91,797	91,797	0	0
Total Wages and Benefits	39,513	39,513	0	312,206	312,206	0	0%
Administration							
Office Expenses	9,979	10,934	(955)	74,778	90,198	(15,420)	-17%
Professional Services	0	854	(854)	15,576	21,333	(5,758)	-27%
Insurance	2,447	2,515	(68)	18,918	19,520	(602)	-3%
Board Operations	782	1,101	(319)	7,436	8,654	(1,218)	-14%
Total Administration Expense	13,209	15,404	(2,196)	116,708	139,705	(22,997)	-16%
Train Operations							
Amtrak Operations	828,371	845,530	(17,159)	6,151,745	6,411,160	(259,415)	-4%
Train Fuel Cost	270,000	321,117	(51,117)	1,845,817	2,351,133	(505,316)	-21%
PanAm	113,233	113,233	0	790,840	834,962	(44,122)	-5%
MBTA	0	16,667	(16,667)	0	133,333	(133,333)	-100%
Other Train Operations	2,925	1,898	1,027	26,836	17,960	8,876	49%
Insurance	1,160	1,155	5	8,860	9,130	(270)	-3%
Layover Facility	12,724	12,724	0	87,319	87,319	(0)	0%
Capital Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Total Train Operations	1,228,413	1,312,324	(83,911)	8,911,417	9,844,997	(933,580)	-9%
Station Operations							
Portland Station	32,386	33,385	(999)	242,358	239,655	2,703	1%
Platform Ins	10,685	11,179	(494)	85,285	86,767	(1,481)	-2%
Station Platform Leases	0	0	0	30,521	31,760	(1,239)	-4%
Other Station Improvements	0	0	0	9,037	0	9,037	100%
Total Station Operations	43,071	44,564	(1,493)	367,202	358,182	9,020	3%
Food Service							
Regular	56,475	55,660	815	496,754	527,820	(31,065)	-6%
Total Food Service	56,475	55,660	815	496,754	527,820	(31,065)	-6%
Marketing	37,742	37,743	(1)	352,364	352,307	57	0%
Total Marketing	37,742	37,743	(1)	352,364	352,307	57	0%
Total Expenses	1,418,422	1,505,207	(86,785)	10,556,651	11,535,216	(978,565)	-8%
Additional Funding Required	821,812	907,965	(86,153)	4,453,420	5,744,308	(1,290,887)	-22%