

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority



April 2015



Board of Directors Briefing Materials

April 27, 2015

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

AmtrakDowneaster.com



FY2015 Action Plan

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

Meet or exceed projected Performance Benchmarks

- Exceed 50% total cost recovery
- Achieve 90% OTP
- Achieve 80% Café Cost Recovery in Café.
- Exceed 90% in all CSI categories

Improve Service Efficiency

- Begin Brunswick Layover Construction to eliminate deadheads, increase revenue service, eliminate idling
- Maximize revenue potential on peak performing trains.
- Improve reliability through tie replacement program.
- Increase performance of off-peak trains through targeted marketing campaigns.

Improve Passenger Services & Communication

- Develop PIDS implementation plan
- Simplify Group Sales process
- Improve station displays
- Explore ways to improve bicycle access.

Complete Service Development Plan

- Review and refine key objectives
- Finalize infrastructure improvement plan

Begin MBTA Infrastructure Improvement Project

- Finalize Scope & Budget
- Begin Construction

Explore Options for Service Expansions

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

April 27, 2015

12:15pm

Motion to enter Executive Session

1:00pm

1. Motion to open Public Session
2. Approval of Minutes from March 2015 Meeting
3. Downeaster Performance Update
4. Finance Report
5. Executive Director and Staff Reports
6. Other Business
7. Public Comment
8. Next Scheduled Meeting: **TBD** due to Memorial Day Holiday



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

March 23, 2015
Portland, Maine

Directors in attendance:

Mr. Martin Eisenstein, Mr. Dana Connors (Conference), Ms. Sue Moreau, Mr. John Bubier, and Mr. George Gervais

Staff in attendance:

Ms. Patricia Quinn, Ms. Marina Douglass, Mr. Brian Beeler, Mr. James Russell, Ms. Natalie Bogart, Ms. Rachel Michaud and Ms. Theresa Diffin

Interested parties:

Mr. Stephen Corcoran, Amtrak; Ms. Emily Boochever, All Aboard Brunswick; Mr. Tony Donovan, Maine Rail Transit Coalition/Sierra Club; Mr. Dana Knapp, Concord Coach Lines; Mr. Bill Lord, TrainRiders Northeast; Ms. Alison Harris, All Aboard Brunswick; Mr. Kenyon Karl, Sierra Club; Ms. Nelia Dunbar, All Aboard Brunswick; Mr. Paul Weiss, MRTC & Sierra Club; Ms. Claudia Knox, All Aboard Brunswick; and Mr. Ed Knox, All Aboard Brunswick

Commencement:

Vote to open Public Session at 12:25pm

Motion:

Seconded:

Accepted: All

Vote to go into Executive Session at 12:25pm

Motion:

Seconded:

Accepted:

Per 1 MRS Section 405(6) (E)

a. To discuss storm water permit meeting

Motion to re-open Public Session

Out of Executive Session into Public Session at 1:05 pm

Minutes of February 23, 2014 Meeting

Vote to accept minutes as presented by the staff.

Motion: Mr. Bubier

Seconded: Ms. Moreau

Accepted: All

Mr. Eisenstein announced the board received a resignation letter from board member Mr. McEvoy.

Motion to accept the resignation letter from Mr. McEvoy.

Motion: Mr. Bubier

Seconded: Mr. Gervais

Accepted: All

DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE REPORT

Senator Stan Gerzofsky presented testimony to the oversight committee of the legislature suggesting the NNEPRA be reviewed by OPEGA, and they agreed. The area of focus is cost effectiveness, use of funds, proficiently and to procurement policies. They will review our management practices and make sure they are consistent with our statutory purpose, as well as, long and short term planning.

Ms. Quinn stated NNEPRA is subject to many audits by the FRA, the FTA in addition to an annual independent audit conducted by MacPage. These documents are posted at NNEPRA.com. There was no chance for input from NNEPRA at this meeting. Staff does not take exception to the review in itself but, felt there was a lack of understanding among committee members about what we do and how we do it. Our website is up-to-date with reports online for public review.

Mr. Eisenstein stated it is important, as a public agency, to be open and transparent. He has reached out to try to talk to Senator Gerzofsky to try to find out what concerns his constituents have so that they can be addressed. He also stated that MacPage always reached out to him, as Chair, to ask if there are any concerns with the organization, and there are none.

Mr. Weiss, a member of the Maine Rail Coalition and Sierra Club said NNEPRA is very transparent and open and has always provided information he has requested. He feels this review waste of taxpayer dollars.

Mr. Lord stated Senator Gerzofsky is putting in a bill to restrict the idling of passenger locomotives.

Mr. Donovan said he has never had an issue with a response from Ms. Quinn or NNEPRA noting that if he thought there was a problem with NNEPRA, we wouldn't be pushing for them to go to Lewiston/Auburn.

Ms. Quinn said there is a lot of legislative activity and that she recently testified on behalf of Senator Golden's bill for a study of service to Lewiston/Auburn. A workshop on that bill brought questions of funding. There have been criticism in our strategic goals on how and when to accomplish expansion. There have also been a number of questions of ridership statistics from past studies on the Lewiston/Auburn area. We need to move forward and support this initiative. Mr. Eisenstein said Senator Golden's bill is very constructive.

Ms. Quinn said this Thursday there is a Transportation Committee meeting to discuss the bill to limit idling passenger trains to 30 minutes. This bill is only for passenger trains and does not include freight trains. If this bill is passed it would significantly impact our service. Legislation that mandates it could jeopardize our operation and there is doubt that it could be enforced. Ms. Quinn will testify as OUGHT NOT TO PASS.

Ms. Quinn further stated that NNEPRA is very responsive and runs the best service possible and that it is troubling to be questioned about our transparency. Station committee meetings are held bi-monthly and a great deal of information is available on the nnepra.com website. We are always open to any input on how to be more transparent and have not kept information from anyone. Brunswick has been a high p

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND STAFF REPORTS

Staff Presentations

Ridership in February 2015 was 29,317 which was 23% less than projected and 19% less than February 2014. Thirty eight trains were cancelled during the month of February and OTP was. March started out poor but was improving to date. There weren't as many events at TD Garden, UNH did not make it to the finals this year and the unpredictability of the train is a big part of ridership.

Ms. Quinn made a presentation on OTP, the effects of speed restrictions, track work, and weather. During July we had to cancel trains and had delays but got better. In the fall we had to do tie replacements and had speed restrictions (cleaned up a lot in December and January). In February there were a lot of delays and cancellations due to bad weather, equipment and signal problems.

There are still some speed restrictions. The MBTA is beginning to run again and will be dealing with spring thaw. More speed restrictions are anticipated. The Downeaster has announced a new schedule which will provide more time between equipment turns and allow more recovery time. This will enable trains to leave on time.

Speed restrictions will get worse and track work will be coming up. Amtrak, PanAm and NNEPRA have met and 22,000 ties will be installed in the spring starting May 4. Mid-day trains will be cancelled during that time. By the end of the six week period, speed restrictions will be removed and reliability will significantly improve.

Ms. Quinn would like approval to provide a discount of \$30-\$50 for pass holders for the month of May and possibly June during track work due to tie replacements. Mr. Beeler and Ms. Bogart brought that idea forward, as well as Ms. Michaud.

Vote to approve a discount for pass holders for month of May and possibly June during construction of ties.

Motion: Mr. Bubier

Seconded: Mr. Gervais

Accepted: All

FINANCE REPORT – Marina Douglass

Budget Variance Report

Despite all challenges, the budget is sound. Ticket revenue was only 3% below projections for February and food service revenue was higher than budgeted.

Expenses year to date are 5% less than projected due to decreases in fuel cost and the lack of performance payments.

Overall cost recovery year to day is 53%. NNEPRA's annual goal is 50%.

Café revenue is greater than budgeted, however expenses were greater. Mr. Beeler mentioned higher expenses because labor adds to cost due to delayed trains. Also with cancelled trains food sales are lost. Have great café attendants.

An invitation for bids on ballast is open until Thursday.

Vote to accept the Variance Report

Motion: Mr. Bubier

Seconded: Ms. Moreau

Accepted: All

Ms. Quinn mentioned the Storm Water Permit Hearing will be on Wednesday. We are looking forward to have it behind us and appreciate Mr. Russell's time and effort preparing for this.

Public Comment

Mr. Donovan inquired into clarification on new schedule time departures and arrivals. Ms. Quinn explained the changes. He also asked if there was any data regarding any correlation between train and turnpike traffic (how many cars are taken off the road due to train travel). Ms. Douglass will check to see if there is any data available. Ms. Quinn said part of it is not so much taking cars off the road but to reduce the growth. Mr. Bubier mentioned that Steve Linnell of GPCOG may have data on this.

Ms. Boochever inquired into layover expenses reported and was told those expenses are primarily for the Portland layover. Only a small portion for plowing in Brunswick is a part of this expense.

Vote to adjourn: 2:00 pm

Motion: Mr. Bubier

Seconded: Ms. Moreau

Accepted: All

NEXT MEETING: April 27, 2015

DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE STATISTICS					
February 2015					
Performance Stats	Ridership	Revenue	Fare/Pax	Pass Mi	Mi/Pax
Actual February 2015	29,317	\$ 532,283	\$ 18.16	2,397,890	82
Actual February 2014	36,114	\$ 602,845	\$ 16.69	2,905,490	80
FY2015 Year to date	319,436	\$5,607,219	\$ 17.55	26,602,404	83
FY2014 Year to date*	351,822	\$5,556,558	\$ 15.79	30,254,798	86
*FY13 Ridership adjusted to reflect ticket lifts , not allocated passengers reported by Amtrak.					
City Pair Ridership February 2015	# Riders	Revenue	Avg Fare	% Total Riders	% Total Revenue
Boston-North - Portland	7,869	\$175,576	\$ 22.31	27%	33%
Boston-North - Exeter	3,978	\$58,109	\$ 14.61	14%	11%
Boston-North - Durham	3,312	\$59,432	\$ 17.94	11%	11%
Boston-North - Dover	2,656	\$46,590	\$ 17.54	9%	9%
Boston-North - Saco	2,182	\$43,295	\$ 19.84	7%	8%
Boston-North - Wells	1,841	\$33,702	\$ 18.31	6%	6%
Boston-North - Brunswick	1,196	\$24,115	\$ 20.16	4%	5%
Boston-North - Haverhill	1,651	\$20,267	\$ 12.28	6%	4%
Boston-North - Freeport	289	\$7,126	\$ 24.66	1%	1%
Total	24,974	\$468,212	\$ 18.75	85%	88%
On Time Performance	Average overall OTP for February 2015				
	4.70%				
100%	None				
90-99%	None				
80-89%	None				
Below 80%	All				
Customer Satisfaction Score	Downeaster January 2015		Amtrak January 2015		
Overall CSI	90%		85%		
Overall Cleanliness of Train	92%		86%		
Friend. /Helpful of Conductors	92%		89%		
Friendliness of Café Attendent	89%		87%		
Quality of Café Food	83%		79%		
Overall Café Experience	84%		80%		

Preliminary March 2015 –
 Amtrak reports for March 2015 not yet available

DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE STATISTICS					
March 2015					
Performance Stats	Ridership	Revenue	Fare/Pax	Pass Mi	Mi/Pax
Actual March 2015	37,318	\$ 647,150	\$ 17.34		
Actual March 2014	44,215	\$ 735,305	\$ 16.63		
FY2015 Year to date	356,754	\$6,254,369	\$ 17.53		
FY2014 Year to date*	351,822	\$6,557,582	\$ 18.64		

*FY13 Ridership adjusted to reflect ticket lifts , not allocated passengers reported by Amtrak.

PRELIMINARY VARIANCE REPORT - March 2015							
	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	647,150	735,305	(88,155)	6,254,369	6,489,315	(234,946)	-4%
Food Service Revenue	61,752	56,250	5,502	527,323	484,182	43,140	9%
Advertising Revenue	0	0	0	7,400	7,500	(100)	0%
Parking Lot Revenue	42,220	27,000	15,220	301,760	292,282	9,478	3%
Interest on Accounts	250	206	44	2,695	1,856	838	45%
Other Revenue	14,009	12,404	1,604	157,143	119,802	37,341	31%
Total Operating Revenues	765,381	831,166	(65,785)	7,250,690	7,394,938	(144,248)	-2%
Expenses							
Wages and Benefits							
Permanent Full-Time	28,915	28,915	0	268,569	268,570	(0)	(0)
Benefits	13,722	13,722	0	127,216	127,214	2	0
Total Wages and Benefits	42,638	42,638	0	395,785	395,784	1	0%
Administration							
Office Expenses	10,649	12,108	(1,459)	93,078	95,508	(2,430)	-3%
Professional Services	423	708	(285)	18,923	22,875	(3,952)	-17%
Insurance	2,446	2,734	(288)	21,273	23,363	(2,090)	-9%
Board Operations	1,284	1,215	69	10,180	10,583	(402)	-4%
Total Administration Expense	14,802	16,765	(1,963)	143,455	152,328	(8,873)	-6%
Train Operations							
Amtrak Operations	982,099	982,099	(0)	8,553,702	8,553,703	(1)	0%
Train Fuel Cost	253,725	324,900	(71,175)	2,199,074	2,924,100	(725,026)	-25%
PanAm	106,747	106,747	0	877,933	960,726	(82,793)	-9%
Other Train Operations	3,070	3,749	(678)	29,762	35,738	(5,976)	-17%
Insurance	1,290	1,655	(365)	11,446	13,552	(2,106)	-16%
Layover Facility	9,784	12,478	(2,695)	95,119	106,438	(11,319)	-11%
Capital Maintenance	191,418	192,000	(583)	247,621	251,877	(3,674)	0%
Total Train Operations	1,548,133	1,623,628	(75,495)	12,014,656	12,846,133	(830,894)	-6%
Station Operations							
Portland Station	34,672	35,700	(1,028)	264,173	262,500	1,673	1%
Platform Ins	10,767	12,543	(1,776)	96,808	103,911	(7,104)	-7%
Station Platform Leases	0	0	0	31,611	32,249	(638)	0%
Other Station Improvements	0	0	0	681	944	(263)	0%
Total Station Operations	45,439	48,243	(2,803)	393,273	399,605	(6,332)	-2%
Food Service							
Regular	84,863	67,188	17,676	682,437	582,858	99,579	17%
Total Food Service	84,863	67,188	17,676	682,437	582,858	99,579	17%
Marketing	26,419	26,419	0	256,288	256,846	(558)	0%
Total Marketing	26,419	26,419	0	256,288	256,846	(558)	0%
Total Expenses	1,762,295	1,824,881	(62,586)	13,885,894	14,633,554	(747,078)	-5%
Additional Funding Required	996,914	993,715	3,199	6,635,204	7,238,616	(602,830)	-8%