

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority



July 2014



Board of Directors Briefing Materials

July 28, 2014

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

AmtrakDowneaster.com



FY2014 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

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

June 23, 2014

12:30pm

- Open Public Session

- Motion to go into executive session pursuant to 1 MRS Section 405(6)(E) to discuss contract negotiations.

1:00pm

- Motion to re-open Public Session

- Approval of Minutes from June 23, 2014 Meeting

- Downeaster Performance Update

- Finance Report
 - a. June Preliminary Variance Report

- Brunswick Layover Update
 - a. Project Status
 - b. Brunswick Layover Advisory Group
 - c. Train Idling Committee update

- Executive Director Report

- Public Comment

- Next Scheduled Meeting: August 25, 2014



June 23, 2014
Portland, Maine

Directors in attendance:

Mr. Martin Eisenstein, Mr. Dana Connors, Mr. Matt Jacobson, Mr. John Bubier, Commissioner David Bernhardt, Ms. Carolann Ouellette and Mr. Robert McEvoy

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. Dana Knapp, Concord Coach; Mr. Tony Donovan, Maine Rail Transit Coalition (MRTC); Mr. Paul Weiss, MRTC & Sierra Club; Mr. John Eldridge, Town of Brunswick; Ms. Mary Keith, Brunswick resident; Mr. Peter McGuire, The Forecaster Reporter

Commencement:

Vote to open Public Session at 12:37 pm

Motion: Mr. Jacobson

Seconded: Mr. Connors

Accepted: All

Motion to go into executive session

Motion: Mr. Bubier

Seconded: Mr. Connors

Accepted: All

Per 1 MRS Section 405(6) (E)

a. To discuss contract negotiations

Motion to re-open Public Session

Out of Executive Session into Public Session at 1:00 pm

Minutes of May 5, 2014 Meeting

Vote to accept minutes as presented by the staff.

Motion: Mr. Jacobson

Seconded: Mr. Bernhardt

Accepted: All

DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE REPORT

Staff Presentations

Downeaster Performance update

Staff Presentations

- Ms. Quinn reviewed the Downeaster May performance, revenue and ridership.
- May ridership was approximately 1,300 lower than May 2013.
Mr. Beeler noted that the Bruins were in playoffs in 2013, which increased ridership. He further noted that group travelers in May 2014 doubled from the same time last year..
- Mr. Beeler provided of recent train delays, indicating that trains are currently averaging a 37 minute delay, and commended Café and Amtrak crews for their excellent service providing passengers with information. He noted that speed restrictions are expected to continue through June and that inconvenience vouchers would be used to compensate passengers and encourage return ridership.
- In addition to speed restrictions, Mr. Beeler stated that other delays have been caused by a fire in Scarborough and pedestrian trespassing.
- Ms. Quinn said that 2,000 ties were recently delivered for installation by Pan Am in the coming month to remove speed restrictions. Some mid-day trains will be annulled this week to give Pan Am more time to work on the tie replacement. An additional 28,000 ties will be replaced in the fall, and a maintenance program has been put in place replace 10,000 ties each year.
- Mr. Connors inquired if passengers knew the cause and effect of late trains. Mr. Beeler explained that passengers are notified of speed restrictions on social media, on both the NNEPRA and Downeaster website and with station sign postings.
- Ms. Bogart provided an update on the Train to Maine campaign and distributed photos from a recent photography shoot in Portland.
- NNEPRA held a focus group with 24 participants in Haverhill, MA, to gather information about travel patterns and Downeaster opinions from both riders and non- riders of the Downeaster. Concern over the availability of convenient transportation connections once passengers arrive at most of the Downeaster stations, seemed to be the most notable challenge in attracting car-free visitors.
- Mr. Eisenstein asked about the progress of allowing bikes to board at more stations. Mr. Beeler explained that Boston, Portland and Brunswick are still the only stations that are able to have bikes loaded and unloaded due to safety issues at the other stations. He noted that high-level platforms would need to be constructed at station to provide more bike access. He further state that Zagster, the Portland Transportation Center (PTC) bikeshare provider, made a presentation at the PTC to Amtrak ticket agents, Concord Coach customer service agents and Downeaster volunteers.

FINANCE REPORT – Marina Douglass

Budget Variance Report

- Ms. Douglass reviewed the May 2014 variance report.

Vote to accept May 2014 Variance Report

Motion: Mr. Connors
Seconded: Mr. Jacobson
Accepted: All

FY 2015 Budget Update

- Ms. Quinn noted that she had met with Commissioner Bernhardt, as required. Commissioner Bernhardt to review the FY2015 NNEPRA Budget proposal and that he had approved the budget as presented.
- Ms. Quinn and Ms. Douglass also reviewed the FY2015 budget with the NNEPRA Board finance committee, Mr. Eisenstein and Mr. Jacobson, who also approved the budget.
- Ms. Quinn stated that the FY15 Amtrak operating cost agreement is not finalized.
- Included in the FY2015 budget is a line item for PIDS (Passenger Information Display Systems) for the Downeaster stations. Mr. Beeler reported that NNEPRA and Amtrak are meeting to work on the procurement and installation of the system to keep passengers informed of train status. NNEPRA will provide the system for Maine stations. New Hampshire and Massachusetts stations will have to pay for their own.

Vote to accept FY 2015 Budget

Motion: Mr. Connors
Seconded: Mr. Jacobson
Accepted: All

Ms. Quinn reported that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Brunswick Layover Facility project. The grant application for funding will be finalized and NNEPRA will meet with the construction firm, Consigli, to discuss the next steps. A meeting with the Brunswick advisory group will be arranged in the next month.

NNEPRA held a public meeting in Dover, New Hampshire to discuss the Service Development Plan (SDP). It was not as well attended as the Portland meeting. Despite fewer attendees, comments were similar to the Portland SDP meeting.

Ms. Quinn received a letter from a group of Maine legislators questioning some of NNEPRA's strategic initiatives and suggesting potential track improvements. Ms. Quinn responded with an invitation to meet with them and discuss future goals and long-term needs.

Project Updates

- Mr. Russell reported that work on the Brunswick Expansion Project is continuing currently with signal work and tie pick up.
- Mr. Russell stated that a budget for the NNEPRA-MBTA Haverhill Line Project should be completed in the next few months. As of July 1, 2014, Keolis will take over operations from the MBCR for MBTA. The majority of project construction will be completed next summer.

Executive Director Report

Ms. Quinn congratulated Ms. Douglass for being named Chairman of the PACTS Transit Committee.

Public Comment

Mr. John Eldridge, Interim Brunswick Town Manager spoke on behalf of the Brunswick Town Council regarding the idling of trains in Brunswick. The council would like NNEPRA to consider options to having trains idle during the day. An option that they specifically would like investigated is head-end power. He expressed that Brunswick is very supportive of the Downeaster service. The council would like a solution as soon as possible. Mr. Russell said head-end power would cost approximately \$50,000 which includes Central Maine Power installation cost, procurement of equipment and electrician costs. The equipment procurement and installation would take 2-3 months. Mr. Jacobson and Mr. Connors asked Mr. Russell to investigate powering only the café car and have power for cleaning while keeping the rest of the train shut down.

Ms. Mary Keith of Cedar Street in Brunswick expressed her support for Downeaster service, but explained that train idling is a real concern especially in the summer months with the fumes and noise from the trains running 5-6 hours. Ms. Keith requested that NNEPRA consider alternative means to having the trains idle.

Mr. McEvoy stated that this situation needs a very thorough review. Ms. Quinn stated that Staff will revisit the prices and timeline. Mr. Eisenstein asked Mr. Russell and Mr. Eldridge to meet as a committee to discuss options. Mr. Eisenstein asked if any board members wanted to participate on the committee. Mr. McEvoy volunteered and suggested that a mobile generator could be beneficial. Mr. Russell, Mr. Eldridge and Mr. McEvoy will move forward on this issue and report to the board at the next meeting.

Mr. Donovan requested and was given a copy of the letter sent to Ms. Quinn from the Maine legislators. Mr. Eisenstein said that the letter focused on the core service which NNEPRA needs to maintain as strong and vibrant and then expanded service can be built off that strong foundation. Mr. Donovan feels that NNEPRA should work on expansion now because studies have been done that show the need for more rail service. Mr. Bubier stated that a lot of money was needed to expand. Mr. Weiss responded that whether money is available or not, NNEPRA needs a vision and should reach out to the other projects and support them. He said that NNEPRA can be a strong advocate to other projects without additional investments. Mr. Weiss stated that rail lines across the state are disappearing and being replaced with bike paths.

Mr. Eisenstein responded that NNEPRA is working with all groups to support new rail initiatives. Commissioner Bernhardt said that NNEPRA, in concert with MaineDOT, has to carefully consider which expansion projects can be supported, noting that all modes of transportation must be considered to fulfill everyone's needs. He further stated that MaineDOT continually looks for funds and that expansion or additional of services needs to be done in a financially responsible way. There are no federal funds available – Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) etc.

Ms. Quinn noted that NNEPRA fully supports the vision of expanded rail services in Maine, but that demonstrated need and resources were not available at this time.

Mr. Davis said that TrainRiders Northeast volunteers assist in informing passengers of delays. He also explained that Trainriders Northeast is working with the Federal delegation regarding reauthorization of the surface transportation bill and other pertinent legislation.

Vote to adjourn: 2:30 pm

Motion: Mr. Jacobson

Seconded: Mr. Bubier

Accepted: All

NEXT MEETING: July 28, 2014

DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE STATISTICS					
June 2014					
Performance Stats	Ridership	Revenue	Fare/Pax	Pass Mi	Mi/Pax
Actual June 2014	41,756	\$ 709,751	\$ 17.00	3,560,799	85
Actual June 2013*	43,258	\$ 714,222	\$ 16.51	3,995,889	92
FY2014 Year to date	536,524	\$8,623,686	\$ 16.07	44,412,304	83
FY2013 Year to date*	512,775	\$8,117,252	\$ 15.83	45,307,427	88
*FY13 Ridership adjusted to reflect ticket lifts, not allocated passengers reported by Amtrak.					
City Pair Ridership June 2014	# Riders	Revenue	Avg Fare	% Total Riders	% Total Revenue
Boston-North - Portland	11,834	\$242,815	\$ 20.52	28%	34%
Boston-North - Exeter	5,503	\$68,691	\$ 12.48	13%	10%
Boston-North - Durham	2,214	\$33,495	\$ 15.13	5%	5%
Boston-North - Dover	3,125	\$49,462	\$ 15.83	7%	7%
Boston-North - Saco	2,626	\$52,049	\$ 19.82	6%	7%
Boston-North - Wells	3,800	\$64,003	\$ 16.84	9%	9%
Boston-North - Brunswick	2,021	\$44,905	\$ 22.22	5%	6%
Boston-North - Haverhill	1,851	\$19,582	\$ 10.58	4%	3%
Boston-North - Freeport	576	\$13,647	\$ 23.69	1%	2%
Total	33,550	\$588,649	\$ 17.55	80%	83%
On Time Performance	Average overall OTP for June 2014				
	18.80%				
100%	None				
90-99%	None				
80-89%	680				
Below 80%	All Other Trains				
Customer Satisfaction Score	Downeaster May 2014		Amtrak May 2014		
Overall CSI	91%		86%		
Overall Cleanliness of Train	90%		85%		
Friend. /Helpful of Conductors	93%		89%		
Friendliness of Café Attendent	93%		88%		
Quality of Café Food	85%		80%		
Overall Café Experience	88%		81%		

PRELIMINARY VARIANCE REPORT - June 2014							
	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	709,751	712,099	(2,348)	8,623,682	8,181,813	441,869	5%
Food Service Revenue	73,337	51,902	21,435	703,174	620,206	82,968	13%
Advertising Revenue	0	0	0	20,056	7,500	12,556	167%
Parking Lot Revenue	28,948	34,000	(5,052)	393,389	405,920	(12,531)	-3%
Interest on Accounts	300	236	65	2,616	2,827	(211)	-7%
Other Revenue	4,250	4,206	44	136,570	50,251	86,319	172%
Total Operating Revenues	816,586	802,443	14,143	9,879,487	9,268,517	610,971	7%
Expenses							
Wages and Benefits							
Permanent Full-Time	33,042	34,296	(1,254)	345,954	347,208	(1,254)	(0)
Benefits	14,604	17,928	(3,324)	158,139	161,464	(3,324)	(0)
Total Wages and Benefits	47,646	52,224	(4,578)	504,093	508,672	(4,578)	-1%
Administration							
Office Expenses	17,237	24,237	(7,001)	128,259	135,467	(7,207)	-5%
Professional Services	11,796	3,538	8,258	37,909	43,500	(5,591)	-13%
Insurance	1,151	2,700	(1,549)	27,706	30,125	(2,419)	-8%
Board Operations	1,220	1,170	50	12,340	13,605	(1,265)	-9%
Total Administration Expense	31,403	31,645	(242)	206,215	222,697	(16,482)	-7%
Train Operations							
Amtrak Operations	887,036	883,333	3,703	10,471,235	10,437,000	34,235	0%
Train Fuel Cost	253,178	314,000	(60,822)	3,365,801	3,768,000	(402,199)	-11%
PanAm	106,296	127,300	(21,004)	1,084,424	1,301,068	(216,644)	-17%
Other Train Operations	4,497	3,125	1,372	44,440	37,500	6,940	19%
Insurance	1,160	6,569	(5,409)	13,920	19,329	(5,409)	-28%
Layover Facility	9,745	12,057	(2,312)	129,182	147,421	(18,239)	-12%
Capital Maintenance	702,232	702,232	0	712,279	712,279	0	0%
Total Train Operations	1,964,142	2,048,616	(84,473)	15,821,282	16,422,597	(601,315)	-4%
Station Operations							
Portland Station	28,100	41,600	(13,500)	358,669	379,800	(21,131)	-6%
Platform Ins	10,748	12,491	(1,743)	128,672	140,922	(12,249)	-9%
Station Platform Leases	7,086	12,135	(5,049)	38,095	43,877	(5,782)	-13%
Other Station Improvements	0	817	(817)	75	9,800	(9,725)	100%
Total Station Operations	45,934	67,042	(21,109)	525,512	574,399	(48,887)	-9%
Food Service							
Regular	86,079	67,473	18,606	835,742	806,267	29,475	4%
Total Food Service	86,079	67,473	18,606	835,742	806,267	29,475	4%
Marketing	110,092	109,159	934	478,837	480,000	(1,163)	0%
Total Marketing	110,092	109,159	934	478,837	480,000	(1,163)	0%
Total Expenses	2,285,297	2,376,159	(90,862)	18,371,680	19,014,631	(642,951)	-3%
Additional Funding Required	1,468,711	1,573,716	(105,005)	8,492,193	9,746,114	(1,253,921)	-13%