

# Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority



## September 2011

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Construction of the Freeport Platform began September 1, 2011

### Board of Directors Briefing Materials

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September 26, 2011  
12:30pm

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**NNEPRA Office**  
75 W Commercial Street, Suite 104  
Portland, Maine



## BOARD MEETING AGENDA

September 26, 2011  
NNEPRA Office  
75 W Commercial St. Suite 104  
Portland, Maine

**12:30pm** Meeting Called to Order  
Vote to enter Executive Session

**1:00pm**

- I. Vote to open Public Session
- II. Approval of Minutes, August 22, 2011, 2011 Meeting (page 3)
- III. Performance Update - Patricia Quinn (page 8)
- IV. Finance Report - Marina Douglass (page 9)
- V. Executive Director's Report – Patricia Quinn
- VI. Passenger Services Report – Brian Beeler
- VII. Marketing Report – Natalie Allen
- VIII. Special Projects Report – James Russell
- IX. Other Business
- X. Public Comment
- XI. Next Meeting: October 24, 2011



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

August 22, 2011

Abromson Center, Room 214  
University of Southern Maine  
Bedford Street  
Portland, Maine

### **Directors in attendance:**

Mr. Eisenstein, Mr. Dana Connors, Mr. John Clifford, Mr. John Bubier, Ms. Brenda Garrand, Commissioner David Bernhardt, and Commissioner George Gervais

### **Staff in attendance:**

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

### **Interested parties:**

Representative Mike Carey, Jeff Reynolds, Margo Knight, Claudia Knox, Kristen Fortier, Barry Magda, Amanda Swanbey, Denny Mohn, Wayne Davis, Benet Pols, John Perreault, Anna Nelson, Bob McEvoy, John MacKellop, Steve Fortier, Jim Keithley, Matt Chapman, Senator Stan Gerzofsky, Jeff Edmonds, Joan Saxe, Nicole Vinal, Emily Guerin, Dana Knapp, Steve Corcoran.

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### **Commencement:**

The meeting was called to order at 12:00pm and the Board moved into Executive Session. Executive session was closed at 1:11 pm and the Public Session commenced.

### **Minutes of July 23, 2011 Meeting**

The minutes were accepted as presented by the staff

Motion: Mr. Connors

Seconded: Commissioner Gervais

Accepted: All

### **PERFORMANCE REPORT – PATRICIA QUINN**

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- Ms. Quinn reviewed the performance report highlighting that July 2011 was the highest ridership month in the Downeaster's history.
- On Time Performance is still very low, due primarily to track infrastructure issues on both the MBTA and Pan Am portions of the line. While OTP is poor, the duration of delays has decreased. Both railroads are working to make corrections in the coming weeks to improve OTP.
- CSI scores are strong.
- A Performance Report highlighting Fiscal Year 2011 was presented.

## **FINANCE REPORT – MARINA DOUGLASS**

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### **Budget Variance Report**

- Ms. Douglass reviewed the June 2011 Variance Report

Motion to accept the July 2011 Variance Report:

Motion: Ms. Clifford

Seconded: Mr. Bubier

Accepted: All

### **BRUNSWICK LAYOVER DISCUSSION**

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- Chairman Eisenstein began a discussion about the Brunswick Layover. He expressed his appreciation to members of the public who commented on the Brunswick Layover Siting Report at the Special Board meeting held in Brunswick on August 18, 2011.
- Chairman Eisenstein opened the floor to any other members of the public who did not have an opportunity to speak at that meeting.
  - Mr. Jeff Reynolds, a resident of Brunswick, spoke in support of locating the layover at the Brunswick West site.
  - Representative Mike Carey of Lewiston spoke, stating that his community was looking forward to being considered next for Downeaster service. He also reiterated the importance of the freight intermodal facility located in Auburn.
  - Senator Stan Gerzofsky expressed appreciation to the Board, members of the public, NNEPRA and others for participating in an open dialogue to discuss concerns associated with the layover. He said he felt all sides had an opportunity to present input.
  - Mr. Eisenstein noted that the Board had not only heard comments from the public, but that the Board was listening, and will incorporate those comments into future plans.
  - Brunswick Councilor John Perreault stated that the community was supportive of Amtrak service, but had concerns about the Brunswick West location. He expressed appreciation to all for the time and consideration which had been given to date. He also expressed his hope that the process could continue to move forward with input from all involved parties.
- Chairman Eisenstein read a letter submitted by Brunswick Councilor Margo Knight, expressing the Town's support for NNEPRA and Downeaster service, stressing the work, investment and planning which has gone into the expansion to date. She urged NNEPRA to continue to work collaboratively with the Town and its residents on the development of the layover and pledged support from the Town of Brunswick.
- Chairman Eisenstein asked Ms. Quinn to comment on the layover project. Ms. Quinn commented on the process to date, clarifying some of the details of the facility which had been misrepresented at past meetings. She suggested that the Board accept the recommendations of PB and move forward with the acquisition of the Brunswick West site and the development of a layover at that location
- She also stated a commitment to move forward with the process collaboratively and recommended the formation of an advisory group to work with NNEPRA and its consultants to be sure all interests were represented.

- A Motion was made to accept recommendation from consultants and staff to move forward with the development of a layover facility at the Brunswick West site and to form a working advisory group to work collaboratively with NNEPRA on this project, noting that the NNEPRA Board would retain the authority to make any decisions.
  - Motion: Ms. Garrand
  - Seconded: Mr. Bubier
  - Discussion:
    - Mr. Connors requested clarification on the composition of the Advisory Group. It will include: NNEPRA staff, PB consultants, Nate Moulton from MaineDOT, the Brunswick Town Planner, a Brunswick Town Councilor, 2 representatives of the Brunswick Community and a representative from Amtrak.
    - Mr. Clifford asked for clarification regarding representation from MaineDOT. Ms. Quinn stated that it was to ensure that the layover development did not have a negative impact of existing or planned freight operations in that location.
    - Mr. Bubier expressed his support for the public input process which had taken place.
    - Mr. Eisenstein reiterated that the NNEPRA Chairman would make the final decision regarding who would participate in the advisory group, and welcomed input from the Town.
  - Accepted: All

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT – Patricia Quinn**

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- Ms. Quinn stated that work on the Freeport platform would begin prior to the next Board meeting and requested authorization to sign necessary agreements.
  - Mr. Nathaniel Rosenblatt commented that the Freeport Platform Agreement between NNEPRA and Maine Central Railroad was circulating in draft form.
  - Ms. Toni Kemmerle explained MaineDOT’s involvement in helping to negotiate a temporary construction easement with a private landowner in Freeport for the purposes of equipment and material storage.
  - A motion was made to authorize the Executive Director to finalize the Freeport Platform Agreement between NNEPRA and Maine Central Railroad and to finalize the Temporary Construction easement agreement with Mr. Doug Timm.
    - Motion: Mr. Connors
    - Seconded: Mr. Clifford
    - Discussion:
    - Accepted: All
- Ms. Quinn stated that the Cooperative Agreement between FRA and NNEPRA for the \$20.8M HSIPR Grant for the MBTA Track Improvement Project needed to be completed prior to the end of September to avoid losing funds to rescission. She stated that she had been working with FRA, MBTA and Amtrak to finalize the necessary agreements and requested authorization to complete them.

- A motion was made to authorize the Executive Director to finalize the agreements necessary to complete the obligation of HSIPR funds for the MBTA Track Improvement Project including a construction agreement between MBTA and NNEPRA and a Service Outcome Agreement between MBTA, NNEPRA and Amtrak.
  - Motion: Mr. Bubier
  - Seconded: Ms. Garrand
  - Discussion:
  - Accepted: All
  
- Ms. Quinn reported that as part of the Service Development Planning effort, a Portland Station Stakeholders group had been formed and held one meeting. Member of the group include MaineDOT Deputy Commissioner Bruce VanNote, Greg Mitchell from the City of Portland, Steve Corcoran from Amtrak, Harry Blunt of Concord Coach Lines, Wayne Davis of TrainRiders Northeast, Chris Thompson from Thompson’s Point Developers, Consultants from Gannett Fleming and NNEPRA Staff.
  - Ms. Quinn expressed the need to construct new track to facilitate the movement of Downeaster trains from the current PTC location and her intention to pursue a TIGER Grant Application for that purpose.
    - Chairman Eisenstein expressed support for the application.
    - Commissioner Bernhardt stated that the MaineDOT would be submitting applications for other priority projects, but was supportive of NNEPRA’s effort to submit an independent application, stating that it would not dilute the efforts of the MaineDOT.
  
- Ms. Quinn reported that the PRIIA Section 209 Pricing Policy was likely to be sent to Governor LePage for concurrence in early September and expressed support for the Policy.

#### **OPERATIONS REPORT – BRIAN BEELER**

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- Mr. Beeler reiterated comments about On Time Performance stating that delays were decreasing in duration and all were working together on solutions.
- Training for E-ticketing began this week and will be tested throughout the month of September. A sample copy of a “print at home” Downeaster ticket was circulated.
- CSI Score for the Café have shown steady improvement for the past 3 months. Appreciation was expressed to Steve Gillingham and the Epicurean Staff for their efforts.
- The Cart service pilot program will be introduced in September and will hopefully increase sales and provide additional passenger convenience.
- Amtrak WiFi is expected to be introduced in October providing a much more robust solution for riders.

#### **MARKETING REPORT – Natalie Allen**

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- The Train to Maine Campaign is underway and a mini Visit Maine expo was held at North Station on August 11. Many Downeaster communities and other tourism related businesses and regions participated.

- More than 2,000 people toured the Amtrak 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Train during its visit to Freeport on August 13 & 14.
- The Downeaster Discovery Field Trip Teacher Fam trip was held to provide teachers with more information about Boston field trips on the Downeaster. A direct mailing about the Discovery Program will be sent to Maine schools. Last year 12,000 students participated.
- Ms. Diffin has been helping to send out 6-TIX information to colleges along the corridor.
- A new NNEPRA website is being developed.

## **PROJECTS UPDATE –JAMES RUSSELL**

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### **Brunswick Expansion Project:**

- 16 of 36 grade crossing rehabilitations are complete.
- C&S work is progressing concurrently.
- 78 welds have been completed and tested on the line
- Tie replacement will begin September 6.
- B&B crews have begun work on stone arches.
- Pre-cast concrete sections for the Brunswick Platform should be installed in the next month or so.
- Mobilization for the Freeport platform is expected to begin on September 1.

### **Wye Project:**

- CWR has been installed as has the greaser.
- The project is complete and closed out.

### **Other Business**

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Ms. Quinn expressed appreciation to Mr. Steve Corcoran for doing a great job during a very busy and trying period filling in for Mr. Eastwood while he has been out on medical leave. Mr. Eastwood is expected to return in September.

### **Public Comment**

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A member of the public asked when the NNEPRA Annual Report would be complete. Ms. Douglass responded that it needed to be complete to send to the State by October 15. She also commented that the independent audit had begun and that MacDonald Page would be on site at the NNEPRA office the week of September 12.

Motion to adjourn 2:20 pm

### **NEXT MEETING: September 26, 2011**

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Motion: Mr. Clifford  
 Seconded: Mr. Bubier  
 Accepted: All

<b>DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE STATISTICS</b>					
<b>August 2011</b>					
<b>Performance Stats</b>	Ridership	Revenue	Fare/Pax	Pass Mi	Mi/Pax
Actual August 2011	50,825	\$ 715,595	\$ 14.08	4,272,071	84
Actual August 2010	48,841	\$ 727,924	\$ 14.90	4,097,196	84
Note: No service operated Sunday, Aug 28; limited service Monday, Aug 29 due to Tropical Storm.					
FY2012 Year to date	101,904	\$ 1,460,695	\$ 14.33	8,606,796	84
FY2011 Year to date	96,014	\$ 1,441,778	\$ 15.02	8,001,525	83
<b>City Pair Ridership</b>	<b># Riders</b>	<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Avg Fare</b>	<b>% Total Riders</b>	<b>% Total Revenue</b>
<b>August 2011</b>					
Portland -Boston	16,459	\$ 290,221	\$ 17.63	32%	41%
Exeter-Boston	7,016	\$ 59,534	\$ 8.49	14%	8%
Durham-Boston	2,457	\$ 28,092	\$ 11.43	5%	4%
Wells-Boston	5,583	\$ 85,758	\$ 15.36	11%	12%
Saco-Boston	3,576	\$ 56,621	\$ 15.83	7%	8%
Dover-Boston	3,859	\$ 46,200	\$ 11.97	8%	6%
Haverhill-Boston	1,975	\$ 13,916	\$ 7.05	4%	2%
Boston-Old Orchard B	2,607	\$ 47,751	\$ 18.32	5%	7%
<b>On Time Performance</b>	<b>Average overall OTP for August 2011</b>				
	<b>43.40%</b>				
100%	699				
90-99%	None				
80-89%	None				
Below 80%	680,681,682,683,684,685,686,687,688, 689				
	690, 691, 692, 693,694, 695,696, 697, 698				
<b>Customer Satisfaction Score</b>	<b>Downeaster August 2011</b>		<b>Amtrak August 2011</b>		
Overall CSI	87%		80%		
Value for Price Paid	89%		76%		
Overall Cleanliness of Train	84%		76%		
Friend./Helpful of Conductors	90%		82%		
Friendliness of Café Attendent	85%		80%		
Quality of Café Food	69%		67%		
Overall Café Experience	72%		69%		



<b>VARIANCE REPORT - August 2011</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	715,595	757,109	(41,514)	1,460,695	1,488,361	(27,666)	-2%
Food Service Revenue	57,984	55,840	2,145	117,076	109,772	7,304	7%
Advertising Revenue	3,728	3,728	0	7,508	7,508	0	0%
Parking Lot Revenue	32,087	28,002	4,085	74,241	55,048	19,193	35%
Interest on Accounts	238	250	(12)	450	500	(50)	-10%
Other Revenue	4,436	4,436	0	8,872	8,872	0	0%
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>814,068</b>	<b>849,364</b>	<b>(35,296)</b>	<b>1,668,842</b>	<b>1,670,061</b>	<b>(1,219)</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>							
<b>Wages and Benefits</b>							
Permanent Full-Time	26,164	26,164	0	52,350	52,350	0	0
Benefits	10,642	10,642	0	21,192	21,192	0	0
<b>Total Wages and Benefits</b>	<b>36,806</b>	<b>36,806</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>73,542</b>	<b>73,542</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Administration</b>							
Office Expenses	12,577	10,906	1,671	21,974	21,812	162	1%
Professional Services	1,588	1,050	538	3,134	2,100	1,034	49%
Insurance	2,375	2,370	5	4,751	4,740	11	0%
Board Operations	1,823	912	912	3,314	1,823	1,491	82%
<b>Total Administration Expense</b>	<b>18,364</b>	<b>15,237</b>	<b>3,127</b>	<b>33,173</b>	<b>30,475</b>	<b>2,698</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Train Operations</b>							
Amtrak Operations	720,597	720,597	0	1,441,311	1,441,194	118	0%
Train Fuel Cost	195,846	318,750	(122,904)	391,693	637,500	(245,807)	-39%
PanAm	98,770	98,778	(8)	160,800	197,557	(36,757)	-19%
MBTA	20,384	20,384	(0)	40,768	40,768	(0)	0%
Other Train Operations	1,014	556	458	2,312	1,113	1,199	108%
Insurance	1,250	1,250	0	2,500	2,500	0	0%
Layover Facility	6,985	7,643	(659)	13,054	15,286	(2,232)	-15%
Capital Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
<b>Total Train Operations</b>	<b>1,044,846</b>	<b>1,167,959</b>	<b>(123,113)</b>	<b>2,052,438</b>	<b>2,335,917</b>	<b>(283,480)</b>	<b>-12%</b>
<b>Station Operations</b>							
Portland Station	26,695	26,325	369	53,935	52,741	1,194	2%
Platform Ins	10,462	10,462	0	20,924	20,924	0	0%
Station Platform Leases	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Other Station Improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
<b>Total Station Operations</b>	<b>37,157</b>	<b>36,787</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>74,859</b>	<b>73,665</b>	<b>1,194</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Food Service</b>							
Regular	76,425	75,426	999	140,979	148,328	(7,348)	-5%
<b>Total Food Service</b>	<b>76,425</b>	<b>75,426</b>	<b>999</b>	<b>140,979</b>	<b>148,328</b>	<b>(7,348)</b>	<b>-5%</b>
Marketing	20,069	20,068	1	43,111	43,110	1	0%
<b>Total Marketing</b>	<b>20,069</b>	<b>20,068</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>43,111</b>	<b>43,110</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,233,666</b>	<b>1,352,283</b>	<b>(118,617)</b>	<b>2,418,102</b>	<b>2,705,037</b>	<b>(286,935)</b>	<b>-11%</b>
<b>Additional Funding Required</b>	<b>419,597</b>	<b>502,918</b>	<b>(83,321)</b>	<b>749,260</b>	<b>1,034,975</b>	<b>(285,716)</b>	<b>-28%</b>

