

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority



October 2017 Annual Meeting



Board of Directors Briefing Materials

October 23, 2017

GPCOG Office
970 Baxter Blvd, Suite 201
Portland, Maine
6:00pm

AmtrakDowneaster.com

NNEPRA FY2018 Action Plan

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority 75 W. Commercial Street, Portland, ME 04101 207-780-1000
Draft 9/30/2017

Meet or exceed projected Performance Benchmarks

- 46% Total Cost Recovery
- 85% On Time Performance
- 84% Café Cost Recovery in Café
- 95% Overall Customer Satisfaction

Improve Service Efficiency

- Increase revenue on peak trains
- Maximize equipment utilization
- Increase performance on off-peak trains
- Improve cost recovery in Café

Improve Passenger Services & Communication

- Implement PIDS at Maine Stations
- Promote and improve connectivity to Amtrak network
- Formalize Station Ambassador Program
- Improve/promote last mile connectivity
- Improve customer interface on AmtrakDowneaster.com
- Seek ways to improve bicycle access

Sponsor Capital Projects to improve service quality and efficiency

- Complete MBTA Haverhill Line Project
- Support Kennebunk Station development
- Secure Funding for and complete Rockingham Siding Rehabilitation
- Initiate Royal Junction Siding Construction
- Participate in Portland Station improvements
- Develop Wells Siding/Platform concept into a potential program.
- Plan FY19 tie replacement program

Explore Options for Service Improvement/Expansions

- Manage Lewiston/Auburn Service Planning study
- Identify opportunities for additional service growth
- Explore implementation of seasonal service on Rockland Branch

Maintain Compliance with all Regulations

- Improve and enhance written policies & procedures
- Improve and enhance data collection & reporting
- Improve internal documentation processes.

Identify and Promote Economic and Public Benefits associated with the Downeaster.

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



BOARD of DIRECTORS MEETING AGENDA

October 23, 2017

6:00pm Vote to open meeting

- Welcome & Introductions
- Approval of Minutes from September 25, 2017 Board Meeting
- Performance Update
 - FY2017 Annual Report Presentation
 - MacPage Review of NNEPRA Audit
 - FY2018 Fiscal Year to Date
- Finance Report
 - Variance Report
- Mitchell Award Presentation
- Other Business
- Public Comment

Next Meeting:
November 27, 2017



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

September 25, 2017
Portland, ME

Directors in attendance:

Mr. Brian Hobart, Mr. Ron McKinnon, Mr. John Melrose, Mr. Charles Large

Staff in attendance:

Ms. Patricia Quinn, Mr. James Russell, Ms. Marina Douglass, Ms. Natalie Bogart, Mr. Brian Beeler, Ms. Jennifer Crosby and Ms. Lynn Harrington

Interested parties:

Mr. Stephen Corcoran, Amtrak; Mr. Wayne Davis, TrainRiders Northeast; Mr. George O'Keefe, TrainRiders Northeast; Mr. Dana Knapp, Concord Coach; Herb Thomson; MaineDOT

Opening Remarks

Motion to open Public Session at 12:18 pm

Motion: Mr. McKinnon
Seconded: Mr. Hobart
Accepted: All

Motion to go into executive session pursuant to at 12:19 pm

1. 1 MRS § 405(6)(C) and 23 MRS § 8115-A to discuss negotiations with Amtrak regarding the FY2017 and FY2018 agreement.
2. 1 MRS § 405(6)(C) and 23 MRS § 8115-A to discuss negotiations with Concord Coach Lines regarding agreements related to the Portland Transportation Center.
3. 1 MRS § 405(6)(C) and 23 MRS § 8115-A to discuss negotiations with Pan Am Railways regarding agreements related to rail line improvements.
4. 1 MRS § 405(6)(C) and 23 MRS § 8115-A to discuss negotiations with VHB regarding agreements related to the L/A Service Plan.

Motion: Mr. Hobart
Seconded: Mr. McKinnon
Accepted: All

Motion to reopen Public Session at 1:10 pm

Motion: Mr. Hobart
Seconded: Mr. McKinnon
Accepted: All

Vote to accept minutes as presented by the staff

Motion: Mr. Hobart

Seconded: Mr. McKinnon
Accepted: All

Ms. Quinn introduced and welcomed Ms. Harrington as NNEPRA's new graphic design contractor. Mr. Melrose also noted that MaineDOT Board Representative Sue Moreau has retired. Mr. Thompson filled in as a non-voting representative of MaineDOT today.

DOWNEASTER PERFORMANCE REPORT

Ms. Quinn reviewed the Performance Report highlighting the following:

- July 2017 ridership of 57,652 was the highest July in Downeaster history, 15% above target of 50,000. July 2017 was also the highest ridership month in Downeaster history.
- August 2017 ridership of 57,306 was the highest August in Downeaster history, 5% above target of 54,400. August 2017 was the second-highest ridership month in Downeaster history.
- July 2017 revenue of \$1,042,712 exceeded target of \$887,500 by 17% with average fare per passenger at \$18.09.
- August 2017 revenue of \$1,052,422 exceeded target of \$965,600 by 9% with average fare per passenger at \$18.36.
- Overall CSI score through July 2017 is 90%.
- OTP continues to be a challenge.
- Mr. Corcoran said that the majority of the issues were due to Host Railroad infrastructure slow orders and freight train interference, mostly Massachusetts.
- The Amtrak Great Dome car finished its service on the Downeaster September 24th and received tremendous national and local earned media coverage. NNEPRA will try to acquire the car again for 2018.
- A new schedule took effect today. Old Orchard Beach stop closed for the season.
- The flexible late-night schedule to accommodate Red Sox games and TD Garden events has been very successful and will continue. As such, Train 689/699 will depart 10:30pm each night except when there are concerts at the TD Garden. Celtics and Bruins games which begin at 7pm or earlier typically get out by 10:00pm, so the earlier schedule accommodates those fans.

FINANCE REPORT – Marina Douglass

Ms. Douglass reviewed the July 2017 variance report.

Vote to accept July 2017 preliminary variance Report

Motion: Mr. Thompson
Seconded: Mr. Hobart
Accepted: All

Marketing Update- Natalie Bogart

- Ms. Bogart presented the AmtrakDowneaster.com website redesign and provided a brief tutorial on changes to navigation and schedule display. Ms. Bogart also highlighted improvements including a responsive layout for mobile and desktop versions, simplified content, increased imagery and icons, a new FAQ section, and search functionality.
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Project Updates – Jim Russell and Patricia Quinn

- Mr. Russell reported the MBTA project (Haverhill Line Improvements) is scheduled to be completed November 30, 2017. Two additional weekend outages October 21st and 22nd and November 4th and 5th.
- Royal siding project is in development and set to be completed by the end of 2018. Earthwork contract was awarded to D&C Construction scheduled to be completed mid-December.

Ms. Quinn requested permission to apply for a New Hampshire CMAQ (NHCMAQ) grant for the Rockingham Siding Project (Project). This project will rehabilitate and existing passing siding in NH used for Downeaster train meets. The siding is in poor condition and trains are limited to 10mph. If rehabilitated, the operating speed will increase to 30mph. The total project is \$1,600,000. The NHCMAQ application is requesting \$1,200,000 and Pan Am will be contributing the labor as an in-kind match of \$400,000. NNEPRA will use the Restricted Cash Account to fund the Project until reimbursement from the federal grant.

Mr. Melrose suggested that Staff also apply for any other funding opportunities available for the Project.

Vote to authorize Staff to proceed with the Rockingham Siding Project grant application for the New Hampshire CMAQ grant and any other funding opportunity that may be available. Staff may use NNEPRA's Restricted Cash Account to cash flow the Project

Motion: Mr. Hobart

Seconded: Mr. McKinnon

Accepted: All

Ms. Quinn stated that the Lewiston Auburn Service Plan Committee has chosen VHB to study the feasibility of Lewiston Auburn Rail Service. The study is broken down into two phases. The first phase will study ridership propensity. The second phase will identify infrastructure and equipment needs and project both construction and operating costs. MaineDOT has allocated \$250,000 of the \$500,000 that the Maine Legislature voted to fund the study. Ms. Quinn requested permission to enter into a contract with VHB for up to \$250,000 to complete Phase 1 of the Lewiston Auburn Service Study. Once the agreement is finalized, public meetings will be coordinated by VHB.

Vote to authorize Ms. Quinn to enter contract with VHB up to \$250,000 to complete Phase 1 of the Lewiston Auburn Service Study

Motion: Mr. Hobart

Seconded: Mr. McKinnon

Accepted: All

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORTS

- Ms. Quinn reported there are ongoing improvements in North Station that include a hotel. The Downeaster ticket window will be relocated as will be access point to the subway.
- Ms. Quinn reported that Amtrak is investing in an extensive interior overhaul of the train cars used in Downeaster service. The Amfleet Refresh will include a series of major

improvements including: brand-new seat cushions, new carpeting, new LED reading lights, new bathroom flooring, upgraded wainscoting and bulkhead, new curtains in Business Class, and redesigned galleys in the café car. The total investment is over \$16 million. Amtrak has said that this cost will not be passed on to States which use this equipment in their service.

- Ms. Quinn stated that the Town of Brunswick residents and Town Council continue to discuss train noise at the Brunswick Layover Facility (BLF). The primary concern seems to be the horn noise associated with trains passing through the crossings. Some Brunswick residents have accused the Amtrak Downeaster engineers of being “vindictive” and blowing the train horns unnecessarily. Amtrak is aware of these allegations, has investigated these complaints and have found them to be unsubstantiated.
- The BLF is under extreme scrutiny by the neighbors, some of whom have installed cameras and recording devices on their property to monitor activities at the BLF.
- Pan Am has assured NNEPRA that they intend to install a new interlocking (for which NNEPRA has provided funding) in the BLF vicinity which will facilitate more streamlined operations and make it easier for trains to enter the east end of the building, therefore alleviating the need to cross Church Roach twice and enter the building from the west end.
- Although the BLF doors are not to be open while trains are running, Ms. Quinn stated that there is no restriction against allowing workers to open the doors and get fresh air when trains are off. Neighbors have complained about the light inside the building when the doors are open at night. Although NNEPRA is not aware of any ordinance which restricts the opening of doors, she has directed Mr. Corcoran that crews open the doors only half way.
- The Town of Brunswick is pursuing a Quiet Zone which means that engineers will not be required to blow horns while passing through crossings. Safety measures may have to be installed at the crossings such as median strips that cars can’t circumvent. The expense of a Quiet Zone would be borne by the town. Ms. Quinn noted that the Town Council was scheduling a workshop to discuss train issues with many rail entities, and that NNEPRA would, of course, participate.
Ms. Quinn further reported that the Brunswick Town Council is now charging a fee for the long-term parking lot near the Brunswick Station. They have installed a payment kiosk in the lot.

Public Comment:

- Mr. O’Keefe stated that the Town of Brunswick could have avoided some of these challenges if Quiet Zones had been pursued earlier like other communities did.

Vote to adjourn at 2:12pm

Motion: Mr. McKinnon
Seconded: Mr. Hobart
Accepted: All

NEXT MEETING: To be determined.

**Preliminary Performance Report
FY2018 First Quarter (July 2017-September 2017)**

| Ridership | | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| | FY2018 Actual | FY2018 Target | Variance to Target | % Var to Target | FY2017 Actual | Passenger Miles |
| July | 57,652 | 50,000 | 7,652 | 15% | 51,402 | 4,865,639 |
| August | 57,306 | 54,400 | 2,906 | 5% | 53,627 | 4,767,867 |
| September | 50,016 | 46,000 | 4,016 | 9% | 45,315 | - |
| Total | 164,974 | 150,400 | 14,574 | 10% | 150,344 | 9,633,506 |

| Revenue | | | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| | FY2018 Actual | FY2018 Target | Variance to Target | % Var to Target | FY2017 Actual | Average Fare |
| July | \$1,042,712 | \$ 887,500 | \$ 155,212 | 17% | \$ 921,482 | \$ 18.09 |
| August | \$1,052,422 | \$ 965,600 | \$ 86,822 | 9% | \$ 942,790 | \$ 18.36 |
| September | \$ 933,017 | \$ 772,800 | \$ 160,217 | 21% | \$ 752,830 | \$ 18.65 |
| Total | \$3,028,150 | \$ 2,625,900 | \$ 402,250 | 15% | \$ 2,617,102 | \$ 18.36 |

| Customer Satisfaction | | | |
|--|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| July | Downeaster | Amtrak | FY to Date |
| Overall Customer Satisfaction | 90 | 83 | 90 |
| Value of Amtrak Service for Price Paid | 88 | 80 | 88 |
| Overall Cleanliness of Train | 91 | 83 | 91 |
| Clarity of Announcements | 83 | 77 | 83 |
| Friendliness/Helpfulness of Train Conductor | 93 | 88 | 93 |
| Friendliness/Helpfulness of Café Car Personnel | 91 | 85 | 91 |
| Quality/Freshness of Food in Café Car | 82 | 76 | 82 |
| Overall Experience in Café Car | 84 | 77 | 84 |

| On Time Performance | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Calendar | March | April | May | June | July | August |
| 2017 | 0% | 89% | 76% | 70% | 54% | 72% |
| 2016 | 93% | 81% | 81% | 81% | 65% | 66% |

| PRELIMINARY VARIANCE REPORT - SEPTEMBER 2017 | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| | 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 | 933,017 | 772,800 | 160,217 | 3,028,151 | 2,625,900 | 402,251 | 15% |
| Food Service Revenue | 90,149 | 71,300 | 18,849 | 252,525 | 233,120 | 19,405 | 8% |
| Advertising Revenue | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2,678 | 500 | 2,178 | 436% |
| Parking Lot Revenue | 45,346 | 37,000 | 8,346 | 151,926 | 133,500 | 18,426 | 14% |
| Interest on Accounts | 478 | 141 | 337 | 2,035 | 423 | 1,612 | 381% |
| Other Revenue | 18,270 | 19,125 | (855) | 72,387 | 74,650 | (2,263) | -3% |
| Total Operating Revenues | 1,087,260 | 900,366 | 186,894 | 3,509,701 | 3,068,093 | 441,608 | 14% |
| Expenses | | | | | | | |
| Wages and Benefits | | | | | | | |
| Permanent Full-Time | 30,686 | 30,686 | 0 | 94,753 | 94,768 | (16) | (0) |
| Benefits | 19,351 | 19,392 | (41) | 60,807 | 60,852 | (45) | (0) |
| Total Wages and Benefits | 50,037 | 50,078 | (41) | 155,559 | 155,620 | (61) | 0% |
| Administration | | | | | | | |
| Office Expenses | 9,777 | 9,381 | 396 | 24,483 | 28,143 | (3,660) | (0) |
| Professional Services | 2,590 | 9,168 | (6,578) | 11,082 | 25,002 | (13,921) | (1) |
| Insurance | 2,478 | 2,478 | (0) | 7,433 | 7,434 | (1) | (0) |
| Board Operations | 1,219 | 1,628 | (409) | 3,966 | 4,884 | (918) | (0) |
| Total Administration Expenses | 16,064 | 22,655 | (6,591) | 46,964 | 65,463 | (18,499) | -28% |
| Train Operations | | | | | | | |
| Amtrak Operations | 1,314,128 | 1,314,128 | 0 | 3,929,040 | 3,929,040 | 0 | 0% |
| Train Fuel Cost | 152,646 | 160,000 | (7,354) | 459,400 | 480,000 | (20,600) | -4% |
| PanAm | 106,664 | 106,664 | 0 | 333,024 | 319,992 | 13,032 | 4% |
| Other Train Operations | 3,803 | 2,802 | 1,001 | 10,378 | 8,406 | 1,972 | (0) |
| Facilities | 21,736 | 20,492 | 1,244 | 61,344 | 61,476 | (132) | 0% |
| Capital Maintenance | 2,929 | 3,000 | (71) | 18,962 | 18,600 | 362 | 2% |
| Total Train Operations | 1,601,906 | 1,607,086 | (5,180) | 4,812,148 | 4,817,514 | (5,366) | 0% |
| Station Operations | | | | | | | |
| Portland Station | 30,900 | 29,900 | 1,000 | 92,700 | 89,700 | 3,000 | 3% |
| Platform Ins | 10,972 | 10,972 | (0) | 32,916 | 32,916 | (0) | 0% |
| Station Platform Leases | 13,178 | 13,282 | (104) | 32,689 | 32,964 | (275) | -1% |
| Other Station Improvements | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Station Operations | 55,050 | 54,154 | 896 | 158,305 | 155,580 | 2,724 | 2% |
| Food Service | | | | | | | |
| Regular | 94,219 | 85,100 | 9,119 | 259,170 | 278,240 | (19,070) | -7% |
| Total Food Service | 94,219 | 85,100 | 9,119 | 259,170 | 278,240 | (19,070) | -7% |
| Marketing | 49,624 | 49,600 | 24 | 81,287 | 81,400 | (113) | 0% |
| Total Marketing | 49,624 | 49,600 | 24 | 81,287 | 81,400 | (113) | 0% |
| Total Expenses | 1,866,899 | 1,868,673 | (1,774) | 5,513,432 | 5,553,817 | (40,385) | -1% |
| Additional Funding Required | 779,639 | 968,307 | (188,668) | 2,003,732 | 2,485,724 | (481,993) | -19% |
| Revenue Per Passenger | 21.74 | 19.57 | | 21.27 | 20.40 | | |
| Cost Recovery | 58% | 48% | | 64% | 55% | | |