

New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority
Meeting June 12, 2009
Manchester Boston Regional Airport

Attendees: Representative Mary Allen, Tim Moore, Jay Minkarah, Mike Izbicki, Malcolm Taylor, Mark Brewer, Kit Morgan, Ron O'Blenis, Kathy Hersh, Tom Mahon, Peter Burling, David Preece, Kerrie Diers, Christine Walker, Chris Clement

Call to Order

Peter Burling opened the meeting at 10:14am. Mark Brewer welcomed everyone to the Manchester Boston Regional Airport. Peter thanked Mark for hosting the meeting and Kathy for sending out the agenda and other information.

Public Input

None.

MOTION by Jay, seconded by Mike Izbicki to accept the minutes from the May 22, 2009 meeting. Motion passed. Christine and Kerrie abstained.

Election of officers

Since there is no quorum, election of Secretary will be later in the meeting or at the next meeting.

Update on Pending Legislation

Peter said HB613 died in the Senate. HB76 was amended by the Senate to include the indemnification and clarification on our relationship with DOT. The amendment passed the Senate and the House concurred on a voice vote. Peter said Kate Peters said the Governor will sign as soon as it gets to his office. Peter said regardless of legal status, Chris Clement and Kit Morgan, both from DOT, are here working with us. The close working relationship between NHRTA and DOT is helping to convince others that NH is serious about rail.

Mike and Chris attended the FRA workshop, as well as Lisa Levine (Hodes' office) and Mike Firestone (Sheehan's office). The top FRA players were there; it was a four hour meeting. There is \$9.3 billion ARRA for rail, of which \$1.3 billion is set aside for Amtrak and \$8 billion for other projects. Another \$5 billion will follow in the future. FRA is encouraging REGIONS to go after the money.

Peter will send the members the joint letter signed by nine Midwestern governors.

FRA criteria will be published June 17th. Applications are due August 2nd. The selections will be made in the fall. \$8 billion is seed money for high speed rail. They want success stories. All components of rail are being funded - planning, shovel ready, design, etc.

Mike, Chris and Peter met with MA Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) last week. Chris is talking to EOT regularly. They met with MA Secretary of Transportation and the Lt. Governor. Kate Peters was at the meeting.

MA has identified the projects they see in New England as:

- CT - New Haven to Springfield; Springfield to Brattleboro; Springfield to NY
- VT - knowledge corridor
- NH - Capitol Corridor to Montreal
- ME - Downeaster to reduce trip times and extend to Brunswick

MA is concerned about NY efforts to extend to Montreal in competition with New England's efforts.

Peter, Chris and Mike talked about FRA's perception that NH might not be shovel ready. Chris said we are. FRA is concerned about risk mitigation. New England's projects address this better than other projects. Our high speed rail corridor was the third of now ten to be designated in the country. It was designated during the Clinton administration. Peter said there is only one designated high speed international rail corridor, which is ours.

The regional approach is essential. No state is powerful enough alone. We need to be working with our other New England states and show cohesiveness, not infighting. Our project is Boston to Concord. Some think Tyngsboro is sufficient; it is not.

Peter, George Campbell and Mike met with a firm in Boston – TransSystems, Inc. Dr. Carla Carrish recommended to Peter that they are well qualified to write our application for FRA funding. The cost will be about \$100,000. Some procedural questions were asked regarding who would contract with TransSystems and what approvals might be needed. It is not yet clear how the procedures would work.

Dan Kelly asked if the five states will file one application or each state their own. Peter said it was a great question, and we do not yet know the answer.

Chris said the NASTO conference is on 6/20. They are trying to get Governors Lynch and Patrick together to talk about priorities. There's lots to do in a short time.

Chris and Peter talked about Mike Dukakis being a strong supporter of the Boston to Montreal corridor. Dukakis is frustrated that the governors have yet to talk to each other. Mark your calendars for August 2nd, a Sunday. Mike is doing a half day session on regional rail in Burlington VT, and it would be good for as many members of NHRTA to attend as possible. The forum is the day before the Council of State Governors meet. Peter will provide additional details. We should post on the web site.

Regarding contracting TransSystems to write our application, Peter plans to pursue private money but he does not yet have the green light from the Governor or Commissioner. Christine suggested using a pre-approval process so we don't get slowed up by the process. Peter said it is a sole source because TransSystems is the only one whom they have spoken to who can do the application within the timeframe.

David motioned to authorize Peter and Mike to request support from the Governor and Commissioner and to raise the funding and to reach out to other States. Because there was no quorum, the Authority could not act on the motion. David suggested maybe one of the RPCs could manage the contract.

Ron mentioned that he has a contract with MA to write their grant and so he needs to recuse himself. Tom Irwin offer assistance from the New England Regional Rail Coalition.

Jay motioned to authorize Mike and Peter to take all necessary steps to get application done. MA has already hired someone. We need to move even if we aren't perfect procedurally. Regarding a joint application with the other states, we can't wait for that. We need to get moving on NH's application.

Kerrie suggested maybe a friendly non-profit could manage the contract. Malcolm suggested NH Charitable Foundation. Peter said he has had expressions of interest from NHCF and PSNH to help. Tom Irwin said the Midwest is proposing a Chicago hub system. Maybe we should propose a Boston hub system. We need to include Mayor Menino. Peter said that's what he has been talking about with MA.

Ron suggested a joint cover letter with individual State's applications attached. FRA is looking for a regional approach with projects that can stand alone.

Chris said NH's application will cost about \$100,000; a joint application with other States may cost more. We need to talk to FRA about what our regional application should look like. FRA was very clear we need a joint application. They don't want it to be complicated. He is meeting or talking to MA every day.

Ron said no matter what the final application, we still need to have details for each project.

Christine asked if MA is already doing their application, why aren't we piggybacking with them? Peter said we are farther behind than everyone else. This could be the most political football game in New England for 50 years. NH has no money. He thinks the MA/CT/VT deal already set. Christine asked again why we are not tagging onto MA. Peter said we still need to write our own project and the rules are not out yet.

Some discussion ensued regarding whether we needed a formal vote of the authority for Peter to continue to pursue funding and approvals to hire consultant. Peter asked if anyone had concerns about the current direction, which is to fundraise to hire a grant writer. There was unanimous consent with the current direction.

Peter offered to speak with anyone at any time; he plans to be talking to the Chambers.

Kathy asked for clarification on the cost to connect Lowell to Concord. The cost is approximately \$250 million to \$300 million to connect Lowell to Concord.

Malcolm does not want to lose sight of freight. Everyone agreed.

Media Policy

Some people had comments, starting with the first word "only." Mike said that is not the latest version. We agreed that Kathy will get the latest version and then forward to David Hilts for his review and comments.

Website

It is up and running on DOT's site. Any information to be posted should be sent to Kit.

Other discussion

Peter remarked that our Congressional delegation is fantastic.

Chris thanked Kit for all his help, especially since Chris is new. Kit knows so much history.

Peter said the Airport wants some guidance regarding the best location for the airport station. Peter proposed locating it on the west side of the Merrimack River, between the River and Route 3, south of the new access road. It is entirely in Merrimack. David Preece said SNHPC did the station site study and this is the best location. Jay said it is the only viable location and a good site. Mike said there is a total of 40 acres of open land. 10 acres belongs to DOT. The site is 2

miles from the airport. Mike moved, David seconded, the sense of the members that we designate this site, subject to further design and review. There was unanimous agreement.

Logo/Business Cards

Tim passed out what a draft card might look like. We agreed to take up at the next meeting. Chris said we could use DOT's street address. Tim will add the web address.

Nest Meeting

June 26th. Kathy will send out a notice via Outlook Calendar.

MOTION by Mike Izbicki, seconded by Peter Burling to adjourn. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at noon.

Respectfully submitted,
Katherine Hersh

Next meetings:

Friday, June 26, 2009

Friday, July 10, 2009