

New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority
Meeting June 26, 2009
LOB 201-203

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, Senator Martha Fuller Clark, Representative Sandra Keans, Nancy Larson, Ted Starkweather, Representative Williams

Call to Order

Peter Burling opened the meeting at 10:06am.

Public Input

Peter received a letter from League of Women Voters expressing concern about the limited public information and lack of opportunity to offer public input to the process. They did not know of the meeting on June 26th in time to attend since it was not widely publicized. Considerable discussion ensued regarding the importance of good communications. Christine suggested that the Public Relations Committee will work on providing information for the public. The website is an important medium as well and Kathy said she will assist Kit with the web site.

Kathy offered to create an e-mail 'group' for people who would like to be copied on meeting announcements.

Minutes

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 secretary

Kathy Hersh tendered her resignation as Secretary.

MOTION by David Preece, seconded by Malcolm Taylor to nominate Kerrie Diers as Secretary. Motion by Jay, seconded by Kathy to close nominations. **MOTION** was made and passed to cast one ballot for Kerrie as Secretary.

Update on Grant Process

Mike Izbicki summarized the status of the grant process since the last meeting. The priority is to advance the NH application in spite of the position NH had taken in the past. Chris Clement, Mark Brewer, Mike Izbicki, Kathy Hersh and David Preece have all been involved in meetings with the state delegation as well as neighboring state delegations to convince them of NH's importance in being involved in rail and to put us in a position to apply for the ARRA funds.

What we have achieved so far includes: convincing other states that NH is serious about participating and collaborating in a regional application. We have identified a firm to write the grant application. TranSystems is a firm with the expertise, skill, intelligence, and willingness to take on the application at this late date in the process. No other comparable firm would be able to accomplish the application in the few weeks remaining before the application deadline.

Funds to pay for the grant writing were raised in the past 2 weeks. Peter Burling expressed his sincere gratitude to the NH Charitable Foundation who donated their staff time and expertise to help raise the funds. We are working with the NHCF to put together an appropriate thank you acknowledgement to the donors. The Nashua Regional Planning Commission will act as steward of the funds until a contract can be negotiated with the State. We are pleased that NH will be part of the regional effort.

Peter Burling expressed kudos to Mike Izbicki for all of his time and effort in the last two weeks. Kathy Hersh expressed kudos to Peter Burling for his fund raising efforts. Peter Burling emphasized that this is all going very fast and this is amazing considering this is a volunteer effort with no State funds involved.

Moving forward, Mike Izbicki will work with TranSystems to give them the data and get the preliminary application filed on July 10. The official grant is due August 24. Other efforts going on nationally include California, the mid-west and other smaller areas. The focus for us in New England is to make the case for “reweaving” the rail network using the existing rail lines connecting CT, MA, NH, ME and VT. Preliminary decisions will be made in October with the final decisions coming in November or December. Our goal is to be in service in 2 ½ to 3 years.

Malcolm Taylor asked how the negotiations with Pan Am were proceeding. Chris Clement stated that the negotiations were proceeding well and that we still need to finalize them.

Kit Morgan asked which tracks we are applying for under the ARRA funds. This is being worked on with TranSystems.

Chris Clement will try to set up a ride on the railroad with the Governor and anyone else who hasn't had the opportunity to take a ride from the NHRTA.

Media Policy

The NHRTA reviewed the media policy and added some typographical edits. Kathy Hersh will incorporate the comments and finalize the policy document. It is important that we speak with one voice. The media concluded that California and the mid-west were going to receive all of the funding, when this is not the case. Peter Burling has been working to counter that media attention with the message that New England will have a strong application. This is the only international high speed corridor that has been designated.

Logo and Business Cards

Mike Izbicki had some logos emailed to him, and Tim has been working on logo and letterhead for the NHRTA. As part of public outreach and publicity, Christine Walker suggested we have a competition to design the logo. Christine will work on making that happen.

Kathy Hersh recognized that the official name of the committee is the Public Relations Committee.

Other Discussion

Meeting locations were discussed. Chris Clement will check to see if there is a room at NH DOT that might work better on a consistent basis. Meetings will be on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month through the summer. Peter Burling will check with the Clerk about rooms at the LOB. Kathy Hersh will make sure that the meeting locations are on the website.

Website requests should go to Kit. Kathy Hersh agreed to assist Kit in organizing information to post on the website.

We are waiting for the Governor to sign the bill to legislative attach the NHRTA to NHDOT. Once that happens, we can get a mailing address and phone at the DOT.

Possible non-public session

At the next meeting, Peter Burling would like to bring everyone up to speed on the negotiations that are taking place, as well as the contractual issues. This needs to be in non-public session. We may have our attorney by then as well to have a meeting with him.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45.