

# New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority - Project Committee

## Minutes

March 24, 2015

Southern NH Planning Commission  
438 Dubuque Street  
Manchester, NH 03104

### **In Attendance:**

Michael Izbicki	NH RTA Chair
Carlos Baia	City of Concord
Peter Griffin	NH Rail Revitalization Association
Bob Jaffin	Strafford RPC
Nancy Larson	City of Concord
Tom Mahon	NH RTA
Tim Moore (via telephone)	NH RTA Rep – Rockingham Planning Commission
Mike Tardiff	Central NH Regional Planning Commission
David Preece	Southern NH Planning Commission/NHRTA Vice-Chair
Adam Hlasny	Southern NH Planning Commission

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### **I. Call to Order**

Mr. David Preece called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

### **II. Minutes – February 10, 2015**

Mr. Preece noted that the bill referenced in item IV of the February minutes was SB #63. Mr. Tom Mahon said that “appointee” should be made plural under the first bullet in the same section. **Motion by Mr. Mahon to approve minutes as amended, seconded by Mr. Mike Izbicki.**

### **III. Public Input**

There was no public input.

### **IV. Legislation Status Update**

Senate Bill 63 (reorganization of NH RTA) is currently assigned to the House Transportation Committee. Mr. Mahon will check its status again this Friday, March 27, 2015. Mr. Mahon added that he believes Senate Bill 88 (Public-Private Partnerships or P3) has gone to the same committee. Mr. Izbicki reported that this legislation seems to have received positive feedback from both parties. For HB25 (Capital Improvements), the \$4 million allocated by Gov. Hassan for rail was voted down.

Mr. Izbicki expanded on the P3 legislation, explaining the necessity of cooperation between NH and MA governments. He added that in order to make the Capitol Corridor project work, at least one of the following will need to be pursued:

- Continue to seek out private financing
- Public-private partnerships
- Amendment to HB25 to reserve at least \$1-2 million in funding for rail

The best-case scenario is that the public assets (trackage rights, rolling stock, state land) could be complemented by private investment in developing the station areas, and grants from the FTA or FRA. There are roughly a dozen models of P3s across the country, yet none that would be similar to the situation in NH.

#### **V. NH Capitol Corridor Alternatives Analysis and Recommendation**

Ms. Nancy Larson and Messrs. Carlos Baia and Mike Tardiff expressed concern that there was no mention of extending service to Concord in the Project Committee's recommendation of the Manchester alternative as the preferred alternative from the URS study's options. It was suggested that the language of the recommendation be revised to reflect Concord's desire to be included as soon as practicable. Mr. Baia shared a resolution recently passed by the City of Concord "*Recommending that any passenger rail service implemented in New Hampshire as a result of the NH Capitol Corridor Rail and Transit Alternatives Analysis include service to Concord.*"

After some discussion, the wording of the Project Committee's recommendation to the full RTA board was amended as follows: "*The preferred alternative is MBTA commuter rail service to Manchester with a continued interest in extending passenger rail service to Concord.*" **Motion by Mr. Mahon to approve the revised wording, seconded by Mr. Izbicki.** This revised recommendation will be presented to the full RTA board at its March 27, 2015 meeting.

#### **VI. NH RTA Strategic Plan**

Mr. Tim Moore summarized the draft strategic plan via telephone. Mr. Mahon said that the Strategic Plan should be more focused on action items at a more detailed level, similar NNEPRA's Strategic Plan. Mr. Izbicki said that a vision statement and a goal related to public education are needed, as well as a map of potential projects and verbiage about "building true intermodal transportation systems". He added that it should ideally be no more than two pages in length. Mr. Peter Griffin noted the importance of showing visually how rail in NH relates to connectivity in the entire New England region.

It was decided that Mr. Moore will revise the draft with the assistance of SNHPC to reflect the comments of the Project Committee. Mr. Izbicki will bring regional rail maps to the next meeting for further discussion.

#### **VII. Other Business/Next Steps**

Mr. Preece said that Mr. E.J. Powers of Montagne Communications is still doing some post-contract work for the Project Committee. A meeting should be set up with E.J. to ensure continuity in website maintenance and other matters of public interest. Mr. Tardiff noted that Central NH RPC has staff available to ensure that the website is updated regularly. Mr. Griffin suggested public announcement (possibly on the RTA website) of Mr. Izbicki's upcoming speaking engagements on behalf of the RTA.

**Motion by Mr. Mahon to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Izbicki. The meeting stood adjourned at 10:15 AM.**

*Respectfully submitted by Adam Hlasny, SNHPC, 3/25/15; approved 4/22/15.*