

# New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority

New Hampshire Department of Transportation, PO Box 483, Concord, NH 03302

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(603) 271-2468

## Minutes

### NHRTA Board

January 24, 2014

10:00 am

Concord NH

LOB 203

Present: Ray Gagnon, Richard Cane, Nancy Larson, Carlos Baia, Patrick Herlihy, Mike Tardiff, Tim Moore, Mike Izbicki, Mark Brewer, David Preece, Thomas Mahon, Kerrie Diers, Stephen Pesci, Mike King, Malcolm Taylor, Jonathon Edwards, Ted Starkweather, David Barufaldi, Dan Kelly, Sandra Keanes,

- I. Call to Order – Mahon called the meeting to order at 10:05 am
- II. Introduction of New Board Member – Sandra Keans introduced her replacement, Bob Jaffin, from Strafford Regional Planning Commission. Mahon welcomed Jaffin.
- III. Public Input –  
Mr. Hunter, representing Atlantic & St Lawrence Railroad, is present and available for questions.
- IV. Minutes – December 20, 2013 – Preece moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Herlihey. Motion carried unanimously.
- V. Annual Meeting
  - a. Annual Report – Mahon drafted the report – this will be distributed and voted on at the next meeting.
  - b. Election of Officers – Mahon opened the nominations to the floor:
    - i. Chairman – Tim Moore nominated Tom Mahon. No other nominations were made. All voted in favor with one abstention.
    - ii. Vice Chair – Mike Izbicki nominated David Preece. No other nominations were made. All voted in favor with one abstention.
    - iii. Secretary – Herlihy nominated Kerrie Diers. No other nominations were made. All voted in favor with one abstention.
    - iv. Treasurer – Preece nominated Mike Izbicki. No other nominations were made. All voted in favor with one abstention.

VI. Old Business:

- a. Letter of Support – Train Hotel: Izbicki raised concerns regarding the pricing issue as being premature. Herlihy stated that the siding issue is Federal Rail Administration jurisdiction and the NHDOT has no position. Mahon clarified that this is just a letter indicating our support and the gaps in information clearly will be need to be resolved as the project moves forward. Baia asked for input from the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Rail Road. Mr. Hunter stated that they have been in discussions with the Hotel Rail Road. They have requested additional information which has not been forthcoming at this point. Their main goal is safety. Introducing passenger rail introduces additional opportunities for safety concerns. He stated that the sidings are in full compliance with FRA regulations.

**Richard Cane made a motion seconded by Kelly to write a letter supporting the concept for this service and encourage people to work cooperatively to resolve the outstanding issues.**

**The motion passed 19-1.**

The letter will be distributed to Mr. Hunter, Mr. Rebello and NHDOT. Taylor requested a copy be sent to the North Country Council.

VII. Updates

- a. Executive Committee Meeting – Mahon summarized the Executive Committee meeting. Moore is in the process of updating the language. Mahon discussed the requests for changing the meeting dates to Tuesday or Thursday later in the day at 3:00 pm to fit better with the legislative schedule. Possible by-law changes would include leaving the specific meeting date out of the by-laws and state the NHRTA would meet at the call of the chair. The meeting in February will remain on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Committee consensus was to move the meeting to 11 am on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of the month. The Executive Meeting will begin at 10 am. Izbicki asked about the snow cancellation policy. Mahon will send out an email the day before if the meeting is cancelled.
- b. NH Capital Corridor – Mahon summarized the NHCC Advisory Committee held on 1/21/14. The consultant's powerpoint was distributed via email to the NHRTA. Bus on shoulder and commuter rail are the options that the consultant will go forward with. Projected operating and debt service for capital costs is estimated to be at 8-10 million per year (net after fares). Edwards asked about the bus on shoulder. Mahon described the conditions under which bus on service would be implemented. The bus on shoulder option needs to be clarified in order to have a level playing field to compare actual costs. Mark Sanborn clarified that bus on shoulder is extremely safe and further clarified his company's position. They have worked hard to support commuter rail and to

change the perception that they are not in favor of rail. He hopes that the NHRTA also supports the value of different modes at different times. The NHRTA assured Mr. Sanborn that they do understand and support the balance of different modes. The public meeting will be held in March in Concord. Location to be determined. A notice will be sent to the committee and public.

- c. Public Relations and Education Contract – Will be at G&C on February 12, 2014.
- d. Plaistow – Tuesday, January 28 public meeting will be held at Town Hall.
- e. Claremont Station – Gagnon summarized the background of the situation to advocate for Claremont being considered as a stop for high-speed rail on the Boston to Montreal line. The plans were to not consider stopping in New Hampshire. Reasons for adding Claremont as a stop were discussed including economic development and an area of 40,000 people. Vermont, Connecticut and Massachusetts DOTs are heading up this project and NH is coming to the table late. However, they seemed open to the possibility.

**Gagnon made a motion that the NHRTA write a letter of support that the Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative study include an evaluation of a Claremont station as part of the study, seconded by Edwards.**

Discussion regarding the potential service ensued, regarding the study and potential upgrades to the lines and service. Shelley Winters reported that this initiative is called the Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative, and the NHDOT and Upper Valley Regional Planning Commission are participating in the process. The FRA directed that existing infrastructure and no significant infrastructure upgrades would need to be considered for the service to be viable. NHDOT is participating in the process to make sure that Claremont is included in the station screening for consideration. This does not change the Vermonter service. Baia asked if the Concord high speed route would not be pursued if we endorsed the Claremont proposal. Gagnon explained that this was not either/or.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

- f. Exeter Station – no updates
- g. Hampton Branch line – Herlihy reported that the independent appraisal was completed. They are waiting for PanAms review.
- h. State and federal legislation – Mahon testified on HB1573 which has been ruled ITL out of committee. The Federal Budget Action included additional TIGER funds but eliminated high speed rail. They are still evaluating the rail program appropriation.

VIII. Sub-Committee Reports

- a. Projects Sub-committee - Preece reported on the project committee which met on January 10, 2014. (Refer to minutes of subcommittee meeting.) The committee will be looking at 5 different governance and operating models. They may have more information to present in March.
- b. Public Relations (no meeting)
- c. Finance (no meeting) – Mahon asked for a few volunteers to join Izbicki on the Finance committee to start meeting to put together a budget and financial plan for the NHRTA moving forward. Those interested should contact Izbicki or Mahon.
- d. Mahon discussed the possibility of establishing an ad hoc committee to work on amending the enabling legislation of NHRTA.

IX. Outreach

- a. Leadership of Greater Nashua-Economic Development Day – Mahon presented to this group on 1/9/14 to update them on the progress of this study.

X. Adjourn

Cane made a motion to adjourn seconded by Preece . Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 12:30.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kerrie Diers, Secretary