



# NH Railroad Revitalization Association

February 23, 2009

Tonight's meeting was called to order by President Peter Griffin @ 7:05 PM at the Health and Safety Council in Concord.

## Attendees:

| Name           | Town           |
|----------------|----------------|
| Larry Ayer     | Nashua, NH     |
| Gary Kerr      | Chichester, NH |
| Lenny McGee    | Manchester, NH |
| Steve Flanders | Weare, NH      |
| Bill Remington | Concord, NH    |
| Tom Noel       | New Boston, NH |

| Name          | Town         |
|---------------|--------------|
| Stephen Piper | Dover, NH    |
| Frank Judge   | Bedford, NH  |
| Sam Langley   | Boscawen, NH |
| Peter Griffin | Windham, NH  |
| Dennis Grimes | Bedford, NH  |

**Visitors:** Tom Manning (Hooksett, NH)  
Mike Burke (Manchester, NH) – Terracon Consultants  
Jim Vayo (Nashua, NH)  
Brendan Forsley (Henniker, NH)

## January Minutes

The January 26 meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

## Treasurer's Report

Steve Flanders reported the organization's account balance. He also reported \$48 in dues receipts since the last meeting and a \$25.30 payment for copying costs.

## NH Rail Transit Authority Update

Tom Noel and Bill Remington attended and reported on the February 13 meeting of NHRITA held in the Legislative Office Bldg. in Concord.

- (1) There was a public input opportunity afforded at the beginning of the meeting. This will be typical of future meetings.
- (2) There are three proposed station sites to serve Nashua. Jim Vayo spoke up in favor of the downtown option to best serve the walking community. He mentioned that the NH Office of Energy and Planning has 8 points requiring that planners look at downtown stations for better socio-economic benefit.
- (3) Elections for Executive Director and Executive Committee have been postponed due to legislation still pending regarding Peter Burling's qualification to serve as Director since retiring from the Senate. David Hiltz (NH Dept of Justice) is still working on amendments to the bill. Steve Williams of Nashua Regional Planning Commission is still Acting Chairman of the Board.
- (4) Ken Niemczyk (Connecticut Valley Rail Authority) is pushing for some kind of commuter rail service from the Central Vermont line southward from White River Junction to New Haven (to be designated as the "Knowledge Corridor"). He submitted an employee draw area map for the Lebanon, NH area.
- (5) Kit Morgan (NH DOT Rail & Transit) presented on three potential funding sources via the stimulus package: New Starts (\$750M – not likely to come to NH), Supplemental Discretion Grants (\$1.5B) and High Speed Intercity Rail (\$8.0B – waiting for application guidelines from FTA and FRA).

There is still some uncertainty over whether or not Commissioner Campbell's request for funding the NH Capitol Corridor would be eligible for stimulus money. Kit explained that operating funding source(s) need not be in place to qualify for the capital funds, but a plan to provide for such must be. Also the definition of "high speed" is somewhat blurred around the country. Does this refer to 80 MPH? 110 MPH? Higher speed?

Steve Williams reported that Representative Hodes has already requested an omnibus bill to do the environmental study to be in either FY 2009 or 2010.

Bill suggested that had NH funded the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the Boston-Montreal HSR study years ago as we had wished, the entire corridor could now have been shovel-ready and available for stimulus funding. It's a missed opportunity. Frank mentioned he saw on CNN "Obama backs High Speed Rail" with a map clearly showing the Boston-Montreal corridor.

### **Legislation Review**

Bill Remington reported that Peter Leishman has introduced a bill HB613 to study the potential benefits of the State of NH taking over remaining rail corridors. The bill is due out of committee by March 19. Also SB71, the bill to study regional transit came out of committee inexpedient to legislate. Bill submitted copies of SB186 that would establish a statewide transportation policy and a transportation advisory commission. Lastly, SB111, which authorizes the Governor to appoint an additional public member to the NHRRA [specifically Peter Burling] passed the Senate 8-0 and will now cross over to the House [presumably after a full Senate vote].

Peter Griffin said he had already contacted Sen. Fuller Clark (one of the bill's sponsors) by e-mail requesting that NHRRA be added to the commission and that he would follow up on this.

### **NHRRA Elections**

Tom advised that this is an NHRRA election year for officers. Elections will be held in May, but nominations for any NHRRA member wishing to be placed on the ballot must be forwarded to the Election Committee by March 20, 2009. Tom Noel ([t.noel@att.net](mailto:t.noel@att.net)) and Gary Kerr ([rail.nut@comcast.net](mailto:rail.nut@comcast.net)) have agreed to be the Election Committee. Offices are for 2-year terms: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and (2) Representatives. Per Section 16 of the By-Laws, incumbent officers may hold an office for a maximum of (3) consecutive terms, unless no other member wishes to run. Incumbents at this meeting whom this might pertain to have agreed to continue if no opposition. Gary agreed to draft some language for distribution to the membership.

### **Other Business**

Steve Piper provided a brief Downeaster update to say that after a dismal December (due to ice storm power outages, etc.) the January '09 ridership numbers are up 7% over last January.

Frank Judge asked if there might be any renewed interest in running a "trash train" on the NH mainline similar in concept to the one operating on Cape Cod. This could potentially pull business from 25-40 miles each side of the corridor.

NHDOT Commissioner Campbell has expressed interest in speaking at a regular NHRRA meeting. Perhaps April?

Jim Vayo suggested that NHRRA needs to increase the level of advertising to the public. He will develop some ideas.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM

Next meeting: Monday, March 23, 2009 at 7 PM  
Safety & Health Council  
163 Manchester Street, Concord

Minutes by: Stephen R. Piper, Secretary