



# NH Railroad Revitalization Association

March 23, 2009

Tonight's meeting was called to order by President Peter Griffin @ 7:00 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
Winthrop Buswell	Laconia, NH

Name	Town
Stephen Piper	Dover, NH
Ken Milender	Warner, NH
David Cruz	Raymond, NH
Peter Griffin	Windham, NH
Dennis Grimes	Bedford, NH
Jim Bull	Windham, NH
Mark Richardson	Bedford, NH

## February Minutes

The February 23 meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

## Treasurer's Report

Steve Flanders reported the organization's account balance. He also reported no dues receipts or expenses since the last meeting.

## NH Rail Petition

Nik Coates and mark Richardson have initiated an on-line petition to be signed by those who support rail and more specifically the construction of the NH Capitol Corridor. The time frame for completion is not known at this time, but they are seeking 100,000 names and thus encourage all to sign and forward on. They have not yet launched this into the business community, but anticipate doing so within the next few days and expect to target 5000 people per week. It was suggested that it be forwarded to the media and political activists. The petition can be found at [www.nhbt.org](http://www.nhbt.org).

## Portsmouth Branch

There is an initiative underway that suggests connecting Portsmouth with the Downeaster at Rockingham Junction via the Portsmouth Branch. Although this seems like a good idea to connect the city with rail service, logistically it doesn't make much sense. There is no existing public station at Rockingham Jct. and if one were to be built it would require a cross-platform transfer to the Downeaster. Downeaster officials are not likely to support another NH station stop, especially so close to Exeter, so it would seem the Portsmouth connection would have to discharge at Exeter and back out to Rockingham Jct. prior to the Downeaster's arrival. NHRRA instead would support the revitalization of the Hampton Branch (Eastern Route) as this would connect all the seacoast communities of North Hampton, Hampton, Seabrook and Salisbury, MA with Newburyport and Boston. A study was conducted in 1999 with encouraging potential, but it unfortunately doesn't satisfy the current requirements of an Alternatives Analysis. This study can be found at <http://www.rpc-nh.org/PDFs/docs/HampBranchFeas-ExecSumm.pdf>.

## Double Track on the Wildcat?

Bill Remington reported on a potential upgrade to the Wildcat Branch in MA that could be funded with stimulus money. The double track main line currently ends at Ash St. (mileage 11.7), which is just west of the Reading Station. From that point, east up to CPF-AS (mileage 25.63) is where the MBTA wants to reconnect to the existing double track main line.

The Wildcat Branch connects with the Western Route Main Line at CPF-WJ (mileage 17.92). Here they would

have to construct a crossover. The Lowell Main Line where Pan Am Railways connects into the Western Route Main Line is at CPF-LJ (mileage 19.85). Here they would also have to construct a crossover. The Wildcat Branch runs from Wilmington, MA (mileage 15.2) to CPF-WJ (mileage 18.2). To put double track in would be okay from Glen Road (mileage 16.2) to CPF-WJ, but to put double track from Wilmington to Glen Road they would have to deal with property owners and their houses. This was never double track since it was only used as a freight cutoff for freight trains years ago coming from Portland, ME to Boston.

### **NH Capitol Corridor**

Tom reported on the latest NHRTA meeting as follows:

1. **New NHRTA Board Appointments** - Gov. Lynch has appointed Sen. Martha Fuller Clark to fill the seat vacated by Peter Burling necessitated by his leaving the Senate. Peter Burling is back on the Board - he was reappointed by Gov. Lynch to an at-large seat newly created by legislation.
2. **Funding** - Lisa Levine (Rep. Hodes staffer) reported that NH will get \$1.9 million for the NH Capitol Corridor alternatives analysis from Hodes' earmark on the 2009 omnibus funding bill. She said the larger funding needed for corridor construction must come from the 2010 Federal DOT 5-year reauthorization. Kit Morgan (NHDOT) reported that the guidelines for applying for federal stimulus funds are supposed to be available in April. He said NHDOT, in coordination with the NHRTA, will apply for Capitol Corridor funds.
3. **Election of Officers & Executive Committee** - The Board voted the following: Peter Burling, Chairman; Steve Williams, Vice-Chair; Kathy Hersh, Secretary; David Preece, Treasurer. These officers plus Mike Izbicki, Ron O'Blenis, Tim Moore, Mark Brewer and Christine Walker make up the nine-member Executive Committee.
4. **Letter of Agreement with NHDOT** - Chairman Burling announced that, with Gov. Lynch's approval, NHRTA will enter into a Letter of Agreement with DOT for them to implement NHRTA policy and to provide administrative assistance until such time that NHRTA has its own funding and staff.

The next NHRTA meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 8.

### **Legislative Update**

Peter Leischman's bill to study the state's takeover of active rail corridors in NH is going to the full House for consideration. Some debate exists as to whether or not this might be construed as a conflict of interest since he operates a railroad himself, but the bill is set to be considered.

### **NHRRRA Elections**

The members who have expressed interest in running for office for the May 2009 – April 2011 term have been identified and placed on the attached ballot. It is requested that all members vote for or write in their choices and return their ballots by the May 25 meeting (either by US mail or in person).

### **Other Business**

- Lenny proposed that NHRRA should be attending more trade shows to boost exposure and membership. David added that NHRRA should not restrict itself to rail related shows, but should make an effort to have a presence at home shows, etc. to gain interest from the non-railroad population. Also, the organization should seek support from the Verizon Center.
- Bill suggested that SB203, Liability Relief of Rail Owners should be killed or referred to a study committee. He will give verbal testimony in opposition.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM

Next meeting: Monday, April 27, 2009 at 7 PM  
Safety & Health Council  
163 Manchester Street, Concord

Minutes by: Stephen R. Piper, Secretary