



# NH Railroad Revitalization Association

**DRAFT**

May 23, 2011

Tonight's meeting was called to order by President Peter Griffin at 7:10 PM at the Steeplegate Mall in Concord.

## Members:

Name	Town
Peter Griffin	Windham, NH
Tom Noel	New Boston, NH
Lenny McGee	Manchester, NH
Steve Flanders	Weare, NH
Gary Kerr	Chichester, NH

Name	Town
Jay Gadon	Concord, NH
Steve Piper	Dover, NH
Mike Wheeler	Laconia, NH
Gary Seneschal	Allenstown, NH

## March Minutes

The March 28 meeting minutes were accepted as written.

## Treasurer's Report

Steve Flanders reported the organization's account balance and stated that there have been no expenses incurred since the last meeting.

## NHRRRA Elections

A count of votes for NHRRRA officers by ballots received was taken. One additional entry was made to include Tom Manning as Representative per his request. Lenny made a motion to include Tom in the election and all members presents voted in favor. There were no other nominations, but Bill Remington offered to remain on as a Representative at Large. Incumbents Peter Griffin (President), Tom Noel (Vice President), Steve Flanders (Treasurer) and Steve Piper (Secretary) were all voted to another 2-year term. Although not an elected position, Gary Kerr has confirmed his desire to take over maintenance of the website.

## NHRTA

Tom Noel reported on the most recent NHRTA meeting as follows:

- 1) Kit Morgan (NHDOT Bureau of Rail & Transit) reported on the State Rail Plan development progress to date. The meetings held so far have not been well attended, probably due to a lack of advertising. There will be a meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee at the PSNH conference room at 780 North Commercial Street in Manchester at 9 AM on June 15.
- 2) The Senate's version of HB218, which aims to keep the Rail Authority but strip it of any power, has gone back to the House Transportation Committee. It is expected to pass the full House. The Chambers of Commerce of both Nashua and Manchester have been objecting vehemently to Governor Lynch. His position is such that if the business leaders are firmly against the bill he will veto it. Chairman Peter Burling said that regardless of what happens, the NHRTA will continue. The grant process is in the hands of the NHDOT now.
- 3) The FTA planning grant is moving ahead. Louis Berger, Parsons Brinckerhoff, HDR and one other are on the "short list" of consultants under consideration for performing the Alternatives Analysis. The FRA grant will take over from where the FTA grant leaves off, but will require a state match. There was discussion on time frames to complete the planning aspects.
- 4) An aggressive citizens group from Atkinson has surfaced to oppose the MBTA's layover facility relocation to Plaistow citing pollution concerns and lower property values.

## Downeaster Update

Steve Piper reported that March and April ridership numbers were strong and looking like double-digit increases over similar months in 2010. FY ridership is expected to surpass 500,000. The Brunswick extension is still on target to be completed by the fall of 2012 at which point 5 round trips (not 3) will originate from Brunswick. This should add about 71,000 new riders to the service. Phase 1 of the Brunswick station development is now complete and 100% occupied. There is now a \$600,000 development plan that takes a 30-year look at the Downeaster's future. It's looking to implement an additional 2 daily round trips for a total of 7 and cut 15 minutes of the total travel time. On May 9 the MBTA announced \$20.8 million in upgrades to the Wildcat Branch in MA. Also recently announced was a potential plan for a \$110 million, 48,000 SF development at Thompson's Point (adjacent to where the Downeaster currently terminates in Portland), which would include a new sports arena and a 700-car parking garage. Steve also gave some general Amtrak updates and information.

## Other Business

- All attendees voted in favor of keeping the website under its current basic plan rather than upgrading to more bandwidth and storage at a higher cost.
- Steve Piper suggested that draft meeting minutes be mailed out to the membership immediately upon completion since our meetings are now bi-monthly. Information might become stale if we continue to wait until their acceptance at the next regular meeting. Steve will also send out the accepted minutes from the prior meeting to include any corrections or additions. All attendees were in favor of this new protocol.
- The Town of Salem is seeking a \$1.2 million grant to convert the M&L corridor into a paved trail.
- Gary Kerr reported on the current status of NEGS. 3M is their primary customer in Tilton. NEGS is actively marketing for more business. They've cleared some land adjacent to the track and installed some sidings in hopes of drawing new customers.
- Peter attended a rail forum in New Haven, CT on April 29. There they discussed the "Knowledge Corridor" and the potential restoration of service to Montreal.
- For those who continue to say that NH roads pay for themselves without a subsidy, here are the facts. NH has typically received \$140 million per year for each of the last five years from the Federal Highway Administration. Historically, this money has come from federal gasoline tax, but now an average of 30% (\$40 million per year) comes from the Federal General Fund.
- Amtrak's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary train will be in Freeport on the weekend of August 12-14.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM

Next meeting: Monday, July 25, 2011 at 7 PM  
Safety & Health Council  
57 Regional Drive, Concord

Minutes by: Stephen R. Piper, Secretary