



NH Railroad Revitalization Association

August 27, 2007

Tonight's meeting was called to order by Pres. Griffin @ 7:10 PM at the Health and Safety Council in Concord.

Attendees:

Name	Town
Peter Griffin	Windham, NH
Tom Noel	New Boston, NH
Dick Currier	Hopkinton, NH
Stephen Piper	Dover, NH

Name	Town
Gus Sheedy	Derry, NH
Lenny McGee	Manchester, NH
Bill Remington	Concord, NH
George Katsakiores	Derry, NH

July Minutes

The July 23 meeting minutes were accepted as written.

Treasurer's Report

Steve Flanders was not present, therefore no treasurer's report was available.

NH Rail Authority

As per SB 75, Governor Lynch has made his appointments to the Authority's Board of Directors and they are as follows:

- 1) Mike Izbecki (Consultant)
- 2) Ron O'Blenis (Consultant)
- 3) Mike King (North Country Council)

Other members will be appointed by city and town Boards of Selectmen and by regional planning commissions. Some of these appointments have already taken place and it is not known if the names have been made public at this time. HB 311, the bill designed to form a committee that will review liability issues relating to commuter rail, requires that the committee report by November 1 of this year.

NH / MA Transit Study

The transit study will begin public sessions again. Discussions regarding I-93 allude to the fact that the expansion might only go as far as Exit 3. This will place even more emphasis on the need for alternative transportation options.

Publicity

There have been a few negative articles in the press recently that either downplay the need for rail, opine that the costs are far too great for the benefit or state that rail travel is just a romantic passion for the past. NHRRA needs to revive the Publicity Committee to respond in writing to every such article to ensure that the benefits of rail services are clearly and accurately brought forth.

Other Business

- Jim Repass (National Corridors Initiative) has been asked by Massachusetts Lt. Governor Murray to create a conference on rail development. This conference is scheduled for Oct 11 of this year. It is anticipated that House and Senate leaders of all the New England states will be included in this summit.
- Massachusetts Governor Duval Patrick has signed the Massachusetts Mobility Compact into law. The Compact directs nine state transportation or transportation-related agencies to work more closely together to better coordinate transportation planning, design, construction and operations (from *Progressive Railroading*)
- Dick reported that the NH Central has completed trackwork on Phase 1 of the Groveton Branch Track Rehabilitation. Major items of work included installation of 4900 ties, repair of two bridges in Northumberland and Whitefield, regauging of 22 miles of track, replacement of defective rails and brush cutting. Phase 2 has been bid and Maine Track Maintenance will begin relaying 2 miles of track in Jefferson next week. This work is being funded by the Rail Fund and a Special Appropriation that came out of last session's legislation. The rehab is supporting the return of freight service to the Groveton Branch. The first revenue cars will be delivered to Presby Plastics at the transload facility at Hazens in Whitefield on September 4.
- Tom inquired into the Council on Fundraising and they suggested attending some of their conferences and "coffee meetings". He has furnished his e-mail address to be placed on their mailing list. Anyone interested in receiving distributions should contact Tom. He submitted a copy of CONFR's response letter and their membership application form.
- As per discussions at last month's meeting, Steve contacted the NHRRA webmaster Matt Cosgro to inquire about the possibility of placing a survey and/or commuting cost calculator on the web site and he said it is easy to do. He will just need the data we wish to use.
- The 5th Downeaster round-trip commenced Aug 17. There is now an 8:10 PM departure out of Portland and an 11:20 PM return departure from Boston daily. Steve submitted total NH ridership figures to date on the Downeaster (through July) showing over 645,000 trips across NH stations.
- Bill submitted a copy of Weekly Rail Review highlights for the week ending July 27. On Monday, the US Government Accountability Office released a report suggesting that the Dept. of Transportation was not doing enough to promote a national intermodal transportation system.
- The Ten-Year Transportation Plan is going out to public hearings again. NHRRA encourages its members to try to attend these meetings and speak out in favor of rail.
- George stated that the window for filing legislation this year is Sept 10-20. November 2 will be the last day to sign off or repeal.
- Dick attended the Vermont Rail Council meeting on August 1. An alternative High Speed Rail corridor from Boston to Montreal via Springfield was discussed. This idea might be getting more attention due to NH's total lack of action on the Northern Line HSR study. The NH Bureau of Rail and Transit acknowledges that \$84,000 has been allocated for Phase 2 of the study. NHRRA's Legislative Committee will meet to draft legislation to authorize the expenditure of said funds.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM

Next meeting: Monday, September 24, 2007 at 7 PM
Safety & Health Council
163 Manchester Street, Concord

Minutes by: Stephen R. Piper, Secretary