



Minutes

**Wednesday December 19, 2012 - 7:00 PM
SWRPA Offices, Stamford, CT**

Council Members in Attendance: Chairman Jim Cameron, Terri Cronin, Sue Prosi, Tim Beeble, Rodney Chabot, John Davis, Roger Cirella, Bob Jelly, Jeff Maron, Mitch Fuchs, Laura Cordes, John Hartwell, Jim Gildea

Guests: Eugene Colonese - DOT, John Bernick – DOT, John Austin, consumer advocate

Chairman Cameron opened the meeting at 7:00 PM and called for a moment of silence for those killed at the Sandy Hook elementary School in Newtown.

Chairman Cameron announced that Dave Hendricks is excused as he is attending a meeting of the Stamford Garage Task Force.

1. New Haven – Springfield High Speed Rail Project:

John Bernick, Project Engineer for DOT, made a PowerPoint Presentation on the High Speed Rail Project that will run from New Haven to Springfield, Mass. The PowerPoint presentation will be emailed to the Council members. The project has broken ground, and cables are being installed. \$365,000,000 is in place to run two tracks to Hartford and a single track to Springfield. The State of Massachusetts wants the line to continue north to Greenfield via Northhampton. The system will be designed for a 110 mph maximum speed. There are 32 grade crossings to protect. In 2013, work will include design and Track 1 realignment. In 2014, construction will begin on Track 2, stations, bridges, culverts and crossings. By 2016 the system will be operational.

Minutes: Approval of the minutes of the October 17, 2012 meeting: Motion by Jeff Maron, seconded by Roger Cirella. Motion approved.

2. Stamford Garage RFP Update:

Eugene Colonese reported that three proposals are being considered. The initial review is of the technical aspects of the proposals. DOT has not opened the Financial Sections of the proposals. The Task Force has met twice. DOT will conduct a composite review in January, and there will be a thorough evaluation of all proposals. DOT will hold public hearings after the selection to obtain public input on the proposal. Mr. Colonese read an email from the DOT Commissioner regarding the RFP process.

4. 2013 Fare Increase:

The fare increase on the New Haven Line and Shore Line East goes into effect on January 1st. Single Trip and Ten-Trip tickets may be purchased by December 31st at the current fare, subject to the MN-imposed expiration and refund policy. Fares will increase for NY commuters in March. MN is advertising the increases.

5. Main Line:

Rodney Chabot reported that the trains have been overcrowded with holiday shoppers especially on Fridays on the New Canaan branch line. Mr. Colonese reported that few cars are exceeding 90% capacity. MN uses historical data to determine the number of cars on each train. The 2:07 PM from GCT (1534/1734) was overcrowded, but the front car was closed. Ms. Cronin reported that MN bartenders had told her that the M-8 conversions for bar cars was proceeding, but Mr. Colonese indicated that the funding is not in place for the conversions. Ms. Cronin also asked for an update on the Yankee Train.

Ops Report was reviewed; cancelled trains are not considered late by MN's for its calculation of on-time service. Mr. Colonese reported that 174 M-8s have been delivered and 164 are conditionally accepted.

6. Branch Lines:

Rodney Chabot again reported a burned-out light bulb at the Talmadge Hill Station on the New Canaan Branch. Gene Colonese determined that the Town of new Canaan is responsible for changing light bulbs at the station.

Jim Gildea asked about the FRA approval of the Temporal Gap and the Derby siding improvement that has a 2015 deadline. Roger Cirella also asked about the funding. Mr. Colonese confirmed that the funding is in place and that the PTC Upgrade is a federal mandate.

7. Shore Line East:

The Legislature approved funding for New London service. Mr. Colonese reported that M-8 testing on SLE will begin in Spring 2013. To address a shortage of power on the eastern end of the NH line, DOT is building a new power station and upgrading an old substation. DOT is well underway with building the Westbrook Station.

8. Other:

The Council approved the 2013 Schedule of Regular Meetings for filing with the Secretary of State. Modification from the draft schedule: the June 19th meeting will be in New Haven and will begin at 7:30 PM.

The Annual Report is due January 15th. The Council consensus was for a two-page report with embedded links to connect the reader with more information.

3. Legislative Wish List:

A sub-committee including Chairman Cameron, Mr. Hartwell, Ms. Cordes, and Mr. Jelly will prepare the Council's proposed legislative action for 2013. This will include a new legislation to force MN to provide refunds to monthly and weekly ticket holders when it cancels train service for extended periods. Legislative advocacy will also include expansion of the CT Rail Commuter Council to include representation of the New Haven – Springfield line.

Motion to adjourn by John Hartwell, seconded by Rodney Chabot. Meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Tim Beeble
Secretary