

AGENDA

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
MEETING

Thursday, May 6, 2004 - 1:30 PM

D.O.T. Headquarters, Conference Room B

Newington, Connecticut

1. Approval of the April 1, 2004 meeting minutes
2. Featured speaker: Tom Janaky, Colorado Railcar
3. Comments from the public
4. Report from operating entities
5. Chairman's report
6. Old business
7. New business

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MEETING ATTENDANCE

THURSDAY, April 1, 2004

Union Station, Conference Room A

New Haven, Connecticut

VOTING MEMBERS

Dorothy Adamson  
Linda Blair  
Richard Carpenter  
Tom Cheeseman  
N. Terry Hall  
Yvonne Loteczka  
Richard Schreiner  
Richard Sunderhauf

GUESTS

Rodney Chabot

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CDOT STAFF

Cindy Gollareny  
Carmine Trotta

# CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

## Minutes

April 1, 2004

(Meeting convened at 1:32 p.m.)

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 4, 2004

Accepted as amended.

### FEATURED SPEAKERS – KEY POINTS

**RODNEY CHABOT**, Chairman, Connecticut Rail Commuter Council, addressed some of the concerns currently affecting rail commuters in the state. The main area of concern involves the shortage of railcar equipment and the timeliness of the delivery of new railcars once the order is placed. The Council sees this as an opportunity to get political support to receive funds to replace the M2 fleet that are well passed its life expectancy.

Mr. Chabot mentioned that \$60 million has been approved for 2,000 seats of new rail capacity. This will provide either 20 new “off the shelf” bombardier coaches or, if available, compatible used equipment. This is merely a small step in solving the equipment deficiencies on the New Haven Line. Outgoing Commissioner Byrnes presided over the preparation of a long-term plan for the complete replacement of the New Haven Line fleet. That plan, which contemplates the use of M8 equipment, has no funding attached to it.

The Council is also concerned with the poor service of the Waterbury Branch. The mid-day train service has been discontinued and substituted with buses. The commuters are not satisfied with this arrangement due to the lack of comfort, space, reading lights and other benefits of the train. Also, the bus schedule is not listed on the Metro North train schedule, which is another inconvenience to the commuters. Mr. Chabot has been notified that the appropriations committee has allotted \$200,000 to restore the mid-day train service. If this appropriation is fully approved, the mid-day train service should be reinstated on the Waterbury Branch in the fall. Mr. Chabot reported that the mid-day train service was temporarily reinstated during the closing of I-95 in Bridgeport.

Further concern is the limited service of the Danbury Branch due to the lack of a signal system. The Council has been pushing for a Centralized Training Control (CTC) Signal System to increase the frequency on the line. There are currently 3 – 4 hour gaps with no train service.

The Stamford Station is another area of concern. With the opening of the new parking garage and its 1,200 spaces, the old parking garage was closed for repairs, eliminating several entrances and exits and causing a backlog. This has since been improved by the renovations taking place one floor at a time. There was also a problem with the new overpass from the new parking garage to the train platforms not having a TV monitor

directing individuals to their appropriate track. This has been resolved and a TV monitor has been installed. Additionally, there is great debate over the newly implemented token system for taxi service at the station.

Lastly, the Council is advocating that the waiting rooms of stations with one-shift operators along Metro North remain open to accommodate riders, especially during inclement weather.

### **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Carmine Trotta, Office of Intermodal Policy, ConnDOT, updated the Commission on the following initiatives the State is currently involved with: Danbury Branch Electrification Study; New Haven - Hartford - Springfield Rail Commuter Implementation Plan; New Haven Line Rail Station Governance Study; Hartford East Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Study; I-95 Corridor Coalition; and the new Waterbury Fixed Route System Study. The Danbury Branch Electrification Study and the Springfield Line Commuter Study are due for completion in June of this year. The Hartford East BRT Study, which is looking at options for a phased approach to add BRT components over time, should conclude in late 2004.

### **REPORT FROM OPERATING ENTITIES**

Richard Schreiner attended the Danbury Branch Electrification Study and reported that the press was present and published several topics/figures that were discussed that may not be recommended once the study is complete. Mr. Schreiner also announced that the Housatonic Area Regional Transit District (HART) took delivery of the Orion VII low floor bus.

Richard Sunderhauf reported that CTTransit Hartford/New Haven/Stamford divisions are still in the process of negotiating a new union contract. He also announced that a section of the new Stamford facility has been open.

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Mr. Cheeseman reported on some of the excerpts from House Bill 5048 regarding the Governor's budget for transportation. Effective July 1, 2004, an amount not to exceed \$5 million may, with the approval of the Transportation Strategy Board (TSB), be expended from the TSB project account, to support the continuation of the following TSB projects: Fairfield County Inter-Regional Bus Services; New Haven Line Commuter Connection; Danbury Area Feeder Bus Service; Shore Line East Service extension; Southeast Connecticut Jobs Access – Dial-a-Ride; and Hartford Area Express Bus Service. Also effective July 1, 2004, an amount not to exceed \$600,000 may be expended from the TSB project account to support the continuation of the state operating assistance to Tweed-New Haven Airport, provided that the city of New Haven continues to provide at least its current level of operating subsidy to the airport and the funds are not expended to provide subsidies or financial assistance to any air carrier.

An amount not to exceed \$2 million may be expended from the TSB project account for expenses incurred by the Department of Transportation in connection with following projects: Deduct-a-Ride Program; Southeast Corridor Tourism Service-Single Ticket Fare Structure; Capitol Region Council of Governments-New Britain Busway; and Southeast Connecticut Jobs Access-Dial-a-Ride. In addition, the following may be expended: East Haven Road and Sidewalk Improvement Aid, \$150,000; Fairfield County Interregional Services, \$900,000; New Haven Line Commuter Connection, \$320,000; Danbury Area Feeder Bus Service, \$200,000; Expanded Hartford Area Express Bus Service, \$750,000; Shore Line East Service through New Haven-Bridgeport-Stamford, \$1,700,000; and continuation of State Operating Subsidy for Tweed-New Haven Airport, \$600,000.

Mr. Cheeseman reported that the appropriations committee voted to increase the ADA line item by \$2.1 million above and beyond what is in the governor's budget for FY 2005. In doing so, the intent is to no longer have to use Dial-a-Ride funds to support ADA services. They also voted to increase to the bus operations line item by \$1.4 million above and beyond what is in the governor's budget for FY 2005. These monies will go to CTTransit to offset their fare structure.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Fred Riese attended the last meeting of the Southeast Corridor Advisory Committee. They are proceeding with the finalization of the design/environmental work.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Richard Carpenter made a motion to send a letter to James F. Byrnes, DOT Commissioner (retired), thanking him for his support during his tenure as well as for his successful efforts with the tanker/bridge fire in Bridgeport. Ms. Loteczka seconded the motion. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

Fred Riese announced that the four spring public hearings have been scheduled as follows: Tuesday, May 18, in Stamford, Richard Carpenter moderator; Tuesday, May 25, in New London, Fred Riese moderator; Tuesday, June 8, in Dayville, Tom Cheeseman moderator; and Monday, June 14, in Milford, Linda Blair moderator. The hearings will begin at 7:30 p.m.

(Meeting adjourned at 2:55 P.M.)