

AGENDA

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday, July 10, 2003 - 1:30 PM

Legislative Office Building, Hearing Room 1B

Hartford, Connecticut

1. Approval of the June 5, 2003 meeting minutes
2. Guest Speaker Harry P. Harris, Bureau Chief, CT Department of Transportation, Bureau of Public Transportation will be speaking on the "Rail Station Governance Study".
3. Comments from the public
4. Report from operating entities
5. Chairman's report
6. Old business
7. New business

CPTC Liaison – Sherry L. Osterling (860) 594-2857

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MEETING ATTENDANCE

THURSDAY, June 5, 2003

Union Station, Fourth Floor, Conference Room B

New Haven, Connecticut

VOTING MEMBERS

Linda Blair
Richard Carpenter
Tom Cheeseman
Morton Katz
Yvonne Loteczka
Richard Schreiner
Russell St. John
N. Terry Hall
William Kelaher
Dot Adamson
Richard Sunderhauf

GUESTS

Peter Lynch

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Fred Riese

CDOT STAFF

Laila Mandour
Sherry L. Osterling
James H. Peay

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Minutes

June 5, 2003

(Meeting convened at 1:31 p.m.)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 1, 2003

Accepted as written.

FEATURED SPEAKERS – KEY POINTS

Though there was no featured speaker scheduled, Chairman Thomas Cheeseman introduced author, Peter Lynch. Peter was a New Haven railroad employee who has written a book, New Haven Railroad. In this book, he writes about various stories surrounding railroad history, which has laid a foundation for today's service. For example, he has highlighted Railroad great, JP Morgan of Hartford and accounts of the first railroad bankruptcy. His book covers the entire history the NHRR from 1830-1969. Lynch mentioned that 175 railroads were absorbed or merged into the NHRR, and that in the 1920's the New Haven carried 10% of US passenger travel, though it had only 1% of US rail mileage. Almost all of the 1,700- 1,800 miles of rail in the NHRR system had passenger service. One example cited was that there were three different routes over which the trip from Fall River to Boston could be made.

J.P. Morgan's ambitious acquisition plans left the railroad in much debt. Its first bankruptcy filing in 1935 removed much of that debt.

Since the NHRR had much idle equipment on weekends, the railroad ran ski trains to the Berkshires, beach trains, excursions, and provided services to big events such as flower shows or the circus, anything to put the equipment into revenue service. In fact, the NHRR played a large role in popularizing skiing. It also was a pioneer in the use of computers and in the provision of piggyback service, provided between New York, Providence and Boston.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Chairman Thomas Cheeseman had received a letter from Mayor Diane Wheelock of Vernon who has congratulated the Commission for conducting the public hearing in the Capitol Region. She expressed her concerns about the impact that the proposed cuts to CTTransit will have on the provision of service in her town, particularly the Hockanum Valley Community Council.

REPORT FROM OPERATING ENTITIES

Richard Schreiner stated HART is operating a new scheduled service for Job Access. Also, he said HART has broken over one hundred trips per day on the Katonah Shuttle Service, and over twenty-one trips for the month. Ridership on the Brewster Shuttle is maintaining itself at over four thousand trips per month.

Richard Sunderhauf stated he agrees with the fare increase and passed out the new rate structure pamphlet. He went on to say that service adjustments are taking place by combining new routes. A June 16 dedication ceremony will take place commemorating the unveiling of the new hybrid-electric bus.

Fred Riese reported that "Atlantic Northeast Rails and Ports" published an article based on the minutes of the May 1st CPTC meeting detailing John Hanlon's presentation. Also, the Southeast Advisory Committee has received a draft report on existing conditions for the interstate 95 corridor from Branford to Rhode Island. Data considered includes level of service, areas of deficiencies, and environmental issues. Mr. Riese also reported that June 24 is the next meeting date for the Southeast Corridor committee.

Dorothy Adamson had brought to the attention of the commission an article from the Quinnehtukqut (CT Chapter Newsletter of the Sierra Club) April-May 2003 issue, www.connecticut.sierraclub.org written by Molly McKay and Dan Lorimier of the Transpiration Choices Coalition. This article criticized the Transportation Strategy Board report as relying too heavily on highway expansion to relieve traffic congestion.

Russell St. John stated that there were public hearings on June 3 and 4, outlining the Griffin Feasibility Study.

Terry Hall stated that AMTRAK has developed a five-year strategic plan and business is growing. He mentioned that he had met Amtrak President Peter Gunn at BWI Airport. Hall mentioned that Gunn has now completed one year as head of Amtrak and that most Amtrak observers are pleased so far.

Gunn has instituted monthly financial statements for Amtrak, prepared 13 days after the close of each month. He has also overseen the development of a very detailed 5 year strategic plan. The main foci of the plan are to get damaged equipment repaired and back in service again, to get revenues up, and to get the Northeast Corridor in good operating shape. Gunn has cut the levels of management and is getting Amtrak's financial house in order. Hall mentioned that the Niantic River Bridge is near the top of the list of capital improvements in the plan, and that the new Thames River Bridge and the Guilford siding are also on the list.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Cheeseman recently attended the Community Transportation Association of America conference in Philadelphia. This conference reinforced the fact that public transportation's needs are increasing. He spoke of a website, Transitnews, that gives updates on ground transportation issues in forty-eight states. He went on to say that, in speaking with other state representatives in the transportation arena, other states do not contribute to the public transportation operation, and yet local municipalities do. In Connecticut, the opposite is true. He feels it would be important that towns try to contribute, and then ask for the state's assistance. Mr. Cheeseman also mentioned that there will be no more state matching funds for paratransit vehicles and other paratransit capital needs.

Mr. Cheesemen also mentioned the potentially very significant loss of Federal transportation dollars to Connecticut if the new transportation reauthorization bill, presently called SAFTEA, changes the allocation formula among the states in the way that is currently proposed.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Fred Riese stated the commission would hold three hearings in Danbury, Torrington and Bristol in the fall. Dates and times of hearings will be announced upon confirmation.

James Peay informed the commission that due to the layoffs and recent retirements, the Rail Regulatory Unit has been transferred to New Haven. The address and telephone number is as follows:

Mike Donnarumma,
Supervisor Rail Officer
Rail Operations W, 3rd Floor West
50 Union Station Ave.
New Haven, CT 06579
Telephone #(203) 789-7657

Telephone # (203) 789-7657

(Meeting adjourned at 3:12 P.M.)

