

## **AGENDA**

### CONNECTICUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING

**March 6, 2008 - 1:30 PM**

Union Station, Fourth Floor Conference Room  
New Haven

1. Approval of the February 7 meeting minutes
2. Speaker: TBA
3. Comments from the public
4. Comments from operating entities
5. Chairman's report
6. Discussion of ConnDOT responses to 2007 Annual Report recommendations
7. Old business
8. New business

## Connecticut Public Transportation Commission

Minutes of February 7, 2008

Fourth Floor Conference Room  
Union Station, New Haven

**Attendance: Members:** Tom Cheeseman, Russ St. John, Terry Hall, Rich Sunderhauf, Rick Schreiner, Kevin Maloney, Robert Zarnetske, Yvonne Loteczka, John Zelinsky, Richard Caprenter. **Ex-officio members:** Susan Simmat (OPM), Fred Riese (DEP). **ConnDOT staff:** Dennis King. **Guests:** Andrew Anastasio, Jr., Alan Sylvestre.

In the absence of Chairman Tom Cheeseman, Vice chairman Fred Riese opened the meeting at 1:35 pm. The minutes of the meeting of January 3, 2008 were approved as written.

### **Featured Speaker**

Kevin Maloney introduced Andrew Anastasio, Jr., whom he had met at a recent Motor Transport Association of Connecticut function. Anastasio is vice president of A. Anastasio and Sons Trucking Company. The company was founded in the late 1970s moving local freight, much of which came in through the Port of New Haven. The company unloads rail cars and ships and distributes the cargoes regionally, generally in a radius of up to 250 miles. Lumber was the first product the company handled and it is still the major product moved, at 4-5 million board-feet per year. The firm next got into movements of steel. Now these products have been joined by telephone poles, plywood, oak flooring and other wood products. Anastasio also aggregates shipments of scrap metal, construction and demolition wastes and municipal solid waste to go out by rail.

When Anastasio first got into the shipping business, he found he had to counter a poor public perception of the reliability of rail service. The trucking and railroad industries were locked in a competitive conflict at that time and each put out negative publicity about the other. Now there is more of a tendency to work together, which is what his company is all about.

Anastasio and Sons provides a hub for the local distribution of products. The big move is made by rail to Cedar Hill Yard in North Haven. Then the products are transloaded to trucks for moves of up to 250 miles, which is the maximum distance a truck can travel, unload, and return in one day. With a shortage of qualified truck drivers industry-wide and with the increasing levels of congestion on the highways, it makes more sense for products to move by rail for the long haul and then be distributed locally by truck. This model also generates less pollution and is more energy efficient. One rail car moves the equivalent volume of freight carried by four trucks. Anastasio believes long haul trucking will start to subside as a means of moving freight.

Anastasio mentioned that ten years ago, waste was not a significant cargo for rail shipment. Now it is a major cargo. His company operates the largest construction

and demolition waste terminal on the East Coast. This waste all goes out of state, mostly to Ohio, Pennsylvania and Kentucky.

One issue limiting the rail freight business in Connecticut is that this state is still under a 263,000 pound load limit per rail car, while most of the nation is now using a 286,000 pound standard for cars, and in some areas, 315,000 pounds is the weight limit. National shippers already load cars to the 286,000 pound standard but these cars can't get into Connecticut.

The proposed feeder barge service was described by Anastasio as 'feel good' legislation but he is not convinced that this proposal offers any efficiencies as each time a cargo is handled, it adds to the cost of shipping it. He also mentioned that today the conflict between trucks and railroads is often replaced by that between passenger and freight services on the rails. His freight shipments arrive and depart on the Connecticut Southern Railroad (CSO) which must operate within certain time windows between Amtrak trains on the Springfield Line. At present, this is usually not a problem due to the level of Amtrak service on the line but it could become more of an issue with the increases in passenger service proposed for the Springfield Line.

From a competitive standpoint, having to route freight trains from New Haven to Springfield, then across the Hudson River at Selkirk, New York and down to New Jersey adds much time and cost in both directions. He has heard through the rail grapevine that the State of Connecticut will be acquiring the Springfield Line from Amtrak in a year to a year and a half though he has not seen anything official on this subject. This would help make rail shipments more competitive by reducing the exorbitant trackage fees Amtrak assesses for freight movements over this line. These fees of over \$1.00 per car mile really hurt business. He noted that his inbound shipments leave Springfield on the Connecticut Southern Railroad at 4:00 AM and arrive at Cedar Hill Yard by 6:00 AM.

After Mr. Anastasio's departure from the meeting, Kevin Maloney noted that Anastasio's company owns over 300 rail cars and 140 acres of land at Cedar Hill. He also owns the Connecticut Limousine Company.

### **Comments from the Public**

None.

### **Reports from Operating Entities**

Russ St. John mentioned that Providence and Worcester Railroad has entered into an agreement with tank car vendor GATX. The agreement will result in increased traffic for P&W from increased shipments of ethanol to Providence for fuel blending. Russ mentioned that ethanol is more corrosive than gasoline. He and others mentioned that this affects rubber and fiberglass that come into contact with ethanol-containing fuels and has been a particular problem for small engines, especially boat engines.

Richard Sunderhauf mentioned that new run bids are underway at the Hartford Division of Connecticut Transit to take effect in March.

Rick Schreiner distributed copies of the new HART system map, which is the first update of the map in over ten years. He also reported that most HART buses are now equipped with bike racks. Soon all fixed route buses in the system will be equipped with racks. Though the racks get used now, he expects a big bump in rack usage once all buses in the system have them and riders can have an assurance that no matter what bus they may be on, it will have a rack.

Dennis King of ConnDOT reported that the search for a new commissioner is continuing, with the list of candidates now narrowed to nine. The new commissioner will have the added responsibility of handling the transition of ConnDOT into separate Departments of Highways and Transit, Aviation and Ports. This transition is expected to occur in 2010.

### **Chairman's Report**

Fred Riese mentioned that Tom Cheeseman was absent from today's meeting because he was involved in labor negotiations at Middletown Area Transit. Fred also inquired of Alan Sylvestre about the status of his efforts to be appointed to the Commission. Alan said that Speaker Jim Amann had given him a preliminary indication that he was positively inclined toward making the appointment but would need to wait until the crunch of the legislative session was over before making a final decision.

### **Old Business**

Fred Riese mentioned that a revised abandonment notice has been issued by the Surface Transportation Board for a section of the Canal Line in the northern portion of Southington. The initial notice had specified that Boston and Maine sought permission to abandon 1.51 miles of the Canal Line from Interstate 84 to the Plainville town line. The new notice only covers 0.73 miles northward from the Interstate 84 crossing. The Department of Environmental Protection remains interested in acquiring this property for recreational trail use to extend the contiguous trail use south of this segment.

### **New Business**

Russ St. John suggested that Bob Singleton of the National Railway Equipment Company might be a possible speaker at a future Commission meeting. The company manufactures an ultra-low emissions locomotive using either two or three 700hp Cummins diesel engines for its 1400-hp and 2100-hp models, respectively. Among other features, these locomotives only operate as many engines as necessary to handle their immediate loads, thereby minimizing emissions and fuel use. Russ reported that P&W has used one of these locomotives at its Worcester yard.

Terry Hall extended an invitation to Commission members to attend the Region I meeting of the National Association of Railroad Passengers March 1 in Boston. Speakers will make presentations on topics including Amtrak's Sacramento-San Jose service, upgrades on the Downeaster rail service between Boston and Portland, and the replacement of the Amtrak Thames River Bridge.

In response to a question about a reference to a rail tunnel effort from Staten Island to Brooklyn in the 1920s, Dick Carpenter confirmed that such a rail tunnel had been started in the 1920s but was stopped by Governor Al Smith shortly after he took office. Dick did not know how far that effort had progressed before it was halted.

Several members reported having finally received their reimbursement checks for the first half of 2007, though some members had not yet received them. Fred Riese promised to work with Russ to come up with a list of public hearing sites for the spring hearings of 2008. ConnDOT's responses to the recommendations of the Commission's 2007 Annual Report were distributed at the end of the meeting. These will be considered as an agenda item for the March 6 meeting.

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 3:05 PM.