

## **Connecticut Public Transportation Commission**

Minutes of October 6, 2011

Union Station

New Haven, CT

**Attendance: Members:** Christopher Adams, Richard Carpenter, Morton Katz, Yvonne Loteczka, Kevin Maloney, Robert Rodman, Russell St. John, Richard Schreiner, Richard Sunderhauf, Alan Sylvestre, **Ex-officio members:** Connie Mendolia, ConnDEEP. **ConnDOT staff:** Dennis King. **Guests:** Terry Hall, Jan Lindberg.

Chairman Maloney opened the meeting at 1:45 p.m. The minutes of the meeting of September 1, 2011 were approved

### **Featured Speaker**

In lieu of a featured speaker, the Commission was given an informal tour of an M8 train on track 12 at Union Station. ConnDOT Rail Administrator Gene Colonese and his staff were on hand to answer questions.

Yvonne Loteczka had difficulty boarding the vehicle due to the design of the bridge plate. She felt that the design of the bridge plate with its small peak was too narrow and steep for someone boarding in a wheelchair, and that she could not have safely boarded by herself. She questioned whether or not a person with a walker could safely board either. Chairman Maloney noted that in the trucking industry bridge plates are typically flat. He will pass Yvonne's comments on to Gene Colonese.

### **Comments from the public**

Terry Hall announced that Amtrak carried 30 million passengers in the fiscal year ended September 30. Short haul passengers are now more important than long haul as a percent of usage. Mr. Hall also noted that the State of Vermont and New England Central had done a good job getting rail lines restored after the extreme flooding events last month.

### **Comments from Operating Entities**

Richard Sunderhauf reported that CTTRANSIT was having a meeting at Manchester Community College asking for input into improvements to the transit service.

Richard Schreiner stated that it was still unclear if the cuts to Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) services in the eastern and western regions from the Department of Social Services could be made up by ConnDOT. The cut to the western region was in the neighborhood of \$136,000.

Russ St. John related that Providence and Worcester Railroad is continuing its track upgrade between Willimantic and Plainfield. This will give the railroad improved access to the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National rail networks via the New England Central.

## **Chairman's Report**

Chairman Maloney provided a handout from Charles Hunter's presentation at the September meeting. He also received a request from RailAmerica/NECR for a letter of support from the commission for a TIGER III grant. The proposal would upgrade track in three states to allow for use of 286K pound freight cars, the national standard. The railroad is prepared to provide up to 20% of the local match for the grant and anticipates participation from Massachusetts. The Commission agreed it would be worthwhile for the Chairman to send a letter of support.

Chairman Maloney mentioned an article that indicated that funds for work on I-84 between Waterbury and Cheshire were in place for improvements beginning in 2014.

At a 2010 hearing in Waterbury, the Commission took testimony from students at Naugatuck Valley Community-Technical College on transportation problems in the evenings in Waterbury. North East Transportation worked on a proposal for evening service with ConnDOT. This proposal was supported by the Commission in the form of a recommendation in the Annual Report. Funds were recently made available to allow evening service in Waterbury to begin on October 24. Chairman Maloney reported that Senator Hartley had personally thanked him for the support of the Commission and said that the CPTC's efforts had made a big difference.

Kimberly Dunham of the Greater Hartford Transit District has expressed interest in serving on the Commission as a transit district representative. Russ St. John, Yvonne Loteczka and Richard Schreiner all spoke highly of her and felt she would be a good addition and a worker. The Chairman will send a communication in support of her request.

Dennis King will remain at the department and will continue as DOT liaison for the CPTC.

## **Old Business**

Morton Katz asked if Commissioner Redeker could attend an upcoming CPTC meeting. Dennis King will extend an invitation

There was discussion regarding poor attendance from the public at the Torrington meeting. The Commission was well represented with 9 members, but only 3 members of the public were present. Local press and cable outlets did pick up the meeting. Historically, the CPTC had held daytime hearing's with varying results. Dennis King stated that as an option, recent CTTRANSIT fare increase hearings had an afternoon and evening component with a short break. There was consensus that the Commission should look at alternate models for hearings for 2012.

## **New Business**

Richard Sunderhauf expressed his surprise that drivers at BOLT bus were members of the same union as CTTRANSIT. There was some thought that part of the reason for the creation of the service was to hire non-union drivers.

Commission members were reminded of upcoming public hearings in Westport on 10/12, Wilton on 10/18 and in Plainville on 10/24.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.