

LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD COMMUTER COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2018

A meeting of the Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council (LIRRCC) was convened at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 12, 2018, in the LIRR Transportation Services Conference Room at 1 Penn Plaza, Penn Station, New York.

The following members were present:

Gerard P. Bringmann
Mark Epstein
Michael Godino
Ira Greenberg
Larry Rubinstein (on phone)

The following members were absent:

Sheila Carpenter
Raymond Pagano
Bryan Peranzo

In addition, the following persons were present:

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|-------------------|--------------------------|
| William Henderson | -PCAC Executive Director |
| Bradley Brashears | -PCAC Planning Manager |
| Hector Garcia | -LIRR |
| Ryan Attard | -LIRR |
| Richard Amanna | -LIRR |
| Stanley Davis | -LIRR |

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The agenda for the April 12, 2018 meeting was accepted by those in attendance. The minutes of the January 11, 2018 meeting were approved with a correction indicating that Ira Greenberg was in attendance.

Chair's Report

The Chair's Report is attached to these minutes.

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Presentation – LIRR Performance Improvement Plan

Hector Garcia said that he would go through the Performance Improvement Program first and that the group could discuss the elements after they are presented. Mr. Garcia said that the process of writing the performance improvement plan involved the entire organization and asked LIRR employees what problems they see and what resources are needed to take actions that they see as necessary. The issues that were identified are divided into three areas of concentration, including preventing incidents in the system, seasonal preparations, and customer communication.

Mr. Garcia said that one example of a problem identified and action that is being taken to address it is the growing number of cars on the tracks, such as the recent incident at Willis Avenue in Mineola. The action proposed to address the issue is a pilot of flexible bollards that will alert drivers that track areas are not streets but permit necessary access for Rail Road workers.

Another action is the addition of overnight track crews to repair problems that have been identified prior to the start of the morning rush. Also on tap are more inspections and evaluation activities focusing on tracks. These efforts will look for broken rails, especially at grade crossings where inspections will be more thorough. The LIRR will also use wheel sensors to find broken rails.

Stanley Davis said that other efforts will be directed toward customer communication. The LIRR will be engaging an outside training group that will be working with public information staff. One of the objectives of this training will be to help staff express more empathy in their communications with riders who are stressed by service diversions. Mark Epstein said that the LIRRCC would like to work with the LIRR on the phrasing of its announcements. Mr. Garcia said that the LIRR would also be working on progressive messaging, where messages are updated to reflect what has already been reported.

Mr. Garcia said that one point of emphasis of the program is adding timing points and countdown clocks. He said that the LIRR needs to add timing points to make countdown clocks work accurately. Larry Rubinstein said that the Train time App does not work well with respect to arrival time. Mr. Garcia responded that this is because of the low number of timing points in the system. Gerry Bringmann reported that disappearing trains are problem with the app. Mr. Davis said that the Passenger Information office would strive to do a better job informing riders of the status of trains. Mr. Garcia noted that the on-board signs on the diesel fleet are to be fixed

Mr. Epstein said that one major problem is that on-time statistics do not account for the impact of missed connections. Mr. Garcia said that the LIRR will be improving its metrics and instituting an interactive performance dashboard. Data that is now available on on-time performance and incidents where trains are

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delayed by 15 or more minutes. He said that the categories of delays of trains are also being improved.

Mr. Bringmann said that the biggest problem he encounters is that there are many short trains, which is surprising to him as the cars with damaged wheels should be repaired by now. Richard Amanna remarked that there are several actions in place or planned to increase production in the repair of cars. Mr. Greenberg noted that there seems to be a chronic shortage of equipment in recent months. Mr. Garcia responded that there are several reasons for the number of short trains, among them the need to take units out of service to install Positive Train Control (PTC). He also said that the M9s would be on the property in June, which will ease car shortages.

Mr. Garcia said that the listening tour that had been scuttled by bad weather earlier this year would take place. Its new version is in planning stages and details will follow soon. He also said that a performance dashboard is to be released shortly.

Old Business

On the issue of Amtrak's summer work, Mr. Garcia said that after work on Track 19 in Penn Station is completed, in July and August Amtrak will move on to another phase, which is currently being discussed by the carriers serving Penn Station. He said that work this summer, such as the completion of the Ronkonkoma Branch second track would also cause a number of temporary service changes.

The question of Brooklyn service when East Side Access is put in service was raised. Mr. Garcia said that there is a potential to maintain some direct service to Brooklyn on some branches and that this is being considered. He said that that there will be monthly surveys of riders and that a market research consultant would be brought on board to do an online survey.

Mike Godino said that the new signage that has been installed at Hicksville is not very visible. Mr. Epstein said that it would be positive to involve the LIRRCC before changes are made at stations, as the group can be helpful in identifying problems. Mr. Bringmann said that the informal meeting that the Council had with LIRR staff at Jamaica in February had been very effective and reiterated that the Council could provide the LIRR with input on the Rail Road's plans. He said that one piece of input he would suggest is to add graphics to some email alerts. Mr. Davis said that the Rail Road is producing common graphics for reroutes of trains during service disruptions.

Mr. Rubinstein suggested that the LIRR stop putting on-time performance statistics in *Train Talk*, as this serves to inflame riders.

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Board Report

Mr. Greenberg delivered the Board Report. He discussed the status report that the LIRR had for Positive Train Control and noted that both the LIRR and Metro-North are planning for a December 2018 implementation. He also noted that a station rehabilitation contract has just been awarded.

Staff Report

Mr. Henderson said that he is planning to retire in October and that planning is underway to get his successor in place.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William Henderson
Executive Director