



Meeting Minutes of

April 2, 2020

A meeting of the Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council (LIRRCC) was convened at 4:30 pm on Thursday, April 2, 2020 via remotely/telephone.

Member Attendance

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Mark Epstein (Chair) | Present |
| Gerard P. Bringmann (Vice Chair) | Present |
| Sheila Carpenter | Absent |
| Raymond Pagano | Absent |
| Bryan Peranzo | Present |
| Marilyn Poterson | Present |
| Larry Rubinstein | Present |

Staff Attendance

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|---|---------|
| Lisa Daglian (Executive Director) | Present |
| Ellyn Shannon (Associate Director) | Present |
| Bradley Brashears (Planning Manager) | Absent |
| Sheila Binesh (Transportation Planner) | Present |
| Deborah Morrison (Administrative Assistant) | Absent |

Non-member Attendance

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Affiliation</u> |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Hector Garcia | LIRR |
| Christopher Greif | NYCTRC |
| Matt Kamper | Concerned citizen |
| John Rakowski | Concerned citizen |
| Matt Kessler | Concerned citizen |
| Andrew Pollack | Concerned citizen |
| Debra Greif | Concerned citizen |

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Approval of Agenda for April 2, 2020 meeting.
Approval of Minutes for February 13, 2020 meeting.

Chair's Report attached.

Hector Garcia, LIRR External Affairs: LIRR COVID-19 responses

Non-essential LIRR employees are working from home. Our essential employees include cleaners, train crews, engineers, and folks at shops. Many employees are out, so we are running less service to maintain employees on reserve. MTA has 744 positive cases, 85 are back to work. 76 cases are from LIRR. When employee test positive, people working with them are notified to self-isolate. MTA wide has 4229 workers in quarantine and 360 LIRR workers are in quarantine. Temperatures are taken at work places where social distancing is not possible. We are stepping up cleaning at stations, trains, and work locations, i.e. tools and desks. Waiting rooms are closed at 2 pm to scale back use and cleaning. There is a shortage of cleaning supplies and we are preserving our stock pile.

Penn Station

Penn Station West End concourse will close tonight indefinitely. The past 2 weeks it closed at 9pm. We are working with Amtrak, the police department, and homeless outreach to decrease unused spaces at Penn to address the increase in homelessness.

Penn Station vendors are officially still allowed to be open. We informed Vornado that as of June businesses must vacate. That might be delayed now, but we are not kicking out anyone by June. Given current circumstances, they might leave on their own.

Penn station construction is not delayed. It is considered essential.

Ticket refunds

Mail and ride riders aren't charged until tomorrow for April tickets. We sent out an email blast last week and yesterday to Mail and Ride customers on how to return their tickets. As long as you don't open the ticket, you can mail it back and won't get charged. The normal refund policy applied to refunds in the March. MTA decided they are keeping the ticket refund policy as is.

Workers on trains

We were following CDC guidelines instructing train crews to not wear masks unless sick. Masks were optional. Last week the MTA received 75,000 masks. Our focus was telling employees to stay home if they are ill. That is why crews were not previously wearing gloves or masks.

Projects

New Hyde Park closed a month ago. There is a big hole and we are looking to finish it. No project has been stopped yet. We are changing how we manage projects. There are less people reporting onsite and many are working remotely. We are cleaning tools in between uses. Currently, all new projects are paused because of the financial concerns.

B. Peranzo: Riders are dealing with a different level of service so the ticket policy should be changed. How are the ticket refunds prorated? It should be by last used date of electronic tickets. The refund fees should be waived. People need the money now.

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H. Garcia: Pat Foye has said the MTA is focusing on getting through this pandemic. We are currently low on employees having access to the proper work systems and devices. This affects employees who process ticket refunds.

G. Bringmann: The LIRR should waive 10-trip expiration dates or extend them for a few months.

Action item: Write letter on LIRR ticket refunds.

L. Rubenstein: Riders weren't able to catch a train and conductors weren't accepting 10-trip tickets that expired.

H. Garcia: We are still running 65% of service. Service is mostly modified during off-peak hours, like weekend service. We are running close to a normal rush hour service. We are closely monitoring crowding and have added an extra rush hour train to Jamaica to reduce crowding.

M. Epstein: What is the marker to return to regular service?

H. Garcia: Whenever people return to work.

M. Epstein: Will the Outer-borough rail discount begin in May?

H. Garcia: It is delayed and will not begin in May since it is not considered essential. The discount requires programming and testing to implement.

A. Pollack: Is construction at New Hyde Park bridge still going on?

H. Garcia: Yes, it is scheduled to finish on time

M. Kessler: How often are train cars cleaned?

H. Garcia: Our entire fleet is disinfected every 72 hours, on top of the regular cleaning schedule. Fleet maintainers work together closely, so some were infected which slowed down cleaning.

M. Kessler: Are crew member enforcing distancing between passengers?

H. Garcia: They do so as safely as they can. It is voluntarily. Riders have to distribute among the cars.

J. Rakowski: Will there be lenience to forgive 10-trip ticket expiration dates?

H. Garcia: We are concerned with finances. There is a 76% drop in ridership. Ticket sales down over 90%.

M. Epstein: What about parking pass renewal?

H. Garcia: Last week we reached out to towns. Most towns are waiving permit renewal or not focusing on it.

B. Peranzo: Are employees being furloughed?

H. Garcia: Pat Foye said that was not being considered because we need all the people we have. MTA might have to use congestion pricing funds to subsidize the MTA. We are currently holding off on awarding capital projects.

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L. Daglian: How is the \$3.9 billion federal stimulus being distributed by agency?

H. Garcia: We have just received the money and don't know the details yet.

State Budget update

- Convicted sex offenders can be now barred from the transit system.
- The lock box for congestion pricing was unlocked.
- The budget is late, it will be probably passed and approved today.
- Good news is there are additional transparency and reporting requirements. It would be good to see transparency in reporting before emergency measures are taken to understand why they should be used.
- The measure to allow LIRR staff on private property to trim trees and brush was not passed.
- This was a war-on-virus budget, but it will be revisited every quarter to adapt.
- It would be good to see small projects move along.
- We are calling for additional federal funding and support for recovery of service.

Frontline workers include train crews, operators, cleaners, and maintainers.

M. Epstein: We need to maintain our mantra of no additional fare increases. People are hurting.

Action item: Send Council station/taxi response from David Florio, MTA Real Estate.

Adjourned

Action Items

- **Write letter on LIRR ticket refunds**
- **Send Council station/taxi response from David Florio, MTA Real Estate.**

Meeting recording

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Daglian
Executive Director