

An in person meeting of the Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council (LIRRCC) was held at 4:30 pm on Thursday October 12, 2023 at One West Street Mineola, NY. The public and members unable to attend in person joined via Zoom.

## Member Attendance

Gerard P. Bringmann (Chair)	Present
Bryan Peranzo	Absent
Larry Rubinstein (Vice-Chair)	Present
Christy Tolbert	Present
Peter Gorry	Present – virtual

## Staff Attendance

Lisa Daglian (Executive Director)	Present
Kara Gurl (Planning & Advocacy Manager)	Present – virtual
Jessica Spezio (Administrative Assistant)	Present – virtual
Jack Connors	Present

## Non-member Attendance

Name	Affiliation
Rob Free	LIRR President
Hector Garcia	LIRR
Stuart Desser	Concerned citizen
Ron Troy	Concerned citizen
Christopher Greif	NYCTRC Member
Debra Greif	Concerned citizen

**Approved Agenda for October 10, 2023 meeting.**

**Approved Minutes for July 13, 2023 meeting.**

**Approved Agenda for July 13, 2023 meeting.**

**Approved Minutes for May 15, 2023 meeting.**

### **Chair's Report:**

- As you probably know, Rob Free has been named the Interim President of the LIRR, as the MTA launches an official search for a permanent President. This was a result of pressure from some MTA Board Members and few elected officials who felt that the LIRR needed its own President. Cathy Rinaldi will still be involved to some degree, so that both of the MTA's Commuter Rails can benefit from the best practices of each railroad.
- Congestion Pricing continues to move forward with the TMRB continuing to hold public meetings. While we await the final report, which will be reviewed by the MTA, infrastructure is currently being put in place and tolls should start being collected in the Spring of 2024.
- The MTA released its 20 Year Needs Assessment, and it doesn't appear that there will be any LIRR "mega projects," at least not in the next 5 year Capital Plan. Most of what's included for the LIRR will be "State of Good Repair" projects and the purchase of a considerable amount of new rolling stock.
- I recently attended a presentation at the Suffolk County Public Works Meeting in Hauppauge regarding the benefits of upgrading the Port Jefferson branch. While this is an item on the Twenty-Year Year Needs Assessment (TYNA), it will probably not be given any serious consideration by the MTA at this time, as the cost benefit ratio would not seem to justify the cost (probably between \$2-3 billion dollars) of double tracking and electrification.
- As for the current rolling stock situation, delivery of the remaining M-9 order has been delayed by a number of reasons (Newsday recently ran a front page article on this) and the contract to provide the badly needed M-9a's is still being negotiated. Unfortunately, this means the LIRR will need to keep approx. 100 M-3 cars, which are at the end of their useful life, in service for another couple of years.
- Shortly after Labor Day, the LIRR revised their train schedules in an attempt to address the needs and concerns expressed by our fellow commuters. The revised schedules have received mixed reviews, but at least this indicates that the railroad is trying to listen to their riders. One item that has yet to be addressed is the lack of timed connections in Jamaica.

- While the number of delayed trains is up substantially since the opening of Grand Central Madison, the LIRR is providing approximately 40% additional service, so some increase in delayed trains was anticipated. OTP continues to be over 90% on most branches, but Customer Satisfaction is not where it should be.

Rob Free, the new Acting President of the LIRR, joined our meeting to introduce himself. He previously held the position of Senior Vice President of Operations for about three and a half years within a 32-year career at the railroad. He started as a station cleaner and worked his way up through various roles. In his most recent role, he oversaw over 6,000 employees and was deeply involved in projects like the East Side Access project, operational readiness, and the development of Third track.

Rob Free stated that his priorities are a safe, reliable system and improving the customer experience. He noted that the LIRR team will be involved to the extent possible in the projects selected to move forward from the TYNA.

View Q & A with Members here: <https://youtu.be/Pk650-X29uM?t=213>

## **Nomination and Election: LIRRCC Chair (Gerard Bringmann) and Vice Chair (Larry Rubinstein)**

### **Executive Director/ Staff update:**

Lisa introduced Jack Connors, PCAC's new Research and Communications Associate. She shared that we also started to advertise the Associate Director position.

OMNYvate report: Lisa shared that the team produced and released its report on OMNY and fare policy called Integrate, Simplify, and [OMNYvate](#) with a press conference on Friday October 6<sup>th</sup>. The report received positive feedback from the MTA and other stakeholders. The next step is to raise awareness and work with elected officials to move the recommendations forward.

LIRRCC Survey: Lisa shared that PCAC staff has worked to update the survey with new questions and will revamp it with more detailed questions pertaining to big transfer points, timed connections, and other rider concerns.

### **Social Media and Communications Update:**

Jack shared the following social media and communications updates:

- We continued to receive communications from commuters following the September service changes, particularly from riders on the West Hempstead and Long Beach branches who previously had direct trains to Brooklyn but no longer do.
- We still hear a lot about the loss of timed connections, particularly in the PM rush hour headed East.

- Last weekend, buses replaced train service on the Montauk branch but had delays and issues due to the large number of riders traveling over the holiday weekend.

### **LIRR Updates:** by Hector Garcia

Hector stated that things have largely settled down, especially after the first week of the latest schedule change in September. There were some minor issues following the schedule change that have since largely been resolved. Compared to last February and March, this round of adjustments has been smoother. The LIRR will continue to make schedule adjustments to improve the situation.

Twenty-Year Needs Assessment: Hector shared that the Twenty-Year Needs Assessment is about assessing the entire system's needs for the next twenty years. There is a focus on state of good repair, and the priority is to address infrastructure that needs replacement to ensure safety. Hector explained that the process involves differentiating between the Twenty-Year Needs, which include long-term needs and potential projects, and the five-year capital plan, which identifies high-priority projects to be completed in the near future.

### **Old Business:**

NONE

### **New Business:**

NONE

### **Action items:**

NONE

## **Adjourned**

Meeting recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pk650-X29uM>

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 PM.  
Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Daglian  
Executive Director