

**Connecticut Commuter Rail Council**

**Wednesday, April 21, 2021 – 7:00 PM**

**Via Video Conference**

The following Council Members were in attendance by video conference: Jim Gildea, Jeff Maron, Sue Prosi, Melissa Kane, Doug Hauslauden, Ed Schroeder, Terry Borjerson, and Roger Cirella.

The following people also attended by video conference: Representative Brian Smith, Representative Christine Connolly, Richard Jankovich, CDOT; Garrett Eucalito, CDOT Deputy Commissioner; Yuri Kulijis, CDOT Assistant Rail Administrator; Jon Foster, CDOT; Marci Peterson, CDOT; Jim Carlson, Amtrak; Ben Cornelius, MNRR; David Melillo, MNRR; Tom Aparo, MNRR; Michael Donnarumma, MNRR; Zell Steever, and Miriam Grossman.

**Public Comments**:

Miriam Grossman, a commuter is concerned about the mask enforcement on trains. Miriam would like the conductors to enforce the mask rule. Rich Jankovich will look into the mask issue.

The March 2021 minutes were approved.

**Counsel Business**:

**SLE Service Update and Future Plans**:

John Foster discussed the current ridership levels on Shoreline East. There has been a very little increase in ridership. In 2019, there were 660,477 rides. In 2020, there were 155,871 rides. CDOT is anticipating 88,226 rides in 2021. The Stamford express train is no longer running which accounted for twenty percent (20%) of ridership. Many commuters are telecommuting. E.C. Shroeder expects an increase in June. Ridership is down fifty-five percent (55%) Monday thru Friday and down twenty-three percent (23%) Saturday thru Sunday.

**SLE Fleet Procurement Plan:**

Marci Peterson of CDOT presented the status of the rail car procurement plan. Jim Gildea asked what the current timeline was. This June, a notice to proceed will be issued. The design phase will occur in 2022, delivery will begin in 2024, and production will begin in 2025. Sixty (60) cars have been designated for the Shore Line and Hartford Line. The new cars will each have four (4) bike racks. Rich Jankovich mentioned that CDOT is watching service changes and he cannot comment if changes in ridership will affect the fleet procurement plan at this time.

**SLE M8 Testing**:

Marci Peterson said the pantograph study has been completed. The results have been accepted by Amtrak. The traction power study will be completed in June. Jim Gildea asked how much time is left before the M8’s can be used on Shore Line East. Marci said it is difficult to say since this will all have to be negotiated with Amtrak.

**SLE Station Update (Clinton/Madison):**

In Clinton, passenger information displays have been installed. The station improvements are scheduled to be completed this December. At the Madison station, there are wetlands on the north side of the station so an alternative is being searched before any improvements begin.

**House Bill 5423 Update**:

The bill has twelve (12) co-sponsors. The bill seeks to improve SLE service from Old Saybrook to Rhode Island. The bill would establish a new Norwich Branch Line, reduce the need for more highways, improve air quality, and would better connect CT to NY, RI, and MA. Representative Connolly said it is a great bill that would remove cars from our roads. The bill has bi-partisan support and the hope is to receive funding from the federal government. Representative Smith said he used SLE for work. He recognized the need for public transportation.

**Main Line Issues**:

No questions.

**Branch Line Issues**:

Dave Melillo said busing will begin on the Waterbury in mid-May. In June, there will be a full outage. Peter Pan busing will be utilized. Ties will installed, testing for signals and PTC will be completed, and there will be soil remediation at the former Ansonia Copper and Brass. The outage will run until approximately August 28th.

Adjourned at 8:24pm.

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Respectfully submitted,

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| Roger J. Cirella, Secretary |  | |  | |  |
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