



**Connecticut Commuter Rail Council**

**Wednesday, January 19, 2022 – 7:00 PM**

**Via Video Conference**

The following Council Members were in attendance by video conference: Jim Gildea, Zell Steever, Sue Prosi, Melissa Kane, Marcellus Edwards, Doug Hauslauden, Blaize Levitan, Jessica Bremner, Julia McGrath, and Roger Cirella.

The following people also attended by video conference: Garrett Eucalitto, CDOT Deputy Commissioner; Jonathan Dach, Governor's Policy Director; Representative Cindy Harrison; Representative Cristin McCarthy Vahey; Representative David Michel; Rich Jankovich, CDOT; Eric Bergeron, CDOT; Angelo Llubres, CDOT; Yure Kuljis, CDOT; Tom Aparo, CDOT; Bruce Olmstead, CDOT; Jim Carlson, Amtrak; Tom McCarthy, CT Rail; Mike Donnarumma, MNRR; Ben Cornelius, MNRR; Peter Gold, Miriam Grossman, Fred Nangle, Kate Rattan, and Aaron Goode, members of the public.

**Public Comments:**

Miriam Grossman was concerned about masks and waiting areas in Grand Central and Stamford stations. Mike Donnarumma said various masks are issued to the conductors depending on the availability of masks that day. KN95 masks are harder to obtain. Metronorth employees who are not vaccinated must be tested. Mike repeated that conductors have no authority to enforce masks on commuters.

**Council Business:**

The December 2021 minutes were approved. Blaize Levitan moved for a motion to approve the minutes which was seconded by Melissa Kane.

**Governor's Transportation Initiatives:**

Johnny Dach discussed the status of transportation in Connecticut. TCI and tolls are off the table for this legislative season. The highway user fee for large trucks is in. The State of Connecticut is waiting on the federal infrastructure bill. Jessica Bremner asked if the funding also included Amtrak. MTA and Amtrak are working together to obtain funding from the federal government. Garrett Eucalitto mentioned that his office is open to dialogue with interested parties to improve bus and rail.

**Legislative Transportation Initiatives:**

Jim Gildea presented the Council plan to the representatives on the call. Jonathan Dach said he will focus on the Council's list.

**Hartford Line Capital and Operational Update:**

Bruce Olmstead discussed the history of the Hartford Line and the state's plans. Connecticut received three (3) high speed rail grants. Connecticut was the only applicant that completed the high-speed rail grant. The Hartford Line began operating in 2018. There are sixty-two (62) miles of track between New Haven Station and the Springfield Station. Twenty-seven (27) miles of the track are double tracked. There are twenty-four (24) public crossings and nine (9) private crossings. The Windsor Station is almost complete and the Windsor Locks station is going out to bid. All stations will be ADA compliant and contain high level boarding.

**Main Line Issues:** Ben Cornelius said November was a good month up until Omicron in mid December. Ridership has since rebounded as of last week and is heading towards a favorable trend.

**Branch Line Issues:**

Nothing to report.

**Hartford Line and Shoreline Issues:**

Tom Aparo discussed the recent ridership trends on the Hartford Line. As of last December, the Hartford Line was running at about sixty (60) percent of pre-covid ridership. Ridership was improving until about Thanksgiving when the Omicron virus set in. Ridership has declined but CDOT is hopeful for a return to better ridership. Customer service has been added to the Hartford Station. There will be service adjustments between January 24, 2022 and March 27, 2022. The Hartford Station will have a canopy roof replacement in mid July. Jessica Bremner asked about the status of buses to Storrs, CT. Tom Aparo said CDOT is currently working with CT Transit and will take some time due to the driver bid process.

**Old Business/New Business:**

CDOT will be meeting with the Council's working group.

Adjourned at 8:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger J. Cirella, Secretary