

Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
Joint Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad Committees  
Monday, January 27, 2025  
9:15 a.m.

Meeting held at  
2 Broadway – 20<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10004

The following Committee Members were present:

Hon. Marc Herbst, Co-Chair  
Hon. Blanca López, Co-Chair  
Hon. Gerard Bringmann  
Hon. Samuel Chu  
Hon. Daniel Garodnick  
Hon. Randolph Glucksman\*  
Hon. David Mack\*  
Hon. Midori Valdivia

The following Committee Members were not present:

Hon. Norman Brown  
Hon. Michael Fleischer  
Hon. Lisa Sorin  
Hon. Vincent Tessitore, Jr.  
Hon. Neal Zuckerman

**Representing Metro-North Railroad:**

Catherine Rinaldi – President  
Justin Vonashek – Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer  
Shelley Prettyman – Vice President, System Safety  
Michael Loney – Vice President, Maintenance of Way  
Michael Metz – Chief Security Officer, Security

**Representing Long Island Rail Road:**

Robert Free – President  
Thomas Kost – Senior Vice President, Operations  
Lori Ebbighausen – Vice President, Corporate Safety  
Paul Dietlin – Vice President, Maintenance of Way  
Haley Stein – Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary (also representing Metro-North)  
Hector Garcia – Chief of Staff

**Representing MTA Police Department:**

Thomas J. Taffe – Chief of Operations

---

\* appeared via video conference

**Representing MTA Construction and Development:**

Anthony Tufano – Senior Vice President, Railroads Business Unit

**Also present:**

Shanifah Rieara – Senior Advisor for Communications and Policy

David Florio – Chief of Real Estate Transactions and Operations

The members of the Metro-North Railroad (“Metro-North”) Committee met jointly with the members of the Long Island Rail Road (“LIRR”) Committee.

**1. OPENING MEETING:**

Co-Chair López called the joint meeting to order.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

The following public speakers commented:

Christopher D. Greif (in person)

Ian Matthews (via audio)

Jason Anthony, LIRR ADA Task Force (in person)

Aleta Dupree, Team Folds (via video)

Iris Kelley (in person)

Lisa Daglian, PCAC Executive Director (in person)

To hear the content of public comments, details of Committee presentations, and Committee Members’ comments and questions as well as any part of the Committee meeting, please refer to the video recording of the meeting produced by the MTA, available and maintained on the MTA website:

<https://www.mta.info/transparency/board-and-committee-meetings/january-2025>

**3. METRO-NORTH PRESIDENT’S REPORT:**

Metro-North President Catherine Rinaldi (“President Rinaldi”) discussed ridership gains in December due to discretionary and weekend ridership increases, which was a 9.5% increase as compared to 2023 with a record setting Saturday December 14 of 159,000 riders.

President Rinaldi reported on the added weekend train capacity to provide comfort for customers during the holidays, the introduction of the “Holiday Lights Train” and holiday themed safety messages at certain stations.

President Rinaldi highlighted Metro-North's 2024 achievements and record-breaking performance, including a 12.1% increase in ridership in 2024 as compared to 2023 for a total of 67.4 million customers and the highest on-time-performance, 98.3%, in Metro-North's history.

President Rinaldi discussed the results of the Fall 2024 Customer Count Survey, resulting in a total systemwide customer satisfaction of 85%, a two percent increase from the Spring 2024 survey results.

President Rinaldi then highlighted Metro-North's efforts at climate change resiliency, speed initiatives on the New Haven Line, and new gating procedures for select trains at Grand Central Terminal.

President Rinaldi reported on the use of technology to improve Metro-North's operations, specifically the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) initiatives to drive safety, efficiency, and innovation. These initiatives include AI-Aided Trespasser Detection System, Train Door Detection System, precision LiDAR data for detecting infrastructure changes, use of AI to detect vegetation and infrastructure changes, LaserTrain collection of data for obstacle detection, and use of predictive maintenance pilots to optimize maintenance processes.

President Rinaldi mentioned that monthly ticket holders enjoy unlimited travel on either railroad and can bring up to two additional passengers for just one dollar per person per way.

President Rinaldi reported on the ribbon cutting ceremony on Tuesday, December 17 at the new Haverstraw Ferry Terminal. The ferry connects Haverstraw to the Ossining Station, offering west of Hudson residents with access to the Hudson Line.

President Rinaldi shared that Metro-North will receive funding as part of the federal Grade Crossing Elimination Grant that has been awarded to eliminate various crossings throughout the system to enhance the safety of motorists and passengers alike. Additionally, Metro-North will receive a \$675,000 grant from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation for the improvement of Grand Central Terminal's terrazzo floors.

President Rinaldi outlined several 2025 State of the State proposals relating to the Hudson Line made by Governor Hochul, including reducing trip time for the Super-Express train to under 90 minutes from Poughkeepsie to Grand Central Terminal, track interlocking and signal enhancements, yard capacity improvements, signal redesign near Yonkers, and second track on Amtrak Connection at Spuyten Duyvil.

President Rinaldi discussed the analysis of future projects as part of the MTA's upcoming Capital Program, including adding a third track to the Harlem Line, connecting Hudson Line service to Penn Station, and exploring enhanced connectivity for West of Hudson service.

In response to a question from Board Member Garodnick regarding the workings of the trespasser detection system in Peekskill, Executive Vice President Vonashek explained that a

geofence is placed around the crossing and the system detects anything that goes over the crossing. Vice President Prettyman stated that the video-based system allows for review to determine the type of trespassing occurrence, and then decide the appropriate or necessary intervention at that particular location, such as signage or outreach to the community or businesses nearby.

In response to a further question from Board Member Garodnick regarding whether the geofence is time-limited, Executive Vice President Vonashek stated that the geofence is there continuously and improves upon the existing camera system because it pinpoints when someone breaks the geofence, rather than Metro-North having to review all footage or know the date and time of an occurrence. President Rinaldi noted that the Peekskill location is particularly heavily used so there has been special focus on the crossing for safety.

In response to a question from Board Member Valdivia regarding why the MDBF remains high despite trains breaking down in November, Executive Vice President Vonashek stated that weather was good in November and the team has been doing a good job of identifying any issues before the equipment leaves the yard.

The complete presentation is filed with the records of this meeting. The video recording of the meeting produced by the MTA and maintained in the MTA records contains a complete record of President Rinaldi's remarks.

#### **4. LIRR PRESIDENT'S REPORT:**

LIRR President Rob Free ("President Free") provided an update for 2024 ridership on the LIRR. There was an increase of 15.7% in 2024 compared to 2023 for a total of 75.5 million customers. This is 82.9% compared to 2019 pre-COVID levels. The 2024 level of ridership progressively increased each month and reached levels closer to 90% at the end of the year. Non-commutation ridership increased by 19.7% over 2023, and monthly ticket ridership increased by 23.4% over 2023.

President Free provided an update for LIRR's on-time performance ("OTP"). The total OTP for 2024 was 95.65%. The OTP has been increasing, even while providing more service, with 13,000 more trains than in 2023.

President Free stated that one of the main goals when he became the President of LIRR was to improve the customer experience at the LIRR. He discussed the positive results of the most recent Customer Satisfaction Surveys. Overall station satisfaction increased, along with seat availability and transfer satisfaction at Jamaica Station.

President Free reported on the Federal Railroad Administration's grant awarded to the New York State Department of Transportation to eliminate the grade crossings at Ocean Avenue and Pond Road in Ronkonkoma.

President Free announced the inaugural LIRR Safety Excellence Awards on January 9 to recognize employees whose proactive and sustained efforts to improve safety for the workforce and riders were deemed outstanding. President Free congratulated awardees Steve Prokopiou of Maintenance of Equipment, Steve Trancheff of Engineering, Chris Smith of Transportation and the team consisting of Jennifer Uihlein, Nicole Jones, Nadia Pinheiro, Rosina Morales and Christine Cardillo of the Stations Department. In addition, the Stations Department was honored with the separate and first-ever President's Safety Excellence Award, which recognizes an operating department that has demonstrated continuous improvement in overall safety performance and innovation.

President Free thanked the employees for their hard work and response to the recent extreme cold weather and snow events in the last two weeks.

In response to a question from Board Member Valdivia regarding the customer satisfaction result survey for Atlantic Terminal and how it can be increased, President Free stated that the Capital Program identifies a new fleet to replace the aging M3s which will improve fleet reliability. Additionally, the Capital Program's planned infrastructure improvements will improve the customer experience.

In response to a question from Board Member Bringmann regarding the current policy for waiting rooms during extreme cold weather, President Free stated that the waiting rooms have been open 24/7, although it leaves us vulnerable to vandalism, such as the recent event with the bathrooms in Laurelton. Board Member Bringmann stated that there used to be email communications notifying the public of the waiting room status. President Free stated that he will look into the communications.

Board Member Garodnick asked about the impact of the LIRR's 13,000 additional trains that President Free mentioned in his remarks and whether the expectations for 2025 is for a similar increase in trains. President Free stated that the additional trains were due to the operation of Grand Central Madison, and similar increases are not anticipated in the future. President Free stated that for 2025 ridership trends, some lines have more than adequate service and they are seeing increased ridership. Board Member Bringmann commended LIRR for the increased service on the Ronkonkoma Branch, with half-hourly service.

The complete presentation is filed with the records of this meeting. The video recording of the meeting produced by the MTA and maintained in the MTA records contains a complete record of President Free's remarks.

## **5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Committee approved the minutes of the December 16, 2024 Joint LIRR/Metro-North Committee Meeting.

## **6. METRO-NORTH AND LIRR 2025 WORK PLANS:**

President Rinaldi stated that the only change in the Work Plans for both railroads in December was to move approval for the following year's Work Plans to the end of the year from the beginning of the next year.

There were no changes for January to the LIRR or Metro-North Work Plans. The 2025 Metro-North and LIRR Work Plans are filed with the records of this meeting.

## **7. OPERATING REPORTS:**

Metro-North Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer Justin Vonashek ("Executive Vice President Vonashek") presented the service and performance results for December 2024 for Metro-North.

LIRR Senior Vice President of Operations Tom Kost ("Senior Vice President Kost") presented the service and performance results for December 2024 and upcoming work that will impact service in February for LIRR.

The complete LIRR and Metro-North operating reports are filed with the records of this meeting. The video recording of the meeting produced by the MTA and maintained in the MTA records contains a complete record of the presentations.

## **8. SAFETY REPORTS:**

Metro-North Vice President of System Safety Shelley Prettyman ("Vice President Prettyman") presented the customer and employee injury rate through November 2024, along with the year-end injury rates which decreased 31.5% and 17%, respectively, compared to the prior year for Metro-North.

LIRR Vice President of Corporate Safety Lori Ebbighausen ("Vice President Ebbighausen") presented the customer and employee injury rate through November 2024 for LIRR with decreases in those rates compared to the prior twelve months.

The full LIRR and Metro-North safety reports are filed with the records of this meeting. The video recording of the meeting produced by the MTA and maintained in the MTA records contains a complete record of the presentations.

## **9. MTAPD REPORT:**

MTAPD Chief of Operations Thomas J. Taffe ("Chief Taffe") presented the crime and policing report for December 2024. Chief Taffe reported a decrease in major crime of 21%

compared to the same period last year. Police have continued train patrols to support train conductors with fare evasion.

In response to a question from Board Member Chu regarding the September 2024 spike in summonses and the outlook for 2025, Chief Taffe stated that the September 2024 spike was a result of the response to calls from conductors, and the subsequent reductions were likely the result of those enforcement efforts. Board Member Bringmann commented that compliance might be the result of ad campaigns and he thanked the officers for their work.

Board Member Chu thanked the police and stated that fare evasion is the number one issue that everyone is concerned about and he appreciates the continued efforts of the police.

The full MTAPD report is filed with the records of this meeting. The video recording of the meeting produced by the MTA and maintained in the MTA records contains a complete record of Chief Taffe's presentation.

#### **10. INFORMATION ITEMS:**

President Rinaldi noted the following Metro-North information item: (i) Lease agreement with Carlo Innovation Inc. for retail food service at the Spring Valley Station Building.

President Free noted the following LIRR information item: (i) Winter Trackwork Programs.

The details of the information items are contained in reports filed with the records of this meeting.

#### **11. FINANCE:**

The finance reports for both railroads are contained in the meeting material.

#### **12. PROCUREMENTS:**

There were no action items or procurements for LIRR or Metro-North.

#### **13. ADJOURNMENT:**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Haley Stein", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Haley Stein  
Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary  
The Long Island Rail Road Company  
Acting Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary  
Metro-North Commuter Railroad Company