



**NORTHERN INDIANA COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
February 27, 2019
Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District
33 East U.S. Highway 12
Chesterton, IN 46304-3514
Public Session – 10:30 a.m. (CST)**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Michael Repay
Mark Catanzarite
Richard Mrozinski, Jr.

Dan Whitten
Andrew Kostielney
Jim Biggs

Christine Cid
David Prancus
Mark Yagelski

OTHERS PRESENT:

Greg Price-Passenger
George Rogge-MCC MBA
Steven Lyons-Passenger
Roy G. Benedict-Passenger

Gerald Williamson-Passenger
Alan Harris-MCC MBA
Tim Zorn-Post Tribune

STAFF PRESENT:

Michael Noland
Chuck Lukmann, Esq.
Christine Dearing
Justice Anderson
Nicole Barker

Holly Taylor
Brianna Anderson
Chris Beck
Michael Rowe
Christine Dearing

Vic Babin
Jessie Watts, Jr.
Bjarne Henderson
William O'Dea

CALL TO ORDER

Michael Repay called the meeting to order.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

METRA TRACKAGE RIGHTS AGREEMENT (TRA) AND PURCHASE OF SERVICE AGREEMENT (PSA)

Michael Noland, NICTD President, introduced the Metra Trackage Rights Agreement (TRA) and Purchase of Service Agreement (PSA). Mr. Noland stated the importance of both agreements to the ongoing functionality of NICTD's operations and the need to add more trains as part of the West Lake Corridor and Double Track Northwest Indiana projects. Mr. Noland outlined the changes made to the Metra Trackage Rights Agreement (TRA) and Purchase of Service Agreement (PSA) as compared to previous versions.

Mr. Noland and NICTD staff requested the Board grant approval for Resolution 19-02 Authorizing the Execution of the Metra Trackage Rights Agreement (TRA) and Purchase of Service Agreement (PSA). Upon a motion by Dan Whitten, seconded by Christine Cid, the board unanimously approved Resolution 19-02.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Noland briefly discussed the polar vortex that took place earlier this month.

Mr. Noland explained that the National Weather Service issued a Winter Storm Warning and forecasted record-breaking sub-zero temperatures for Northwest Indiana and the Chicagoland area beginning January 30 spanning multiple days. In the interest of safety, the South Shore Line planned to run a modified schedule on Wednesday, January 30th and Thursday, January 31st. Per the plan, passengers traveling from South Bend would have been bussed from South Bend to Michigan City from Tuesday, January 29, through the morning of Friday, January 31. Given the weather conditions, NICTD took extra precautions knowing there would likely be operating challenges due to the extreme cold.

Crews ran test train throughout the day and night on Tuesday, January 29 and into the early morning on Wednesday, January 31 to assess whether rail lines were safe and operational. Unfortunately, the record-breaking temperatures caused problems ranging from downed electrical lines on South Shore Line's tracks to damage on Metra Electric District tracks that the South Shore Line runs on in Illinois. NICTD made the determination that the safest option would be to cancel service. Metra also cancelled their service. Both Metra and South Shore Line crews worked around the clock to fix the issues in an expedited fashion. Unfortunately, while NICTD forces were able to stabilize our system by Thursday, February 1, Metra had a freight line derailment and also experienced extended issues delaying repairs on their line. NICTD loaned equipment to Metra and offered labor assistance as well. Both NICTD and Metra were back in service on Sunday, February 3.

South Shore Line recognizes the strain and inconvenience that suspended services have on commuters. Therefore, as a way to say thank our passengers, South Shore Line offered a 10% discount on monthly pass purchases for the month of March..

Vic Babin, Chief Engineering Officer, briefly explained what happened with NICTD's overhead wire damage.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Catanzarite stated that Indiana officially has its first national park with the renaming of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore to Indiana Dunes National Park per the recently passed omnibus bill in Congress. The Indiana Dunes received 3.6 million visitors last year, and combined with the Indiana Dunes State Park, the destination ranks just below Yellowstone National Park with visitors. This is anticipated to bring more tourism to the park.

Mr. Noland added that he believes we are the only commuter trail line to provide transportation directly to a National Park. NICTD hopes to see some additional ridership due to this change as well.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting is scheduled for March 22, 2019. Mr. Yagelski made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Catanzarite. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark Yagelski, Board Secretary