



**NORTHERN INDIANA  
COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT**

33 E. U.S. HIGHWAY 12 • CHESTERTON, IN 46302-3514

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**NORTHERN INDIANA COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT  
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**

**December 17, 2015**

**Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District**

**33 East U.S. Highway 12**

**Chesterton, IN 46304-3514**

**Public Session – 11:00 a.m. (CST)**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

John Evans  
Mark Catanzarite  
Andrew Kostielney  
David Pranckus

David Decker  
Michael Repay  
Mark Yagelski

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Gerald Williamson – Passenger

Paul Willer – Passenger

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Michael Noland  
Chuck Lukmann, Esq.  
Laura Harrington  
Jessie Watts

John Parsons  
Boris Matakovic  
Lisa J. Johnson  
Rich Garcia

Keith Casey  
Anthony Siegmund  
Joe Crnkovich

**CALL TO ORDER**

Board Chairman, Mr. Evans, called the meeting to order and asked that those present stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

**Federal Update.** Mr. Noland stated that we now have a Federal Transportation Bill. After five years with no increase to the Federal Transportation Plan, and with thirty continuing resolutions over that period of time, we now have a five year bill. Our “state of good repair” funds, (approx. \$15,000,000) to keep the railroad in shape, is going to go up about 15.7%. After

we add our local match to that program, it will mean another approximately \$3,000,000 a year to add to our capital program. We will describe in our 2016 Business Plan what we plan to do with those funds. The maintenance funds are a very small increase. The Transit Benefit Program will not be tied to the same amount that employers can provide for those who drive – the auto discount. Our riders who purchase their train tickets through a transit benefit program can now shield from taxation an additional \$120 per month which will result in direct savings to our riders. We are hoping it will be a permanent fix.

Mr. Repay asked whether there is any media splash on this topic. How many riders do we currently have a month? Mr. Parsons replied that it would only be for monthly riders, and only those who take advantage of the transit benefit. We are trying to calculate that at this time. This is what is being considered by the house at this time. This has not passed yet. Mr. Evans asked why a rider would not qualify. Mr. Casey replied that it is offered through your employer. Mr. Evans asked if we would be marketing this as well. Mr. Parsons assured him we will.

**Regional Cities Update – Double Track Initiative.** Mr. Noland stated that the Regional Cities competition and our double tracking program with the Northwest RDA was not selected. Congratulations, however, to the Northern RDA as one of the three RDAs selected to receive a \$42,000,000 grant. The hook there is that the legislation called for two grants at \$84,000,000, and it was going to be funded by the tax amnesty program. The tax amnesty program has generated higher revenue than they forecasted. Mr. Noland stated they are going to need legislative change that we will be working on in this upcoming session. The three awards are not prioritized. The Northern RDA will help fund preliminary engineering for the airport to move us to the west side; help us complete our wire project to South Bend; and the double-tracking project has received input and support by those on the committee.

If we can identify local share, we can get the FTA to fund 50% of that project. We could potentially start construction in three years. There will be significant ridership increases from double tracking.

**RESOLUTION 15.08 – A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE NORTHERN INDIANA COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT AUTHORIZING TO PROVIDE FOR THE ADOPTION OF PROTOTYPE PLAN DOCUMENTS AND/OR UPDATE OF THE PLAN FOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CHANGES OF THE NICTD SUPPLEMENTAL PENSION PLAN AND TRUST AND THE NICTD SUPPLEMENTAL PENSION PLAN AND TRUST FOR UNION EMPLOYEES.**

Mr. Noland stated that our pension plans need to be updated to meet IRS regulations. We have made several changes over the years, and the IRS requires that you periodically update your pension plan.

Mr. Evans asked if anyone has any questions regarding the resolution. Mr. Repay motioned to approve the resolution. The motion was seconded by Mr. Yagelski. The motion was unanimously approved.

**AECOM Draft Environmental Impact Statement Budget Amendment.**

Mr. Noland stated that there were change orders to AECOM. First, with respect to the West Lake Draft Environmental Impact Study, we have had several meetings with the public and have received positive suggestions that we need to study. Hammond suggested a complete reroute. These additional studies cost additional funds to complete. Mr. Noland requested that the Board grant authority for NICTD to enter into a change order with AECOM. Mr. Repay asked if the studies had already been completed. Mr. Noland replied that there is additional work needed to complete the DEIS. The technical reports must be completed with developing a preferred alternative.

Mr. Evans asked if anyone would make a motion. Mr. Repay motioned to approve the resolution. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kostielney. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Interagency Agreement with Metra to Jointly Fund and Conduct an Analysis of the Metra Electric Corridor to Enhance Capacity.** With respect to West Lake, we have studied the Metra Electric extensively because we will be using the Metra line. AECOM spent a significant level of effort and time studying and understanding the Metra line, including RTC modeling. The model showed and Metra indicated that West Lake can operate. We need AECOM to study the railroad – with all the variables – what is the best way to maximize the railroad.

Mr. Noland requested the Board to grant him the authority to enter into an agreement with Metra to do a change order to AECOM's contract – which we would split with Metra 50% - 50% - to study the possible improvements on the Metra Electric District.

Mr. Yagelski questioned Metra's benefit of teaming up with us now? Mr. Noland stated he believed it had to do with Metra's leadership (Dan Orseno), Norm Carlson (Metra board member), the Metra Electric needs upgrading – all making the partnership with NICTD a great start. Mr. Yagelski inquired whether Mr. Noland's connection to Metra assisted with the new proposed partnership. Mr. Noland replied in the affirmative. Mr. Evans attested to the fact of a definite change of attitude of working with Metra – all towards a cooperative effort.

Mr. Noland introduced Earl Wacker of AECOM who will work with both Metra and NICTD.

Mr. Evans asked if anyone has any questions regarding the resolution. Mr. Yagelski motioned to accept the joint funding with Metra and to enter into a contract with Metra for the future of this project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Repay. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **RIDERSHIP & PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Mr. Parsons stated that NICTD is still positive for the year in terms of ridership. November was a rough month – primarily in off peak and weekend ridership. Low gas prices and better weekend weather lowered ridership. The protests in Chicago lowered ridership numbers as well. Metra has also had lower ridership numbers. Mr. Parsons stated that on time performance for peak trains was better than last year at 91%. Weekday off-peak has been effected by maintenance and is still up at 86% on time. For the year, we ran almost 12,000 trains with over 10,000 trains being on time. Mr. Parsons explained that there would be an extra train on the Saturday before Christmas, with a Christmas Eve early quit train, along with a New Year's Eve early quit train. Both Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve Day will be running the weekday schedule.

## **OPERATIONS REPORT**

Mr. O'Dea discussed how the weather affected the ridership. He also stated that 2016 will include several initiatives such as Bikes on Trains, expansion of some facilities, completing the project at the east end of 11<sup>th</sup> Street, and replacement of the universal crossovers at three critical locations.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Matakovic stated that we now offer free Wifi at the Millennium Station, along with still going forward with Wifi on the trains. Mr. Yagelski inquired as to whether there has been any problem with the number of people using the Wifi. Mr. Matakovic stated the performance in testing has been good.

Mr. Noland stated that he would like the Board to consider a fare increase this year that would go into the capital farebox – possible for two years in a row. This would generate, at

2.5%, generate about \$500,000 each 2.5% increment. This would allow NICTD to work on its infrastructure.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Evans and the Board wish everyone a Merry Christmas. Mr. Evans called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Repay made the motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Yagelski. It was so moved. The next NICTD Board Meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,



Dave Decker, Board Secretary

LJJ 12/17/15

