

Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
Joint Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad Committees  
Monday, March 24, 2025  
9:00 a.m.

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

The following Committee Members were present:

Hon. Blanca López, Co-Chair  
Hon. Samuel Chu  
Hon. Gerard Bringmann  
Hon. Norman Brown  
Hon. Randolph Glucksman  
Hon. Vincent Tessitore, Jr.  
Hon. Midori Valdivia  
Hon. Neal Zuckerman

The following Committee Members were not present:

Hon. Marc Herbst, Co-Chair  
Hon. Michael Fleischer  
Hon. Daniel Garodnick  
Hon. David Mack  
Hon. Lisa Sorin

**Representing Metro-North Railroad:**

Justin Vonashek – Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer  
Brian O'Donnell – Acting Vice President, System Safety  
Evan Zucarelli – Acting Senior Vice President, Operations  
Haley Stein – Acting Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary

**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  
Hector Garcia – Chief of Staff  
Theresa Dorsey – Chief Stations Officer  
Donald Olson – Principal Engineer Structures

**Representing MTA Police Department:**

Thomas J. Taffe – Chief of Operations

**Also present:**

Jessica Cooke – Agency Deputy Chief Equal Opportunity Officer

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:**

Board Member Zuckerman called the joint meeting to order.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

The following public speakers commented:

Anthony Simon, SMART General Chair  
Christopher D. Greif  
Andy Pollack\*, Passengers United  
Jason Anthony, LIRR ADA Task Force  
Murray Bodin\*, Concerned Grandparents  
Iris Kelley  
Brian Fritsch, PCAC Associate Director  
Aleta Dupree, Team Folds

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/february-2025>

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Approval of the minutes of the February 24, 2025 Joint LIRR/Metro-North Committee Meeting was postponed due to the lack of a quorum.

**4. METRO-NORTH AND LIRR 2025 WORK PLANS:**

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

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\* Appeared via video

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

LIRR President Rob Free (“President Free”) provided LIRR ridership and performance highlights for the month of February, which has seen consistent ridership growth with an increase of 6.3% compared to February 2024 and 84.9% of February 2019 ridership. LIRR had an on-time performance (“OTP”) of 96.41% for February 2025, which is the best February in recorded history.

President Free spoke of the March 18 celebration of National Transit Employee Appreciation Day where he worked as a track member under the supervision of Track Foreman Joe Famulari and attended an event at Penn Station with the Chair and all transit agency presidents in recognition of all employee’s efforts. President Free was accompanied by Joe and Chief Train Dispatcher Mark Allen at the event. President Free thanked all the employees of the LIRR for the work they perform every day.

President Free acknowledged and thanked two LIRR Transportation Managers, Stephen Light and John Petrone for their heroic efforts in aiding an unresponsive passenger at Grand Central Madison on January 30. They were also recently honored as ABC7 Heroes of the Week. President Free acknowledged the Fire Brigade’s assistance in the incident.

President Free announced the completion of the Mastic-Shirley Station renewal project, which included a new sheltered plaza, new LED lighting, railings, signage, platform and ADA ramp repairs, digital information screen, and upgraded security and communication system. President Free stated the work was performed by LIRR in-house workforce and emphasized the need for a fully funded Capital Program. President Free thanked labor partner Anthony Simon, Suffolk County, the Town of Brookhaven, local civic leaders, and MTA Construction and Development.

President Free shared the excitement of the Big East Tournament featuring St. John’s Red Storm college basketball team. Celebrations were ongoing throughout the week at Penn Station, including a pep rally, music, speeches, and performances by Big East school bands.

President Free re-emphasized the need for a fully funded Capital Program by highlighting the major renovation work performed over the past few years and the future projects that are critical to the operations of the LIRR. This work includes switch and capacity upgrades at Queens Interlocking, Jamaica Capacity Improvements, signal renewals from Huntington to Smithtown, and from Babylon to Patchogue, upgrades to Wreck Lead Bridge between Long Beach and Island Park, and six substation renewals.

President Free concluded his remarks by acknowledging and congratulating Board Member Vincent Tessitore on his retirement. President Free noted that Board Member Tessitore is most proud of the revised training program for Conductors at the LIRR. President Free also highlighted Board Member Tessitore’s respect for the craft of Conductor. President Free thanked Board Member Tessitore for all he has given to the LIRR.

Co-chair López congratulated Board Member Tessitore.

Board Member Zuckerman expressed appreciation and admiration for Board Member Tessitore's ability to advocate for the members of his union but also maintaining a business savvy on behalf of the organization. Board Member Zuckerman stated that Board Member Tessitore is irreplaceable.

Board Member Glucksman wished Board Member Tessitore a happy and healthy retirement.

Board Member Valdivia stated that she met Board Member Tessitore while working as Chief of Staff at the MTA and highlighted Board Member Tessitore's passion, dedication, and commitment to his role and willingness to voice the tough things. Board Member Valdivia thanked Board Member Tessitore for keeping the focus on the workers who keep New York moving.

Board Member Chu lauded Board Member Tessitore's professionalism and dedication to the frontlines of service. Board Member Chu stated that he will be sorely missed.

Board Member Brown stated that he will miss Board Member Tessitore and highlighted Board Member Tessitore's advocacy for the workforce, which includes both the riders and members of his union.

Board Member Tessitore thanked everyone and Anthony Simon for starting the meeting and stated that as a certified conductor, he was lucky to be able to advocate for the 1400 conductors on the LIRR as well as every other employee or craft in the industry. Board Member Tessitore thanked Board Member Brown for his friendship.

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.

## **6. METRO-NORTH PRESIDENT'S REPORT:**

Metro-North Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer Justin Vonashek ("Executive Vice President Vonashek") presented the President's Report on behalf of President Catherine Rinaldi.

Executive Vice President Vonashek provided the latest ridership trends for February, including on-time performance ("OTP") of 98.5%, 100% OTP on March 9, 2.2% increase in ridership compared to February 2024, and 6.5% increase in weekday ridership compared to February 2024.

Executive Vice President Vonashek highlighted schedule changes set to begin March 30, which are necessary to support critical infrastructure improvements and maintenance work. Executive Vice President Vonashek noted that train run times have significantly improved, which will be further expanded by the addition of “Super Express” trains on the Hudson Line.

Executive Vice President Vonashek provided an update on Hudson Line resiliency where Chair Lieber and the Construction and Development team attended a tour on March 14 to review key infrastructure projects that are part of the 2025-2029 Capital Program.

Executive Vice President Vonashek announced the inaugural run of Locomotive No. 222 on February 28, the latest addition to the Heritage Locomotive Series.

Executive Vice President Vonashek highlighted the celebration of National Transit Employee Appreciation Day on March 18, where he worked alongside fellow employees as an usher, ticket seller, and making announcements as a customer service representative. Executive Vice President Vonashek extended his heartfelt gratitude to all the Metro-North employees for all they do every day.

Executive Vice President Vonashek reported on the second Confidential Close Call Reporting (C<sup>3</sup>RS) Symposium hosted by Metro-North on March 12-13 at Grand Central Terminal.

Executive Vice President Vonashek acknowledged the contributions of women at Metro-North in celebration of Women’s History Month.

Executive Vice President Vonashek introduced Acting Senior Vice President of Operations, Evan Zucarelli and Acting Vice President of System Safety, Brian O’Donnell.

Executive Vice President Vonashek provided an overview of his background as he looks forward to taking the leadership role as President of Metro-North. Executive Vice President Vonashek congratulated President Catherine Rinaldi and Board Member Tessitore for their retirement.

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 Executive Vice President Vonashek’s remarks.

## **7. OPERATING REPORTS:**

LIRR Senior Vice President of Operations Tom Kost (“Senior Vice President Kost”) congratulated Board Member Tessitore and presented the service and performance results for February 2025 and upcoming work that will impact service in April for LIRR.

Metro-North Acting Senior Vice President of Operations, Evan Zucarelli (“Senior Vice President Zucarelli”) congratulated Board Member Tessitore and presented the service and performance results for February 2025 and upcoming work that will impact service in April for LIRR.

Board Member Brown acknowledged and congratulated Metro-North for the recent increases in ridership and on-time performance, which is exceptionally high.

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:**

LIRR Vice President of Corporate Safety Lori Ebbighausen (“Vice President Ebbighausen”) acknowledged Corporate Safety Fire Marshal and Emergency Management teams led by Deputy Chief Safety Officer Lee Sorensen, Chief Fire Marshal Dan Gallagher, and Director of Emergency Management Patrick Beckley for their support in Suffolk County’s emergency response to the wildfires in eastern Long Island. Vice President Ebbighausen invited everyone to the first quarter customer safety event at Grand Central Madison. Vice President Ebbighausen congratulated Board Member Tessitore on his retirement.

Metro-North Acting Vice President of System Safety Brian O’Donnell (“Vice President O’Donnell”) presented the customer and employee injury rate through February 2025, both of which decreased compared to the prior year for Metro-North.

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 February 2025 for both railroads, which remains low with 12 reported incidents, which is a 52% decrease compared to the same period last year. Police issued over 480 criminal summonses with over half related to fare evasion.

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. SPECIAL PRESENTATION – STATION SPRUCE UP:**

Chief Stations Officer Theresa Dorsey provided an overview and update on the Station Spruce Up Program.

Deputy Chief Engineer Donald Olson presented the efforts of various teams to ensure the success of the Spruce Up program through collaboration and provided highlights from some of the completed stations.

Board Member Bringmann commented that the Sayville Station stairway leading up to the overpass needs a lot of work. Deputy Chief Engineer Olson advised that there are currently a crew on site assessing the staircase.

The details of the special presentation is contained in reports filed with the records of this meeting.

## **11. INFORMATION ITEMS:**

President Free noted the following LIRR information items: (i) Station Spruce Up Presentation; (ii) Annual Elevator & Escalator Report; (iii) Spring Trackwork Programs; and (iv) Diversity-EEO Report - 4th Quarter 2024.

Executive Vice President Vonashek noted the following Metro-North information items: (i) Annual Elevator & Escalator Report; (ii) Spring Trackwork Programs; (iii) Diversity-EEO Report - 4th Quarter 2024; and (iv) License with Monsey Developers and Builders Inc. for parking and land along Commerce Street in Spring Valley, NY.

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

## **12. FINANCE:**

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

## **13. PROCUREMENTS:**

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

## **14. 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 General Counsel & Secretary*  
Metro-North Commuter Railroad Company