

Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Joint Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad Committees
Monday, July 28, 2025
9:30 a.m.

Meeting held at
2 Broadway – 20th Floor
New York, New York 10004

The following Committee Members were present:

Hon. Marc Herbst, Co-Chair
Hon. Samuel Chu
Hon. Gerard Bringmann
Hon. Michael Fleischer
Hon. Daniel Garodnick
Hon. Randolph Glucksman
Hon. Christopher Leathers
Hon. David Mack
Hon. Melva M. Miller
Hon. James O'Donnell
Hon. Midori Valdivia
Hon. Edward Valente
Hon. Neal Zuckerman

The following Committee Members were not present:

Hon. Blanca López, Co-Chair
Hon. Lisa Sorin

Representing Metro-North Railroad:

Justin Vonashek – Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer
Brian Pina – Vice President, System Safety
Joseph Lagana – Senior Vice President, Operations
Eamonn Foley – Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary

Representing Long Island Rail Road:

Robert Free – President
Paul Dietlin – Senior Vice President, Operations
Chris Gough – Vice President, Corporate Safety
Haley Stein – Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary
Hector Garcia – Chief of Staff

Representing MTA Police Department:

Thomas J. Taffe – Chief of Police

Also present:

John McCarthy – MTA Chief of Policy and External Relations

David Florio – MTA 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 Herbst called the joint meeting to order.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

The following public speakers commented:

Jason Anthony, LIRR ADA Task Force

Christopher D. Greif

Charlton D’Souza*, Passengers United President

Iris Kelley

Murray Bodin*

Evan Yankey, Advocacy Director, Brooklyn Center for the Independence of the Disabled

Lisa Daglian, PCAC Executive Director

Omar Vera

Aleta Dupree*, Team Folds

* Appeared by audio/video

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/july-2025>

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Committee approved the minutes of the June 23, 2025 Joint LIRR/Metro-North Committee Meeting.

4. METRO-NORTH AND LIRR 2025 WORK PLANS:

Metro-North President Justin Vonashek (“President Vonashek”) noted that Metro-North Work Plans will no longer include Grand Central Retail Development, which will be provided in

a separate format moving forward. There were no changes to the LIRR Work Plans. The 2025 Metro-North and LIRR Work Plans are filed with the records of this meeting.

5. METRO-NORTH PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Metro-North President Justin Vonashek ("President Vonashek") began by announcing the appointment of Joseph Lagana as the new Senior Vice President of Operations and thanked Evan Zuccarelli for his role as acting Senior Vice President of Operations for the past three months. President Vonashek announced the appointment of Eamonn Foley as Metro-North General Counsel.

President Vonashek stated that performance remains strong at above 97% in June with year-to-date performance at 98.2%. President Vonashek commended Metro-North employees for making this possible. Average weekday ridership is over 238,000. Metro-North set two new ridership records with 258,760 weekday riders on June 18 and 128,084 weekend riders on June 29. Customer satisfaction climbed 4% to 89% overall satisfaction.

President Vonashek announced the return of "Summer Saturdays" program on Metro-North, which rewards monthly ticket riders with up to two additional riders for \$1.00 each.

President Vonashek stated that Metro-North has been recognized by federal and multiple industry associations regarding safety and security. Metro-North received the Transportation Security Administration's Gold Standard Award, Security Department. Metro-North received the American Public Transportation Association Gold Award for Commuter Rail Emergency Management. Both the International Association of Public Transport (UITP) and the Conference for Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) recognized Metro-North for its virtual reality training program for employees.

President Vonashek shared ways that Metro-North reduced costs and improved efficiencies in year three of the MTA's Operating Efficiencies Initiative. Metro-North has not just cut the budget but thought about how to do things differently. Metro-North reduced costs of \$10M in 2023, \$47M in 2024, and is on track to save \$67M in 2025. These savings are being driven by improved overtime oversight, more disciplined contract management, optimized train and crew scheduling, targeted energy efficiency initiatives, the rollout of standard work, and increased revenue from Grand Central Terminal events.

In response to a question from Board Member Valdivia regarding how these cost savings translates into benefits for riders, President Vonashek stated that they have added capacity on trains where there is the perception of crowding.

In response to a further question from Board Member Valdivia regarding whether the fleet design for new fleets has taken the middle seat into consideration, President Vonashek stated that ridership levels have risen and there has been more use of the middle seats as was seen pre-pandemic.

Board Member Bringmann noted that New Jersey Transit has two level trains that have two seaters on both sides.

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 Vonashek's remarks.

6. LIRR PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

LIRR President Rob Free ("President Free") reported that ridership remains strong. June saw 6.9M riders, which is a 6.7% increase over the same time last year and represents 89% of June 2019 ridership. Year-to-date ridership is 9.3% higher than the same time period in 2024.

President Free noted multiple record-breaking ridership numbers, including a new one-day post-COVID record of 298,419 riders on July 23. President Free stated that these record-breaking numbers reflect increased customer satisfaction ratings and record-breaking reliability and performance.

President Free stated that on-time performance ("OTP") for June was 95.9% and YTD OTP was 96.5%.

President Free stated that the customer injury rate in May 2025 fell by 29% and employee injury rate fell by 10% as compared to May last year.

President Free provided an update on LIRR's cost reduction efforts. LIRR is on track to deliver \$71M in recurring savings this year, which are achieved without any service cuts. The cost reductions reflect improved operational efficiencies over a wide range of areas. For example, as a result of the Maintenance and Equipment team's review and analysis of periodic inspections, they were able to reduce the time spent on these inspections by 25% per car per year, resulting in \$2.8M in annual savings. LIRR also combined two inspection programs, the M7 Air Brake inspections and the Truck Programs, so that the work is done simultaneously, which has resulted in a savings of \$4.4M annually. Finally, LIRR recalibrated maintenance cycles of support equipment with original equipment manufacturer guidelines and realized \$2.1M in annual savings. President Free emphasized that the savings are not one-time cuts but rather building smarter, more sustainable practices into daily operations.

President Free stated that Long Island will host the 2025 Ryder Cup at Bethpage Black from September 23 to September 28. Additional service will be provided for this event.

President Free announced that LIRR Office of Security was the recipient of the American Public Transportation Association Gold Award for Rail Security. In addition, the Stations Department received the Merit Award for enhanced safety protocols.

President Free concluded his remarks by congratulating Paul Dietlin, appointed to Senior Vice President of Operations, and Chris Gough, appointed to Vice President of Corporate Safety, on their new positions.

In response to a question from Board Member Miller regarding capacity as related to increased ridership levels, President Free stated that daily ridership is reviewed and there is still plenty of capacity on the trains for any increase in ridership.

In response to a question from Board Member Garodnick regarding on-time performance peaking in the month of April, President Free stated that spring or fall weather is generally ideal months for performance due to favorable weather.

Board Member Bringmann stated that LIRR has two by two seating on the C3 cars.

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.

7. OPERATING, SAFETY, AND MTAPD REPORTS:

Co-Chair Herbst stated that the Operating, Safety and Police reports are contained in the book.

The complete LIRR and Metro-North Operation, Safety, and MTAPD 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. METRO-NORTH ACTION ITEM:

Metro-North Executive Director of Management and Budget Steve Weiss presented an action item seeking the Board's adoption of a resolution authorizing the implementation of the fare increases proposed and approved by the Connecticut Department of Transportation ("CTDOT"). The fare increases impact the fares for travel to and from Connecticut stations on Metro-North's New Haven Line. The increase is initiated by the State of Connecticut and MTA is required to implement it. The fares will be increased by 5% effective September 1, 2025, and an additional 5% by July 1, 2026, with CTDOT reserving the ability to withdraw the July 2026 increase should there be intervening changes to CTDOT's budget. CTDOT advertised the proposed increases, solicited public comments, and held in-person and virtual public hearings between June 23 and July 1, 2025. CTDOT provided Metro-North with a summary of comments received during the public outreach and conducted and published an equity analysis, which concluded that the proposed fare changes would not have a disparate impact or disproportionate burden on minority or low-income populations. Fare tables for the 2025 increase are attached to the resolution contained in the staff summary. Fare tables for the 2026 increase will be developed and provided to the Board prior to implementation. Metro-North will also implement CTDOT's Connecticut

Branch Line fare increases, which are determined solely by CTDOT. UniTicket prices will not be affected. UniRail fares will be increased based on CTDOT's determination of fares. It is estimated that the proposed fare increases effective in 2025 and 2026 will increase New Haven Line net revenue by approximately \$1.4 million in 2025, \$16.1 in 2026, and \$20.5 in 2027.

In response to a question from Board Member Zuckerman regarding whether this means a 10% increase within a 9-month period and how customers perceive who is raising the fares, President Vonashek stated that Connecticut had four public hearings, so Connecticut customers understand that fare increase is due to Connecticut budget. Board Member Zuckerman stated that the MTA has strived to have predictable and low fare increases and expressed concern that the MTA will be tainted by Connecticut's double-digit increase within a 12-month period during an inflationary period, even though the MTA Board may not have any recourse. Mr. Weiss stated that the fares are set and approved by Connecticut, and the increase was originally scheduled for July 1 but was moved to September 1.

In response to a question from Board Member Valdivia regarding the timing of the fare increase proposal and how much notice the public had been provided for a September fare increase, Mr. Weiss stated that Connecticut announced public fare hearings in early June and held public hearings in the last week in June.

In response to a question from Board Member Miller regarding whether an analysis was made to determine the effect of cross-border ridership and whether the MTA will be doing anything to support impacted riders, Mr. Weiss stated that Connecticut performed an equity analysis for their ridership and under the ARSA agreement, and Connecticut can set the fares for the trips to and from Connecticut stations. Mr. Weiss stated that whenever fares are increased on the New Haven Line an analysis is done to ensure that the fares from the two stations on the New York side are no higher than fares on the Connecticut side. Mr. Weiss stated that there is always some reduction in ridership after a fare increase but they are usually small.

Board Member Chu suggested moving the action request to the full board and the motion was seconded.

In response to a question from Board Member Zuckerman regarding the possibility of a rejection of the proposal and the consequences, Metro-North General Counsel Eamonn Foley stated that the fare increase is governed by the ARSA agreement and that either party can recommend a fare increase and implementation is subject to approval by both parties.

Board Member Glucksman stated the committee should move the resolution forward for approval because the MTA will seek a fare increase later this year as well and because implementation of the 2026 increase has been left open by Connecticut.

Board Member Chu stated that the discussion should be moved to the full board as there are many new members and to allow further discussion.

Board Member Mack stated that the 10% increase is scary and that the discussion should be moved to the full board.

Board Member Valdivia requested a copy of the equity analysis for the board's review prior to the next board meeting.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Committee moved the action item to the full board for approval.

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 Steve Weiss's remarks.

9. SPECIAL PRESENTATION-CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS:

MTA Senior Director Customer & Market Research Tatyana Levina presented the Spring 2025 Customers Count Survey results for both railroads. The survey was open for the last two weeks of April and each railroad received over 17,000 responses.

Ms. Levina stated that both railroads experienced an increase in customer satisfaction in latest wave. Customer satisfaction at LIRR has returned to the satisfaction levels seen prior to the opening of Grand Central Madison. The largest gains in overall satisfaction are seen in customers who travel the most frequently.

Metro-North overall customer satisfaction increased by 4% to 89%. Metro-North saw increased customer satisfaction across all branches. The greatest increases in Metro-North customer satisfaction were in the areas of peak and off-peak service frequency and seat availability.

In response to a question from Board Member Glucksman regarding West of Hudson survey results, Ms. Levina stated that they will provide a report.

In response to a question from Board Member Zuckerman regarding the size of the responses for Metro-North, Ms. Levina stated that there were more than 17,000 respondents, which is a healthy size but they can always use more.

In response to a question from Board Member Valdivia regarding what specific improvements were made at Atlantic Terminal to see such increases in customer satisfaction, President Free stated that slight tweaks to the schedule were likely responsible for these increases, including trains to Atlantic Terminal every eight minutes during morning peak, through trains every 15 minutes, and facilitating train transfers across the platform at Jamaica.

Board Member Bringmann commended President Free for the focus on the transfer opportunities at Jamaica because that is the point of greatest issue from riders.

Board Member O'Donnell stated disappointment that the West of Hudson survey is not publicly announced. Ms. Levina stated that the West of Hudson receives too few responses, so they rely upon the New Jersey Transit survey to prepare a report for West of Hudson.

Board Member Glucksman stated that there used to be paper surveys handed out to customers at station platforms. Ms. Levina stated that the survey is currently online.

Board Member Valdivia suggested that they be provided with the raw data from the New Jersey Transit survey. President Vonashek stated that Metro-North's own survey received too few responses for West of Hudson and will wait for the results from New Jersey Transit's survey to provide a report.

In response to a question from Board Member Garodnick regarding the reason for lack of satisfaction at Atlantic Terminal compared with other stations, President Free explained that when service commenced to Grand Central Terminal, Atlantic Terminal trains were moved to Platform F, which required passengers to disembark and walk over the tracks instead of having a cross-platform transfer. LIRR significantly increased through trains to Atlantic Terminal during peak hours, from four to thirteen trains as well as focusing on on-time train arrivals in Jamaica so passengers can more easily make those transfers.

In response to a question from Board Member O'Donnell regarding whether there is a separate West of Hudson survey, Ms. Levina stated that West of Hudson is included in the MTA survey but there is not enough responses to show as a separate branch. NJ Transit completes its own survey every year, which raw data is used to prepare a separate report that is ready to be shared after this meeting. Board Member O'Donnell suggested that there be a separate West of Hudson survey for those customers.

In response to a question from Board Member Zuckerman regarding the number of responses required for a survey, Ms. Levina stated that there needs to be a couple of hundred responses, but they typically receive only about 50 responses for West of Hudson. Board Member Zuckerman suggested that Board Members O'Donnell and Glucksman locate additional panelists for the survey. Board Member O'Donnell stated that he wants to see a legitimate survey because he is responsible for the four hundred thousand people in Orange County and aims to increase ridership.

In response to a question from Board Member Glucksman regarding whether the TrainTime app automatically updates to reflect real-time transfers at Jamaica Station, President Free confirmed that it does, and that you only need to put the information into the app once from your origin to the desired destination and the app will guide you where you need to transfer.

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 Tatyana Levina's remarks

10. INFORMATION ITEMS:

Metro-North Chief of Operations Oversight Evan Zucarelli provided the Mid-Year Operations Update for Metro-North, highlighting ridership, on-time performance, service delivered, fares not collected, and mean distance between failure for the months of January through June.

In response to a question from Board Member Bringman regarding how it is possible to calculate the fares not collected when you failed to collect them, Mr. Zucarelli stated that those numbers are based on internal audits. Board Member Bringman further questioned whether the calculations were based on weight sensors in the train cars, and President Vonashek stated that the auditors perform their calculations based on a formula.

In response to a question from Board Member Leathers regarding the discrepancy between the MBDF in May and June, Mr. Zucarelli stated that they were fortunate that some equipment outperformed itself in May, which resulted in exceptional reliability in the fleet in the month of May.

President Vonashek noted the following additional Metro-North information items: (i) Ground lease and development of MNR Beacon Station Commuter Lot (TOD); and (ii) Permanent & temporary easements with Palmer Center for New Rochelle Yard Improvements (PSA).

President Free noted the following LIRR information item: (i) September Timetable & Trackwork Programs and reminded customers to check the schedule for most up to date information.

LIRR Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives Eytan Kurshan provided the Mid-Year Operations Update for LIRR, highlighting key drivers of on-time performance improvements on the LIRR. These included schedule adjustments, focus on routing through Jamaica Station, strategically timed outages in support of state of good repair projects, and regular meetings of on-time performance committees to identify and address late trains.

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 procurements for LIRR or Metro-North.

13. ADJOURNMENT:

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

Respectfully submitted,



Haley Stein
Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary
The Long Island Rail Road Company



Eamonn F. Foley
Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary
Metro-North Commuter Railroad Company