

Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
Joint Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Committees  
Monday, July 17, 2023

Meeting held at  
2 Broadway – 20<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10004  
9:30 a.m.

The following Committee members were present in person:

Hon. Samuel Chu, Co-Chair  
Hon. Blanca López, Co-Chair  
Hon. Frank Borelli Jr.  
Hon. Gerard Bringmann  
Hon. Norman Brown  
Hon. Randolph Glucksman  
Hon. David Mack  
Hon. Vincent Tessitore, Jr.  
Hon. Neal Zuckerman

The following Committee members attended via video:

Hon. Midori Valdivia

The following Committee members were absent:

Hon. Michael Fleischer

**Representing Long Island Rail Road:**

Catherine Rinaldi – Interim President  
Rob Free – Senior Vice President, Operations  
Lori Ebbighausen – Vice President, Corporate Safety  
Paul Dietlin – Vice President, Maintenance of Way  
Haley Stein – Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary

**Representing Metro-North:**

Catherine Rinaldi - President  
Justin Vonashek – Senior Vice President, Operations  
Shelley Prettyman – Vice President, System Safety  
Michael Loney - Vice President, Maintenance of Way

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

Co-Chair López called the joint meeting to order.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

The following public speakers commented:

Lisa Daglian (in person), PCAC Executive Director, thanked the Metro-North workers who got service back up and running quickly after the devastating flooding from last week's storm. The storm highlighted the need to make our transit more resilient. She thanked Senator Gillibrand for introducing legislation for new resiliency funding streams to help ensure the system is prepared for the future. With congestion pricing and fare increases on the horizon – bringing much-needed funding to both the capital and operating budgets – good, reliable service is critical for getting riders back on board and to keep them coming back. PCAC launched a survey this spring to hear from LIRR riders. She stated that the survey found some positives, such as Grand Central Madison (“GCM”), more Brooklyn shuttle trains, and more options. The survey also found what needed to change – overcrowding on Penn-bound trains, lack of timed connections leading to delays, insufficient service between Queens stations, and the dreaded up-and-over at Jamaica. Daglian stated that the PCAC is glad to see that LIRR plans to address these rider concerns starting in September. The PCAC is thrilled to see more peak through-trains from Long Island and Far Rockaway to Brooklyn, reducing the need to transfer, having most trains that stop at both Kew Gardens and Forest Hills, adding capacity to and from Penn, and improving Penn service on nights with major events at the Garden. Daglian stated that the PCAC is thankful the LIRR has heard the concerns of riders headed to and from Atlantic Terminal and will soon better connect Brooklyn to Long Island. Daglian hopes that LIRR will make every effort to bring back timed connections. Daglian stated that the PCAC is also looking forward to hearing more updates on Penn Access today. Bringing Metro-North service into Penn with the addition of four new stations in the Bronx will make for a more connected region and open reverse commute opportunities.

Jason Anthony (in person) said that he is thrilled that starting in September there will be full service to and from Atlantic Terminal during morning peak but would love to see the same during the PM peak and weekends. He urged LIRR to repair East New York station which is in bad shape. He thanked President Rinaldi for making changes and her work during her tenure.

Andrew Pollack (via audio) from Passengers United thanked LIRR for its transparency regarding schedule changes. He noted that in August there will be two straight weekends of no service to Grand Central Madison (“GCM”) from Great Neck. He also noted that the new schedules are to begin on September 5. While he was happy to see Atlantic Terminal getting more service, he said it was too early to tell how it will play out. He urged LIRR to keep the off-peak departure times on the Port Washington branch at 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. He hoped the 2:17 train from Penn Station to Port Washington will remain with the schedule changes. He also stated that he hopes the September 7 and 8 schedule changes will not impact the Eagles Farewell Tour at Madison Square Garden as there had been complaints of not enough service after events.

Jack Nierenberg (in person), Passengers United Vice President, commented that the initial schedule changes coming on September 5 look very promising with more through service to Brooklyn in the AM from Hempstead, Far Rockaway, Long Beach and Huntington. He stated that

there should be more through service from Atlantic Terminal during peak periods because of the elimination of timed transfers. He remained hopeful of the necessary changes to other branches such as Ronkonkoma because the 5:25 p.m. from Penn Station to Brentwood was finally extended to Ronkonkoma.

Charlton D'Souza (via video), Passengers United President, stated that the fact that there will be no shuttle buses between 9:45 a.m. and 11 a.m. with no service from Jamaica to Atlantic Terminal Brooklyn with the planned schedule changes is deeply concerning. He advised everyone to read the fine print in the Board materials which says that there will be track work performed at Dunton Interlocking. He asked whether the MTA would provide an articulated bus to transport people from Jamaica to Atlantic Terminal. Alternative service is necessary as people cannot wait for over an hour and twenty minutes. D'Souza said that the sixty-dollar Atlantic weekly pass being cut just as service is being restored to Atlantic Terminal makes no sense. Instead, the sixty-dollar pass should be extended to CityTicket, and be available at Atlantic Terminal, Grand Central, and Penn Station at all times. He said that in order to get people to use the system during congestion pricing, there needs to be attractive offers. There should be a \$3.75 CityTicket and a five-dollar peak ticket. He believes the rule change regarding the reduction of speaking time to only one two-minute allotment is illegal.

Christopher D. Greif (in person) acknowledged that it is Disability Pride Month and Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") celebrates its thirty-third anniversary. He thanked MTA Chief Accessibility Officer Quemuel Arroyo, LIRR, and Metro-North for Long Island Cares, Metro-North Cares, and more accessibility signages. He thanked the railroads for listening to the community as there have been more accessibility upgrades. He further thanked the increased service to Brooklyn. Greif commented that the elevators and escalators at Jamaica are not MTA's but the Port Authority's so complaints about maintenance and repairs need to go to the Port Authority. He reminded everyone to submit any issues and complaints to Customer Feedback which is there to keep track of all the different issues.

Aleta Dupree (via audio) stated that the work of improving the railroad must never stop. She said that hopefully the plans to electrify the Central Branch will be revived to augment service from Babylon to the Main Line and reduce the use of diesel fuel on the system. Penn Access is essential, and the railroads need to continue to work to bring OMNY onto the trains.

Murray Bodin (in person) from Concerned Grandparents said that there needs to be flexibility and things should be done differently.

The video recording of the meeting produced by the MTA and maintained in the MTA records contains a complete record of the public comments.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Committee approved the minutes of the June 26, 2023 Joint LIRR/Metro-North Committee Meeting.

## **METRO-NORTH AND LIRR 2023 WORK PLANS:**

There were no changes to the LIRR or Metro-North Work Plans. The 2023 Metro-North and LIRR Work Plans are filed with the records of this meeting.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORTS:**

President Rinaldi said that Mother Nature unleashed a summer torrent on Sunday, July 9 as Biblical short-term rain totals and subsequent flooding throughout the Hudson Valley led to washouts, fallen trees, and high-water conditions along the Metro-North right-of-way (“ROW”). This led to service suspensions along the Hudson Line north of Croton-Harmon as well as the upper Harlem Line. Metro-North Senior Vice President of Operations Justin Vonashek, who led the recovery, will provide more details in his full Operations Report. President Rinaldi also acknowledged Metro-North’s Vice President of Engineering Michael Loney who led the Maintenance of Way (“MoW”) effort in recovery. She thanked every responding employee for their fine incredible work to recover from the storm, from the crews who both cleaned-up and re-fortified the ROW in multiple spots, workers who supported temporary bus service, and customer contact specialists who fielded more than 700 calls and handled more than 200 chats and 200 social media inquiries on Monday, July 10 alone. President Rinaldi commended MTA Construction & Development who also provided invaluable support in recovery resiliency efforts in the affected area.

Both railroads are no strangers to extreme seasonal weather, and while winter storm preparedness often gets the lion’s share of the coverage, summer can come with challenges of its own. The railroads prepare for it all, and when the summer heat comes around, both railroads’ MoW crews ready their respective systems to the greatest extent possible to combat whatever may come their way. By and large, the methods used by the railroads are very similar to one another. When temperatures rise, steel rails expand and that can create heat kinks and misalignment in vulnerable areas. Both railroads deploy heat patrols during unusually hot weather and proactively increase track inspections and stage extra maintainers in key risk areas. Both railroads closely monitor their power systems during extreme weather and Metro-North increases patrols of catenary wire on the New Haven Line. As part of a pilot program that originated in 2018, Metro-North has also begun applying reflective paint to running rails to cool down the temperature and reduce expansion. The curve in the vicinity of Rye station is now painted yearly and they have found that the paint has led to a 15-degree decrease in the temperature of the running rails. The west approach to the Walk Bridge in Norwalk has also received a similar treatment and more areas are under consideration for future applications.

In preparation for a pending storm and potential for flash flooding, Metro-North MoW forces conduct track inspections in flood-prone areas, ensure adequate inventory of key materials, and prepare work equipment for rapid deployment. Long Island has quite different terrain, as flat as a board and surrounded by water. LIRR has its own known trouble spots, so LIRR deploys pumps and manpower to those key spots to manage flooding risks.

Vegetation really explodes in the spring and early summer, which is why vegetation management efforts are a key component to keeping the ROW as clear of vegetative debris as possible once extreme weather strikes. Both railroads have vegetation management and tree trimming programs to clear vegetation along the ROW. Metro-North's Enterprise Asset Management and MoW teams review tree data to identify correlations between the various weather events, tree types, and the resulting damage and/or impact to rail operations. On LIRR, additional High-Tension and Communications forces are employed to respond to downed poles or wires in advance of anticipated high wind events. The Track Department supports these events with grapple trucks to remove downed trees.

President Rinaldi stated that the spring has been fantastic with regard to ridership. Weekday and weekend post-COVID ridership records for both railroads were as common as spring flowers with customer numbers surging in the wake of the introduction of full GCM service. Predictably, ridership has slowed down a bit now that summer is in full swing, and people are taking vacations. Weekday LIRR ridership totals still top 200,000 with regularity but have calmed a bit following the May/June surge they experienced on both railroads. This is not necessarily a bad thing nor unexpected, and they fully expect ridership to climb once again after Labor Day. A return to seasonal patterns is healthy and welcome after the last few years, which were far from "normal."

President Rinaldi said that later during this meeting, MTA Chief of Strategic Initiatives Jon Kaufman will present the results of the bi-annual "Customers Count" survey for both railroads. Given the earlier rough patches that were associated with the rollout of the full GCM service in late February, they were not surprised by the decline in overall customer service satisfaction on the Long Island side, but obviously the results were certainly not welcome. The September 5 schedule changes contain some major improvements that will directly address some of the most consistent complaints that they've been hearing about the new service plan. The highlights include more direct service to Brooklyn during the AM peak with the addition of five through-trains to Brooklyn on the Far Rockaway, Long Beach, Hempstead, and Huntington branches. More stations will be getting direct service to Brooklyn. Locust Manor, Laurelton, Rosedale, Hollis, and Queens Village stops have been reassigned to more Atlantic Terminal trains as data indicates that more riders from these stations are traveling to Brooklyn and they want to ensure that they get as many trains to Brooklyn as possible. Elected officials in these communities have been very supportive of this change.

One additional complaint was the reduction in express service. The new schedules create more morning express service on the Huntington and Ronkonkoma branches. All but four morning peak Ronkonkoma trains will operate express to Jamaica from either Hicksville or Bethpage and two trains from Huntington will operate express from Syosset or Hicksville; two new morning peak trains originating from Hicksville and Westbury have been added to provide local service. There will be more AM peak express service between Jamaica and Manhattan. To further balance service while meeting the demands of customers, a few trains to and from Grand Central Madison will be redirected to operate to and from Penn Station, and some late-evening trains will originate from Penn Station to offer additional service opportunities to customers attending concerts or sporting events at the Garden. Another upcoming change will have most off-peak trains that make a Kew Gardens stop also make a Forest Hills stop. President Rinaldi reminded customers to please keep an eye out for the new schedules to be posted on our website, [mta.info](http://mta.info), and the TrainTime

app, listen for announcements, and use the app to always remain current for when and where the trains are operating at the moment. She stated that they will continue to review, analyze, and react to customer needs and demands going forward as they have throughout this entire process.

President Rinaldi reported that in an attempt to stem the tide of an increasing and costly problem across all MTA agencies, a Blue-Ribbon Panel convened last year to combat fare evasion. The Panel analyzed causes, challenges, and existing conditions for each agency and provided recommendations in a final report released in May. President Rinaldi said that this month, they will be reporting on some of the initial work in response to this report. She stated that they appreciate the panel's work and certainly share the concerns of all stakeholders. Combined, the railroads lost an estimated forty million dollars in revenue due to uncollected fares in 2022. She noted that one of the panel's recommendations is to take a closer look at the methodology for calculating fare evasion on the commuter rails, to gain confidence that the railroads understand the scope of the problem especially given changes due to post-COVID ridership.

For the commuter railroads, fare evasion does not look the same as it does on subways and buses. The systems are open, have no physical barriers, and the conductors collect mobile or paper ticket fares after customers are already on board. The panel categorized fare evaders into several groups. On commuter rail they generally find that they fall into one of two groups: 1) "Opportunistic" fare evaders, who evade the fare by taking advantage of a free non-commutation ride via an uncollected paper ticket or an inactivated mobile ticket; and 2) "Determined" fare evaders, who board the train with no intention of paying the fare. Because a "determined" fare evader is already on a moving train when a crew member discovers that they have no intention to pay the fare, the challenge becomes how to address the situation firmly and decisively without compromising the reliability of the service to the paying customers and the safety of the on-board personnel. Short-hop trips between stations that are close together present additional fare collection challenges, as riders board and disembark trains before the conductor can reach them. This is exacerbated on crowded trains, which make it difficult for conductors to check all tickets, and by customers waiting to purchase or activate mobile tickets which slow down conductors as they make their rounds. Customers notice when other customers don't pay the fare and they, rightfully, let us know about it - as some of them did during the recent fare hearings.

The Panel made several recommendations and President Rinaldi was happy to report that the railroads are already hard at work on a number of them even prior to the report's release. The Panel recommended that the railroads refresh customer messaging campaigns with a focus on the importance of fare payment while also addressing the unique problem of delayed activations on mobile tickets. As a result, the railroads released a revised ticket activation campaign before the final report was issued and another campaign is launching soon. It was also recommended that the railroads leverage the success of the TrainTime app, a great medium for collecting fares which now accounts for over 60% of ticket sales and growing. The Panel correctly noted the need to address the delayed activation problem and potentially pursue changes to ticket validity periods and activation policies based on peer agencies and recent technological advancements. The conductors have also highlighted these problems. The railroads agree with the panel that collaboration with frontline employees and union leadership is essential to success in this endeavor.

President Rinaldi reported that a few weeks ago she had the pleasure of attending the opening of the New York Transit Museum's brand-new exhibit entitled "Metro-North at 40: The Oldest Young Railroad." The exhibit is a snapshot – actually, many snapshots – of an institution whose determined employees lifted it from humble beginnings to one that consistently receives high marks in safety and customer satisfaction. As we all know, Metro-North has come a long way since its 1983 founding. At that time, rail transportation was generally viewed as something that had its day long ago and many people seemed to prefer sitting in traffic in their cars to a train that may or may not get them to their destination. In this exhibit, you'll see the faces of the men and women who set out to change that perception. The exhibit features plenty of historic photographs, uniform elements, promotional buttons, maps, plus Metro Man II occupying a place of honor. This is the first exhibit opening at the Transit Museum gift shop in Grand Central since the start of the pandemic and she encouraged everyone to stop by and check it out - on display now until early November.

President Rinaldi announced that this month we bid a very fond goodbye for now to LIRR Chief Engineer of Operations Support Albert Guerra who leaves after many years of distinguished service in the engineering department and the group formerly known as the Department of Program Management. One of the true good guys in the industry, "Big Al" first brought his amazing organizational skills to the railroad in 2006 as assistant project manager and he's been a tremendous asset ever since. Among his many other accomplishments, Al managed LIRR force account work on the Queens side of the Eastside Access construction operations including the intricate Harold Interlocking. President Rinaldi thanked Al for his many contributions over the years and wished him a long and healthy retirement.

President Rinaldi said that she is often asked: "What is your biggest challenge as an organization?" For an entity this size and in a region this big, attracting and retaining new talent is near the very top of the list, if not at the top, especially since COVID, which changed just about everything, including the nature of employment itself. That's precisely why they were so excited to welcome a cohort of 28 new Engineering trainees to the Metro-North family on June 28. The 18 months of training – plus the on-the-job education they will receive throughout their careers in MoW and Equipment Maintenance – will be nothing short of world-class. This is all part of an organizational push to build the MTA talent pipeline like never before, which manifests itself in open and active recruitment on social media and the railroads' digital networks, job fairs, open houses, college and technical high school outreach, employee referral programs, and the like. The job opportunities range from entry-level positions, many of which don't require a bachelor's degree, all the way to skilled professionals.

President Rinaldi noted that financial reports typically included with the Committee materials were not completed in time for this meeting because of this month's accelerated schedule. All financial reports will be distributed through the Director's Desk and posted on MTA's website before the end of the month.

President Rinaldi announced that MTA Chief Accessibility Officer Quemuel Arroyo who leads our accessibility efforts across the entire MTA, has joined the meeting today. July is Disability Pride Month. LIRR and Metro-North have been celebrating all month long with both

internal and external digital content designed to shine a light on the experiences of people with disabilities, their importance to our region, and how they can better serve these communities. While we celebrate Disability Pride all year long, July allows us to mark the 33rd anniversary of the ADA. To honor the month, the MTA and its agencies are both hosting and taking part in a series of special events at which we hope to see customers, employees, and partners alike. As Chief Accessibility Officer Arroyo has said, “ADA set a floor, not a ceiling, of what accessibility could look like...and compliance is not good enough.” Both Metro-North and LIRR will continue to enhance every part of the journey, from station access to the way they disseminate customer information, in order to make the entire system more accessible for all. She thanked Chief Accessibility Officer Arroyo for his partnership and looks forward to working with him on all these important endeavors.

In response to a question from Board Member Zuckerman regarding the impact of climate change on our expenditures and whether the annual amounts spent on emergency responses should be disclosed, President Rinaldi stated that would be a good idea as they have been focused on longer term capital resiliency projects. There is currently no sufficient recognition of how these storms have impacted the operating budget. There needs to be extra coverage and many other elements to being prepared for storms. A hurricane is one thing, where there is time to prepare, but when there is a threat of thunderstorms all summer long, it changes the ability to be prepared and it can be costly. While they tracked the expenses for this storm as required, the need for a broader conversation about the operating budget impacts to prepare for these extreme weather conditions is a good idea.

Board Member Brown congratulated the managers, MoW, and Engineering departments who worked on emergency response and got it done and did a great job. He commented that the storm highlighted when and how the railroad was built. The railroads move a lot of people and are closer to the water table than any other system in the country and practically underwater. It’s a beautiful ride along the Hudson until the storm comes in. President Rinaldi further commented that there are many vulnerable locations that they need to deal with, not just along the Hudson.

In response to a question from Board Member Glucksman regarding whether these emergency response events had any impact on the railroad’s ability to maintain its proposed goals reported for the year for maintenance and track work, President Rinaldi stated not yet. They remain hopeful that they will meet their goals this year. Board Member Brown commented that someone will inevitably blame the railroad for all the overtime worked in ninety-five-degree heat and hundred-percent humidity.

In response to a question from Co-chair López regarding how conductors are trained to deal with those “determined” fare evaders as reported earlier, President Rinaldi stated that there is a concerted effort on de-escalation training to keep these encounters professional and our conductors safe. They have been working with law enforcement and appreciate the work of the MTAPD. Board Member Tessitore commented that the train crews cannot perform enforcement duties, and despite the improvement on the number of harassments and assaults, there are still concerns about safety. The crew has been working with the MTAPD but in some cases it means just walking away. He understands how frustrating it may be for other customers watching this.



He urged MTA leadership to keep the fare collection procedures simple and policies consistent as they approach changes with fares and ticketing, and to be patient to deliver the message properly to avoid confusion. President Rinaldi noted that one of the recommendations in the Blue Ribbon Panel report was to simplify the number of fare products to make it more straightforward. Train crews on both railroads understand that collecting the fare is a key requirement but the railroads will need to continue to make the process as efficient and safe as possible for the crew.

Board Member Bringmann commended the work of the employees for bringing the service back as quickly as they did after the storm. He also thanked President Rinaldi and Senior Vice President Free for continuing to listen to customers regarding scheduling and admitting that it is a work-in-process. Finally, he commented that he believes those who have twenty or twenty-five IOUs should be arrested because it's theft of service, not fare evasion. It should be publicized when it happens to show that it's not to be tolerated anymore.

### **OPERATING REPORTS:**

Metro-North Senior Vice President Vonashek said that Metro-North's Operating Report begins on page 14 of the Key Performance Metrics report. Metro-North's service delivered rate for June was 99.9%. Systemwide on-time performance ("OTP") was 97.5%, above goal of 94%. Year-to-date ("YTD") OTP was also above goal at 97.6%. He noted that on West of Hudson's Port Jervis line, there was a June OTP of 74.5%. On Sunday, June 25, New Jersey Transit ("NJT") reported a lightning strike at CP Camerons which resulted in a fire that destroyed the CIL. As a result, code lines were down between Ridgewood Junction and Suffern until local control could be established. This required that all trains on June 26 to be talked past signals. As the week progressed, NJT was able to gradually regain control of more territory and delays diminished until the situation was finally resolved during the overnight on July 1st. This singular event accounted for nearly 50% of all delayed trains for the month.

The mean distance between failures ("MDBF") for the month of May was over 300,000 miles, above goal of 175,000, and YTD MDBF as of May was 412,000 miles, also above goal of 175,000.

Senior Vice President Vonashek reported that on Sunday, July 9, Mother Nature once again wreaked havoc on our region. With rain totals double over what was forecasted, there were numerous washouts, nearly a dozen high water conditions, trees downed, and boulders on the tracks, all leading to the suspension of Hudson Line service north of Harmon beginning Sunday afternoon. Metro-North crews worked through the night and into Monday morning to assess the damage and clear the tracks of downed trees, mud, boulders, and water in places that had risen above the running rails. Come Monday morning, they also had to suspend upper Harlem Line service north of Southeast due to high water conditions and a washout south of Dover Plains. After the Monday morning rush, they were able to provide limited bus service on the Hudson Line. On the upper Harlem Line, they began bussing between Southeast and Wassaic. Customers were provided with regular service updates and advice to monitor TrainTime for up-to-date schedule info. On Tuesday, they announced a partial restoration of service with hourly trains operating between Grand Central and Peekskill. On Wednesday, nearly full service returned to the Hudson

Line, with full service resuming the next day. Regular service was also restored on the upper Harlem Line by Wednesday morning. Given the amount of damage to our territory, it is nothing short of amazing that the crews in partnership with MTA Construction and Development were able to restore service on both lines by Wednesday morning. He thanked each employee who made this a reality. If not for their hard work and dedication, this would not have been possible.

LIRR Senior Vice President Free reported that LIRR's OTP for June was 92.6%, below goal of 94% and YTD OTP as of June was 94.4%, above goal of 94%. For June, three branches operated at or above goal and six branches operated at or above goal YTD as of June. There were 25 major events which resulted in 10 or more late trains. The most significant event occurred on June 29 due to a signal problem that began in the off-peak and into the PM peak period. This incident negatively impacted OTP by 0.1% and resulted in 29 late trains. The cause was a defective transformer that has been replaced. The mean distance between failures ("MDBF") for the month of May was 242,028 miles, and YTD MDBF as of May was 181,788 miles, both above the goal of 170,000 miles.

LIRR completed 99.6% of its trips for the month of June and YTD was 99.7%. On the weekends of August 12-13 and 19-20, contractor work will take place on GCM tunnels. As a result, Hempstead branch trains will originate and terminate at Atlantic Terminal. West Hempstead trains will originate and terminate at Jamaica. Huntington and Port Washington trains will originate and terminate at Penn Station. On the weekend of August 26-27, waterproofing work will take place on Van Wyck Bridge in Jamaica. As a result, there will be schedule adjustments to the West Hempstead and Babylon trains. On September 16-17, there will be switch installation work taking place east of Floral Park on the main line and concrete tie work between Bethpage and Hicksville. Schedules on the Oyster Bay, Huntington, and Ronkonkoma lines will be adjusted. At the end of August, U.S. Open service will begin. Updated schedule information can be found at the web site or the TrainTime app.

Board Member Zuckerman commended the MTA app, which he said works extremely well and which he relies upon for the subways, LIRR and Metro-North because it works so cohesively. He stated that he was stunned by how well the app works because even private companies have a hard time maintaining their apps. He praised the I.T. department for a job well done. President Rinaldi commented that the app has extremely high ratings in the app store, which is a home-grown app with a huge team behind it who has done an amazing job.

The complete LIRR and Metro-North 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.

### **SAFETY REPORT:**

Metro-North Vice President Prettyman said that Metro-North's safety report is on page 18 of the Key Performance Metrics report. The customer injury rate for the 12-month reporting period ending May 2023 compared to the prior twelve months ending May 2022 increased from 2.02 to 2.07 per one million customers. The 12-month rolling rates have ticked up after six months of

decreases. Slips, trips and falls remain the highest category of customer injury. The employee lost time injury rate decreased from 2.18 to 2.08 per 200,000 working hours. These rolling 12-month rates dropped for the second month in a row. Vice President Prettyman highlighted the customer and community safety outreach through the Together, Railroads and Communities Keeping Safe (“T.R.A.C.K.S.”) program. She stated that the outreach continues in the warmer months as they partner with communities to join a variety of outdoor events and spread the word about rail safety across the territory, such as the Bethel Pride event in Connecticut, Port Jervis Rubber and Truck event, Shore Line Trolley Museum in Connecticut, and many others. Metro-North made 224,497 in-person contacts for YTD through May and over 600,000 contacts through web and social media. More events are planned through August. The information can be found in the Safety and Security Committee book for this month.

LIRR Vice President Ebbighausen stated that LIRR’s safety report through May 2023 is found on page 28 of the Key Performance Metrics book. She is pleased to report that the customer injury rate decreased from 2.6 to 2.24 per one million customers. The employee reportable lost time injury rate increased from 4.07 to 4.42 per 200,000 hours worked. She highlighted that in conjunction with the wonderful work of the MTAPD and community relations specialists over the summer with the T.R.A.C.K.S. program, on July 11 they held their first in-person Safety Incentive Award ceremony since 2019. Labor leaders and representatives from management leadership gathered together to recognize employees who were nominated by their peers for their extraordinary acts of safety in 2022.

The full 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.

### **MTAPD REPORT:**

MTAPD Chief of Operations Thomas J. Taffe said crime remains low on both railroads. The first half of 2023 saw the lowest crime rate since 2019 at the start of the pandemic. For the month of June 2023, of the eleven police districts, no district had more than six major crimes, with four of the eleven experiencing no major crimes. That said, larceny is still a major concern. Most of these larcenies are the result of unattended packages and sleeping passengers. In the summer months, with the increased use of bicycles to commute to the trains, they saw an increase in bike thefts from rail stations. In response, they’ve increased patrols around high-risk stations which resulted in arrests of persistent bicycle larcenists. Further, all district commanders have been instructed to survey each station for crime prevention measures to curb these bike thefts. The department continues its strategic plan to increase officer training, including leadership training. This year, they’ve increased the size of the training division as well as the number of field training officers. They’re in the process of training fifty new sergeants on leadership and frontline supervision. Finally, last month the department was honored to receive the FBI Trilogy Award. The award is given to agencies where the entire command staff completes the FBI Leadership course. They’re the first agency in New York State to receive this honor. He thanked Chair Lieber for supporting this training and President Rinaldi and the Metro-North team for the use of their training facilities to conduct this training.

In response to a question from Board Member Bringmann regarding how the new policy for battery powered scooters was communicated to the officers in the field, Chief Taffe stated that after a policy memo was released, there was a resulting increase in summonses issued, especially in GCM where many people were riding their scooters in the long hallway.

Board Member Glucksman reiterated his prior request for specific data on hate crimes in the Joint Committee Book.

The 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.

### **UPDATE ON CUSTOMERS COUNT SURVEY:**

MTA Chief of Strategic Initiatives Jon Kaufman stated that he recently absorbed the Customer Research Group into his Strategic Initiatives Group and is working closely with MTA Senior Advisor of Communications and Policy and Acting Chief Customer Officer Shanifah Rieara and operating agencies to make sure that they're getting robust customer perspectives and insights to better shape their operational plans. He is pleased to present the findings of the Spring "Customers Count" survey for LIRR and Metro-North. The Spring Survey was conducted to obtain ratings in key drivers of customer satisfaction. This online biannual survey was conducted the last two weeks of May. The survey was offered in various languages and also by phone for those who don't have internet access or if assistance was required. Response to the survey was better than in the fall. They had a 30% increase in LIRR respondents with 21,000 individual riders and a 4% increase in Metro-North with another 18,000 people giving feedback. He thanked the marketing and advertising teams for getting the word out. The data is weighted using the census to adjust for income and minority status and for ridership using average weekday counts.

Chief of Strategic Initiatives Kaufman reported that the key takeaways around the top drivers of satisfaction for both railroads are service based: "service reliability," "on time performance," and "seat availability" are among the highest. Fares are also highly important. LIRR customer satisfaction scores declined by 13 points since fall 2022, which may be attributed to the declines in satisfaction from Atlantic Terminal customers. LIRR leadership continues to adjust its operations by further adjusting schedules to address these customer concerns. He noted that LIRR shifted over the last three periods with Spring 2022 being the first baseline survey in this format, consistent across all modes at the MTA. There was a 13-point decrease in the spring. Metro-North maintained a high score of 89%, which is remarkable, and has maintained that score consistently over the last three periods.

Chief of Strategic Initiatives Kaufman reported that for LIRR customers, scores were presented alphabetically by branch. Green and blue indicate relevant levels of satisfaction with orange and red showing dissatisfaction. The numbers next to the triangles indicate the delta from last fall's survey. With the exception of the Montauk branch, every line is down in the low double-digits. As they dug deeper in the results, they determined that this is not the most revealing way to look at how and why satisfaction shifted. He explained that the decline is the relationship between

how often customers are traveling and their satisfaction. The resulting schedule adjustments meant many folks may have to transfer to get where they want at the exact time they want. The results show that those always transferring are markedly less satisfied and represent just over twenty percent of the respondent base. LIRR teams have worked hard to improve the transfer experience, including earlier platform assignments, more connection possibilities shown easily in the TrainTime app, whose benefits can be seen in some positive trends. He further reported that there have been improvements since April, when they surveyed 3,000 customers on their LIRR experience. For dissatisfaction with transfers, customers going to Atlantic Terminal were affected the most. This group represents the largest drop of any customer group down to 41% satisfied. Accommodating more trains to midtown required a reconsideration of all branch services and included the rollout of the Brooklyn shuttle service, with up to seven trains per hour but required more customers to transfer at Jamaica. The smaller but more meaningful decline in satisfaction was seen from the Penn respondents which dropped 16 points to 64%. These recent announcements around the substantial adjustments to the fall schedule will help improve the experience for most customers, which include reducing transfers by adding more through-trains through Atlantic and adding faster trains to Penn at peak periods. He pointed out the very high satisfaction rates for those going to GCM at 80% satisfied and represented 20% of the respondents.

Chief of Strategic Initiatives Kaufman reported on the highest rated LIRR stations in the survey. He stated that the survey allowed them to drill down and provide information to the leaders on 125 stations operated by LIRR. They obtained sample sizes of at least 100 to have reliable reads on how folks feel about the stations. He reported that at the very top, GCM came in with 96% satisfaction, which he said is frankly amazing. Additionally, other high rated stations include Stewart Manor, which has served the Village of Garden City on the Hempstead branch for over 150 years, as well as Manhasset, Broadway, and Syosset. The flip side of this are the lowest rated LIRR stations, with the bottom being East New York station. Four of the six of the lowest rated stations are on the City Terminal Zone. East New York saw the lowest score of 41%, which is about the same as it was a year ago, clearly a work in progress. Penn Station is still on this list. However, there is a seven-point increase in satisfaction since the fall and a nineteen-point gain since the spring of last year. This is an early recognition of the efforts and investments in the physical layout of Penn Station. He pointed to some other attributes around Penn Station, three of which have received considerable attention over the last 12 months. There has been a massive increase in “wayfinding” scores at Penn, “personal security” scores have gone up 16 points in a year as a result of increased focus by the MTAPD at Penn, and “cleanliness” scores have gone up 23 points in the last year. While there’s still some way to go, you can see significant improvement here.

For Metro-North, there were very high overall satisfaction scores at 89%. This is true across all three lines, with 91% on the Hudson Line in particular, which is remarkable. Looking at the key drivers for Metro-North, they are similar to LIRR, and the most important ones have to do with service-related attributes. “On time performance” at 86% continues to increase, while “service reliability” held steady at 89%. “Seating availability” was the third most important attribute with a decrease of 11%. This correlates directly to the ridership increase, which has been substantial over the last six months. At 78% satisfaction, it is still quite high overall in terms of folks being able to find a seat. He pointed out the safety-related elements also scored quite high, although they are down a little bit during this period.

For ratings on Metro-North stations, scores are quite high in the upper 90's. Particularly, along the Harlem line, there were very high scores on "personal security," "cleanliness," "lighting programs and signs," and "wayfinding." Harlem 125th was the lowest-rated station. The scores on "homelessness," "pan handling," "restrooms" and "station cleanliness" are lower than average. The railroad continues to work with City partners to improve conditions and the perception of safety at this station. The other stations with lower scores are Marble Hill, Mount Vernon East, and Stamford, which are "lower" in a straight ranking but high overall, with Bridgeport at 83%.

Finally, Chief of Strategic Initiatives Kaufman stated that there was a new question in the survey, "what would encourage you to ride more often?" They asked folks to choose two responses from the selection. Customers for both railroads selected "more frequent service on weekdays and weekends" as the most common thing that would make them ride more often, along with "fare incentives." In addition, "a change in the work-from-home policy" would make them ride more often, although that's been trending down. The prevalence of remote work is something that holds us back from getting ridership to pre-COVID levels. The leadership teams at both railroads are quite engaged in the insights from these findings. He thanked the Customer Research Team who worked hard to support our agencies. Specifically, Samantha Hawkins and Janice Pepper here in the gallery make this all happen twice a year and more.

In response to a question from Board Member Glucksman as to why the report failed to mention the two lines west of Hudson, Pascack and Port Jervis, Chief of Strategic Initiatives Kaufman stated that NJ Transit captures those surveys and are received on a slightly different cycle.

In response to a question from Board Member Bringmann as to whether the survey required a respondent to answer every question before submission and why there was no option for a "non-applicable" response, Chief of Strategic Initiatives Kaufman stated that the survey was given online although a phone option was available. In addition, they captured data on partially completed surveys that were not submitted, although they were held separately and if they felt they were robust enough, the responses were included. Some questions required an answer, which may have frustrated some folks, but they will still take partial completions if some questions were not answered. He stated that they will take another look at the survey regarding questions that may be skipped if the customer does not have an opinion.

In response to a question from Board Member Brown regarding how many respondents were included in the results, Chief of Strategic Initiatives Kaufman stated that there were 20,000 individual riders from LIRR and 19,000 from Metro-North. Board Member Brown further questioned whether this figure is a good number. Chief of Strategic Initiatives Kaufman responded that the figure is very robust, probably one of the biggest surveys in the New York region. Board Member Brown commented that the takeaway from the survey is how ridership increased with the increase in service, despite dissatisfaction with the service, which he stated that he sees as a positive trend.

The video recording of the meeting produced by the MTA and maintained in the MTA records contains a complete record of Chief of Strategic Initiatives Kaufman's presentation.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS:**

President Rinaldi noted the following five Metro-North information items: (i) Track Program Quarterly Update; (ii) Grand Central Terminal Retail Development; (iii) Permanent Easements with Amtrak in Support of the Penn Station Access Project; (iv) Permanent Easements with HD Development of Maryland, Inc. in Support of the Penn Station Access Project; and (v) Acquire Property for a New Electrical Substation at 3876-3880 Park Avenue in the Claremont Section of the Bronx.

President Rinaldi noted the following two LIRR information items: (i) September Timetable Change & Trackwork Programs; and (ii) M/W Quarterly Update.

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

## **FINANCE:**

President Rinaldi stated again that the finance report for both railroads is not contained in today's meeting materials but will be provided sometime before the end of the month.

## **PROCUREMENT:**

MTA Assistant Deputy Chief Procurement Officer Richard Mack reported on one procurement item for LIRR on behalf of itself, Metro-North, and New York City Transit. MTA Board approval will be requested to award a contract to Loram Maintenance of Way, Inc. ("Loram") for Rail Grinding Services. Rail grinding services are needed to optimize wheel-rail interface and maximize wheel-rail life span. This process is the most effective practice to control the effects of rolling contact fatigue on the running rail by restoring the rail profile to maximize the value of the rail. The benefits of a rail grinding program include (1) reduction of broken rails; (2) extension of rail life; (3) extended track components life, and (4) improved ride quality and passenger comfort. The contract is for a two-year base term with three 1-year options. This procurement was competitively solicited through a Request for Proposals ("RFPs"). Loram will provide rail grinding services (equipment and personnel) at various points along the agencies' ROW in the estimated quantity award amount of \$56,223,940, broken up into a two-year base contract of \$22,489,576, plus three 1-year Options which total \$33,734,364, subject to an adjustment based on a price index formula, as set forth in the contract terms and conditions.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Committee recommended approval of the procurement item.

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

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The Committee unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Susan Sarch", is centered on the page.

Susan Sarch  
Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary  
Metro-North Commuter Railroad Company

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Haley Stein", is centered on the page.

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