

Passenger/Regional Rail Committee

Minutes

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

- A. Call to Order:** Chair Rob Scherer (Ashland) called the committee to order at 2:03 PM via Zoom.
- B. Presentation:** William Wolfgang, MBTA Director of Vehicle Engineering, delivered a presentation on the MotivePower HSP46 Locomotive Overhaul Update: The recent approval to overhaul 40 HSP46 locomotives to ensure long-term reliability long-term reliability, safety, and efficiency of passenger operations.
- a R. Scherer asked how the locomotives are getting to Erie, PA. B. Wolfgang answered that the FRA assists with a “dead and tow” operation.
 - b Sheila Page (Wellesley) asked if an MBTA representative would be on site in Erie. B. Wolfgang answered that there is an engineering firm that supports them with an internal inspection service and a local inspection so much of the process will be done inhouse. Their production, quality, and test plans are validated by the MBTA. S. Page also asked if the overhaul after 12 years was anticipated. B. Wolfgang said that this overhaul was on time--the mid-life overhaul of vehicles takes place when funding is available.

- c Brian Kane (Executive Director) thanked B. Wolfgang for joining the committee and asked him to discuss the eventual transition from diesel to battery after the diesel locomotives reach the end of their lifespan in 12 years. B. Wolfgang answered that the MBTA needs to reach a transition point and the locomotive battery technology is at its beginning stages right now. There are not many in use and their operating in small fleets and at small capacity right now. The MBTA's electric bus fleet have seen three generations of batteries in 10 years. The MBTA needs a reliable locomotive so the next contract will have a base order of 10 diesel locomotives and 10 battery electrics allowing the fleet to stabilize while exploring the compatibility of the new technology for the system while considering range and power density. B. Kane also asked if the Massachusetts grid can support plugging in 10 electric locomotives, and later 60 or 70. B. Wolfgang answered that this is still to be determined. The MBTA is the largest consumer of electricity in MA and this expansion will double it.
- d Chester Osborne (Maynard) asked what percent of the stock will be out for refurbishment at one time. B. Wolfgang answered around 25%.
- e R. Scherer asked if the refurbishment will improve combustion. B. Wolfgang answered that it would not. The locomotives are a core part of the fleet and by federal mandate, must be used to the end of their useful life.

- f Chris Podgorski (Canton) commented that electric battery power locomotives are still in their infancy and he would worry that the MBTA would encounter challenges by adopting too early. B. Wolfgang commented that the MBTA will not be the first agency to adopt as there is still a long road to go and hurdles to address such as charging capacity.
 - g The committee thanked B. Wolfgang for joining.
- C. Minutes:** R. Scherer requested a motion to approve the minutes from the June 18, 2025, October 15, 2025, and December 17, 2025 meetings. Steve Olanoff (Westwood) made the motion to approve and Brian Glennon (Duxbury) seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.
- D. Next Meeting Dates:** March 11
- E. Old/new business:** The committee discussed topics for future meetings.
- a Interest in meeting directly with Commuter Rail operations contract bidders.
 - b Fare gates update.
 - c FIFA scheduling.
 - d Parking lot expansion.
 - e Safety at grade crossings.
 - f C. Osborne will deliver a presentation on developing resource.
- F. Adjourn:** Chair R. Scherer adjourned the meeting at 3:02.



These minutes were approved by vote of the committee at their March 11, 2026 meeting.

Attendees:

Committee:

Ashland	Rob Scherer
Canton	Chris Podgurski
Duxbury	Brian Glennon
Hingham	Joe Fisher
Reading	Mark Kraunelis
Maynard	Chester Osborne
Natick	Morgan Griffiths
Wellesley	Sheila Page
Westwood	Steve Olanoff
Worcester	Todd Kirrane

MBTA

William Wolfgang	MBTA
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MBTA Advisory Board Staff:

Brian Kane	Executive Director
Hanna Switekowski	Deputy Director
Isabella MacKinnon	Budget & Policy Analyst



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