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Mum's the word on Amtrak meeting

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By Matt Rocheleau

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Surely there was much to discuss this week when Governor Charlie Baker and state Transportation Secretary Stephanie Pollack met with Amtrak's new president and CEO Wick Moorman in Washington D.C.

Massachusetts public officials and executives at the train service company have been fighting for months, letting off steam in courtroom filings and in public comments.

The legal dispute is over maintenance to tracks that both Amtrak and the MBTA use — namely who should pay for the work. First Amtrak demanded money from the T, citing a change in federal policy. The T disagreed it owed money and sued Amtrak in January. In August, Amtrak, in court filings, [threatened to cut rail service](#) from Boston to New York and Washington D.C.

[The T has also repeatedly blamed Amtrak's maintenance work](#) for major disruptions at South Station. In April, Pollack said the MBTA might pursue fines against Amtrak in a new contract.

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So did the two sides make amends at Wednesday's get-together? Or does their relationship remain derailed?

Unfortunately, the key figures involved are doing their best impressions of a quiet car passenger.

"The governor and secretary were pleased to meet with the new CEO of Amtrak to discuss the Commonwealth's infrastructure and rail needs and ongoing relationship with federal transit officials," said an e-mailed statement spokesman Billy Pitman.

That virtual no-comment appears to be a change of strategy for Baker, who spoke about how things went after a similar D.C. meeting in May with Joe Boardman, Amtrak's president and CEO then. In fact, after that meeting, [Baker described how he felt Amtrak should communicate better](#).


Speaking on behalf of Moorman, [who became Amtrak's head in September](#), company spokesman Mike Tolbert declined to comment, saying in an e-mail that: "We don't have a practice of disclosing details of private meetings."

Congressman Michael Capuano was also slated to attend Wednesday's meeting. But spokeswoman Alison Mills said in an e-mail that he didn't make it "due to some House business that took longer than anticipated."

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