
MINUTES OF PVTA'S
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
January 27, 2021

1. CALL TO ORDER

The postponed January 20, 2021 Advisory Board Meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Wednesday, January 27, 2021 at 12:00 P.M. and was held remotely in accordance with the Governor's State of Emergency Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, Section 20, relieving from the requirement of section 20 of chapter 30A that it conduct its meetings in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public, permitting a public body to allow remote participation by all members.

	<u>Present (41.49 votes)</u>	<u>Not Present (20.51 votes)</u>
Agawam		Michael Squindo
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter	
Belchertown	Brian O'Leary	
Chicopee	Steve Huntley	
East Longmeadow	Mary Beth Dowd	
Easthampton		Brendan Rogers
Granby		Glen Sexton
Hadley		David Moskin
Hampden	Becky Moriarty	
Holyoke		Mayor Alex Morse
Leverett		Peter D'Errico
Longmeadow	Mark Gold	
Ludlow		Tony Goncalves
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz	
Palmer	Benjamin Hood	
Pelham		Karen Willard-Ribeiro
South Hadley	Michael Sullivan	
Springfield	Tasheena Davis	
Sunderland	Geoff Kravitz	
Ware	John Carroll	
West Springfield	Jim Czach	
Westfield		Peter Miller
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord	
Williamsburg		J.M. Sorrell
ADA Representative		Vacant
Rider Representative		Patrick Burke

A quorum of 31.05 vote being present, Chairman of the Advisory Board, Mayor David Narkewicz, called the remote meeting of PVTA's Advisory Board to order at 12:04 PM; majority vote of 41.49 present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked if any members of the public would like to make a public comment. No public comments were made.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to approve the meeting minutes from the November 18, 2020 Regular Advisory Board Meeting.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Slaughter/O'Leary) to approve the meeting minutes from the November 18, 2020 Regular Advisory Board Meeting.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked if the Board had any discussion. Hearing none; asked for a roll call vote to approve the minutes.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam			
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown	Brian O'Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Mary Beth Dowd		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz		
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham			
South Hadley	Michael Sullivan		
Springfield	Tasheena Davis		
Sunderland			Geoff Kravitz
Ware	John Carroll		
West Springfield	Jim Czach		
Westfield			
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg			

Motion passed by a vote of 40.01.13-0 with one abstention (1.48).

4. REPORT OF THE FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

Steve Huntley gave the report of the Finance and Audit Committee and stated that the committee met on Tuesday, January 19, 2021. The committee voted to approve the meeting minutes from November 16, 2020 and voted to accept the year to date-budget to actual report. The committee also received an update on PVTA's FY21 Budget and discussed a fare review.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to accept the report of the Finance and Audit Committee.

Motion: Moved and seconded (O'Leary/Slaughter) to accept the report of the Finance and Audit Committee.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked if the Board had any discussion. Hearing none; asked for a roll call vote to accept the report of the Finance and Audit Committee.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam			
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown	Brian O'Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Mary Beth Dowd		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz		
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham			
South Hadley	Michael Sullivan		
Springfield	Tasheena Davis		
Sunderland	Geoff Kravitz		
Ware	John Carroll		
West Springfield	Jim Czach		
Westfield			
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg			

Motion passed by a vote of 41.49, 14-0.

5. REPORT OF ROUTE COMMITTEE

Chairman of the Route Committee, Brian O’Leary, reported that the Route Committee met on Friday, January 15, 2021. The committee voted to approve the meeting minutes from September 22, 2020 and voted to approve holding public hearings on service modifications for the Palmer/Ware Shuttle & Quaboag Microtransit and the Amherst/Worcester Intercity route. The committee also received a report on service updates on the R14, Westfield State University, Agawam Senior Service and Hadley Senior Service.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to accept the report of the Route Committee.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Slaughter/O’Leary) to accept the report of the Route Committee.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked if the Board had any discussion. Hearing none; asked for a roll call vote to accept the report of the Route Committee.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam			
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown	Brian O’Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Mary Beth Dowd		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
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Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz		
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South Hadley	Michael Sullivan		
Springfield	Tasheena Davis		
Sunderland	Geoff Kravitz		
Ware	John Carroll		
West Springfield	Jim Czach		
Westfield			
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg			

Motion passed by a vote of 41.49, 14-0.

6. SERVICE UPDATES

R14: PVRTA modified the schedule on this route beginning on August 30, 2020 to provide more consistent service to Pheasant Hills Apartments and create overall efficiency in the route. While overall, this worked well, there were concerns regarding difficulty with some trips running behind schedule and the elimination of a stop at the Big-Y in West Springfield on certain trips. The schedule has been adjusted slightly to improve on-time performance and include a stop at Big-Y on all trips.

Agawam Senior Service: Working with the Agawam COA as part of our Beyond ADA program, we are in the process of implementing additional service aimed at providing a limited "circulator" route in Agawam that will provide more regular service to seniors and other members of the community.

The proposed route will provide service along a route running from Main Street to Walnut and High Streets, then traveling along Suffield Street and terminating at the Geisslers Plaza. This route will provide consistent service in a limited area without the need to schedule trips in advance. It could improve access to banking, medical appointments, shopping, etc. from assisted living facilities, apartment complexes and other points in the community. This route will provide connections with the existing R14 service. In time, we anticipate adding a microtransit component to this route.

Westfield State University: The future of service on campus with both the OWL Shuttle and the 10S is uncertain due to the pandemic and budget concerns at WSU.

Hadley Senior Service: We are implementing a smaller circulator type service with the Hadley COA as part of the Beyond ADA project. This circulator would provide regular access along a limited route on the Route 9 corridor from the intersection of University Drive and Route 9 to the Mount Farms Mall. This would allow seniors in town, the majority of whom access the service from Windfield Estates and Hawkins Meadows Apartments just off Route 9, to access shopping and medical trips. This service will provide connections with the existing fixed route service in the area.

Palmer Ware Shuttle & Quaboag Microtransit: PVRTA and the Quaboag Connector have received funding to acquire scheduling software for the Quaboag region that will allow us to integrate portions of our system in the Palmer/Ware area with Quaboag's to coordinate service and provide more effective transit solutions. This partnership will allow us to enhance service in the area, including resuming a second circulator operated by Quaboag Connector. Hulmes will operate a redefined deviated fixed-route circulator in Palmer and provide more frequent connections to Springfield both at Union Station and the Eastfield Mall area of Springfield. Once the scheduling software is installed, we will initiate a microtransit option in the region. This will allow for the scheduling of same-day trips and provide access to transit for riders who live within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of the fixed route. Because these changes will likely impact the number of service hours and miles significantly, public hearings will need to be held in the area. We are requesting authorization from the Advisory Board to conduct a public hearing for this route.

Amherst/Worcester Intercity Service: PVRTA has been informed that it will receive funding to implement a new route that will directly connect the PVRTA service area and the WRTA and the MBTA Union Station in Worcester. PVRTA and Quaboag Connector will partner to operate this route. Quaboag will operate the route with PVRTA providing the vehicle and providing maintenance support and garaging. The route will begin in the Amherst Center and end at Union Station in Worcester with stops in most town centers in each community along the Route 9 corridor from Amherst to Worcester. This route will operate as a commuter route with a different fare structure than typical PVRTA routes. Fares on this route are proposed to range from \$3.50 to \$9.00 depending on the origin and destination. Because this is a new route, public hearings will need to be held in the

area. We are requesting authorization from the Advisory Board to conduct a public hearing for this route as well.

7. APPROVAL TO HOLD PUBLIC HEARINGS ON PALMER/WARE SHUTTLE & QUABOAG MICROTRANSIT AND AMHERST/WORCESTER INTERCITY ROUTE

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to hold public hearings on the Palmer/Ware Shuttle & Quaboag Microtransit and the Amherst/Worcester Intercity Route.

Motion: Moved and seconded (O’Leary/Slaughter) to hold public hearings on the Palmer/Ware Shuttle & Quaboag Microtransit and the Amherst/Worcester Intercity Route.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked if the Board had any discussion. Hearing none; asked for a roll call vote to hold public hearings on the Palmer/Ware Shuttle & Quaboag Microtransit and the Amherst/Worcester Intercity Route.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam			
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown	Brian O’Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Mary Beth Dowd		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
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Springfield	Tasheena Davis		
Sunderland	Geoff Kravitz		
Ware	John Carroll		
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Williamsburg			

Motion passed by a vote of 41.49, 14-0.

8. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER REPORT

Chief Financial Officer, Lisa Seymour, reported the following on PVTA’s Budget to Actual:

Revenue

- Farebox Revenue is down due to lower than normal ridership associated with COVID
- School Passes: Most schools are conducting remote learning. Holyoke Community College purchased 2,000 tickets for the Fall semester on the new mobile ticket app.
- Operating Subsidy: Other Grants will even out by end of year.
- Federal Operating Grants: TrAMS just reopened at the beginning of November. PVTA is awaiting approval of the grants. Once that is done, PVTA can bill for the ADA and PM operating funds.

Expenses

Paratransit:

- NEXT trips are down significantly due to the effects of COVID on ridership. The current agreement is based on a higher negotiated trip cost to ensure driver retention.
- COA- Northampton did not provide service for July and August. September through November was provided through our paratransit provider on their behalf due to COVID and billed accordingly.
- Hadley was not on the original budget as the service just began. This service is billed as part of the Other Operating Subsidy - Beyond ADA as reflected in the budget.
- Fuel: Less service being operated because of the effects of COVID.
- Maintenance on the vans is under budget as less trips means less mileage.

Fixed Route:

- SATCo/VATCo have lower costs due to school trippers and service to colleges/universities not operational due to remote learning.
- UMASS has lower costs associated with limited service associated with remote learning at the Five Colleges.
- Maintenance Recovery will even out as SATCo catches up on billing.

9. DIRECTOR OF TRANSIT OPERATIONS REPORT

Director of Transit Operations, Paul Burns, reported the following:

Systemwide ridership continues to remain relatively stable. However, there have been some small declines at times due to the recent surge in the pandemic. Paratransit ridership has followed a similar trend. Systemwide, fixed-route ridership is at about 38% of prior-year levels, with paratransit operating at about 48%.

According to its By-Laws adopted last April by the Paratransit Riders Council, some members' initial terms will be ending March 31, 2021. As outlined in their bylaws, members will need to be selected by the community they serve.

Ridership on the Beyond ADA Council on Aging partnership continues. Ridership has been down slightly due to the resurgence of the pandemic, although this program served over 600 riders in December or about 50% of pre-pandemic levels.

10. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator, Sandra Sheehan, reported the following:

After going back and forth on the State Budget including vetoes by the Governor and override votes by the Legislature, RTAs ended with \$94 Million. \$90.5M distributed to the RTAs. \$87M to be distributed using the old formula and \$3.5M distributed through a new formula based on ridership, population of member communities and service area coverage. The \$3.5 balance of the appropriation funds are to be distributed by Mass DOT as discretionary grants.

The Transportation Bond Bill that was passed by the legislature was modified by the Governor. The Governor took out a new Transit Authority Fund and the implementation of a low-income fare program.

The Federal Stimulus Relief Package is for \$344M for Massachusetts, most of the money is going to the MBTA and some RTAs. PVTA is not included in this distribution.

At the RTA Council, the Secretary indicated that RTAs are in a position where service cuts or fare increases do not need to be on the table due to both the state and federal funds.

Overall, fixed-route ridership in calendar year 2020 was 54% of ridership in calendar year 2019, with SATCo at 61%, VATCo at 52% and UMass at 38%.

FY21 Community Transit Grant (CTGP) Program: PVTA received a \$213,990 grant award for mobility management and Beyond ADA Operating Assistance

The MassDOT BusPlus Mobile Fare Payment App launched in July 2020, continues to be successful with minimum issues. There were over 1,000 daily mobile ticket activations in November and December. The program is expanding to include the Valley Pass business partners with 16 agencies.

Capital Side progress continues with:

- Northampton and UMass: Bus washing system and Electrical bus charges
- Paving project at UMass: The construction phase is anticipated to be from April 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021.
- Improvements at Cottage/Robbins Road: The project is currently scheduled to be advertised for construction in 2021 with construction following in 2022.
- Placed order for 12 diesel buses and 8 electric buses.

PVTA worked with MassLive to set up coverage on PVTA drivers and maintenance during the pandemic. "In the shadow of the frontline" MassLive article is included in your packet on page 54.

11. NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz reported that there is no new business to discuss.

12. OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz reported that there is no old business to discuss.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Moved and seconded (O'Leary/Gold) to adjourn.


Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked if the Board had any discussion. Hearing none; asked for a roll call vote to adjourn.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam			
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown	Brian O'Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
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Westfield			
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg			

Motion passed by a vote of 41.49, 14-0.

The meeting of the Advisory Board adjourned at 12:45 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD

ATTEST: 
BRANDY PELLETIER

Documents filed with Board Meeting packet:

- Roll Call Votes
- Regular Advisory Board Minutes of 11-18-2020

MINUTES APPROVED ON: March 24, 2021