
**MINUTES OF PVTA'S
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
November 17, 2021**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Advisory Board Meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Wednesday, November 17, 2021, at 12:00 P.M. 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 (46.49 votes)</u>	<u>Not Present (15.51 votes)</u>
Agawam	Michael Squindo	
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter	
Belchertown	Brian O'Leary	
Chicopee	Steve Huntley	
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler	
Easthampton		Nicole LaChapelle
Granby		Glen Sexton
Hadley		David Moskin
Hampden	Becky Moriarty	
Holyoke	Aaron Vega	
Leverett		Peter D'Errico
Longmeadow		Mark Gold
Ludlow		Derek DeBarge
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz	
Palmer	Benjamin Hood	
Pelham		David Shanabrook
South Hadley		Michael Sullivan
Springfield	Tim Sheehan	
Sunderland		Geoff Kravitz
Ware	John Carroll	
West Springfield	Allyson Manuel	
Westfield	Peter Miller	
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord	
Williamsburg		J.M. Sorrell
ADA Representative		Vacant
Rider Representative		Vacant

A quorum of 31.01 votes being present, Chairman of the Advisory Board, Mayor David Narkewicz, called the remote meeting of PVTA's Advisory Board to order at 12:05 PM; majority vote of 46.49 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 September 22, 2021, Regular Advisory Board Meeting.

Motion: Moved and seconded (O’Leary/Squindo) to approve the meeting minutes from the September 22, 2021, 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	Michael Squindo		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown	Brian O’Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke	Aaron Vega		
Leverett			
Longmeadow			
Ludlow			
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz		
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham			
South Hadley			
Springfield	Tim Sheehan		
Sunderland			
Ware	John Carroll		
West Springfield	Allyson Manuel		
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg			
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 46.49.

4. PVTA’S PUBLIC TRANSIT AGENCY SAFETY PLAN: APPROVAL OF THE PTASP PROGRAM UPDATE

Paul Burns, Director of Transit Operations, reported on PVTA’s Public Transit Agency Safety Plan and stated the following:

PVTA’s Safety Committee is responsible for reviewing PVTA’s Public Transit Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) and meets regularly throughout the year to review the PTASP and monitor safety concerns. As part of this process, the safety committee conducts an annual review with a focus on the answering the following three questions.

1. Does the Agency Safety Plan address all relevant requirements?
2. Does the Agency Safety Plan reflect PVTA’s transit system as it operates today?
3. Are the activities and processes described in the plan suitable to manage safety at PVTA?

In reviewing the plan for 2022, the answer to these questions was yes, with two exceptions: the addition of a new paratransit vendor and fixed route service provider. As a result, the PTASP has been updated to reflect these changes. The most substantive change is a revision to pages 25 and 26 which outlines the responsibilities specific to MV Transportation’s Safety Officer. The transition from First Transit to DGR has involved no significant procedural or process changes. Changes to this version of the PTASP correlate to the paratransit transition with changing the name from First Transit to DGR. Other changes have occurred on page 22 replacing National Express with MV Transportation and Identifying MV as a PVTA contractor and on page 54 which assigns responsibility for review of safety performance to support continuous improvement to each operator.

In addition, changes were made to the “Performance Monitoring Deadlines” on page 52 of the PTASP and to TAM investments (Figure 6 on page 56).

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked if the Board had any questions or comments on PVTA’s PTASP. Hearing none, Chairman Narkewicz asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to approve PVTA’s Public Transit Agency Safety Plan Program Update.

Motion: Moved by Brian O’Leary and seconded by Ben Hood to approve PVTA’s Public Transit Agency Safety Plan Program Update.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked if the Board had any discussion. Hearing none; asked for a roll call vote to approve PVTA’s Public Transit Agency Safety Plan Program Update.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam	Michael Squindo		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown	Brian O’Leary		
Chicopee			
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke	Aaron Vega		
Leverett			
Longmeadow			

Ludlow	
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz
Palmer	Benjamin Hood
Pelham	
South Hadley	
Springfield	Tim Sheehan
Sunderland	
Ware	John Carroll
West Springfield	Allyson Manuel
Westfield	Peter Miller
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord
Williamsburg	
ADA Representative	
Rider Representative	

Motion passed by a vote of 41.97.

5. PVTA’S PUBLIC TRANSIT AGENCY SAFETY PLAN: APPROVAL OF THE PTASP SAFETY TARGETS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2022

Paul Burns, Director of Transit Operations, reported on PVTA’s Public Transit Agency Safety Plan Targets:

PTASP Safety Targets 2022

Category	Target
Fatalities	0
Incapacitating Injuries	0
Miles Between Breakdowns	
Fixed Route	20,000
Paratransit	24,500
Preventable Accidents per 100,000 miles	
Fixed Route	2.0
Paratransit	0.8

Mr. O’Leary asked what the process was to determine miles between breakdowns. Mr. Burns described the process as the number of revenue miles traveled in a given time frame divided by the number of breakdowns in that same time frame.

Mr. Squindo asked why there was only a target set for incapacitating injuries and not one for all injuries. Mr. Burns explained there were concerns with quantifying the data for some years and that this has been discussed as a target beginning in 2023 once more consistently quantifiable recent data is available.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked if there were any other comments or questions. Hearing none, Chairman Narkewicz asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to approve the PTASP Safety Targets for Year 2022.

Motion: Moved and seconded (O’Leary/Squindo) to approve PVTA’s Public Transit Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) Safety Targets for Year 2022.

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

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam	Michael Squindo		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown	Brian O’Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
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Motion passed by a vote of 46.49.

6. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER REPORT

Chief Financial Officer, Lisa Seymour, reported the following:

PVTA’s FY 22, 3-Month Budget to Actual as of September 30, 2021

Revenue:

Fares are down due to recovering from the pandemic. We also used the grant funded Valley Pass program to allow free fares on newly implemented routes to try and encourage ridership on the G73 Brennan Express, the Amherst to Worcester Intercity Route and the Ware/Palmer Shuttle for the month of September.

The School Passes have not been billed yet as the contracts are still being finalized.

Interest and Insurance recoveries are up significantly due to claims recovery due from NEXT upon completing the contract.

The Other Subsidy Grants are billed periodically through the year as well as UMASS and Five Colleges which are a large amount of this line item. These are not finalized until the end of the year.

Expenses:

Administration is down due to new employees that did not qualify for pension and others that elected to not take health insurance which is a considerable cost savings. We allow a percentage of the budget in this line item in anticipation of employees electing to take insurance throughout the year.

Paratransit expenses are reflective of the number of trips that have been provided, as well as a first-year negotiation of the new Paratransit vendor.

Northampton notified PVRTA that it will no longer participate in the Beyond ADA program for FY22 due to issues related to the pandemic. Residents are being served as part of PVRTA's Dial-A-Ride Paratransit program.

Williamsburg trips have increased which accounts for the budget overage. This cost can be absorbed by the Northampton line item.

Fuel for both Paratransit and Fixed Route are down due to the reduced trips being performed.

UMASS expenses are down due to the reduction in service for the Summer. This is anticipated to increase as the students are on campus again. UMASS is also operating reduced frequency on some of their routes.

Maintenance Recovery for Fixed Route is down due to the reduction of trips in paratransit service.

7. DIRECTOR OF TRANSIT OPERATIONS REPORT

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

Fixed Route ridership across much of PVRTA's system increased significantly with the return of in-person education in our service area.

UMass Transit experienced the most significant increase in ridership.

VATCo's ridership increased significantly as well.

SATCo's ridership increased slightly

September ridership in total was 60% of September 2019

Paratransit ridership continues to increase steadily. By the end of October, paratransit ridership had increased to 60% of pre-pandemic levels.

As previously discussed, we will need to adjust the R10 routing on East Mountain Road as our newer vehicles will not be able to service this portion of the route due to height restrictions on the bridge at the beginning of East Mountain Road. We anticipate ending service to this portion of the route with fixed route vehicles by the end of March 2022. This portion of the route has very low ridership with only 61 total boards and alights between January and September, averaging 1 every 4.47 days. We will be conducting informal virtual listening sessions and will be assessing the most effective means of providing service to the affected passengers on East Mountain Road.

In response to the current staffing challenges, we have implemented the following service adjustments:

VATCO (effective date 11/1/2021)

Route Affected	Change
R44, 39E	Will operate between 7AM -7PM only
B48	B48 frequency changes from every 30 min to hourly (on the hour)
B43	B43 reduce freq. to every 30 min between 7AM and 1PM

SATCO (effective date 12/12/2021)

Route Affected	Change
T23, T24, T5	Consolidation of school trippers, including replacing some trippers
T1, T3, T20	with modified service on fixed routes in the appropriate areas
G2E	Suspension of service on this route in its entirety
B6	Frequency reduction from every 20 minutes to every 30
B7	Frequency reduction from every 15 minutes to every 20
X90	Changed to hourly service with some reduction in frequency

MV (Effective 11/1/2021)

ADA trips are being prioritized with Dial-A-Ride trips being subject to daily caps as needed to ensure ADA trips are not missed. We are also temporarily suspending the NOHO Senior Shuttle's same day service and redesigning Survival Center trips to enhance efficiency.

8. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Sandra Sheehan reported the following:

The Senate and the House overrode the Governor's veto on RTA funding. The FY22 budget is \$94,000,000 for operating assistance for the RTAs with distribution not less than last year's (\$90.5M) and the additional \$3.5M is to be distributed based on a formula that uses 60/30/10 (ridership/population/service area). Ridership is based on the most recent NTD ridership data.

On the Federal side, the House passed a \$1 trillion bill on November 5th and the President signed it last week.

This is the largest investment in American infrastructure in decades and includes a turning point for transit. This bill, if approved, will increase PVRTA's urbanized area apportionment from \$13.1M to \$14.3M in FY21 and to \$18.4M in FY23. This is an increase to communities across the country by an average of 30%.

The bill has key priorities including:

- Safety: enhance safety programs
- Modernization: repairing and upgrading aging transit infrastructure and modernizing bus and rail fleet including expanding access to high-speed internet services
- Climate: Funding climate resilient initiatives replacing transit vehicles, including buses and ferries, with cleaner, greener vehicles.
- Equity: improve transit service for communities that have limited access to transit and provide for substantial upgrades to accessibility.

We are managing as best as possible the impacts of a national staffing shortage. Finding the right balance between the need to provide reliable and safe access to the residents of the communities we serve with the available staffing levels has been a very difficult and painful exercise. We never want to reduce service but how the team came together to tackle this issue and the methodology used to identify these changes has been very encouraging.

We have changed the way we recruit. A driver training program has been implemented. CDL training is to be provided for individuals in the driver training program. SATCo has partnered with United Trucking for CDL classes. PVTA has partnered with the City of Springfield and MassHires to create a pipeline of potential drivers. We had a meeting with MV on Friday to discuss recruiting options. PVTA staff is working on a marketing campaign that includes digital media to assist with recruiting of employees.

PVTA staff and the contracting agencies have been working to prioritize the capital needs of the Authority. This information will be used to prepare PVTA's Capital Improvement Plan for the next five years taking into consideration PVTA's Transit Asset Management Plan (TAM) and the PVTA's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan. PVTA will be submitting this information to MassDOT by mid-December and to the MPO for public participation and approval.

PVTA has taken delivery of eight new electric buses from New Flyer. These buses have the same color scheme as the regular buses with an identifying decal on the side indicating their electric status. These buses were funded with VW Mitigating Funds. For the first time, an electric bus has been assigned to the Northampton Transit Garage and another to the Amherst Transit Garage. Those two facilities are now equipped with electric charging stations. PVTA plans to purchase up to eight additional electric buses in January and will be replacing supervisory vehicles with hybrid electric vehicles.

9. NEW BUSINESS

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

10. OLD BUSINESS

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

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked for a motion to adjourn.

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

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

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam	Michael Squindo		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown	Brian O’Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
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Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg			
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 41.55.

The meeting of the Advisory Board adjourned at 1:02 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD

ATTEST: _____
SANDRA SHEEHAN

Documents filed with Board Meeting packet:

- Roll Call Votes
- Regular Advisory Board Minutes of 9-22-2021
- PVT Agency Safety Plan

Minutes Approved: January 19, 2022