
**MINUTES OF PVTA'S
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
January 19, 2022**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Advisory Board Meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Wednesday, January 19, 2022, 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 (44.78 votes)</u> | <u>Not Present (17.22 votes)</u> |
|----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Agawam | | Michael Squindo |
| Amherst | Douglas Slaughter | |
| Belchertown | Brian O'Leary | |
| Chicopee | Steve Huntley | |
| East Longmeadow | Erin Koebler | |
| Easthampton | | Mayor Nicole LaChapelle |
| Granby | | Glen Sexton |
| Hadley | David Moskin | |
| Hampden | Becky Moriarty | |
| Holyoke | Gloria Caballero-Roca | |
| Leverett | | Peter D'Errico |
| Longmeadow | Mark Gold | |
| Ludlow | | Derek DeBarge |
| Northampton | Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra | |
| 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, Vice Chairman of the Advisory Board, Douglas Slaughter, called the remote meeting of PVTA's Advisory Board to order at 12:11 PM; majority vote of 44.78 present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice Chairman Slaughter asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to approve the meeting minutes from the November 17, 2021, Regular Advisory Board Meeting.

Motion: Moved and seconded (O'Leary/Sorrell) to approve the meeting minutes from the November 17, 2021, Regular Advisory Board Meeting.

Vice Chairman Slaughter 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 | Erin Koebler | | |
| Easthampton | | | |
| Granby | | | |
| Hadley | David Moskin | | |
| Hampden | Becky Moriarty | | |
| Holyoke | | | Gloria Caballero-Roca |
| Leverett | | | |
| Longmeadow | Mark Gold | | |
| Ludlow | | | |
| Northampton | | | |
| Palmer | Benjamin Hood | | |
| Pelham | | | |
| South Hadley | | | |
| Springfield | Tim Sheehan | | |
| Sunderland | | | |
| Ware | John Carroll | | |
| West Springfield | | | |
| Westfield | Peter Miller | | |
| Wilbraham | | | |
| Williamsburg | J.M. Sorrell | | |
| ADA Representative | | | |
| Rider Representative | | | |

Motion passed by a vote of 37.36 with one abstention.

4. REPORT OF THE FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

Doug Slaughter, Chairman of the Finance & Audit Committee, reported that the Committee met remotely on Tuesday, January 18, 2022. The Committee received a detailed 5-Month Budget to Actual Report from Chief Financial Officer, Lisa Seymour. The Committee voted to approve the minutes of September 20, 2021 and voted to approve PVTA's FY 22 Budget Amendment and recommend adoption to the full Board.

PVTA's FY22 Amended Budget is reflective of an additional \$3.5 million in State Contract Assistance that was awarded to the RTA's. PVTA's share of that award is \$939,567.

This Budget also includes newly awarded Mobility Management and Beyond ADA operating carryover funds from FY21 that are awarded at 100% rather than the usual 50% operating award.

The expenses for the communities participating in the Beyond ADA Program increased to accommodate the 100% funding level.

The Brennan Express, Northampton to Springfield via the Holyoke Mall grant award is also reflected on this budget.

These awards decrease the amount of funds required from the CARES Act to balance the budget.

The Advertising budget was increased by \$5,000 to better reflect the ending revenue in FY21 of \$242,939 according to the audited financial statements.

Vice Chairman Slaughter asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to accept the report of the Finance & Audit Committee.

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

Vice Chairman Slaughter 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 | | | |
| Amherst | Douglas Slaughter | | |
| Belchertown | Brian O'Leary | | |
| Chicopee | Steve Huntley | | |
| East Longmeadow | Erin Koebler | | |
| Easthampton | | | |
| Granby | | | |
| Hadley | David Moskin | | |
| Hampden | Becky Moriarty | | |
| Holyoke | Gloria Caballero-Roca | | |
| Leverett | | | |
| Longmeadow | Mark Gold | | |
| Ludlow | | | |
| Northampton | | | |

| | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Palmer | Benjamin Hood |
| Pelham | |
| South Hadley | |
| Springfield | Tim Sheehan |
| Sunderland | |
| Ware | John Carroll |
| West Springfield | |
| Westfield | Peter Miller |
| Wilbraham | |
| Williamsburg | J.M. Sorrell |
| ADA Representative | |
| Rider Representative | |

Motion passed by a vote of 44.78.

5. APPROVAL OF PVTA'S FY22 BUDGET AMENDMENT

Vice Chairman Slaughter asked the Board if there were any questions on PVTA's FY22 Budget Amendment. Hearing none, Vice Chairman Slaughter asked for a roll call vote to approve PVTA's FY22 Budget Amendment.

| | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | <u>Abstained</u> |
|------------------|------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Agawam | | | |
| Amherst | | Douglas Slaughter | |
| Belchertown | | Brian O'Leary | |
| Chicopee | | Steve Huntley | |
| East Longmeadow | | Erin Koebler | |
| Easthampton | | | |
| Granby | | | |
| Hadley | | David Moskin | |
| Hampden | | Becky Moriarty | |
| Holyoke | | Gloria Caballero-Roca | |
| Leverett | | | |
| Longmeadow | | Mark Gold | |
| Ludlow | | | |
| Northampton | | | |
| Palmer | | Benjamin Hood | |
| Pelham | | | |
| South Hadley | | | |
| Springfield | | Tim Sheehan | |
| Sunderland | | | |
| Ware | | John Carroll | |
| West Springfield | | | |
| Westfield | | Peter Miller | |
| Wilbraham | | | |
| Williamsburg | | J.M. Sorrell | |

Motion passed by a vote of 44.78.

6. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICERS REPORT

Chief Financial Officer, Lisa Seymour, reported that she had no further information to report unless the Board had any questions.

7. DIRECTOR OF TRANSIT OPERATIONS REPORT

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

Fixed Route Ridership: Systemwide December 2021 ridership was at 448,000, up significantly from 296,000 in 2020, although still not recovered to 724,000 from 2019.

December ridership by operator was as follows:

- SATCo 269,000
- UMass 131,000
- VATCo 47,000

While December ridership was lower than October and November, this is a normal (non-covid) seasonal ridership decline similar to what we saw in the fall of 2019. UMass and VATCo showed a decrease in ridership from November to December. At the same time, SATCo ridership remained steady at about 270,000.

While paratransit ridership had been steadily recovering to just over 60% of pre-pandemic levels through the month of October, ridership declined slightly by the end of December to 56.1% of pre-pandemic levels. This is largely due to normal seasonal ridership variations.

Service Updates: 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. While the impact is on a relatively small number of riders and thus does not require public hearings, we will be conducting a virtual listening session on January 27, 2022 to solicit feedback from affected parties. We will also be distributing surveys on the route and at the hospital to assess the impact of this change on passengers in the area.

PVTA has implemented some service adjustments related to the staffing shortage:

VATCO (effective date 11/1/2021):

| Route Affected | Change |
|-----------------------|---|
| R44, R41, 39E | Will operate between 7 AM -7 PM only |
| B48 | B48 frequency changes from every 30 min to hourly (on the hour) |
| B43 | B43 reduce freq. to every 30 min between 7 AM and 1 PM |

SATCO (effective date 12/12/2021):

| Route Affected | Change |
|-----------------------------|--|
| T23, T24, T5 T1, T3, T20 | Consolidation of school trippers, including replacing some trippers 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.

2022 Community Transit Grant (CTGP) Program:

Beyond ADA Operating Assistance: This grant continues the program implemented previously with several area Councils on Aging, with the exception of the program in Northampton which ceased in 2021. The grant will fund the continued operation of those programs and provide funds to expand the program to Ware. While we had requested \$201,500.00 in funding, we were only awarded \$150,000.00. This will allow us to level fund existing programs while adding services in Ware. This program requires a 50% local funding match.

Travel Training: This grant will continue the current program and continues funding for a second travel trainer. We had requested \$108,240.00 for this program and were awarded those funds. This program is subject to a 20% funding match.

Buy Replacement Van: We were awarded \$886,536.00 to purchase fourteen (14) Type-E vehicles to replace aging paratransit vans.

8. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Sandra Sheehan reported the following:

MassDOT issued the report to the Legislature on the Performance of the Regional Transit Authorities for FY21. This report provides comprehensive information on how the 15 RTAs have addressed the changes in travel patterns during the pandemic. As you know, MassDOT and each RTA signed an MOU on Ridership and Performance, not surprising, none of the RTAs met its ridership targets for FY21. The report indicates that ridership reflects serving essential workers who continued working in person throughout the pandemic and those who are primarily low income who rely on the bus system to access jobs, medical appointments, and retail.

MARTA held a meeting on December 20th with Secretary Tessler to discuss the workforce shortage and the budget for FY23. MassDOT is working with the Office of Performance Management and Innovation (OPMI) and the RTAs on a research project that takes a deeper dive into the workforce issue, in particular the hiring and retention problems facing both the MBTA and the RTAs. This research project includes conducting a survey or questionnaire to inform the research. The findings from the research will be reported at the January 27th RTA Council meeting.

The RTAs for FY23 have requested an amount of \$101M in State Contract Assistance (SCA) in accordance with the RTA Task Force. This includes a base of \$94M with an increase of \$3.5M in

lieu of CPI recognizing inflation has increased substantially and its greatly affecting fuel prices, fluids, parts, all insurance coverage, and all other expenses associated with operations. An additional \$3.5M is being requested to address workforce retention and development. This will allow each RTA to implement strategies to meet the current needs now and into the future. This includes, CDL training, passenger designation training, wages during training, testing fees, recruiting activities, promotional materials, etc.

There are not enough workers to keep the systems running at normal levels. Labor shortages are plaguing public transportation systems in nearly every city in the country, disrupting critical support systems and complicating the recovery of the public transit industry that has struggled with ridership during the pandemic. This is raising new challenges for all the systems on how best to deliver service to changing travel patterns but, with the need to continue to serve those who rely on the bus system. PVTA staff, working with PVPC, is constantly monitoring ridership trends and travel patterns to be responsive to the needs of our communities.

PVTA has adopted the revised CDC recommendations which reduced isolation time from 10 days to 5 days for those who test positive with asymptomatic or resolving COVID symptoms. After that time, they're required to wear a mask when around others for five additional days. PVTA has continued to provide COVID-19 testing for employees at the Cottage Street facility with the intent of preventing further service reductions. PVTA continues to closely monitor staffing levels.

PVTA and its contracted operators have been closely following the development regarding the OSHA vaccination requirement for large employers. On January 13th, the US Supreme Court blocked the Biden Administration from enforcing the requirement that employees at large businesses be vaccinated against COVID-19 or undergo weekly testing and wear a mask on the job.

Triennial Review documents are due on the 21st. Staff has been working these past few weeks gathering the data and requested documents.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Vice Chairman Slaughter reported that there is no new business to discuss.

10. OLD BUSINESS

Vice Chairman Slaughter reported that there is no old business to discuss.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chairman Slaughter asked for a motion to adjourn.

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

Vice Chairman Slaughter 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 | | | |
| Amherst | Douglas Slaughter | | |
| Belchertown | Brian O'Leary | | |
| Chicopee | Steve Huntley | | |

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| East Longmeadow | Erin Koebler |
| Easthampton | |
| Granby | |
| Hadley | David Moskin |
| Hampden | Becky Moriarty |
| Holyoke | Gloria Caballero-Roca |
| Leverett | |
| Longmeadow | Mark Gold |
| Ludlow | |
| Northampton | |
| Palmer | Benjamin Hood |
| Pelham | |
| South Hadley | |
| Springfield | Tim Sheehan |
| Sunderland | |
| Ware | |
| West Springfield | |
| Westfield | Peter Miller |
| Wilbraham | |
| Williamsburg | J.M. Sorrell |
| ADA Representative | |
| Rider Representative | |

Motion passed by a vote of 44.10.

The meeting of the Advisory Board adjourned at 12:48 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD

ATTEST: _____
BRANDY PELLETIER

Documents filed with Board Meeting packet:

- Roll Call Votes
- Regular Advisory Board Minutes of 11-17-21

MINUTES APPROVED: March 23, 2022