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**MINUTES OF PVTA'S  
PARATRANSIT COMMITTEE MEETING  
November 12, 2019**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Paratransit Committee of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority held a meeting on Tuesday, November 12, 2019 at 10:00 AM at the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority Administration Office located at 2808 Main Street in Springfield, MA.

**PRESENT:**

Members: Brian O'Leary, Belchertown; Carolyn Brennan, East Longmeadow; Paula Dubord, Wilbraham; Steve Huntley, Chicopee; Mark Gold, Longmeadow;

**NOT PRESENT:**

Becky Moriarty, Hampden;

A quorum being present, Chairman of the Paratransit Committee, Steve Huntley called the meeting to order at 10:11 A.M.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments were made.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chairman Huntley asked for a motion from the Paratransit Committee to approve the meeting minutes of April 5, 2018.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (Dubord/O'Leary) to approve the meeting minutes of April 5, 2018.

Chairman Huntley asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for all those in favor to say aye.

Mark Gold abstained.

Motion passed by a majority vote.

**4. ADA OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES**

Paul Burns, Director of Transit Operations, stated that our paratransit contractor, National Express Transit (NEXT), has recently had a change in management at their decision. The new management

team has been working to address identified deficiencies and to make sure ongoing plans for improvement are in place.

Among the deficiencies noted were some issues with inconsistent on time performance, as well as issues with missed trips and cancellations. The root of these issues is primarily the result of lackluster recruiting and onboarding of drivers. To help resolve issues, NEXT has implemented a streamlined hiring and onboarding process that, while still ensuring only qualified applicants are hired, has also allowed the hiring process to move more quickly and efficiently.

NEXT has a structured safety program and uses Drive-Cam to monitor drivers for braking too fast, speeding, being on the phone, not wearing their safety vest, etc. and these violations are enough to let a driver go. NEXT insures the vehicles and they have a zero-tolerance policy.

PVTA has asked NEXT to be more transparent and pro-active in notifying passengers if they are going to be late so passengers are not waiting for extended periods of time. Bi-weekly meetings are held with NEXT to address staffing levels and any service issues that arise.

## **5. FORMATION OF PARATRANSIT RIDER'S COUNCIL**

Paul Burns stated that the first meeting of the Paratransit Rider's Council (PRC) was held on October 23, 2019. Members of the council represent a wide range of riders throughout the region. The Council has drafted bylaws and the council's primary focus as noted in the mission statement will be *"To provide a forum for paratransit riders to provide regular input to the PVTA and encourage positive change in the paratransit service with a goal of finding solutions to accessibility and rideability in the community."*

The Council's membership includes 15 representatives from the paratransit rider community who live throughout our service area and who also use the service for a variety of purposes. We are hopeful that this committee can help us to provide an even stronger rider focus and ensure that the service we provide continues to meet the diverse needs of the rider community

## **6. OUTREACH TO VISUALLY IMPAIRED PASSENGERS**

Paul Burns stated to more effectively reach out to paratransit riders with visual impairments for meeting notices and service bulletins, we are developing an email notification system in the hopes of providing more timely notification to this subset of riders. While our notification system works well for most riders, the system often provides limited notice to visually impaired riders. We believe that providing email notification to these riders will allow them greater notice of meetings, service changes, and any issues as they arise and allow them to access our system more effectively.

## **7. MASSDOT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

Sandra Sheehan, PVTA Administrator: MassDOT and PVTA have agreed to performance measures with goals set for FY20 and for FY21. PVTA staff as well as the operators' staff is committed to meeting the set goals. PVTA signed the MOU on August 14<sup>th</sup> that includes the following performance targets:

- Ridership
- Customer Service and Satisfaction
- Asset Management
- Financial Performance

For paratransit, some of the performance standards we are working to improve is our on-time performance, decrease the number of dropped calls and increase the number passengers per hour transported.

## **8. UPDATE ON 2840 MAIN STREET RENOVATION**

Sandra Sheehan stated that the former fixed-route bus operations and maintenance facility at 2840 Main Street will be restored and converted for use as a paratransit facility to allow PVTA's paratransit provider to move from their current leased building in early 2020. The current leased paratransit facility is undersized for operations and does not have indoor storage for the paratransit vans which will help with the longevity of the vehicles.

The garage requires upgrades to the HVAC/Air Handling System and new fire protection/CO monitoring systems to accommodate gas powered paratransit vehicle maintenance in the building as well as certain building code upgrades and removal of leaky skylights in the bus maintenance garage.

## **9. PILOT PROGRAM UPDATE**

Sandra Sheehan stated that we are still waiting to hear on the Community Transit Grant Program. This grant was supposed to be released in October and has been delayed.

## **10. OTHER BUSINESS**

Chairman Huntley reported that there is no other business to discuss.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting of the Paratransit Committee adjourned (O'Leary/Gold) at 11:11 A.M.

**A TRUE RECORD**

ATTEST:

  
**BRANDY PELLETIER**

Documents filed with Paratransit Committee meeting packet:

- April 5, 2018 Paratransit Committee Minutes

**Minutes Approved: January 21, 2020**