

**MINUTES OF PVTA'S
ROUTE COMMITTEE MEETING
March 18, 2022**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Route Sub-Committee of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority Advisory Board met on Friday, March 18, 2022 at 9:30 AM 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.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Members: Brian O'Leary, Belchertown; Peter Miller, Westfield; J.M. Sorrell, Williamsburg; Benjamin Hood, Palmer;

NOT PRESENT: N/A

A quorum being present, Chairman of the Route Committee, Brian O'Leary, called the remote meeting of the Route Committee to order at 9:30 A.M.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were made.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 18, 2021

Chairman O'Leary asked for a motion from the Route Committee to approve the meeting minutes of May 18, 2021.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Miller/Sorrell) to approve the meeting minutes of May 18, 2021.

Chairman O'Leary asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for a roll call vote.

J.M. Sorrell: Yes
Peter Miller: Yes
Benjamin Hood: Yes
Brian O'Leary: Yes

Motion passed, 4-0 vote.

4. JOB CORPS SERVICE

Paul Burns, Director of Transit Operations stated the following:

Staff at Chicopee Job Corp has requested that PVRTA provide service to and from their facility on Johnson Road in Chicopee Monday through Friday at approximately 7:30am and 3:30pm to provide direct access to the facility for commuting students. They believe that there will be sufficient demand to support this service. They estimate up to 60 riders each morning and afternoon. PVRTA provided service to this location historically, but for various reasons, including low ridership and budget cuts, PVRTA has not provided service to this area in several years.

Job Corps staff initially requested that we "add a bus stop" at their facility. However, the nearest routes, the X90 and the G1 are approximately 1 and 2.6 miles away, respectively. Deviating either route this much will result in serious impacts on service. We have analyzed several potential options to provide this service to Job Corps which are included in your packet. The most cost-effective option from PVRTA's perspective is Holyoke Option 1. Option 1 provides access for students traveling from Union Station to Job Corps with a connection to the G1 and the X90 at Big Y in Chicopee. It also provides direct service from the Holyoke Transportation Center to Job Corps. This type of service is most similar to the school tripper service we provide for Holyoke and Springfield, which we usually request the communities pay for. However, because we have historically provided service in this area, as a good faith effort to assist Job Corp, we are proposing the PVRTA fund the service for up to a year to allow Job Corps time to find additional funding to support the service in the future.

Chairman O'Leary asked for a motion from the Route Committee to recommend to the Board approving service to Job Corps with service option 1: One bus that services HTC, Big Y, and Job Corps in a single trip for a pilot period of 180 days (academic year).

Motion: Moved and seconded (Sorrell/Miller) to recommend to the Board approving service to Job Corps with service option 1: One bus that services HTC, Big Y, and Job Corps in a single trip for a pilot period of 180 days (academic year).

Chairman O'Leary asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for a roll call vote.

J.M. Sorrell: Yes

Peter Miller: Yes

Benjamin Hood: Yes

Brian O'Leary: Yes

Motion passed, 4-0 vote.

5. R10 ROUTE CHANGES

Paul Burns reported the following:

We conducted an online survey to solicit input from passengers and the general public regarding eliminating service on East Mountain Road on the R10. We also held a virtual listening session on January 27, 2022 and distributed flyers at East Mountain View Senior Housing and Western Mass Hospital informing residents, visitors, employees, and others of ways to provide feedback.

We received a total of three phone calls with comments.

- Two of the three callers indicated concerns regarding the loss of the stop, but when informed that they would have the option to use Dial-A-Ride service, they found that an acceptable alternative.
- Each caller indicated that it was important to have a crosswalk placed at the end of East Mountain Road and Rt. 20.
- One caller indicated that they did not use the bus stop but thought it could be important for others in the complex.
- We received no comments from visitors, staff, or employees of Western Mass Hospital despite several phone calls and one visit on-site to distribute flyers.

We received 31 total responses to the online survey. The survey was distributed online via Facebook, on the Transit App, and advertised on flyers distributed to East Mountain View Senior Housing and Western Mass Hospital.

Respondents were asked five questions regarding service on East Mountain Road.

Q1: Do you use either of the bus stops at East Mountain View Senior Housing or Western Mass Hospital on East Mountain Road? All respondents answered this question. 64.5 % answered no, 22.5 % indicated they used the Senior Housing stop, and 13% indicated they used the stop at Western Mass Hospital.

Q2: How frequently do you use the R10 to travel to East Mountain Road? All respondents answered this question. 52% indicated they don't use it. 16% showed they use it once or twice per week, with another 16% indicating they use it more frequently. 10% said they used it once or twice per month, and 6% indicated they use it once every 2 or 3 weeks.

Q3: Asked respondents to indicate the impact on them. All respondents answered this question. 52% indicated there would be no impact, while 29% indicated a significant impact, and 19% indicated a slight impact.

Q4: Asked respondents how they would access the R10 when this portion of the route was eliminated? 29 of 31 respondents answered this question. 31% indicated that they would not be able to access the R10, 24% indicated they would walk to a stop on Route 20 another 24% indicated they would walk to the bus stop at Walmart. 21% indicated a variety of other responses that included:

- "same stop I always use,"
- "I will have to bike up this road,"
- "There is no crosswalk on route 20 to cross; it's not safe. Even if I wanted to pick up the bus at Walmart".
- 2 comments indicated there were no impacts for them, and an additional comment was inappropriate.

Q5: Asked respondents when they used these stops. 21 of 31 respondents answered this question. 52% indicated they used the stops before noon, 29% between noon and 2:00pm, and 19% after 2:00 pm.

Upon initial review, the survey seems to indicate that a small number of riders could be potentially facing a significant impact due to this change. Responses to question two indicate that the change would impact 17 people or 55% of respondents. However, comparing the responses to actual ridership trends indicates that the impact in the survey is significantly overstated. Actual boards and

alights on this portion of the R10 between January 1, 2022 and September 30, 2022, were 61. Based on survey responses, total boards and alights for the same time period would range between 800 and 1600. These numbers show that the survey overstates the potential impacts.

Recommendations:

Based on the total number of comments received (3) and putting the survey responses in context, the following actions are recommended to address riders who these changes may inconvenience.

- Cease servicing East Mountain Road effective 3/20/2022
- Increase awareness of the Dial-A-Ride option for East Mountain View Senior Housing residents
- Share concerns regarding crosswalks at East Mountain Road and Route 20 with MassDOT and the City of Westfield
- Reassess the impact on Western Mass Hospital three months after service change

Peter Miller: When improvements are made for this location, are we going to reconsider reviewing/re-instating service.

Sandra Sheehan: Gillig Buses can barely fit, and the Electric and New Flyer Buses do not fit under the underpass which is why we are looking to eliminate service to this section of the route.

Brian O’Leary: Is there an option to use a mini bus on this route a few times throughout the day.

Paul Burns: There is currently 1 rider every 4.5 days. The demand for service is not there. A bus goes up there 4 or 5 times a day with a Gillig Bus currently. This change does not affect 20% of riders in that route so no action is needed by the Board.

6. ROUTE UPDATE

Paul Burns reported the following:

The G73E has had over 5,000 monthly riders every month, with a peak of 6,702 riders on October 21, 2021. The B79 had 205 riders on February 22, 2021, the third-best month on record and the second-best for full-fare months.

B7 / B17: Several years ago, we stopped servicing the Eastfield Mall on Saturday evenings at the request of mall management. In response to customer requests, we reviewed the policy with mall management and have re-instated Saturday evening service to the Eastfield Mall effective February 19, 2021.

R14: Travel time on weekdays between Feeding Hills Center and West Springfield Big Y has been shortened by 2-3 minutes to improve schedule reliability.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman O’Leary reported that there is no other business to discuss.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman O’Leary asked for a motion from the Route Committee to adjourn.

MOTION: Moved and seconded (Sorrell/Miller) to adjourn.

Chairman O’Leary asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for a roll call vote.

J.M. Sorrell: Yes

Peter Miller: Yes

Benjamin Hood: Yes

Brian O’Leary: Yes

Motion passed, 4-0 vote.

The meeting of the PVTA Route Committee adjourned at 10:10 A.M.

A TRUE RECORD

ATTEST: _____
BRANDY PELLETIER

Documents filed with Route Committee meeting packet:

- May 18, 2021 Route Committee Minutes
- Job Corps Service Options

Minutes Approved: June 16, 2022