
**MINUTES OF PVTA'S
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
June 26, 2024**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Advisory Board Meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Wednesday, June 26, 2024, at 12:00 P.M. remotely in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, supplemental state budget provisions for Fiscal Year 2023, authorizing public bodies to continue to hold entirely remote meetings, or so-called “hybrid” meetings, upon the provision of “adequate, alternative means” of public access, until March 31, 2025.

	<u><i>Present (33.85 votes)</i></u>	<u><i>Not Present (28.15 votes)</i></u>
Agawam		Cindy Sullivan
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter	
Belchertown		Brian O’Leary
Chicopee		Steve Huntley
East Longmeadow		Erin Koebler
Easthampton		Cindy Tarail
Granby		Glen Sexton
Hadley		David Moskin
Hampden	Becky Moriarty	
Holyoke	Gloria Caballero-Roca	
Leverett		Tom Hankinson
Longmeadow	Mark Gold	
Ludlow		Derek DeBarge
Northampton		Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra
Palmer	Benjamin Hood	
Pelham	David Shanabrook	
South Hadley		Andrea Miles
Springfield	Timothy Sheehan	
Sunderland		Geoff Kravitz
Ware	Nancy Talbot	
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, Doug Slaughter, called the remote meeting of PVTA's Advisory Board to order at 12:05 PM; majority vote of 33.85 present.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chairman Slaughter asked if any members of the public would like to make a public comment on an agenda item.

No public comments were made.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion: Moved and seconded (Sorrell/Gold) to approve the meeting minutes from the May 22, 2024 Advisory Board Meeting.

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

Motion passed by a vote of 33.85.

4. **APPROVAL OF 2025 ADVISORY BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE**

Chairman Slaughter: The proposed 2025 meeting schedule was sent out with the Board Packet.

1. January 22, 2025
2. March 19, 2025
3. May 21, 2025
4. June 18, 2025
5. August 20, 2025
6. September 17, 2025
7. November 19, 2025

Motion: Moved and seconded (Sorrell/Gold) to approve PVRTA's Advisory Board Meeting Schedule for 2025.

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

Motion passed by a vote of 33.85.

5. **PARATRANSIT RIDER SURVEY PRESENTATION**

Alex Forrest, Manager of Planning & Analysis, reported the following:

Overall satisfaction with the service is high. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of those surveyed are satisfied or strongly satisfied with PVRTA Van service quality and value, consistent with the 2017 Paratransit survey.

Areas for improvement include more accessible ADA-related customer service. Both hearing and visually-impaired customer service satisfaction ranked below 65% satisfied or strongly satisfied. Riders are also less satisfied with the ADA application and interview. Aspects of the trip itself are also relatively lower in satisfaction (cost of the fare, 5-minute advance van arrival call, on-time within the 20-minute window, total travel time, and availability of trip times all fall around 75% satisfaction.) Notably, no area of the survey found total unsatisfied responses (including unsatisfied and strongly unsatisfied) greater than 14%.

Access to technology continues to grow for this population. In 2017 internet access reached about half those surveyed. That has grown to 60%. Smartphone adoption has grown from 40% in 2017 to 50% in 2023. Twenty-one percent (21%) of riders would feel very comfortable or comfortable with using an app.

6. DIRECTOR OF FINANCE REPORT

Lori Brodeur, Director of Finance reported on PVRTA's Budget to Actual:

Fixed Route Revenue is slightly over budget due to timing. Our budget amount is the annual amount, spread evenly throughout the year. June is completely fare free, so this will most likely end the year under budget.

Shuttle Revenue and Paratransit Revenue are both under budget. Some of this variance is due to the fare free program. Both will most likely finish the year under budget.

Total Fare Revenue ends slightly under budget for April. There will certainly be a larger variance at year end.

Miscellaneous Revenue includes Advertising, Interest on the investment account, insurance recoveries and some smaller non transportation items. Miscellaneous revenue is over budget by 53% due to an increase in advertising and very favorable interest rates.

Transportation Subsidies are under budget by 5 % due to \$2 Million in ARPA funds still to be drawn before year end and \$600K in Fare Free revenue for May and June. Transportation Subsidies should end the year on budget.

On the expenses side: Admin, Facilities, Services/Utilities:

Wages are under budget by \$160K due to open positions.

Fringe Benefits are under budget due to the \$1.25 Million budgeted to bring the pension to fully funded.

Service Expenses are slightly under budget. This includes janitorial, auditing, credit card service charges, temp employees, security etc.

Equipment/Maintenance is over budget by \$10K due to copier maintenance and A/C repair.

Supplies, Utilities and Insurance are all slightly under budget.

Lease and Cam charges are over budget by around 12% due to fluctuations in utility costs.

Debt on Short Term Obligations appears to be under budget, but that is due to a bond premium that flows through the interest expense account. It is on budget.

Miscellaneous Expenses are over budget by 40%. This includes additional software training for our finance staff as well as multiple subscription renewals.

Paratransit Services are slightly under budget due to timing and should come in right around budget by year end. May will be higher due to five payrolls instead of four.

Total Fixed Cost Service is slightly over budget.

- Shuttles are slightly under budget and should end the year on budget.
- SATCo/VATCo is slightly under budget due to timing and fuel savings due to a favorable contract renewal but will likely end over budget at year end.
- UMass is slightly under budget but will end right at budget at year end.

Overall, we have a YTD net loss of (\$49,509) as of 4/30/2024.

7. DIRECTOR OF TRANSIT OPERATIONS REPORT

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

Northampton Micro-Transit Pilot: The Noho Shuttle began service on May 1, replacing the Noho Senior Center and Survival Center Shuttles. Ridership numbers for the full month show a slight increase over ridership in May of 2023. From 374 passengers in 2023 to 381 this year, an increase of 1.9%

Security Committee: Though not yet federally required for bus operators, PVTa has taken the initiative to form an agency-wide Security Committee which meets quarterly. Part of the goal of this committee is to work with our community partners on continuity plans, develop standard operating procedures for emergency response in the case of security events, perform security audits on our properties, and report on current security-related concerns and trends.

New Grant Awards and Proposals:

With assistance from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, PVTa submitted grants totaling 1,500,000.00 to the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center. If awarded the grant would support an initial study of fleet electrification for the paratransit fleet and identify needed improvements. The grant is structured to include funding for:

- Initial study of site-specific fleet electrification needs.
- Facility upgrades that could include infrastructure to support fleet electrification and needed facility improvements to support this.
- Purchase of electric vehicles to begin the transition to a decarbonized paratransit fleet.

The Town of Amherst will be implementing a Beyond ADA program similar to other programs in Agawam, Ware, Hadley, and the Tri-Town Trolley early in FY 2025. As you may remember this new program was funded in the most recent round of Community Transit Grant Awards as was funding to continue programs in the other participating communities.

In addition, we anticipate beginning operations for two other programs that were awarded funding through the Regional Transportation Innovation Grant in the first quarter of 2025.

- A route connecting Amherst and Greenfield and providing service to Leverett, and Sunderland.
- Service to provide door to door transportation for Amherst area individuals experiencing homelessness and connecting them to employment in Amherst, Hatfield, Whately, and Deerfield

8. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator, Sandra Sheehan, reported the following:

On the State side, both the House and the Senate have approved similar budgets with different spending breakdowns and policy priorities. Conference negotiators have yet to produce a compromise. In the last 14 years, Massachusetts lawmakers have not produced a budget on time, often making it one of the last states in the nation to complete a budget. There are a lot of policy priorities on the table that may make this budget complicated including funding for the MBTA, housing affordability, the fair share spending and clean energy. Formal sessions are set to end after July 31.

For this reason, Governor Healey filed an interim spending plan last week. The bill includes \$6.9 billion and would cover state expenses through July 31.

Strong ridership growth continued during May and is accelerating in June based on data from the first week. APC data indicates June ridership is on track to exceed 500k. APC recovery during May was 90% of 2019 ridership (710k), and if it continues its current trajectory, June APC recovery should approach full recovery. Total YTD ridership for FY24 is just under 6.8 million and is expected to reach approximately 7.3 million by the end of June.

As mentioned at the last Board meeting, PVRTA is fare free for the months of June, July and August. This has been well received by our passengers. The Fare Analysis Study continues as we evaluate data collected from January through May for after-school service as well as weekend service and how ridership levels were affected by the fare free program.

BRTA, FRTA and PVRTA staff have started regular meetings to plan the delivery of service between Pittsfield and Northampton as well as service between North Adams and Greenfield. As you may recall, these services are part of the grant award from MassDOT's Innovation Grant Program. MassDOT is overhauling MCI coaches to be used for this service while the three systems are coordinating operating and marketing materials. Among the items being discussed is a consistent/identifiable look for the service including wrapping the vehicles, schedules as well as a service name. It is anticipated the service will start at the beginning of 2025.

Negotiations between the management company, DGR Management Inc. and SATCo continue. It is our understanding that an offer was been presented to the union leadership. The existing contract ends on June 30th.

9. NEW BUSINESS

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

10. OLD BUSINESS

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

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Slaughter asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Sorrell/Huntley) to adjourn.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam			
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown			
Chicopee			
East Longmeadow			
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke	Gloria Caballero-Roca		
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
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Northampton			
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Sunderland			
Ware	Nancy Talbot		
West Springfield			
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham			
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 33.85.

The meeting of the Advisory Board adjourned at 12:54 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD

ATTEST: _____
BRANDY PELLETIER

Documents filed with Board Meeting packet:

- Roll Call Votes
- Advisory Board Minutes of 5-22-24
- 2025 Advisory Board Meeting Dates
- Paratransit Rider Survey Presentation

Minutes Approved: August 21, 2024