
**MINUTES OF PVTA'S
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
August 21, 2024**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Advisory Board Meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Wednesday, August 21, 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 (44.39 votes)</i></u>	<u><i>Not Present (17.61 votes)</i></u>
Agawam	Cindy Sullivan	
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter	
Belchertown		Brian O’Leary
Chicopee	Steve Huntley	
East Longmeadow		Erin Koebler
Easthampton	Ashley Fraga	
Granby		Glen Sexton
Hadley		David Moskin
Hampden	Becky Moriarty	
Holyoke	Stephen Fay (12:17p)	
Leverett		Tom Hankinson
Longmeadow	Mark Gold	
Ludlow		Derek DeBarge
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra (12:30p)	
Palmer	Benjamin Hood	
Pelham	Tara Loomis	
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 12:07 PM; majority vote of 36.97 present at meeting call to order.

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/Huntley) to approve the meeting minutes from the June 26, 2024 Advisory Board Meeting.

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	Cindy Sullivan		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown			
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow			
Easthampton	Ashley Fraga		
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton			
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham	Tara Loomis		
South Hadley			
Springfield	Timothy Sheehan		
Sunderland			
Ware			
West Springfield			
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham			Paula Dubord
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 35.84 with one abstention (Wilbraham).

4. REPORT OF THE FINANCE & AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE

Steve Huntley, Chair of the Finance & Audit Sub-Committee reported the following:

The committee met on August 19th and voted to approve the meeting minutes from May 17, 2024.

The FY24 Audit Report will not be completed in time for the September Advisory Board Meeting. David Irwin, the Audit Director with Adelson & Company, has asked if the Advisory Board may grant the Finance and Audit Committee the authority to approve/accept the year end audit at a meeting to be held the first week of October between the Auditors and the Finance and Audit Committee in order to meet the deadline to the state on October 4th and the Advisory Board will review the Audit Report at its Regular Meeting scheduled for November 20th to ratify the authority given to the Finance & Audit Committee.

The committee also discussed the FY25 Budget Act, Section 1596-2406 Grant Program and voted to recommend to the Board that PVTa submit a grant application that would allow PVTa to go fare free for approximately 9 months.

The committee also entered into Executive Session under MA G.L. 161b, Section 21a, Qualification #3, Collective Bargaining.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Moriarty/Huntley) to accept the report of the Finance & Audit Sub-Committee.

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	Cindy Sullivan		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown			
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow			
Easthampton	Ashley Fraga		
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke	Stephen Fay		
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton			
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham	Tara Loomis		
South Hadley			
Springfield	Timothy Sheehan		
Sunderland			
Ware			
West Springfield			
Westfield	Peter Miller		

Wilbraham
Williamsburg
ADA Representative
Rider Representative

Paula Dubord
J.M. Sorrell

Motion passed by a vote of 41.69.

5. PVTA FY24 AUDIT

Chairman Slaughter: As Mr. Huntley, Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee stated, David Irwin, the Audit Director with Adelson & Company, has asked if the Advisory Board may grant the Finance and Audit Committee the authority to approve/accept the year end audit at a meeting to be held the first week of October between the Auditors and the Finance and Audit Committee in order to meet the deadline to the state on October 4th as the Audit will not be completed for PVTA's Regular Scheduled Advisory Board Meeting on September 18th.

Chairman Slaughter asked for a motion from the Board:

Motion: Moved and seconded (Miller/Fay) for the Advisory Board to authorize PVTA's Finance & Audit Sub-Committee the authority to review and approve PVTA's FY 24 Audit Report on behalf of the PVTA Advisory Board to submit to the state prior to the October 4th deadline and the Advisory Board will review the Audit Report at its Regular Meeting scheduled for November 20th to ratify the authority given to the Finance & Audit Committee.

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	Cindy Sullivan		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown			
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow			
Easthampton	Ashley Fraga		
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke	Stephen Fay		
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton			
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham	Tara Loomis		
South Hadley			
Springfield	Timothy Sheehan		
Sunderland			
Ware			

West Springfield	
Westfield	Peter Miller
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell
ADA Representative	
Rider Representative	

Motion passed by a vote of 41.69.

6. **FY25 BUDGET ACT, SECTION 1596-2406 GRANT PROGRAM**

Motion Moved and seconded (Loomis/Huntley): To approve PVTa applying for the FY25 Budget Act, Section 1596-2406 Grant Program, that would allow PVTa to go fare free for approximately 9 months, or as long as grant funding allows.

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	Cindy Sullivan		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown			
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow			
Easthampton	Ashley Fraga		
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke	Stephen Fay		
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton			
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham	Tara Loomis		
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Sunderland			
Ware			
West Springfield			
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 41.69.

7. APPROVAL OF TITLE VI ANALYSIS ON NOHO SHUTTLE PILOT

Paul Burns stated that a Title VI Analysis was conducted to analyze the impacts of discontinuing service on the Northampton Survival Center Shuttle and the NOHO Senior Shuttle and replacing these with the NOHO Shuttle which began providing service May 1st, 2024.

The NOHO Shuttle provides service as follows:

- Provides door to door service in Northampton (Florence and Leeds).
- Open to all Northampton residents regardless of age or disability status.
- Operates Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
- Fares are the same as other PVRTA fixed routes.
- Allows same day booking with 2-hour advance notice.

The final Title VI Analysis reached the following conclusions:

- The NOHO shuttle provides sufficient mitigation to any disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens to riders if the shuttles were discontinued alone.
- The NOHO shuttle provides a larger increase in service and mobility options to more diverse riders regardless of age.
- PVRTA will continue to provide regular fixed route service and ADA services to Northampton, which will not be affected by the service change.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Moriarty/Miller): To approve PVRTA's Title VI Analysis on the NOHO Shuttle Pilot.

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	Cindy Sullivan		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown			
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow			
Easthampton	Ashley Fraga		
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke	Stephen Fay		
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton			
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham	Tara Loomis		
South Hadley			
Springfield	Timothy Sheehan		
Sunderland			
Ware			

West Springfield

Westfield

Wilbraham

Williamsburg

ADA Representative

Rider Representative

Peter Miller

Paula Dubord

J.M. Sorrell

Motion passed by a vote of 41.69.

8. DIRECTOR OF TRANSIT OPERATIONS REPORT

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

Ridership Recovery:

Ridership in FY 2024 totaled 7,830,329 on the fixed route and 186,742 on paratransit.

Fixed route ridership for the year was, 77.1% of 2019's ridership an increase of 927,549 riders (13.4%) over 2023.

For the final quarter of FY24, ridership recovery was significantly higher, recovering 86.6% of pre-covid ridership.

Paratransit ridership was 71.66% of 2019's, an increase of 9,766 riders (5.5%) over 2023.

Paratransit ridership recovery for the final quarter of FY 24 was also significantly higher 74.78%.

Route Updates:

All three Hulmes routes have added weekend service over the last few weeks.

- Nashawannuck Express: Sunday service begins at the Academy of Music at 10:45 AM and ends there at 6:00 PM.
- Palmer Shuttle: Added Saturday and Sunday Service with connections to Union Station. Service starts at Palmer Big Y at 8:40 AM and ends in Bondsville at 4:23 PM both weekend days.
- Ware Shuttle: Added Saturday and Sunday service beginning at 8:50 AM and ending at 4:13 PM.

Amherst / Greenfield Pilot Operated by MV Transit in partnership with the South County Senior Center and the Amherst Senior Center: this service tentatively scheduled to begin operations on September 30, 2024 and will operate Monday through Friday from approximately 8:45 AM to 2:30 PM with three daily round trips between Amherst and Greenfield.

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.

Shared Streets and Spaces: PVRTA was awarded funding, in partnership with the communities of Springfield, Holyoke, and Palmer, \$250,000.00 for various bus stop and roadway improvements that support transit.

9. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator, Sandra Sheehan, reported the following:

On the State side, the interim spending plan filed by the Governor in July was released by MassDOT on Friday. A contract was signed but it appears that funds were not transferred by Administration & Finance (A&F) to the MassDOT account until last week. It has been a struggle to finance operations for a month and a half without state operating funds.

The FY25 signed State Budget saw an increase in the allocation for the RTAs. The budget of \$160M includes \$94M from the State Transportation Fund and an additional \$66M from the Fair Share Amendment to support operational enhancements and improvements, including expanded service hours, weekend services and route expansions. These funds are to be allocated in an equitable distribution that takes into account the net cost of service and the 60/30/10 formula. This funding is \$10M more than what the RTAs received last year.

Strong ridership growth continued during June and July and continues in August based on data from collected from the first two weeks of the month. Final APC ridership total for FY24 is 7,830,329. Final ridership for June was 550,875. Systemwide July 2024 ridership was at 577K, up 54% from 374K in July 2023. Planning expects approximately 600K passengers for the month of August. This increase is partly attributable to the fare free program and the service enhancements implemented with the additional funding received during FY24. Improving the frequency of various routes has made a significant difference to our passengers.

The Fare Free Try Transit program will end at the end of August. Fare collection will resume for the month of September. PVRTA has started notifying passengers of the upcoming change.

BRTA, FRTA and PVRTA staff continue to meet regularly to plan the delivery of service between Pittsfield and Northampton as well as service between North Adams and Greenfield. It is anticipated the service will start at the beginning of 2025.

I continue to participate in the Governor's Transportation Funding Task Force. At the last meeting, I was asked to provide a presentation on the funding of the RTAs and how MARTA thought the Task Force could address the under-funding of the RTAs in the years to come.

Negotiations between the management company, DGR Management Inc. and SATCo have stalled. It is our understanding that a proposal that falls within the state budget allocation was presented to the union leadership. The existing contract ends on August 31st. The union has not responded to the proposal. The union members have voted to authorize a strike, which means they have authorized the bargaining unit leadership to call a strike.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION: MA G.L. 161B, SECTION 21A, QUALIFICATION #3, COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Motion: Moved and seconded (Slaughter/Moriarty): To enter into Executive Session under MA G.L. 161b, section 21a, qualification #3, collective bargaining regarding the Local ATU 448 Union Contract negotiations as having the discussion in open session may be detrimental to the public

body's bargaining. The Advisory Board will be adjourning in Executive Session and will not return to Open Session.

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	Cindy Sullivan		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown			
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow			
Easthampton	Ashley Fraga		
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
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Ludlow			
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South Hadley			
Springfield	Timothy Sheehan		
Sunderland			
Ware			
West Springfield			
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 44.39.

The Open Meeting of the Advisory Board adjourned at 12:34 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD

ATTEST: _____
BRANDY PELLETIER

Documents filed with Board Meeting packet:

- Roll Call Votes
- Advisory Board Minutes of 6-26-24

Minutes Approved: September 18, 2024