
MINUTES OF PVTA'S
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
September 18, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Advisory Board Meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Wednesday, September 18, 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>Present (32.69 votes)</u>	<u>Not Present (29.31 votes)</u>
Agawam	Cindy Sullivan	
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter	
Belchertown		Edward Boscher
Chicopee	Steve Huntley	
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler	
Easthampton	Cindy Tarail	
Granby		Glen Sexton
Hadley	David Moskin	
Hampden	Becky Moriarty	
Holyoke	Stephen Fay	
Leverett		Tom Hankinson
Longmeadow	Mark Gold	
Ludlow		Derek DeBarge
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra	
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 12:03 PM; majority vote of 32.69 present at meeting call to order.

Chairman Slaughter stated that Administrator Sheehan is not in attendance at today's meeting as she is out of town for a passing in her family.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Alex Jarrett, Northampton City Council President, thanked PVTA Board for holding meeting as public transportation is vital to his constituents.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Moved and seconded (Sorrell/Huntley) to approve the meeting minutes from the August 21, 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	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton			Cindy Tarail
Granby			
Hadley	David Moskin		
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke	Stephen Fay		
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra		
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham			
South Hadley			
Springfield			
Sunderland			
Ware			
West Springfield			
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 31.17 with one abstention (Easthampton).

4. PVTA FY24 AUDIT REPORT

Paul Burns, Director of Transit Operations stated that the Auditors are in house for their final fieldwork tomorrow. They have additional audit work and wrap up to do, but they expect the completion date to be September 26th, with final drafts to the Finance & Audit (F&A) Committee for review by Friday, September 27th. The Auditors are scheduled to present the FY24 Audit Report to the F&A Committee on October 3rd for approval and will have everything finalized to meet the reporting deadline to the State on October 4th.

The Auditors have no concerns and no findings, and we are expecting a clean audit opinion.

5. DIRECTOR OF FINANCE REPORT

Lori Brodeur, Director of Finance, stated that PVTA's budget to actual currently has a net loss of \$1.2M which AARPA funds will be used to offset the deficit.

6. DIRECTOR OF TRANSIT OPERATIONS REPORT

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

Paratransit ridership continues to increase steadily when compared to the previous year. August paratransit ridership is at 17,321 which is an increase of 2,789 passengers (19.19%) over August of 2023. Year to date, paratransit ridership has increased 20.2% over FY23.

Year to date ridership in FY25 totals 1,313,826 on the fixed route and 33,309 on paratransit. Fixed route ridership for the year is currently 101.7% of 2019's ridership for the first two months of the fiscal year.

Paratransit ridership recovery for the first two months of FY25 is 79% of 2019 ridership for the same time period.

Amherst / Greenfield Pilot: This service, which is scheduled to begin operations on September 30th and will operate Monday through Friday from approximately 8:30 AM to 2:55 PM with three daily round trips between Amherst and Greenfield.

Title VI and Public Participation Plan update: Updates for both the Title VI Plan and the Public Participation Plan for the PVTA are in process. We are working with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission to update both. Draft updates will be released on September 20th for a 45-day public comment period. Virtual public comment meetings will be held at 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM on September 25th. Comments will also be accepted by email at Comments@PVTA.com.

Non-Rider Survey: In the Spring of 2023, PVTA conducted surveys with individuals at various locations in our service area to assess non-rider perception of PVTA and understand what might encourage them to ride. Surveys were mailed to more than 7,000 area residents and teams of interns from PVPC conducted in-person interviews at 10 locations across the area. 657 total responses were received. Respondents were asked how often they rode the buses.

Only respondents who said they rode less than once a week /never were considered non-riders. This resulted in a total of 415 non-rider responses.

Key Survey Findings:

- 79% have a good impression of PVRTA.
- 88% feel PVRTA is a necessary public service.
- 50% would feel safe using PVRTA at night.
- 73% would feel comfortable waiting and riding with regular bus riders.
- The top reasons that non-riders say they do not take transit and drive their own car are:
 - “Convenience”
 - “More Comfortable”
 - “Buses do not go where I want to go”
 - “Bus service is not frequent enough”

7. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Paul Burns gave the Administrator’s update on behalf of Administrator Sheehan and reported the following:

Strong ridership growth continued during August. Improving the frequency on various routes as well as operating fare free has made a significant difference to our passengers. Systemwide August 2024 ridership was at 643K, up 46.5% from August 2023. August SATCo ridership was at 505K (up from 328K from August of last year), UMass was at 80K (up from 72K), and VATCo was at 59K (up from 39K). The August systemwide ridership recovery of 107% is the highest yet recorded since the pandemic.

Fare collection resumed for the month of September. The RTAs, except for CCRTA and GATRA submitted a joint application to implement year-round system-wide fare-free service. If awarded the grant, PVRTA will implement fare free service on the fixed route bus system as well as the paratransit system for as long as the funds will last, premium service is not included in this program.

Negotiations between the management company, DGR Management Inc. (DGR) and ATU Local 448 were very extensive and not at all as reported by the Union in the news outlets. At the end, it was the international union negotiator and the federal mediator who presented a tentative salary agreement to DGR and to representatives of the local union. The union members ratified the contract on September 3rd. The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) has been finalized and includes all the items agreed to as well as the salary increases of 6%/4%/4%. These wage increases will have an impact on PVRTA’s budget most noticeably in year two and three as the wage progression brings a large number of operators to the top of the salary range. PVRTA will be looking at all options available to reduce the impact of the salary increases.

8. NEW BUSINESS

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

9. OLD BUSINESS

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

10. 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	Cindy Sullivan		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown			
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton	Cindy Tarail		
Granby			
Hadley	David Moskin		
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
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Springfield			
Sunderland			
Ware			
West Springfield			
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 32.69.

The meeting of the Advisory Board adjourned at 12:29 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD

ATTEST: _____
BRANDY PELLETIER

Documents filed with Board Meeting packet:

- Roll Call Votes
- Advisory Board Minutes of 8-21-24

Minutes Approved: November 20, 2024