
MINUTES OF PVTA'S
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
January 22, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Advisory Board Meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Wednesday, January 22, 2025, 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 (35.90 votes)</u>	<u>Not Present (26.10 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		Becky Torres
Ware	Nancy Talbot	
West Springfield		Mayor William Reichelt
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 35.90 present at meeting call to order.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comments were made.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Moved and seconded (Sorrell/Gold) to approve the meeting minutes from the November 20, 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			
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown			
Chicopee			
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton	Cindy Tarail		
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra		
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham	Tara Loomis		
South Hadley			
Springfield	Timothy Sheehan		
Sunderland			
Ware	Nancy Talbot		
West Springfield			
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 35.90, all in favor.

4. **APPROVAL OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AGENCY SAFETY PLAN (PTASP) UPDATE**

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

Included in your Board packet is the 2025 update to the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan. PVTA is required to review the (PTASP) annually with a focus on answering the following three questions:

1. Does the Agency Safety Plan address all relevant requirements?
2. Does the Agency Safety Plan reflect PVTA's transit system as it operates today?
3. Are the activities and processes described in the plan suitable to manage safety at PVTA?

The only question where the answer was no was question one. This is due to ongoing updates to the PTASP regulations in the Bipartisan infrastructure law and ongoing regulatory and federally mandated updates to Safety Target setting.

Most of the changes related to regulatory updates are minor and continue a process that began two years ago. We also updated definitions to comply with the National Public Transportation Safety Plan guidelines.

We are asking the Board to approve PVTA's 2025 Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan Update (PTASP).

Motion: Moved and seconded (Sorrell/Talbot) to approve PVTA's 2025 Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan Update (PTASP).

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	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton	Cindy Tarail		
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra		
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham	Tara Loomis		
South Hadley			
Springfield	Timothy Sheehan		
Sunderland			

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

Motion passed by a vote of 35.90, all in favor.

5. **APPROVAL OF 2025 SAFETY TARGETS**

Paul Burns reported the following:

PVTA's 2025 PTASP Update includes Risk Reduction Program Measures with targets set by PVTA's Safety Committee. Of these measures, only those that have data to support a three-year rolling average are subject to the safety set aside rule as required by 49 CFR § 673.27(d)(3)(iii). The measures that currently meet the data requirement are Major Events and Injuries. PVTA will continue tracking Risk Reduction Program Measures and set risk reduction targets as data becomes available. Current targets are estimated for categories that do not meet the data requirement.

Safety Performance Measures for the Safety Risk Reduction

<i>Program – Fixed Route</i>	<i>CY25 Target Number</i>	<i>CY25 Target Rate per 100k VRM</i>
Major Event	6	0.085
Collisions	89	1.84
Injuries	80	1.69
Assaults on Transit Workers	150	3.17

Safety Performance Measures For the Safety Risk Reduction

<i>Program - Paratransit</i>	<i>CY25 Target Number</i>	<i>CY 25 Target Rate per 100k VRM</i>
Major Event	0	0
Collisions	19	1
Injuries	1	0.05
Assaults on Transit Workers	1	0.05

Safety Performance Measures:

In addition to Risk Reduction Program Measures, PVTA measures 14 categories of safety performance as defined by the National Public Transportation Safety Plan Version 2.

The Safety Committee sets the performance targets for Safety Performance Measures and Safety Risk Reduction Program Measures. Targets for the seven overlapping measures are equal. To comply with the National Public Transportation Safety Plan guidelines Safety Targets have been updated to reflect the following categories:

<i>Fixed Route Category</i>	<i>CY25 Target Number</i>	<i>CY25 Target Rate Per 100k VRM</i>
Major Event	6	0.085
Pedestrian Collision	1	0.021
Vehicular Collision	88	1.82
Total Collisions	89	1.84
Fatalities	0	0
Transit Worker Fatalities	0	0
Injuries	80	1.69
Transit Worker Injuries	3	0.063
Assaults on Transit Workers	150	3.17
System Reliability		
Preventable Accidents (FY)		2
Miles Between Breakdowns (FY)	18,500	N/A

<i>Paratransit Category</i>	<i>CY25 Target Number</i>	<i>CY25 Target Rate Per 100k VRM</i>
Major Event	0	0
Pedestrian Collision	0	0
Vehicular Collision	19	1
Total Collisions	19	1
Fatalities	0	0
Transit Worker Fatalities	0	0
Injuries	2	0.042
Transit Worker Injuries	1	0.05
Assaults on Transit Workers	1	0.05
System Reliability		
Preventable Accidents (FY)		0.8
Miles Between Breakdowns (FY)	37,500	N/A

J.M. Sorrell: How are the number of injuries/accidents projected and what are we doing to mitigate these.

Paul Burns: Better reporting of injuries. Any reported injury has to be included even if it's something minor.

J.M. Sorrell: Is there a distinction between verbal and physical assaults.

Paul Burns: No, there is no distinction.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Sorrell/Gold) to approve PVTA's 2025 Safety Targets.

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	Erin Koebler		

Easthampton	Cindy Tarail
Granby	
Hadley	
Hampden	Becky Moriarty
Holyoke	
Leverett	
Longmeadow	Mark Gold
Ludlow	
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra
Palmer	Benjamin Hood
Pelham	Tara Loomis
South Hadley	
Springfield	Timothy Sheehan
Sunderland	
Ware	Nancy Talbot
West Springfield	
Westfield	Peter Miller
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell
ADA Representative	
Rider Representative	

Motion passed by a vote of 35.90, all in favor.

6. APPROVAL OF TITLE VI ANALYSIS FOR B79 FARE MEDIA PILOT – APP BASED FARE & PASSES ONLY. NO CASH ON-BOARD B79 ROUTE

Paul Burns reported the following:

Effective January 5, 2025, UMass Transit has replaced the Quaboag Connector as the operator of the B79. As part of the transition to UMass Transit, we are hoping to move to a cashless fare payment system and began piloting cashless fares on the B79 on January 15, 2025. Riders have the option of purchasing passes through the MassDOT BusPlus App or at customer service in Holyoke and Springfield or by mail.

FTA regulations require us to conduct a Title VI Analysis of the impacts of moving to a cashless fare system. We are requesting authorization from the Board to conduct this Title VI Analysis which includes public hearings.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Sorrell/Miller) to approve a Title VI Analysis for the B79 Fare Media Pilot of a cashless route, using APP based fares and passes only.

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	Erin Koebler
Easthampton	Cindy Tarail
Granby	
Hadley	
Hampden	Becky Moriarty
Holyoke	
Leverett	
Longmeadow	Mark Gold
Ludlow	
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra
Palmer	Benjamin Hood
Pelham	Tara Loomis
South Hadley	
Springfield	Timothy Sheehan
Sunderland	
Ware	Nancy Talbot
West Springfield	
Westfield	Peter Miller
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell
ADA Representative	
Rider Representative	

Motion passed by a vote of 35.90, all in favor.

7. **DIRECTOR OF TRANSIT OPERATIONS REPORT**

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

Fixed Route Ridership: Systemwide November 2024 ridership was 859,842 a significant increase of 174,047 (25%) over November 2023.

- DGR: 566 K up from 390K (45%) in November of 2023
- UMass: 291K down 4K (1.3%) from November 2023

Paratransit ridership continues to increase steadily when compared to the previous year. November paratransit ridership at 17,292 was an increase of 1841 passengers (11.9%) over November of 2023. Year to date, paratransit ridership has increased 17.2% over FY 2024.

Ridership Recovery: Year to date, ridership in FY 2025 totals 3,988,379 on the fixed route. Fixed route ridership for the year is currently 91.1% of 2019's ridership for the first five months of the fiscal year.

Paratransit ridership recovery for the first quarter of FY 25 at 87,610 is 78.7% of 2019 ridership for the same time period.

Amherst / Greenfield Pilot route update: This route began operation on October 7th. Ridership for the first three months of service averages about 10 riders per week with the highest ridership so far occurring in October with 71 total trips. December, with two days still to be reported, had the fewest

trips so far at 47. Ridership so far is concentrated at three stops, Olver Transit Center in Greenfield, Sugarloaf Estates in Sunderland and the Bangs Center in Amherst, although there is ridership at all stops.

PVTA was awarded 1.5 million dollars from the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center's (CEC) Accelerating Clean Transportation for All, Round 2 (ACT4All 2) Program. The grant will fund a study of paratransit fleet electrification to determine initial and long term needs to support fleet electrification. As well as vehicles and equipment needed to begin a transition to fleet electrification. We anticipate the purchase of between 3 and 5 electric paratransit vehicles as well as the necessary charging infrastructure, safety equipment and maintenance infrastructure to support the transition to fleet electrification.

PVTA was also awarded 1.7 million dollars from Mass DOT's RTA Regional Connectivity Grant program to support two new routes. These routes are;

- Parker St. Connector: This route will provide service from East Longmeadow through Springfield along Parker St. to Ludlow. In Ludlow, the route will add new service down State and East Streets to Chapin and Center and end at Big Y on Center St. Currently the route is planned to operate 7 days a week from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. We anticipate this route to begin service in spring 2025.
- Northampton Southwick Route: In partnership with FRTA this new route will provide service from Northampton to Southwick with improved microtransit connections with FRTA in Southwick and Southampton. The route will provide direct connections from Southwick and Westfield to Northampton. Currently the route is planned to operate 7 days a week from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. Because we need to purchase additional vehicles to operate this route (these are funded in the grant) we anticipate this route to begin service in late 2025.

8. DIRECTOR OF FINANCE REPORT

Lori Brodeur, Director of Finance, reported the following:

All Fare Revenue is markedly under budget due to Fare Free grants.

Miscellaneous Revenue includes Advertising, Interest on the investment account, insurance recoveries and some smaller non transportation items. Miscellaneous revenue is slightly under budget due to timing on investment account balances and interest.

Transportation Subsidies are under budget due to timing as annual budget is split equally over 12 months.

Admin, Facilities, Services/Utilities Expenses:

- Wages are under budget by \$56K due to open positions.
- Fringe Benefits are markedly under budget due to open positions as well.
- Service Expenses are over budget due to timing. This includes janitorial, auditing, credit card service charges, temp employees, security etc.
- Equipment/Maintenance is mostly right on budget.
- Supplies, Utilities and Insurance are on budget.

- Lease and CAM charges are on budget. The SATCo CAM fees budget is separate from this budget. The total budget is \$37,046.
- 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. This includes additional software training for our finance staff as well as multiple subscription renewals and timing.

Paratransit Services are under budget due to timing and should come in right around budget by year end.

Total Fixed Cost Service is under budget due to timing and should come in right around budget by year end.

- Shuttles are slightly under budget and should end the year on budget.
- SATCo/VATCo is slightly under budget due to timing.
- UMass is slightly under budget but will end right at budget at year end.

Overall, we have a net loss of (\$1,794,782) as of 7/31/2024.

9. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Sandra Sheehan, Administrator, reported the following:

On the state level, Governor Healey announced last week the recommendations from the Transportation Funding Task Force.

- The report recommends improving transportation finance by stabilizing the immediate financial challenges;
- Enhancing by updating the transportation funding policies; and
- Transforming by assessing and considering new transportation revenues and technologies to support long term investments.

The Governor is expected to issue the H1 budget today. From the press conference last week, we know that she will include making FY24 excess fair share funds available to the MBTA (\$780M), MassDOT (\$52.5M) and RTAs (\$25M). The funds for the RTAs are to create a reserve to support workforce and hiring, CBAs, licensing drivers, etc. These funds are to be managed by MassDOT and are one time funds.

In addition, the Governor has indicated that House1 will have level funding to the RTAs. The Commonwealth Transportation Fund is listed at \$94M and the Fare Share Amendment at \$110M with:

- \$66M for operating subsidy
- \$30M for fare free program
- \$10M for grants
- \$4 for the Community Transit Grant Program

However, the MBTA will be getting a large infusion of funds for a recurring, predictable operating budget that more than doubles the FY25 operating support level.

In addition, excess FY24 Fair Share funds will be used to restore the MBTA's budget reserve used to balance their FY25 budget.

Also, the FY26 budget will pay off the MBTA legacy debt of \$89M. This does not include the funds from the dedicated sales tax or the additional capital funds.

In anticipation of the FY26 budget, the RTAs through MARTA, are preparing a request from the Commonwealth Transportation Fund that includes:

- A percentage increase tied to the CIP of 3% from \$94M to \$97M
- A transfer of monies from the Education and Transportation Fund (Fair Share) line item of \$200M just for operating and \$50M for capital projects. The Fare Share revenue is forecasted to be \$2.3 billion to be split with Education at 50/50.

MARTA believes the funds for the fare free program and the grant programs should come from the MassDOT Budget.

MARTA will be hosting a Legislative Luncheon in Boston on April 1st.

PVTA's fare free program is going very well. PVTA's Manager of Planning and Analysis has looked at the average ridership change. The average monthly change in ridership from fare to fare free increased by 49% while the average monthly change in ridership from free to free (December months) change only 8%. A recovery rate of 91% for the FY25 YTD ridership is very encouraging.

PVTA's annual food drive collected a total of 2,037 lbs.

Bid documents have been issued for Phase II of the Cottage Street Project. PVTA's Manager of Capital Programs is working with consultants to move this year's capital program for facilities forward.

Lastly, we have a new Controller and a new Accounts Receivable Specialist.

10. NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Slaughter reported that he has taken a new position and this will be his last meeting serving on the PVTA Advisory Board.

11. OLD BUSINESS

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

12. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Slaughter asked for a motion to adjourn.

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

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam			
Amherst			
Belchertown			

Douglas Slaughter

Chicopee	
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler
Easthampton	Cindy Tarail
Granby	
Hadley	
Hampden	Becky Moriarty
Holyoke	
Leverett	
Longmeadow	Mark Gold
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Northampton	
Palmer	Benjamin Hood
Pelham	Tara Loomis
South Hadley	
Springfield	Timothy Sheehan
Sunderland	
Ware	Nancy Talbot
West Springfield	
Westfield	Peter Miller
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell
ADA Representative	
Rider Representative	

Motion passed by a vote of 33.20, all in favor.

The meeting of the Advisory Board adjourned at 1:08 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD

ATTEST: _____
BRANDY PELLETTIER

Documents filed with Board Meeting packet:

- Roll Call Votes
- Advisory Board Minutes of 11-20-24
- PVRTA's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan Update
- 2025 Safety Targets

Minutes Approved on: March 19, 2025