

**PVTA
Pioneer
Valley
Transit
Authority**

**Administrative Headquarters
Old North Main St. Firehouse
2808 Main Street
Springfield, MA 01107
(413) 732-6248**

**MINUTES OF PVTA'S
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
May 21, 2025**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Advisory Board Meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Wednesday, May 21, 2025, at 12:00 P.M. remotely in accordance. This meeting is being held virtually as allowed by Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025, An Act Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency which, among other things, further extends temporary provisions pertaining to the Open Meeting Law to June 30, 2027.

Present (32.98 votes)

Not Present (29.03 votes)

Agawam

Cindy Sullivan

Amherst

Paul Bockelman

Belchertown

Edward Boscher

Chicopee

Steve Huntley

East Longmeadow

Sharon Giordano

Easthampton

Cindy Tarail

Granby

Glen Sexton

Hadley

David Moskin

Hampden

Becky Moriarty

Holyoke

Stephen Fay

Leverett

Tom Hankinson

Longmeadow

Mark Gold

Ludlow

Anthony Alves

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
Rider Representative

Vacant
Vacant

A quorum of 31.01 votes being present, Vice Chair J.M. Sorrell, Acting Chair, called the remote meeting of PVTAs Advisory Board to order at 12:07 PM; majority vote of 32.98 present at meeting call to order.

Ms. Sorrell welcomed the new members to the Advisory Board including Amherst, East Longmeadow, Ludlow and Pelham.

2.PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comments were made.

3.APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Moved and seconded (Gold/Huntley) to approve the meeting minutes from the March 19, 2025 Advisory Board Meeting.

Mayor William Reichelt joined the meeting at 12:10p.m. Acting Chair Sorrell 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	Paul Bockelman		
Belchertown			
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Sharon Giordano		
Easthampton	Cindy Tarail		
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke	Stephen Fay		
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			Anthony Alves
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra		
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham			Tara Loomis
South Hadley			
Springfield			
Sunderland			
Ware			
West Springfield	Mayor William Reichelt		

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

Motion passed by a vote of 34.82 with a vote of 2.5 abstaining.

4.REPORT FROM THE FINANCE AND AUDIT SUBCOMMITTEE

Steve Huntley, Chairman of the Finance & Audit Sub-Committee (F&A) reported that the committee met on Monday, May 19th and voted to approve the meeting minutes of March 6, 2025. The committee reviewed PVRTA’s FY26 Budget which is based on FY25 service levels and includes the labor increases associated with the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). The budget includes savings from a diesel futures contract entered as well as some savings on the pension plans. The budget has an increase in expenses from FY25 of 2.2% with an overall deficit of \$2.1M which will be balanced by Covid Relief Funds and federal operating grants. The budget is based on the budget number included for operating assistance for the RTAs in the Governor’s proposal and will need to have amendments as PVRTA is required to submit an approved FY26 Budget to the state by June 1st and does not have finalized numbers for how much funding will be allocated from the state. Mr. Huntley presented the one page budget summary. The F&A Committee voted to recommend to the Advisory Board approval of PVRTA’s FY26 Budget, as presented.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Huntley/Loomis) to approve the report from the Finance and Audit Subcommittee.

Acting Chair Sorrell 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	Paul Bockelman		
Belchertown			
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Sharon Giordano		
Easthampton	Cindy Tarail		
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke	Stephen Fay		
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow	Anthony Alves		
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra		
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		

Pelham	Tara Loomis
South Hadley	
Springfield	
Sunderland	
Ware	
West Springfield	Mayor William Reichelt
Westfield	Peter Miller
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell
ADA Representative	
Rider Representative	

Motion passed by a vote of 37.32 votes.

5.APPROVAL OF PVTA’S FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET

Lori Brodeur, PVTA’s Finance Director stated the PVTA’s budget is made up of three major components

1.Administration which includes, administrative staff wages and benefits, professional services, supplies and utilities. It includes all activities needed for PVTA to function.

2.Paratransit Operations which include ADA Complementary Service, Dial-A-Ride for seniors and grant funded COA Beyond ADA Services.

3.Fixed Route Operations which include bus services provided out of the Springfield (SATCo), Northampton (VATCo) and UMass Transit garages as well as Community shuttle services.

Ms. Broduer indicated the detailed budget was included in the Board Packet. The budget presented was prepared, assuming the same level of service will be maintained for FY26. Her presentation included the following:

EXPENSES

Administration

Wages/Fringe

- Health Insurance is budgeted with a 10% increase, we will have updated rates in June.
- The pension reserve is decreasing by \$250,000 in accordance with actuary report.
- Life Insurance is increasing slightly more than 3% to factor in age related premium increases.
- Mobility Training Wages increased significantly to bring in line with forecast. All other wages and all other fringe benefits are increasing by 3%.

Services/Utilities

- Professional Temporary employment is a significant decrease, as we now have all full-time employees in place for most positions.
- Service Charges Mobile Fares and Admin are both credit card fees. These are shown increasing significantly because of the assumption that fare free program may be ending.
- Utilities are forecast to remain level.
- Administrative travel is increasing to allow for additional professional development by staff.

- Interest expense is decreasing as we plan to pay down some of the RANS in July.

Overall Admin expenses are decreasing by 5.5%, mostly due to the pension reserve decrease.

Paratransit Operations

Contractors

- All COA Contractors are increasing due to service expansion, increases in ridership, as well as increased costs.
- MV's Paratransit is budgeted with a 3% increase. One thing to keep in mind is that they will be negotiating a contract with their union this fall.

Overall Paratransit expenses are increasing at 2.85%.

Fixed Route Operations

SATCo/VATCo (Services out of Springfield and Northampton)

- Subsidy is Increasing only slightly due to cost reductions and pension plan savings.
- Fuel is decreasing slightly due to a favorable diesel fuel futures contract recently signed.
- Overall Budget is decreasing slightly due to reduction of overtime, diesel fuel contract and pension plan savings.

UMass Transit (Services out of Amherst)

- Subsidy is shown as decreasing as additional funding was provided to UMass Transit for FY25 due to increased service costs and also because of the fact that UMass has increased their subsidy significantly for FY26.
- Fuel costs are also much lower due to the favorable diesel fuel contract.

Overall fixed route operations budget is increasing by 2.2%.

REVENUE

Fare Revenue

- Fare revenue is based on estimated ridership, less the \$3.7 million in FY26 Fare Free funds that are being carried over from FY25 for the months of July and August.

Other Revenue

- Advertising Revenue is increasing 14% based on forecast.
- Interest revenue is increasing by 5% to \$570K, based on forecast.
- ID Picture revenue is decreasing due to the Fare free period in FY26.
- Operating Subsidy- State Contract Assistance is level funded to FY25.
- Operating Subsidy- Try Transit, the fare free funds, is the remaining \$3.7 million from the FY25 Fare Free funds.
- Other Operating Subsidy has a significant increase due to several new operating grants awarded to PVTa, as well as the anticipated increases in the contributions from Five Colleges and UMass.

To balance the budget, PVTa is using operating subsidies from the Federal grant program

- \$667K is the remaining ARPA funds available.
- Other Federal- is the amount of CARES funds needed to balance the budget \$1.2M.

Mr. Miller asked to explain how PVRTA budgeted the figure for the farebox revenue considering the fare free period and whether this program is going to continue. Ms. Brodeur responded by stating that until the state budget is approved, PVRTA does not know if the Try Transit fare free program is continuing. Therefore, the farebox revenue has been calculated by using the ridership estimate for FY26 and the balance of fare free funds that will be left over from FY25.

Mr. Miller then asked about the other operating subsidies grants, could you explain where those monies a from? Ms. Brodeur stated the subsidies are the increase of the UMass subsidies as well as Five Colleges Inc subsidies as well as operating grants awarded to PVRTA.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Huntley/Miller) to approve the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget for the Authority.

Acting Chair Sorrell 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	Paul Bockelman		
Belchertown			
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Sharon Giordano		
Easthampton	Cindy Tarail		
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke	Stephen Fay		
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow	Anthony Alves		
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra		
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham	Tara Loomis		
South Hadley			
Springfield			
Sunderland			
Ware			
West Springfield	Mayor William Reichelt		
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 37.32 votes.

6.APPROVAL OF ROLLING STOCK TRANSFER

Administrator Sheehan indicated that PVRTA partnered with partnered with Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA) and Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) to submit a grant application to MassDOT for regional service between Pittsfield and Northampton and Adams and Greenfield. Since these routes are long routes, a different type of vehicle is needed for this service. Beaver County Transit Authority has MCIs vehicles that are available for transfer. Each of the three RTAs will receive two vehicles for the operation of the routes.

Administrator Sheehan requested the PVRTA Advisory Board accept two (2) Rolling Stock assets as a Recipient-to-Recipient transfer from Beaver County Transit Authority (BCTA), located in Rochester, Pennsylvania, to the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVRTA).

These vehicles are needed by PVRTA to operate revenue service for the “Commuter and Regionally Interconnected Bus Network for the 413” (413LINK) connectivity partnership between Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA), Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA), and Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVRTA).

Upon transfer, PVRTA will own these assets. PVRTA will assume responsibility for the remaining Federal interest and useful life of each asset.

The vehicles will be maintained in compliance with FTA requirements for the remainder of their useful life, and they will be included in PVRTA’s Rolling Stock inventory records as PVRTA equipment.

The Acting Chairman will execute the Resolution on behalf of the Advisory Board and a copy of the motion and authorizing resolution will be provided to FTA.

Mr. Gold asked if we know the costs of the vehicles being purchased. Administrator Sheehan responded indicating the vehicles are not being purchased. The vehicles are being transferred from Beaver County Transit Authority to PVRTA and the other RTAs.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Gold/Huntley) to accept the vehicle transfer from Beaver County Transit Authority.

Acting Chair Sorrell asked if the Board had any discussion. Hearing no additional comments; Acting Chairman Sorrell asked for a roll call vote.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam	Cindy Sullivan		
Amherst	Paul Bockelman		
Belchertown			
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Sharon Giordano		
Easthampton	Cindy Tarail		
Granby			
Hadley			

Hampden	Becky Moriarty
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Rider Representative	

Motion passed by a vote of 37.32 votes.

7.OFFICER POSITIONS

Acting Chairman Sorrell, stated that COA Director and Board Member from Easthampton had written in the chat if the Board Members should assist in recruiting individuals for the ADA Representative and Rider Representative to the Board. Administrator Sheehan stated that any assistance provided by the Board members in recruiting individuals to represent the ADA and Rider community will be greatly appreciated. If any Board member knows of any individual interested, please forward their contact information

Ms. Sorrell indicated that at the upcoming June Advisory Board Meeting, the members will be voting on the Board Officer positions. This is a two-year term and includes the Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk. Currently there is interest in the Chair and Vice Chair positions. Mark Gold will let the Board know of his interest in continuing in the position of Advisory Board Clerk.

Ms. Sorrell encouraged Board members to sign up to the committees and subcommittees of the Advisory Board. Committee assignments will be made after the Board Officer positions are voted on.

8.REPORT FROM DIRECTOR OF TRANSIT

Paul Burns, Director of Transit, reported the following:

Fixed Route Ridership:

Systemwide ridership continues to increase. March ridership at 909,667 was up 24.8% over March 2024.

Ridership by operator for March:

- DGR 602 K 152K (33.8%) from March of 2024
- UMass 304 up 28K (10.1%) from March of 2024
- Hulmes 2830 up (47.4%) from March of 24 (highest ridership since August of 2018)

Paratransit Ridership:

Paratransit ridership continues to increase steadily when compared to the previous year. March paratransit ridership at 18,923 was an increase of 2,763 passengers (17.1%) over March of 2024. Year to date, paratransit ridership has increased 14.8% over FY 2024

Ridership Recovery:

Year to date, ridership in FY 2025 totals 7,082,208 on the fixed route. Fixed route ridership for the year is currently 91.25% of 2019's ridership for the first nine months of the fiscal year.

Paratransit ridership recovery for the first nine months of FY 25 at 157,724 is 81.1% of 2019 ridership for the same time period.

Safety and Security:

The rate of assaults on front line workers compared to the prior year continues to decline steadily. While March of 2025 showed an increase over the previous three months in terms of actual number of assaults, the rate per 100K passengers was one of the three lowest months in the last two years.

For the first three months of 2025, the rate of assaults per 100k miles has dropped from 3.4 in 2023 to 1.65 in 2025 and the rate per 100K passengers has dropped from 2.06 down to 0.93.

9.REPORT FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

Administrator, Sandra Sheehan, reported the following:

The Governor's House1 budget level funds the RTAs. The Commonwealth Transportation Fund is listed at \$94M and the Fair Share Amendment at \$110M with \$66M for operating subsidy, \$30M for fare free program, \$10M for grants and \$4 Community Transit Grants.

The House budget is basically the same budget as the Governor's with \$94M from the Transportation Fund and \$110M from the Fair Share Amendment. The Senate released its budget last week with \$94M from the Transportation Fund and \$120M from the Fare Share to be distributed with \$66M for operating subsidy, \$40M for fare free program, \$10M for grants and \$4 Community Transit Grants.

Senator Kennedy has filed an Amendment that adds \$3M to the Transportation Fund for a total of \$97M.

There is another Amendment #815 that has been filed to change the Senate language in the section of Fare Free Program. The Senate language includes a statutory obligation requiring the RTAs to provide fare free on the fixed route and ADA complimentary services. This amendment will change the language from "shall" to "may" and will reinstate the Advisory Board's approval to any fare changes. This is important because fare free is subject to appropriations. If appropriations are not sufficient to offset the amount of

farebox revenue collected by PVRTA, service reductions will most likely be the result of the statutory obligation of providing fare free services. Thus, it is very important that the decision to provide fare free service rest on the Advisory Board. In addition, the language states fixed route and ADA complimentary shall be provided for free

There is also a Supplemental budget that is now in conference as the House and Senate version vary greatly. This supplemental budget deals with FY24 excess fair share funds available. The Governor proposed a budget that includes a distribution as follows: MBTA (\$780M), MassDOT (\$52.5M) and RTAs (\$25M) to create a reserve to support workforce and hiring, licensing drivers, etc. and to implement transit improvements. The House and Senate lower the amounts for the MBTA and keep the \$25M for the RTAs. However, the Senate adds \$50M for RTAs capital projects and \$10M for micro-transit services available to transportation providers. Because of the differences, the budget will go into conference.

Administrator Sheehan reported on the status of the construction activities currently taking place. Progress pictures were shown of the Bus Bay Expansion at the UMass Transit Facility and of the Electrification and Expansion project at the Springfield O&M Facility at Cottage Street. Ms. Sheehan reported that projects are on schedule and on budget.

10. NEW BUSINESS

Acting Chairman Sorrell reported that there is no new business to discuss.

11. OLD BUSINESS

Acting Chairman Sorrell reported that there is no old business to discuss.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Acting Chairman Sorrell asked for a motion to adjourn. **Motion:** Moved and seconded (Gold/Moriarty) to adjourn.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam	Cindy Sullivan		
Amherst	Paul Bockelman		
Belchertown			
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Sharon Giordano		
Easthampton	Cindy Tarail		
Granby			
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Sunderland	
Ware	
West Springfield	Mayor William Reichelt
Westfield	Peter Miller
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell
ADA Representative	
Rider Representative	

Motion passed by a vote of 37.32 votes.

The meeting of the Advisory Board adjourned at 12:59 P.M.



A TRUE RECORD
SANDRA E. SHEEHAN

ATTEST:_____

Documents filed with Board Meeting packet:

- Roll Call Votes
- Advisory Board Minutes of 3-19-26
- FY26 Budget Spreadsheets
- Vehicle Transfer Resolution
- Board Presentation 05-21-2025

Approved at June 18, 2025, Advisory Board Meeting