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**MINUTES OF PVTA'S  
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
June 18, 2025**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Regular Advisory Board Meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Wednesday, June 18, 2025, at 12:00 P.M. remotely 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.

|                      | <u><i>Present (37.63 votes)</i></u> | <u><i>Not Present (24.38 votes)</i></u> |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 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           |                                     | Joshua Levine                           |
| 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   |                                     | Vacant                                  |
| Rider Representative |                                     | Vacant                                  |

A quorum of 31.01 votes being present, Vice Chair J.M. Sorrell, Acting Chair, called the remote meeting of PVTA's Advisory Board to order at 12:05 PM; majority vote of 37.63 present at meeting call to order.

## 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comments were made.

## 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (Sheehan/Bockelman) to approve the meeting minutes from the May 21, 2025 Advisory Board Meeting.

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               |                           |           |                  |
| Amherst              | Paul Bockelman            |           |                  |
| Belchertown          |                           |           |                  |
| Chicopee             |                           |           |                  |
| East Longmeadow      |                           |           |                  |
| Easthampton          | Cindy Tarail              |           |                  |
| Granby               |                           |           |                  |
| Hadley               | David Moskin              |           |                  |
| Hampden              |                           |           |                  |
| Holyoke              | Stephen Fay               |           |                  |
| Leverett             |                           |           |                  |
| Longmeadow           |                           |           |                  |
| Ludlow               | Anthony Alves             |           |                  |
| Northampton          | Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra |           |                  |
| Palmer               | Benjamin Hood             |           |                  |
| Pelham               | Tara Loomis               |           |                  |
| South Hadley         |                           |           |                  |
| Springfield          | Timothy Sheehan           |           |                  |
| Sunderland           |                           |           |                  |
| Ware                 |                           |           |                  |
| West Springfield     |                           |           |                  |
| Westfield            | Peter Miller              |           |                  |
| Wilbraham            |                           |           |                  |
| Williamsburg         | J.M. Sorrell              |           |                  |
| ADA Representative   |                           |           |                  |
| Rider Representative |                           |           |                  |

Motion passed by a vote of 37.63, all in favor.

#### 4. PVTA ADVISORY BOARD OFFICER POSITIONS

Acting Chair, J.M. Sorrell, reported that PVTA's current Advisory Board Officer terms expire on June 30<sup>th</sup>. The descriptions for each position have been sent to the Board. Nominations put forth for a 2-year term that will expire on June 30, 2027 are:

- Chair: J.M. Sorrell
- Vice Chair: Steve Huntley
- Clerk of Board: Tim Sheehan

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (Miller/Bockelman) to approve the nominations put forth for a two year term that will expire on June 30, 2027:

- Chair: J.M. Sorrell
- Vice Chair: Steve Huntley
- Clerk of Board: Tim Sheehan

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               |                           |           |                  |
| Amherst              | Paul Bockelman            |           |                  |
| Belchertown          |                           |           |                  |
| Chicopee             |                           |           |                  |
| East Longmeadow      |                           |           |                  |
| Easthampton          | Cindy Tarail              |           |                  |
| Granby               |                           |           |                  |
| Hadley               | David Moskin              |           |                  |
| Hampden              |                           |           |                  |
| Holyoke              | Stephen Fay               |           |                  |
| Leverett             |                           |           |                  |
| Longmeadow           |                           |           |                  |
| Ludlow               | Anthony Alves             |           |                  |
| Northampton          | Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra |           |                  |
| Palmer               | Benjamin Hood             |           |                  |
| Pelham               | Tara Loomis               |           |                  |
| South Hadley         |                           |           |                  |
| Springfield          | Timothy Sheehan           |           |                  |
| Sunderland           |                           |           |                  |
| Ware                 |                           |           |                  |
| West Springfield     |                           |           |                  |
| Westfield            | Peter Miller              |           |                  |
| Wilbraham            |                           |           |                  |
| Williamsburg         | J.M. Sorrell              |           |                  |
| ADA Representative   |                           |           |                  |
| Rider Representative |                           |           |                  |

Motion passed by a vote of 37.63, all in favor.

## 5. APPROVAL OF FARE FREE PROGRAM

FY25 Try-Transit Fare Free Program funding covers PVRTA fixed-route bus and paratransit services from November 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025.

- Program funded for seven months: November, January through June
- December was funded by FY24 Try-Transit Program
- There is a balance of \$3,720,945. This balance can be used to fund July, August and September.

The Governor's House and Senate budgets includes funding for a FY26 Try-Transit Fare Free Program.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (Tarail/Fay) to approve the implementation of fare-free service for the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority's fixed-route and paratransit systems, effective July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, conditioned upon the appropriation and availability of sufficient state funding to offset lost fare revenue and any associated operational costs.

Acting Chair Sorrell asked for a roll call vote.

|                    | <u>Yes</u>                | <u>No</u> | <u>Abstained</u> |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Agawam             |                           |           |                  |
| Amherst            | Paul Bockelman            |           |                  |
| Belchertown        |                           |           |                  |
| Chicopee           |                           |           |                  |
| East Longmeadow    |                           |           |                  |
| Easthampton        | Cindy Tarail              |           |                  |
| Granby             |                           |           |                  |
| Hadley             | David Moskin              |           |                  |
| Hampden            |                           |           |                  |
| Holyoke            | Stephen Fay               |           |                  |
| Leverett           |                           |           |                  |
| Longmeadow         |                           |           |                  |
| Ludlow             | Anthony Alves             |           |                  |
| Northampton        | Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra |           |                  |
| Palmer             | Benjamin Hood             |           |                  |
| Pelham             | Tara Loomis               |           |                  |
| South Hadley       |                           |           |                  |
| Springfield        | Timothy Sheehan           |           |                  |
| Sunderland         |                           |           |                  |
| Ware               |                           |           |                  |
| West Springfield   |                           |           |                  |
| Westfield          | Peter Miller              |           |                  |
| Wilbraham          |                           |           |                  |
| Williamsburg       | J.M. Sorrell              |           |                  |
| ADA Representative |                           |           |                  |

Motion passed by a vote of 37.63, all in favor.

## 6. **APPROVAL OF B79 FARE MEDIA CHANGE**

Paul Burns, Director of Transit Operations reported that at the January meeting, the Board approved a Title VI Analysis and public hearing for the B79 Fare Media Revision. In January, PVRTA began piloting a cashless payment system for the B79 Intercity route. Users may pay through the BusPlus+ mobile App or purchase prepaid passes. This change only affects how fares are paid and does not change the actual fare, which remains \$9.00 for a full price trip from Amherst to Worcester.

A total of four (4) public hearings were held, one at Ware Town Hall, one at the Bangs Center in Amherst and two virtual hearings. Comments were also accepted by mail, email and phone.

The analysis found no Disparate Impact or Disproportionate Burden is created when the cashless payment system is implemented.

While this analysis does not show a disparate impact or disproportionate burden on low-income or minority riders, PVRTA has listened to riders concerned with access to the BusPlus+ App. Thus, tickets and passes are also available through non-electronic means:

- Purchasing passes at PVRTA Customer Service at the Holyoke Transportation Center and Springfield Union Station
- Tickets by mail will continue to be offered

Additionally, unbanked passengers can add cash to their BusPlus+ App at numerous retail locations throughout our service area and along the B79's route. These retailers include Walmart, CVS, Walgreens, Dollar General, Family Dollar, 7-Eleven, and Speedway.

**MOTION:** Moved and seconded (Bockelman/Miller) to approve B79 Fare Media Change to a cashless payment system.

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          |                |           |                  |
| Amherst         | Paul Bockelman |           |                  |
| Belchertown     |                |           |                  |
| Chicopee        |                |           |                  |
| East Longmeadow |                |           |                  |
| Easthampton     | Cindy Tarail   |           |                  |
| Granby          |                |           |                  |
| Hadley          | David Moskin   |           |                  |
| Hampden         |                |           |                  |
| Holyoke         | Stephen Fay    |           |                  |
| Leverett        |                |           |                  |
| Longmeadow      |                |           |                  |
| Ludlow          | Anthony        |           |                  |

|                      |                           |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Northampton          | Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra |
| Palmer               | Benjamin Hood             |
| Pelham               | Tara Loomis               |
| South Hadley         |                           |
| Springfield          | Timothy Sheehan           |
| Sunderland           |                           |
| Ware                 |                           |
| West Springfield     |                           |
| Westfield            | Peter Miller              |
| Wilbraham            |                           |
| Williamsburg         | J.M. Sorrell              |
| ADA Representative   |                           |
| Rider Representative |                           |

Motion passed by a vote of 37.63, all in favor.

## **7. DIRECTOR OF TRANSIT OPERATIONS REPORT**

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

Systemwide fixed route ridership continues to increase. April 2025 ridership, at 992,302 was up 23.5% over April 2024.

Ridership by operator for April:

- DGR 618 K 154K (33.3%) from April of 2024
- UMass 370K up 33K (9.8%) from April of 2024
- Hulmes 2894 up 754 (35.2%) from April of 24

Paratransit ridership continues to increase steadily when compared to the previous year. April paratransit ridership at 19,654 was an increase of 2,358 passengers (13.6%) over April of 2024. Year to date, paratransit ridership has increased 14.7% over FY 2024.

Ridership Recovery:

Year to date, ridership in FY 2025 totals 8,074,510 on the fixed route, exceeding FY 24 ridership by 244K with 2 months remaining in the fiscal year.

Fixed route ridership for the year is currently 92.0% of 2019's ridership for the first ten months of the fiscal year.

Paratransit ridership recovery for the first ten months of FY 25 at 176,928 is 81.5% 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. April 2025 tied February 2025 for the lowest rate of assaults per 100K since we began tracking assaults.

## **8. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

As discussed in previous meetings, both the Massachusetts House and Senate have budget proposals for Fiscal Year 2026. The next step involves the Conference Committee. The Committee will work to reconcile the differences between the House's \$61.5 billion and the Senate's \$61.4 billion budget. In addition, the House and Senate will also be conferring their FY 2025 Fair Share supplemental budget proposals in tandem with their FY 2026 budget proposals.

The amendments mentioned at the last Advisory Board meeting were withdrawn.

The House Committee on Transportation visited the Northampton O&M Facility on June 12<sup>th</sup> and the Springfield O&M facility of June 13<sup>th</sup>. This was an opportunity for PVRTA to showcase its service as the largest RTA in MA.

On the federal side, President Trump released his FY26 Budget request on May 30<sup>th</sup>. The budget requests \$21.2B for public transit and \$16.5B for passenger rail in FY26, that is when combined with the advance appropriations included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

The \$21.2B for public transit in FY26, a \$310 million (1.5 percent) increase from the FY25 enacted level. The request is \$1.0 billion (-4.7 percent) less than the FY26 IIJA authorized levels.

FTA is currently conducting a Triennial Review of the PVRTA system. During this review, FTA looks at twenty-three (23) areas of compliance. The on-site visit took place on June 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. There will be an exit conference on June 24<sup>th</sup>.

The State Auditor's office has informed PVRTA that they will be conducting an audit of the Battery Electric Buses (BEBs). A list of items to be submitted has been provided and PVRTA is working on submitting the data requested.

Mass Department of Energy Resources is holding a ribbon cutting event on June 17<sup>th</sup> to announce the installation of a one megawatt rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) system that includes a 536-kW battery storage system at PVRTA's Springfield Operations and Maintenance Facility at Cottage Street.

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, PVRTA is hosting the New England Public Transit Association (NEPTA) 2025 Summer University Maintenance Forum at the Springfield O&M Facility at Cottage St.

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

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

## **10. OLD BUSINESS**

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

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

Acting Chair Sorrell asked for a motion to adjourn.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (Fay/Miller) to 7adjourn.

|                      | <u>Yes</u>                | <u>No</u> | <u>Abstained</u> |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Agawam               |                           |           |                  |
| Amherst              | Paul Bockelman            |           |                  |
| Belchertown          |                           |           |                  |
| Chicopee             |                           |           |                  |
| East Longmeadow      |                           |           |                  |
| Easthampton          | Cindy Tarail              |           |                  |
| Granby               |                           |           |                  |
| Hadley               | David Moskin              |           |                  |
| Hampden              |                           |           |                  |
| Holyoke              | Stephen Fay               |           |                  |
| Leverett             |                           |           |                  |
| Longmeadow           |                           |           |                  |
| Ludlow               | Anthony Alves             |           |                  |
| Northampton          | Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra |           |                  |
| Palmer               | Benjamin Hood             |           |                  |
| Pelham               | Tara Loomis               |           |                  |
| South Hadley         |                           |           |                  |
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| West Springfield     |                           |           |                  |
| Westfield            | Peter Miller              |           |                  |
| Wilbraham            |                           |           |                  |
| Williamsburg         | J.M. Sorrell              |           |                  |
| ADA Representative   |                           |           |                  |
| Rider Representative |                           |           |                  |

Motion passed by a vote of 37.63, all in favor.

The meeting of the Advisory Board adjourned at 12:43 P.M.

**A TRUE RECORD**

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**BRANDY PELLETTIER**

Documents filed with Board Meeting packet:

- Roll Call Votes
- Advisory Board Minutes of 5-21-25

**Minutes Approved: August 20, 2025**