
**MINUTES OF PVTA'S
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
March 18, 2026**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Advisory Board Meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Wednesday, March 18, 2026 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 (36.56 votes)</i></u>	<u><i>Not Present (25.46 votes)</i></u>
Agawam	Cindy Sullivan	
Amherst		Paul Bockelman
Belchertown		Edward Boscher
Chicopee		Steve Huntley
East Longmeadow	Emily Constantino	
Easthampton	Cynthia Tarail	
Granby		Glen Sexton
Hadley		David Moskin
Hampden		Becky Moriarty
Holyoke	Stephen Fay	
Leverett		Tom Hankinson
Longmeadow	Lyn Simmons	
Ludlow		Anthony Alves
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra	
Palmer	Benjamin Hood	
Pelham		Jessica Barr
South Hadley	Lisa Wong	
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, Chair J.M. Sorrell called the remote meeting of PVTA's Advisory Board to order at 12:03 PM; majority vote of 36.56 present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comments were made.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Moved and seconded (Fay/Mayor Sciarra) to approve the meeting minutes from the January 21, 2026 Advisory Board Meeting.

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			
Belchertown			
Chicopee			
East Longmeadow	Emily Constantino		
Easthampton	Cynthia Tarail		
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden			
Holyoke	Stephen Fay		
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Lyn Simmons		
Ludlow			
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra		
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham			
South Hadley	Lisa Wong		
Springfield	Timothy Sheehan		
Sunderland			
Ware			
West Springfield			
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		

Motion passed by a vote of 36.56, all in favor.

4. REPORT OF PVTA SUB-COMMITTEES

Stephen Fay reported for the Finance & Audit Sub-Committee:

The Finance & Audit Committee met on Monday, March 9th. The committee voted to approve the Minutes from the previous meeting. PVRTA staff presented an amendment to the FY26 approved budget to reflect additional funding allocated through the Fair Share Amendment and grants awarded to PVRTA.

The committee voted to recommend approval to the full board of the proposed Amendment to PVRTA's FY26 Budget.

PVRTA staff also presented a preliminary draft FY27 Budget to the Committee. This document is a work in progress as additional details are gathered including health insurance premiums, fuel futures contracts, and operating subsidies.

Peter Miller reported for the Route Sub-Committee:

The Route Committee met on March 11th and voted to approve minutes from the previous meeting. The committee also voted to approve the R10 Title VI analysis and approve the frequency improvement on the R10 increasing from every 45-minutes to 30-minutes on weekdays.

JM Sorrell reported for the Compensation Sub-Committee:

The Compensation Committee met on March 11th and had discussions with Administrator Sheehan for a five-year contract. The committee is currently looking at the salary and benefits package and has a meeting scheduled tomorrow to finalize details and bring a recommendation to the full Board at the May meeting.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Wong/Mayor Sciarra) to accept the Reports of PVRTA Sub-Committees.

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			
Belchertown			
Chicopee			
East Longmeadow	Emily Constantino		
Easthampton	Cynthia Tarail		
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden			
Holyoke	Stephen Fay		
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Lyn Simmons		
Ludlow			
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra		
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham			
South Hadley	Lisa Wong		

Springfield	Timothy Sheehan
Sunderland	
Ware	
West Springfield	
Westfield	Peter Miller
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell

Motion passed by a vote of 36.56, all in favor.

5. **AMEND CURRENT FY26 BUDGET**

Lori Brodeur, PVTA's Director of Finance, presented the amendments to the FY26 approved budget to reflect additional funding allocated through the Fair Share Amendment and grants awarded to PVTA. The changes made to the budget include:

Expense revisions:

- Administration - overall increase 32%
- Paratransit Operations - increase of 3.5%
- Fixed Route Operations - increase of 11%

Revenue revisions:

- State Contract Assistance (SCA)
- Fare Free Program
- Operating Subsidies

Details on the budget revisions were presented by Ms. Brodeur.

A detailed presentation of the proposed FY27 budget ~~revisions~~ will be presented to the Advisory Board at the May meeting.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Tarail/Simmons) to approve amending the current FY26 Budget as presented.

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			
Belchertown			
Chicopee			
East Longmeadow	Emily Constantino		
Easthampton	Cynthia Tarail		
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden			
Holyoke	Stephen Fay		

Leverett	
Longmeadow	Lyn Simmons
Ludlow	
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra
Palmer	Benjamin Hood
Pelham	
South Hadley	Lisa Wong
Springfield	Timothy Sheehan
Sunderland	
Ware	
West Springfield	
Westfield	Peter Miller
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell

Motion passed by a vote of 36.56, all in favor.

6. APPROVAL OF TITLE VI ON R10 FREQUENCY IMPROVEMENTS

Paul Burns, Director of Transit Operations reported:

In November, the Board approved conducting a Title VI analysis for service improvements on the R10, increasing frequency from 45-minutes to 30-minutes on weekdays.

~~We~~ PVTA began piloting this change in December of 2025 with the start of SATCo's Winter Bid pending completion of the Title VI analysis. The change has been welcomed by riders during the pilot period. The full analysis is included in your Board Packet.

~~We held~~ two (2) public hearings were held, one on December 11, 2025, at Westfield State University and the other on January 7, 2026, at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. These hearings were conducted as hybrid meetings both in-person and virtually although no one attended either meeting.

Title VI analysis conclusions: The goal of the proposed service improvement on the R10 is to provide better service along the Route 20 corridor and better service to West Springfield, Westfield Center, and Westfield State University. The improvement is consistent with systemwide service improvements implemented by PVTA in 2025 to add frequency on applicable bus routes including the R10. Changes to the R10 result in an increase in service hours and is therefore considered a major change and requires a Title VI Disparate Impact/Disproportionate Burden Analysis.

No Disparate Impact or Disproportionate Burden

- The proposed improvements will add additional trips to the R10 resulting in improved frequency from 45 minutes to 30 minutes. An initial improvement was implemented as a pilot beginning December 21, on weekdays from 9am to 5pm.
- Based on this analysis, the improvement does not have a disparate impact on riders of color or a disproportionate burden on low-income riders.

- The additional frequency throughout the corridor will have no disparate impact on people of color or a disproportionate burden on low-income individuals. No mitigation strategies are necessary at this time.

~~We are requesting~~PVTA requested that the Board accept the Title VI analysis and approve the changes to the R10.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Wong/Miller) to accept the Title VI analysis and approve the changes to the R10.

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			
Belchertown			
Chicopee			
East Longmeadow	Emily Constantino		
Easthampton	Cynthia Tarail		
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden			
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Springfield	Timothy Sheehan		
Sunderland			
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West Springfield			
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		

Motion passed by a vote of 36.56, all in favor.

7. **DIRECTOR OF TRANSIT OPERATIONS REPORT**

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

Systemwide ridership continues to increase overall despite the challenges of this winter, which included significantly colder temperatures than recent winters and two major snowstorms that saw significant service reductions on January 25 and 26 and a full curtailment of service on February 23.

Ridership for January was 644, 511, up 5.43% over FY 25.

Ridership by operator for January:

- DGR 553K up 33K (6.3%) from January of 2025
- UMass 88K down 441 passengers (.05%) from January of 2025
- Hulmes 3031 up 707passengers (30.42%) from January of 2025

Paratransit ridership shows decreases over the prior year for both January and December. We believe this is primarily due to weather issues. January paratransit ridership declined 10.57% over the prior year, while December was down 1.7%. February is also likely to see a decrease over the prior year as well given the colder than average temperatures and the blizzard conditions on February 24th that caused a full-service curtailment for that day.

Overall, this winter has been much harsher than in the recent past. This has an especially significant impact on paratransit ridership as travel in bad weather is more challenging off the main roads and paratransit riders are also more likely to cancel due to weather related concerns.

Link 413: A new regional commuter bus service for Western Massachusetts connecting the 413. This service is a partnership between the Berkshire Regional, Franklin Regional and Pioneer Valley Transit Authorities. Service began on January 27, 2026. The service operates three new commuter routes:

Route 901 travels between Pittsfield and North Adams.

Route 903 travels between North Adams and Greenfield via the communities of Adams, Savoy, Plainfield, Ashfield and Charlemont.

Route 904 Travels between Pittsfield and Northampton along the Route 9 corridor with intermediate stops in the communities of Dalton, Windsor, Cummington, Goshen and Williamsburg.

G47: Scheduled to begin service on March 30th, this route will provide a direct connection between Ware and Holyoke with stops in Belchertown, Granby and South Hadley along routes 9 and 202. This route will operate approximately every two hours Monday through Friday and will provide access to employment, health care, shopping and education in a previously underserved corridor in our service area.

B49: Also scheduled to begin service on March 30, this route will provide a direct connection between Northampton and Southwick and will operate on 70-minute frequency Monday through Friday and will provide access to employment, health care, shopping and education on a previously underserved corridor in our service area. Additionally, this route will connect with FRTA in Southwick and Southampton, improving connections between the transit authorities.

Safety and Security: With few exceptions in calendar year 2025, we continue to see a declining trend in the number of verbal and physical assaults on operators. Overall, 2025 was saw the lowest assault rate since we began keeping records. This can be attributed to several factors that include, increased enforcement of penalties on passengers who commit assaults on driver, ongoing assault awareness campaigns on board the vehicles as well as improved reporting of issues on the part of front line staff. January 2026 continued to show relatively low levels of assaults on operators with 7 total assaults, the same number as last January despite higher ridership.

As part of our continuing effort to address assaults, PVTA is partnering with Behavioral Health Network (BHN) in the Southern tier assist passengers with human service and mental health concerns in the hopes of addressing issues before they create problems on the bus when possible. BHN staff will be able to respond in real time to passengers who may be engaging in problematic behavior and can assist with de-escalation. BHN staff may respond on their own or in coordination with area police departments depending on the needs of individual situations.

8. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Sandra Sheehan, Administrator, reported the following:

The Governor issued H1 at the end of January. The Commonwealth Transportation Fund is listed at \$94M and the Fare Share Amendment at \$123.5M with \$66M for operating subsidy, \$8.5M to enhance service and workforce development, \$30M for fare free program, \$10M for connectivity grants and \$4M Community Transit Grants. The Governor also issued a Supplemental Budget to FY26. This budget includes \$60M for the RTAs. It includes \$35M for general transit improvements, \$10M for connectivity grants and \$15M for micro-transit.

MARTA hosted a Legislative Luncheon in Boston on March 10th. Members of the Western Mass delegation were in attendance. The RTAs funding request for FY27 was presented and discussed with members of the delegation.

A Joint Ways and Means Committee hearing on the FY27 budget, covering transportation, energy, and environment, was held on March 10, 2026, at UMass - Amherst. The Committee Hearing was chaired by Senator Comerford and Representative Sabadosa. The hearing featured testimony from MassDOT officials regarding rail, road, and funding priorities. Senator Comerford highlighted the importance of micro-transit and grant programs for western Massachusetts communities. In advance of the meeting, MARTA provided Senator Comerford and Representative Sabadosa with the RTAs funding request.

PVTA has been able to use the funding levels provided in the last three fiscal years to enhance service by improving frequencies, extending service hours, implementing evening and weekend service and expanding service coverage. With the implementation of service changes at the end of the month, PVTA will be operating service every day of the week on 35 out of 46 routes in the system. The continued ridership increases reflect the investment that has been made in the system. At the end of this month, two additional routes will be added to the system. The requested budget revision in labor and miles also reflects these improvements.

PVTA is celebrating National Transit Employee Appreciation Day today, March 18th. PVTA is taking this opportunity to recognize the dedication of the transit operators, mechanics, and support staff who keep PVTA's transit system running. PVTA is taking this opportunity to recognize employees that accomplished performance records for the 2025 calendar year and to ask the passengers to express their gratitude for the individuals that help them get to where they need to go.

9. NEW BUSINESS

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

10. OLD BUSINESS

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

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Sorrell asked for a motion to adjourn.

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

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam	Cindy Sullivan		
Amherst			
Belchertown			
Chicopee			
East Longmeadow	Emily Constantino		
Easthampton	Cynthia Tarail		
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Sunderland			
Ware			
West Springfield			
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		

Motion passed by a vote of 36.56, all in favor.

The meeting of the Advisory Board adjourned at 12:51 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD

ATTEST: _____
BRANDY PELLETIER

Documents filed with Board Meeting packet:

- Roll Call Votes
- Advisory Board Minutes of 1-21-26
- FY26 Budget Amendment

Minutes Approved: May 20, 2026