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**MINUTES OF PVTA'S  
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
October 4, 2022**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The postponed September 21, 2022 Advisory Board Meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Wednesday, October 4, 2022, at 12:00 P.M. remotely in accordance with the Governor's State of Emergency Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, Section 20, relieving from the requirement of section 20 of chapter 30A that it conduct its meetings in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public, permitting a public body to allow remote participation by all members.

	<i><u>Present (33.41 votes)</u></i>	<i><u>Not Present (28.59 votes)</u></i>
Agawam	Michael Squindo	
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter	
Belchertown		Brian O'Leary
Chicopee		Steve Huntley
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler	
Easthampton		Cindy Tarail
Granby		Glen Sexton
Hadley	David Moskin	
Hampden	Becky Moriarty	
Holyoke		Gloria Caballero-Roca
Leverett		Peter D'Errico
Longmeadow	Mark Gold	
Ludlow		Derek DeBarge
Northampton		Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra
Palmer	Benjamin Hood	
Pelham		David Shanabrook
South Hadley		Michael Sullivan
Springfield	Tim Sheehan	
Sunderland		Geoff Kravitz
Ware		John Carroll
West Springfield	Allyson Manuel	
Westfield		Peter Miller
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord	
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell	
ADA Representative		Vacant
Rider Representative		Jake Hasson

A quorum of 31.01 votes being present, Chairman of the Advisory Board, Douglas Slaughter, called the remote meeting of PVTA's Advisory Board to order at 1:10 PM; majority vote of 33.41 present.

## 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Slaughter asked if any members of the public would like to make a public comment. No public comments were made.

## 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Slaughter asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to approve the meeting minutes from the August 18, 2022 Regular Advisory Board Meeting.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (Gold/Sorrell) to approve the meeting minutes from the August 18, 2022, Regular Advisory Board Meeting.

Chairman Slaughter asked if the Board had any discussion. Hearing none; asked for a roll call vote to approve the minutes.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam	Michael Squindo		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown			
Chicopee			
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley	David Moskin		
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton			
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham			
South Hadley			
Springfield	Tim Sheehan		
Sunderland			
Ware			
West Springfield	Allyson Manuel		
Westfield			
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 33.41.

## 4. REPORT OF PVTA'S SUB-COMMITTEE'S

Doug Slaughter reported that the Finance & Audit sub-committee met on Thursday, September 29<sup>th</sup>. The Committee voted to approve the minutes of May 16, 2022.

Auditor David Irwin, from Adelson & Company PC, gave the committee a detailed presentation on PVTA's FY22 Audit. PVTA met all the requirements for the Audit and all the information and documentation that was needed was provided. It was reported that there are two findings in this Audit. One is for Lack of Controls over Financial Reporting and the other is for Lack of Reconciliation Over Fixed Assets.

The key thing is that the Auditor's were able to provide a clean financial opinion to the State. The findings are areas we could do better in, and are all fixable, and will allow us to refine our processes. The committee also had the opportunity to discuss the Audit without management being present. The committee voted to recommend approval of PVTA's FY22 Audit Report to the full Board.

The committee also reviewed PVTA's FY23 Budget Amendment which two changes are needed; An adjustment to the Farebox line item to better reflect PVTA's ridership data and an adjustment to State Contract Assistance. Everything else presented in the FY23 Budget remains the same. The committee voted to recommend approving PVTA's FY23 Budget Amendment to the full Board.

Mark Gold reported that the Paratransit sub-committee met on September 21, 2022. The committee voted to approve the minutes of March 17, 2022.

The committee received an update on the Dial-A-Ride service enhancements that were approved by the Board in March. The program continues to be successful. The committee voted to recommend to the Advisory Board, extending the pilot through January 31, 2023, authorizing holding public hearings to extend the Dial-A-Ride hours permanently, and to conduct a Title VI analysis for this change.

Chairman Slaughter asked the Board for a motion to accept the report of PVTA's Sub-Committee's

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (Gold/Sorrell) to accept the report of PVTA's Sub-Committee's.

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	Michael Squindo		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown			
Chicopee			
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley	David Moskin		
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton			
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		

Pelham	
South Hadley	
Springfield	Tim Sheehan
Sunderland	
Ware	
West Springfield	Allyson Manuel
Westfield	
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell
ADA Representative	
Rider Representative	

Motion passed by a vote of 33.41.

**5. PVTA FY23 BUDGET AMENDMENT**

Chief Financial Officer, Lisa Seymour, reported the following:

Two changes are needed to PVTA’s FY23 Budget. The first is an adjustment to the Farebox line item to better reflect PVTA’s ridership data from \$6,070,000 to \$5,500,000. The second is an adjustment to State Contract Assistance from \$25,962,099 to \$26,887,785. Everything else presented in the FY23 Budget remains the same.

Chairman Slaughter asked the Board for a motion to approve PVTA’s FY23 Budget Amendment as presented.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (Sorrell/Squindo) to approve PVTA’s FY23 Budget Amendment as presented.

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	Michael Squindo		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown			
Chicopee			
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley	David Moskin		
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton			
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		

Pelham	
South Hadley	
Springfield	Tim Sheehan
Sunderland	
Ware	
West Springfield	Allyson Manuel
Westfield	
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell
ADA Representative	
Rider Representative	

Motion passed by a vote of 33.41.

## **6. PVTA'S FY22 AUDIT REPORT**

Auditor David Irwin, from Adelson & Company PC, reported on PVTA's FY22 Audit and stated the following:

PVTA met all the requirements for the audit and all the information and documentation that was needed was provided. We have reported to management and the Finance & Audit sub-committee that there are material weaknesses in Pioneer Valley Transit Authority's internal control over financial reporting, lack of reconciliation procedures over fixed assets, and significant delays in the drawdown of grants receivable.

Even though there are findings, which I believe can be rectified with monthly reports, we were able to issue a clean financial opinion to the state.

Finding 2022-001: Lack of Controls over Financial Reporting. During our audit, we noted several account balances which were not properly reconciled prior to the start of the audit. As a result, we proposed several material adjustments to be recorded in the Authority's general ledger. The Auditors' Recommendation is that the Authority should document in its Accounting Policies and Procedures manual the required month-end closing procedures to be performed by the Finance department. To assist in the monthly closing process, the Authority should develop a month-end closing checklist, noting the accounts to be reconciled, position responsible for preparation, and due date of the reconciliation to be submitted to the CFO for review. Additionally, the month-end closing checklist should also note certain financial reports to be provided to the Administrator on a monthly basis. These reports should be generated directly from the Operating and Capital general ledger systems, and should include:

- a. Comparative balance sheet, for operating and capital;
- b. Comparative income statement, for operating and capital;
- c. Budget versus actual income statement;
- d. Accounts receivable aging, for operating and capital;
- e. Accounts payable aging, for operating and capital.
- f. Reconciliation of fixed asset module to capital general ledger.

The Authority should plan its month-end close schedule, so the internal financial statements are made available to the Administrator three weeks after month-end. These reports should also be provided to the Finance Committee after review and approval by the Administrator.

Finding 2022-002: Lack of Reconciliation over Fixed Assets. In fiscal year 2020, the Authority began conversion to a new fixed asset software module. The conversion project has been ongoing, and the balances reported in the fixed asset software do not agree to the balances reported in the accounting general ledger by \$3,712,158 at June 30, 2022. This variance is related to the import and maintenance of data in the fixed asset module. The fixed asset balance reported in the general ledger, and ultimately, the financial statements, is fairly stated. The Auditors' Recommendation is that the fixed asset software should be reconciled to the accounting general ledger monthly. This reconciliation should be included as part of the month-end closing process recommended in Finding 2022-001.

We made some comments and recommendations for the Audit. These are not findings but areas for improvement:

1. During our review of cash and short-term investment accounts, we noted that the Chief Financial Officer is the only individual listed as having access to the funds in the Massachusetts Municipal Depository Trust (MMDT) accounts. It was noted that all fund transfers are required to be approved by the Administrator prior to being initiated by the CFO.

Recommendation: The Authority should add the Administrator and a Board member as secondary signers on the MMDT account.

Action Taken: The Authority will add the Administrator and the Chairman of the Advisory Board as secondary signers on the MMDT account.

2. During fiscal year 2022, we identified capital costs of \$711,668 incurred by the Authority which were not funded under existing capital grants.

Recommendation: The Authority should seek to amend its CARES Act Grant to cover the cost of these unfunded capital projects, otherwise the cost will be reimbursed through reimbursable depreciation over the life of the assets.

Action Taken: The Authority has been in discussions with FTA Region 1 staff to amend the CARES Grant to include the capital projects identified through this audit.

Auditor Irwin went over PVTA's Statement of Net Position and Income Statement with the Board. There are no issues with how expenses and revenues are being recorded.

A full copy of PVTA's FY22 Audit Report has been filed with the minutes of this meeting.

Chairman Slaughter asked the Board for a motion to approve PVTA's FY22 Audit Report.

**Motion**: Moved and seconded (Sorrell/Squindo) to approve PVTA's FY22 Audit Report.

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	Michael Squindo		

Amherst	Douglas Slaughter
Belchertown	
Chicopee	
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler
Easthampton	
Granby	
Hadley	David Moskin
Hampden	Becky Moriarty
Holyoke	
Leverett	
Longmeadow	Mark Gold
Ludlow	
Northampton	
Palmer	Benjamin Hood
Pelham	
South Hadley	
Springfield	Tim Sheehan
Sunderland	
Ware	
West Springfield	Allyson Manuel
Westfield	
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell
ADA Representative	
Rider Representative	

Motion passed by a vote of 33.41.

**7. PVTA’S DIAL-A-RIDE PILOT: EXTENSION OF PVTA’S DIAL-A-RIDE PILOT AND APPROVAL OF PUBLIC HEARINGS & TITLE VI ANALYSIS TO MAKE EXTENDED DIAL-A-RIDE SCHEDULE PERMANENT**

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

The Board approved a pilot in March to extend PVTA’s Dial-A-Ride service hours to 7:00 PM, Monday through Friday, and to extend service to Saturdays with the restriction that Saturday service would be available only in communities that also have paratransit service.

PVTA is asking the Board to approve extending this pilot through January 31, 2023 and for approval to hold public hearings to seek comments on the Title VI Analysis & making the expansion of Dial-A-Ride service hours from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM, Monday through Saturday, permanent.

Chairman Slaughter asked the Board for a motion to approve extending PVTA’s Dial-A-Ride pilot through January 31, 2023 and for approval to hold public hearings to seek comments on the Title VI Analysis & making the expansion of Dial-A-Ride service hours from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM, Monday through Saturday, permanent.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (Sorrell/Gold) to approve extending PVTA’s Dial-A-Ride pilot through January 31, 2023 and for approval to hold public hearings to seek comments on the Title VI Analysis & making the expansion of Dial-A-Ride service hours from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM, Monday through Saturday, permanent.

Chairman Slaughter asked if the Board had any discussion.

JM Sorrell: Are there any downsides to continuing the program.

Paul Burns: Only the possibility of capacity issues but MV is operating the service much more efficiently than previous contractors.

Chairman Slaughter asked if the Board had any further discussion. Hearing none; asked for a roll call vote.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam	Michael Squindo		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown			
Chicopee			
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley	David Moskin		
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton			
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham			
South Hadley			
Springfield	Tim Sheehan		
Sunderland			
Ware			
West Springfield	Allyson Manuel		
Westfield			
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 33.41.



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

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

Fixed Route Ridership\_Systemwide for August was at 387,000, which is up 2% from this time last year.

Ridership by operator;

- SATCo ridership 299K (up from 292K in 8/21)
- UMass was at 52K (up from 51K in 8/21)
- VATCo was at 36K (down from 37K in 8/21)

August ridership improved compared to July and June, as students began returning for the fall semester. All three garages showed higher ridership in August than in July or June, but SATCo, in particular, set a ridership record, with August as its busiest month in 2022.

Paratransit ridership continues to increase steadily when compared to the previous year. July and August ridership are 15.5 and 19.6% higher (respectively) than one year ago; paratransit ridership has recovered to 66% of prepandemic ridership.

New Route Updates:

- The G73E set a new ridership record in August 2022, with 7,403 trips.
- The B79 appears to remain very low during August 2022. Weekend service was restored on the B79 on August 21, after being eliminated during May. The absence of weekend service contributed to the low ridership on the B79 during the summer. Preliminary ridership reports for September show consistent and steady increases in weekend ridership, although we are still struggling with staffing shortages on the B79.
- The Job Corps Tripper route has very low ridership of about 3 passengers per day after the first week of service. We are hopeful that ridership will increase as awareness of the service grows.

SATCo Public hearings for labor-related staffing adjustments was held on September 29, 2022 at 3:00 PM and 7:00 PM virtually. One person attended the hearing his comment was that he regrets that we don't have enough drivers to avoid service cuts and hopes that someone somewhere will come up with a solution.

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

Administrator, Sandra Sheehan, reported the following:

I want to take an opportunity to provide information on the projects PVTA staff and our partners are working on.

Accelerating Innovation Mobility (AIM). The Pioneer Valley origin-destination-transfer project uses on-bus mobile ticket validators to enhance fare payment and data collection through mobile technology. The data collected from the validators would be combined with existing Automated Passenger Counter, Global Positioning System, and fare box data to develop an innovative ODX model for PVTA transit trips. Our partners include, PVPC and the NARS Lab at UMass, Amherst. The Lab is part of the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department which is task with the

development of the ODX model. The project also includes a build out of the ODX model with an interactive dashboard coupled with data visualization for further exploration of transit patterns in the network. The ODX model is expected to be able to replicate trip trajectories for input data from other public transit agencies. The goal of the PVTA ODX project is to make traveling on public transit easier for riders by consolidating PVTA’s web app suite to enable integrated multimodal trip planning, access to reliable real-time transit information, and fare payment.

Helping Obtain Prosperity for Everyone (HOPE), a planning grant which aims to review historical and existing transit conditions to inform the design of a sustainable transit system for current and future travel needs in the Pioneer Valley. The project seeks to: improve the reliability of transit service for riders; enhance transit access, mobility and safety; accelerate the deployment of innovative technology and methods; reduce vehicle emissions; reduce travel barriers for low-income, seniors and people with disabilities; improve rural transportation; expand ticketing, payment and financing; and engage with stakeholders for this grant, PVTA is collaborating with PVPC, UMass NARS Lab as well as the Landscape, Architecture and Regional Planning (LARP) Department and Western New England University’s Civil and Environmental Engineering Department

Shared Streets and Spaces, PVTA was awarded \$449,500.00 for transit bus stop infrastructure improvements and an additional \$40,900 for equipment purchases to support proposed bus stop projects throughout the region. This allowed us to partner with member communities to improve shelters and pedestrian/bike infrastructure in fifteen distinct locations in eight communities (Agawam, Amherst, Chicopee, Northampton, Palmer, Springfield, West Springfield, and Ware) over the next year.

RideCarePV, this project consists of engaging Transportation Specialists for medical staff who will provide the crucial bridge between the various transportation resources available and the patients that need them. The goal of this project is to expand transportation services from rural communities to urban centers, support mobility management, promote public health access and improve outreach efforts at medical facilities. PVTA has partnered with Baystate Health Center, Caring Health Center and, the Public Health Institute of Western Mass.

## 10. NEW BUSINESS

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

## 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 (Squindo/Sorrell) to adjourn.

Chairman Slaughter asked for a roll call vote.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam	Michael Squindo		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		

Belchertown	
Chicopee	
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler
Easthampton	
Granby	
Hadley	David Moskin
Hampden	Becky Moriarty
Holyoke	
Leverett	
Longmeadow	Mark Gold
Ludlow	
Northampton	
Palmer	Benjamin Hood
Pelham	
South Hadley	
Springfield	Tim Sheehan
Sunderland	
Ware	
West Springfield	Allyson Manuel
Westfield	
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell
ADA Representative	
Rider Representative	

Motion passed by a vote of 33.41.

The meeting of the Advisory Board adjourned at 2:03 P.M.

**A TRUE RECORD**

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**BRANDY PELLETIER**

Documents filed with Board Meeting packet:

- Roll Call Votes
- Regular Advisory Board Minutes of 8-18-22
- PVTA’s FY23 Budget Amendment
- PVTA’s FY22 Audit Report

**MINUTES APPROVED: November 16, 2022**