

**MINUTES OF PVTA'S  
REMOTE FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING  
November 14, 2022**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Finance and Audit Committee meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Monday, November 14, 2022 at 1:00 P.M. remotely in accordance with the Governor's 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.

**ROLL CALL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Members: Doug Slaughter, Amherst; Steve Huntley, Chicopee; David Moskin, Hadley; Brian O'Leary, Belchertown; Michael Squindo, Agawam (arrived at 1:20pm);

**NOT PRESENT:**

Gloria Caballero, Holyoke;

Call to Order: Steve Huntley, Chairman of the Finance & Audit Committee stated that the committee has a quorum and called the meeting to order at 1:08 P.M.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chairman Huntley opened the floor for public comments. No Public Comments were made.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 29, 2022.**

Chairman Huntley asked for a motion from the Finance & Audit Committee to approve the meeting minutes of September 29, 2022.

**MOTION:** Moved and seconded (O'Leary/Slaughter) to approve the minutes of PVTA's Finance & Audit Committee meeting held September 29, 2022.

Chairman Huntley asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for a roll call vote.

David Moskin: Yes  
Doug Slaughter: Yes  
Brian O'Leary: Yes  
Steve Huntley: Yes

Motion passed, 4-0 vote.

#### 4. **BUDGET TO ACTUAL REPORT**

Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Lisa Seymour, reported that as part of the recommendations from the Auditor's regarding Financial Reporting, included in your packet is a month-end closing checklist, noting the accounts to be reconciled, position responsible for preparation, and due date of the reconciliation as well as the reports generated directly from the Operating and Capital general ledger systems. These reports have been reviewed with the Administrator and are included in the committee's packet for review and discussion. Please let me know what information you would like to discuss and if the committee is happy with the reporting.

Steve Huntley: This is a lot of information. I think we need to have a concise version that won't overload the committee.

Doug Slaughter: Could you provide a summary and if the committee has questions, we can discuss those further. Providing a single page summary with a checklist would be good with me.

Brian O'Leary: I agree with a summary and am comfortable with the reporting.

David Moskin: If there are any unhappy vendors with PVTA or past due payments I would like the committee to be informed about that.

Sandra Sheehan: We will include a narrative of the status of payments.

CFO Seymour reported on PVTA's Budget to Actual:

##### Revenue:

The farebox revenue is down by 7.8% which is better than it has been in the last few months. The school passes have not been billed during this period but are being billed for December as the contracts have been finalized.

Advertising sales are up by 39.3% and insurance recoveries have been more than budgeted increasing the variance by 127.7%. Other operating subsidies have not been billed as of yet but this number will even out as the year progresses.

The federal operating grant, which includes the ADA and Preventative Maintenance line item, has not been billed. PVTA has not billed any expenditures under the for CARES Grant as of yet.

##### Expenses:

Administration is down slightly due to two positions being vacant at the moment. Paratransit vendor is down slightly due to the amount of trips performed.

Fuel is overbudgeted for Paratransit, although it was budgeted at 30% over normal. This is due to the gasoline fuel cost variable.

SATCO/VATCO and UMass are under budget due to service reductions implemented because of the workforce shortages.

Allocated IT support is behind on billing although this expense will even out in the next few months.

(Michael Squindo arrived at 1:20pm)

Chairman Huntley asked for a motion from the Finance & Audit Committee to accept the Budget to Actual Report.

**MOTION**: Moved and seconded (O’Leary/Slaughter) to accept the Budget to Actual Report.

Chairman Huntley asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for a roll call vote.

David Moskin: Yes

Doug Slaughter: Yes

Brian O’Leary: Yes

Steve Huntley: Yes

Michael Squindo: Abstain

Motion passed, 4-0 vote with one abstention.

## **5. TRY TRANSIT DOT GRANT PROGRAM**

PVTA Administrator, Sandra Sheehan reported that the fifteen Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) were selected to receive the MassDOT Fare Free Pilot Program. These funds were made available under Section 1595-6370 of the FY23 Budget Act. The \$2.5M allocated by the Legislation will be used to implement free fixed route and paratransit services during the 2022 holiday season starting on November 25<sup>th</sup> and ending on December 31<sup>st</sup>. The goal of the award is to increase access to transit services across the Commonwealth. PVTA’s share of these funds is: \$744,523. PVTA’s Manager of Marketing and Public Relations has been working with staff from other RTAs to create a marketing package as well as a logo to distribute throughout the state as we inform people of the upcoming pre-paid service. The program is designed to encourage new customers to “Try Transit” by offering no cost trips to shop or dine at local businesses, visit with friends and family, and commute to work during the holiday season.

## **6. SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCILORS REQUEST FOR FARE FREE ROUTES**

PVTA attended a meeting requested by City Councilors from the City of Springfield on October 19<sup>th</sup>. There is a proposed Resolution in support of making the B7, G2, and B6 routes free. This resolution was proposed in April of this year. PVTA indicated a preference for any funds available to be used to improve overall service. We stated our concerns regarding equity as only those individuals residing within a certain distance to these bus routes will benefit from such a program while the rest of the residents of the city would not. We presented the difficulties the drivers will have letting passengers on the bus without paying while other passengers not residents of the route alignments will have to pay. We also expressed our concerns with some passenger behavior that was observed during the pandemic when fares were not being collected. The City Councilors present at the meeting were not deterred by our comments. They requested that we come up with a proposal of what we believe to be equitable and easy to manage.

Although PVTA preference is to use any available funds to improve service frequency, PVTA and PVPC staff have prepared a presentation of a low-income fare subsidy similar to what is currently being studied at the MBTA and what some other systems across the country have implemented as

part of their low income fare program. A follow up meeting has been scheduled with Councilor Justin Hurst on November 15<sup>th</sup>. He has asked for the cost of providing a full subsidy and partial subsidy. PVRTA staff has indicated that any change to PVRTA's fare structure needs the approval of the PVRTA Advisory Board.

Michael Squindo: There must be other cities comparable to the size of Springfield to see the impact of what going fare free does for their ridership, both good and bad.

Steve Huntley: Can you separate the information by community. As Chicopee's designee, I can not support Chicopee subsidizing administrative costs for low income and reduced fares for the City of Springfield's proposed project.

## **7. OTHER BUSINESS**

Chairman Huntley reported that there is no other business to discuss.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Huntley asked for a motion from the Finance & Audit Committee to adjourn.

**MOTION**: Moved and seconded (O'Leary/Squindo) to adjourn.

Chairman Huntley asked for a roll call vote.

David Moskin: Yes

Doug Slaughter: Yes

Brian O'Leary: Yes

Steve Huntley: Yes

Michael Squindo: Yes

Motion passed, 5-0 vote.

The meeting of the PVRTA Finance & Audit Committee adjourned at 1:50 P.M.

**A TRUE RECORD**

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

Documents filed with Finance & Audit Committee Meeting packet:

- September 29, 2022 Finance & Audit Committee Minutes
- Budget to Actual Report
- Financial Reporting Documents

**MINUTES APPROVED: March 16, 2023**