
**MINUTES OF PVTA'S
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
September 22, 2021**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Advisory Board Meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Wednesday, September 20, 2021, 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.

	<u>Present (44.80 votes)</u>	<u>Not Present (17.20 votes)</u>
Agawam	Michael Squindo	
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter	
Belchertown	Brian O'Leary	
Chicopee	Steve Huntley	
East Longmeadow		Erin Koebler
Easthampton		Brendan Rogers
Granby		Glen Sexton
Hadley	David Moskin	
Hampden	Becky Moriarty	
Holyoke		Aaron Vega
Leverett		Peter D'Errico
Longmeadow	Mark Gold	
Ludlow		Derek DeBarge
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz	
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		Vacant

A quorum of 31.01 votes being present, Chairman of the Advisory Board, Mayor David Narkewicz, called the remote meeting of PVTA's Advisory Board to order at 12:06 PM; majority vote of 44.80 present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to approve the meeting minutes from the August 19, 2021, Regular Advisory Board Meeting.

Motion: Moved and seconded (O'Leary/Slaughter) to approve the meeting minutes from the August 18, 2021, Regular Advisory Board Meeting.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz 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	Brian O'Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow			
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley	David Moskin		
Hampden			Becky Moriarty
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz		
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham			
South Hadley	Michael Sullivan		
Springfield	Tim Sheehan		
Sunderland			
Ware	John Carroll		
West Springfield			Allyson Manuel
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham			
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 40.59 and two abstentions.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz was alerted by a Board Member that an individual from the public had raised his hand. The Chairman allotted three minutes for Mr. Lopez. Mr. Lopez provided an update to a bus stop in Feeding Hills for the R14. Mr. Lopez indicated he has requested a bus stop be located at Brookline Avenue. Mr. Lopez has spoken to the abutters, including the Diocese of Springfield, the priest at Sacred Heart Church, as well as the Agawam City Council, and is currently working with Councilor Member, Ms. Sandlin to place the bus stop by the crosswalk.

4. REPORT OF THE FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

Doug Slaughter, Chairman of the Finance & Audit Committee, reported that the Committee met remotely on Monday, September 20th. The Committee voted to approve the minutes of June 21, 2021, and received a detailed presentation on PVTA's FY21 Audit from David Irwin of Adelson & Company, PC. Mr. Slaughter pointed out a few things. The audit is a review of PVTA's accounting policies and procedures to make sure these processes follow standard accounting procedures. The auditor's issued an unmodified clean opinion. PVTA's audit showed no material deficiencies. A couple of recommendations to improve upon existing procedures were made. This audit has no findings, and all financial components of the PVTA are in place. PVTA's Audit is in good order, as has been the case in the last few years. The Finance and Audit committee voted unanimously to adopt PVTA's FY21 Audit.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to accept the report of the Finance & Audit Committee.

Motion: Moved and seconded (O'Leary/Squindo) to accept and adopt the report of the Finance and Audit Committee.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz 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	Brian O'Leary		
Chicopee			
East Longmeadow			
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley	David Moskin		
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz		
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham			
South Hadley	Michael Sullivan		
Springfield	Timothy Sheehan		

Sunderland	
Ware	John Carroll
West Springfield	Allyson Manuel
Westfield	Peter Miller
Wilbraham	
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell
ADA Representative	
Rider Representative	

Motion passed by a vote of 43.64.

5. REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR'S COMPENSATION COMMITTEE

Doug Slaughter, Chairman of the Administrator's Compensation Committee, reported that the Committee met remotely on Monday, September 20th. The Committee is the Committee that also conducts the Administrator's performance review. Over the last few weeks, we asked the Board Members for feedback by completing a survey relative to the Administrator's performance for the last year and a half. It has been a challenging time with the pandemic and the additional complications that have been noted by all. It has been a difficult circumstance for the Administrator and the staff to manage. The responses received were complimentary of the Administrator's performance and a strong indication of the type of leadership we have, and the indication of hiring a good staff to assist in the performance of her duties. Some new members did not feel comfortable responding as they felt they did not have sufficient information. Half of the Board Members responded to the survey comprising of 64% of the system's ridership. Individuals that did not respond are communities that are often not present. The Committee has not yet discussed with the Administrator any changes to compensation. Any changes or adjustments to the compensation will be brought to the Board. This was a strong, positive evaluation of the Administrator. We are looking forward to her continued good work for us into the future.

Ms. Sorrell thanked the Administrator for her incredible leadership during such an unpredictably horrible time. We are lucky to have someone so strong and determined who looks at everything in terms of the potential to keep things going.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to accept the report of the Compensation Committee.

Motion: Moved and seconded (O'Leary/Huntley) to accept and adopt the report of the Finance and Audit Committee.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz 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	Brian O'Leary		
Chicopee			
East Longmeadow			
Easthampton			
Granby			

Hadley	David Moskin
Hampden	Becky Moriarty
Holyoke	
Leverett	
Longmeadow	Mark Gold
Ludlow	
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz
Palmer	Benjamin Hood
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Sunderland	
Ware	John Carroll
West Springfield	Allyson Manuel
Westfield	Peter Miller
Wilbraham	
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell
ADA Representative	
Rider Representative	

Motion passed by a vote of 43.64.

6. PVTA FY21 AUDIT

Auditor David Irwin of Adelson & Company PC reported on PVTA's FY21 Audit for the year ended June 30, 2021. Auditor Irwin stated the following:

Mr. Irwin discussed in detail the primary pages, the Statement of Net Position, which is page 5 in your report, and the Income Statement, page 6. There were no material weaknesses and no significant deficiencies. This was a clean, unmodified audit and PVTA's books are being maintained in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States. These documents are being sent to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and to the Federal Transit Administration with a clean opinion. PVTA met all requirements for the audit, and all the information and documentation that was needed was provided by PVTA management and the operating entities. We had a couple of recommendations to strengthen some internal controls that did not raise any material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. These minor recommendations were discussed with the Finance and Audit Sub-Committee, the Administrator, and the CFO.

Mr. Gold asked if the Auditor had a chance to speak with the Finance and Audit without the presence of the Administrator and the CFO. Mr. Irwin indicated the discussions with the Sub-Committee were held virtually, and the staff was present. Mr. Gold recommended that the auditor have the opportunity to meet with the Sub-Committee without the Administrator or CFO present in the future. Mr. Irwin pointed out that Auditors contacted a single member of the Finance and Audit Sub-Committee during the audit through a fraud questionnaire. Nothing came out as a result of that questionnaire.

A full copy of PVTA's FY20 Audit report has been filed with the minutes of this meeting.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to accept and adopt PVTA's FY21 Audit.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Huntley/O'Leary) to accept and adopt PVTA's FY21 Audit.

Hearing no further discussion, Chairman Narkewicz asked for a roll call vote.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam	Michael Squindo		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown	Brian O'Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow			
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley	David Moskin		
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz		
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham			
South Hadley	Michael Sullivan		
Springfield	Timothy Sheehan		
Sunderland			
Ware	John Carroll		
West Springfield	Allyson Manuel		
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham			
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 43.64.

7. **PVTA'S TITLE VI PROGRAM**

Mr. Sullivan made a motion for the Advisory Board to accept Item 7, PVTA's Title VI Program, and the three components associated with it after discussion and presentation as a consent agenda, as a group. Chairman Narkewicz indicated that following the presentation and discussion, the motion will be voted on.

Mr. Jeffery McCulloch from PVPC made a presentation that included the program update and an analysis of the transit services provided by PVTA. This analysis examined the key performance measures and examined potential disparate impacts as well as compared the disproportionate burdens thresholds to those performance measures that are not meeting standards. The analysis indicates that PVTA demonstrates no discriminatory practices in the operation of its services.

A full copy of the PVTA's Title VI presentation and report has been filed with the minutes of this meeting.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to accept and adopt the Title VI Program.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Sullivan/Huntley) to accept all three components in Item Number 7 of the agenda related to PVTA's Title VI Program.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam	Michael Squindo		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown	Brian O’Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow			
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley	David Moskin		
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz		
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham			
South Hadley	Michael Sullivan		
Springfield	Timothy Sheehan		
Sunderland			
Ware	John Carroll		
West Springfield	Allyson Manuel		
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham			
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 43.64.

8. DIRECTOR OF TRANSIT OPERATIONS REPORT

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

FY 2021 systemwide fixed-route ridership was 3.9 million, 38% of FY 2019 ridership. Ridership by the operator was as follows; SATCo 3.0 million or 50% of FY19 levels, UMass ridership was 522,000. 16% of FY19

VATCo ridership was 347,000. 38% of FY19, Hulme's ridership was 21,000, 98% of FY19.

The Ware-Palmer route was the highest recovery PVRTA route, exceeding its pre-covid ridership level at 148% of FY 2019. The B48, which serves Northampton and Holyoke Transportation Center via Route 5, was the second-highest route in terms of ridership recovery, at 74% of FY 2019.

Paratransit ridership continues to increase steadily. By the end of August, paratransit ridership had increased to 55% of pre-pandemic ridership. With the return of in-person classes at all area colleges, we anticipate that ridership will approach 65% of pre-pandemic levels in the fall.

Amherst/Worcester Intercity Service on this route is scheduled to begin on Thursday, September 16, 2021. The route will operate Thursday through Monday with three trips daily on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Monday and two trips on Sunday.

Northampton Holyoke Springfield Express/ G73E route currently carries an average of 250 passengers daily. The highest ridership day with 371 passengers was on September 11th. Ridership is still trending up. Overall, ridership in the Springfield-Holyoke Mall-Northampton corridor increased by 5% between June and August. The highest ridership day on this route so far was September 14, with more than 400 riders.

During the pandemic, PVRTA had expanded Dial A Ride service hours. As ridership increases, maintaining these hours for all Dial A Ride trips becomes more challenging. As of October 1, we will return to our providing Dial A Ride service between 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM. We will continue to provide expanded Dial A Ride service hours for riders accessing Dialysis and Chemotherapy treatments.

Mr. O'Leary, asked where schedules for the Amherst Worcester route be available. Mr. Burns responded that schedules are only available online at www.pvta.com.

9. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Sandra Sheehan reported the following:

At the state level, the House has not scheduled a full formal vote on the amendments thus, any amendment filed to move the \$3.5M in discretionary grants to operating funds for RTAs has yet to play out. There are no updates to the federal reauthorization program, but we will keep you posted on any changes.

President Biden has imposed new vaccine rules on federal workers, large employers, and health care staff in an attempt to contain the latest surge of COVID-19. Included in the new mandate is the requirement that all businesses with 100 or more employees ensure their workers are either vaccinated or tested once a week. As with any other business, PVRTA is waiting on the Department of Labor to issue regulations for the vaccine mandate and determine how those regulations and requirements would affect PVRTA and its operating entities.

PVRTA completed the procurement process associated with selecting a firm to provide Fixed Route Management Services. The Selection Committee, which included a member of the PVRTA Advisory Board as well as staff from PVPC, has chosen a new fixed route provider, DGR Management Inc. DGR will begin providing management services for SATCo and VATCo employees on October 1, 2021. MV will operate under an initial two-year contract that includes options for up to three consecutive (1) one-year renewal periods.

Staffing continues to be of concern for many transit systems, and PVTA is no exception. These labor shortages are exacerbated by the newly instituted PMFLA and staff who put off medical during the height of the pandemic that are now attending to those needs. Each of PVTA's operators is experiencing labor shortages to a greater or lesser degree. We are working with the operators to assist in recruiting staff at all levels and with PVPC to determine what actions may be needed to ensure the delivery of appropriate transit service, taking into consideration the staff we currently have available.

Ridership for the week of 8/25-9/4 was 141K, and ridership for the week of 9/5-9/11 was at 128K. This spike in ridership corresponds to the return of student riders to the area due to in-class learning. Overall ridership recovery compared to the same week in 2019 is at 70% and 57% for these two weeks. The first week's recovery rate is higher because classes began a week earlier this fall than they did in 2019.

The Administrator thanked the Finance staff as well as the auditors with Adelson and Company for all the work associated with this year's audit.

10. NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz reported that there is no new business to discuss.

11. OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz reported that there is no old business to discuss.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked for a motion to adjourn.

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

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz 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	Brian O'Leary		
Chicopee			
East Longmeadow			
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley	David Moskin		
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
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Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham			
South Hadley	Michael Sullivan		
Springfield	Timothy Sullivan		

Sunderland	
Ware	John Carroll
West Springfield	Allyson
Westfield	Peter Miller
Wilbraham	
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell
ADA Representative	
Rider Representative	

Motion passed by a vote of 39.12

The meeting of the Advisory Board adjourned at 1:05 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD


ATTEST: _____
SANDRA E. SHEEHAN

Documents filed with Board Meeting packet:

- Roll Call Votes
- Regular Advisory Board Minutes of 09-20-221
- FY21 Audit Report
- Title VI Program Update

Minutes Approved: November 17, 2021