

**MINUTES OF PVTA'S  
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
March 23, 2022**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Advisory Board Meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Wednesday, March 23, 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.

	<u>Present (41.47 votes)</u>	<u>Not Present (20.53 votes)</u>
Agawam	Michael Squindo	
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter	
Belchertown	Brian O'Leary*	
Chicopee		Steve Huntley
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler	
Easthampton		Mayor Nicole LaChapelle
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		Vacant

A quorum of 31.01 votes being present, Vice Chairman of the Advisory Board, Douglas Slaughter, called the remote meeting of PVTA's Advisory Board to order at 12:05 PM; majority vote of 35.42 present.

## 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Vice 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

Vice Chairman Slaughter asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to approve the meeting minutes from the January 19, 2022 Regular Advisory Board Meeting.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (Sheehan/Squindo) to approve the meeting minutes from the January 19, 2022, Regular Advisory Board Meeting.

Vice 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			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra		
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham	David Shanabrook		
South Hadley			
Springfield	Tim Sheehan		
Sunderland			
Ware	John Carroll		
West Springfield	Allyson Manuel		
Westfield			
Wilbraham			
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 35.42.

**4. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON OF THE PVTA ADVISORY BOARD TO FILL UNEXPIRED TERM (THRU JUNE 30, 2023)**

Doug Slaughter put forth his interest in Chairperson of the PVTA Advisory Board.

No other nominations were brought forth.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (Carroll/Gold) to appoint Doug Slaughter as Chairman of the PVTA Advisory Board to fill an unexpired term thru June 30, 2023.

Vice Chairman Slaughter asked if the Board had any discussion. Hearing none; asked for a roll call vote to approve Doug Slaughter as Chair of the PVTA Advisory Board to fill an unexpired term thru June 30, 2023.

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

Motion passed by a vote of 35.42.

**5. REPORT OF PVTA SUB-COMMITTEES**

Doug Slaughter, Chairman of the Compensation Committee, reported that the Compensation Committee met remotely on Monday, March 21, 2022. The committee voted to approve the minutes from September 20, 2021. The committee discussed the Administrator's Evaluation for FY22 and voted to recommend a 3% base salary increase in Administrator Sheehan's salary, retro-active to the start of FY22 on July 1, 2021. The committee also voted to recommend giving Administrator Sheehan a one-time bonus of \$10,000 for her work over the past year related to the pandemic and for her work filling in for the vacant Procurement Officer position.

Doug Slaughter, Chairman of the Finance & Audit Committee, reported that the Finance & Audit Committee met remotely on Monday, March 21, 2022. The Committee voted to approve the minutes from January 18, 2022. The Committee received a detailed presentation on PVRTA's FY23 Draft Budget and stated that the committee will be making a recommendation to the Full Board at the May meeting.

Mark Gold reported that the Paratransit Committee met on Thursday, March 17, 2022. The Committee voted to approve the minutes from May 19, 2021. The Committee also voted to recommend to the Board approving a 6-Month pilot program for Dial-A-Ride service enhancements that will expand Dial-A-Ride hours Monday through Friday until 7:00pm as well as the addition of Saturday Service 8:00am – 7:00pm beginning April 1, 2022. This pilot will be funded through efficiencies. While Paratransit ridership is increasing, staffing appears to be increasing faster than ridership is returning. Currently, the system has ample capacity to enhance Dial-A-Ride service. Additionally, because MV's operations are more efficient than in the recent past, these operational efficiencies will allow PVRTA to continue these enhancement as ridership increases. The only restriction on Saturday service would be that for the duration of the pilot, Dial-A-Ride would be available only in communities that also have paratransit service.

(\*Brian O'Leary, Belchertown Representative, arrived at 12:20pm. Quorum present: 36.75)

Brian O'Leary, Chairman of the Route Committee, reported that the Committee met on Friday, March 18, 2022. The Committee voted to approve the minutes from May 18, 2021. The Committee received an update on the R10 service changes that were implemented due to height issues of the Bridge on East Mountain Road. PVRTA's replacement vehicles can no longer fit under the bridge. The Committee also reviewed a variety of options for possible service implementation for servicing Job Corps. The Committee voted to recommend to the Board approving Holyoke Option 1 for implementing service to Job Corps for a pilot period of 180 days (academic year).

Paul Burns: Staff at Chicopee Job Corp has requested that PVRTA provide service to and from their facility on Johnson Road in Chicopee Monday through Friday at approximately 7:30am and 3:30pm to provide direct access to the facility for commuting students. They believe that there will be sufficient demand to support this service. They estimate up to 60 riders each morning and afternoon. PVRTA provided service to this location historically, but for various reasons, including low ridership and budget cuts, we have not provided service to this area in several years.

Job Corps staff initially requested that we "add a bus stop" at their facility. However, the nearest routes, the X90 and the G1 are approximately 1 and 2.6 miles away, respectively. Deviating either route this much will result in serious impacts on service. We have analyzed several potential options to provide this service to Job Corps. The most cost-effective option from PVRTA's perspective is Holyoke Option 1. Included in your packet are the service options for Job Corps. Option 1 provides access for students traveling from Union Station to Job Corps with a connection to the G1 and the X90 at Big Y in Chicopee. It also provides direct service from the Holyoke Transportation Center to Job Corps. This type of service is most similar to the school tripper service we provide for Holyoke and Springfield, which we usually request the communities pay for. However, because we have

historically provided service in this area, as a good faith effort to assist Job Corp, we are proposing the PVTa fund the service for up to a year to allow Job Corps time to find additional funding to support the service in the future.

(\*\*Gloria Caballero-Roca, Holyoke Representative, arrived at 12:30pm. Quorum present: 41.47)

Vice Chairman Slaughter asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to accept the reports of the Sub-Committees.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (O'Leary/Gold) to accept the reports of the Sub-Committees.

Vice 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	Brian O'Leary		
Chicopee			
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke	Gloria Caballero-Roca		
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra		
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham	David Shanabrook		
South Hadley			
Springfield	Tim Sheehan		
Sunderland			
Ware			
West Springfield	Allyson Manuel		
Westfield			
Wilbraham			
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 40.30.

## 6. ADMINISTRATOR'S REVIEW & COMPENSATION

Vice Chairman Slaughter stated that we have a recommendation from the Compensation Committee recommending a 3% base salary increase in Administrator Sheehan’s salary, retro-active to the start of FY22 on July 1, 2021 as well as a one-time bonus of \$10,000.

Vice Chairman Slaughter asked for a motion from the Advisory Board for the Administrator’s Review and Compensation.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (Gold/Sheehan) to adopt the Administrator’s Review for FY22 and Approve a 3% base salary increase in Administrator Sheehan’s salary, retro-active to the start of FY22 on July 1, 2021 as well as a one-time bonus of \$10,000.

Vice 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	Brian O’Leary		
Chicopee			
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke	Gloria Caballero-Roca		
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra		
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham	David Shanabrook		
South Hadley			
Springfield	Tim Sheehan		
Sunderland			
Ware			
West Springfield	Allyson Manuel		
Westfield			
Wilbraham			
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 40.30.

7. **APPROVAL OF DIAL-A-RIDE EXPANDED HOURS 6-MONTH PILOT**

Vice Chairman Slaughter stated that we have a recommendation from the Paratransit Committee to approve a 6-Month pilot program for Dial-A-Ride service enhancements that will expand Dial-A-Ride hours Monday through Friday until 7:00pm as well as the addition of Saturday Service 8:00am – 7:00pm beginning on April 1, 2022. The only restriction on Saturday service would be that for the duration of the pilot, Dial-A-Ride would be available only in communities that also have paratransit service.

Vice Chairman Slaughter asked for a motion from the Advisory Board.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (JM/Caballero-Roca) to approve a 6-Month pilot program for Dial-A-Ride that will expand Dial-A-Ride hours Monday through Friday until 7:00pm as well as the addition of Saturday Service 8:00am – 7:00pm with the restriction that Saturday Service is available only in communities that also have paratransit service.

Vice 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		Brian O’Leary	
Chicopee			
East Longmeadow		Erin Koebler	
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden		Becky Moriarty	
Holyoke		Gloria Caballero-Roca	
Leverett			
Longmeadow		Mark Gold	
Ludlow			
Northampton		Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra	
Palmer		Benjamin Hood	
Pelham		David Shanabrook	
South Hadley			
Springfield		Tim Sheehan	
Sunderland			
Ware		John Carroll	
West Springfield		Allyson Manuel	
Westfield			
Wilbraham			
Williamsburg		J.M. Sorrell	
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 41.47

**8. APPROVAL OF JOB CORPS SERVICE**

Vice Chairman Slaughter reported that we have a recommendation from the Route Committee to approve implementing service to Job Corps with service option 1: One bus that services HTC, Big Y, and Job Corps in a single trip.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (J.M. Sorrell/O’Leary) to approve implementing service to Job Corps with service option 1: One bus services HTC, Big Y, and Job Corps in a single trip.

Vice Chairman Slaughter asked if the Board had any discussion.

Michael Squindo: If the pilot isn’t working, does PVTA have the authority to change the pilot service.

Paul Burns, Director of Transit Operations: As long as it’s presented in the motion when approving whether to implement service.

Michael Squindo: I would like to offer a friendly amendment to the motion to include language that PVTA has the flexibility to make service adjustments accordingly to the pilot service to be implemented up to 180 days or up to \$39,766.32.

Vice Chairman Slaughter: If both the motion maker and seconder agree, we will accept Mr. Squindo’s friendly amendment to the motion.

J.M. Sorrell: I agree.

Brian O’Leary: I agree.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (J.M./O’Leary) to approve implementing pilot service to Job Corps with service option 1: One bus services HTC, Big Y, and Job Corps in a single trip, giving PVTA the flexibility to make service adjustments accordingly to the pilot service, implemented up to 180 days or up to \$39,766.32.

Vice 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	Brian O’Leary		
Chicopee			
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke	Gloria Caballero-Roca		
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		

Ludlow	
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra
Palmer	Benjamin Hood
Pelham	David Shanabrook
South Hadley	
Springfield	Tim Sheehan
Sunderland	
Ware	John Carroll
West Springfield	Allyson Manuel
Westfield	
Wilbraham	
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell
ADA Representative	
Rider Representative	

Motion passed by a vote of 41.47

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

Sandra Sheehan, Administrator, reported for the Director of Transit Operations and reported the following:

Fixed Route Ridership: Systemwide December 2021 ridership was at 448K, up significantly from 296K in 2020, although still not recovered to 724K from 2019. December ridership by operator was as follows; SATCo 269K, UMass 131K, and VATCo 47K.

The G73E has had over 5,000 monthly riders every month, with a peak of 6,702 riders on Oct 21.

The B79 had 205 riders on Feb 22, the third-best month on record, and the second-best for full-fare months (Sep/Oct were mostly fare-free).

B7 / B17: Several years ago, we stopped servicing Eastfield Mall on Saturday evenings at the request of mall management. In response to customer requests, we reviewed the policy with mall management and have reinstated Saturday evening service to the Eastfield Mall effective February 19, 2022.

R14: Travel time on weekdays between Feeding Hills Center and West Springfield Big Y has been shortened by 2-3 minutes to improve schedule reliability.

Staffing related service adjustments: The schedule changes noted below continue to be in effect for SATCo and VATCo.

### **VATCO (effective date 11/1/2021)**

<b>Route Affected</b>	<b>Change</b>
R44, R41, 39E	Will operate between 7 am -7 pm only.
B48	B48 frequency changes from every 30 min to hourly (on the hour)
B43	B43 reduce freq. to every 30 min between 7 am and 1 pm

**SATCO (effective date 12/12/2021)**

<b>Route Affected</b>	<b>Change</b>
T23, T24, T5 T1, T3, T20	Consolidation of school trippers, including replacing some trippers with modified service on fixed routes in the appropriate areas
G2E	Suspension of service on this route in its entirety
B6	Frequency reduction from every 20 minutes to every 30
B7	Frequency reduction from every 15 minutes to every 20
X90	Changed to hourly service with some reduction in frequency

Paratransit driver salaries were increased in January to make them more competitive. The salary increase and the new advertising campaign have significantly increased drivers applying to MV and being hired. Currently, MV is fully staffed for current operating needs and has significant numbers of applicants in the pipeline to support future needs.

Paratransit ridership continues to increase steadily when compared to the previous year. February's ridership is 52.1% higher than one year ago, the highest percentage increase so far this year.

New Grant Awards and Proposals: Working with planning and DPW staff in eight communities, we submitted a Shared Streets and Spaces Grant on March 1, 2022 for bus stops and related transit infrastructure improvements throughout our service area for FY 2023. Funding requests were submitted for 15 projects. Totaling \$449,500.00 for infrastructure improvements.

**10. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Administrator Sandra Sheehan reported the following:

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, PVRTA participated in a budget briefing for the Western Mass Legislative delegation. As many of you know, in the past, PVRTA hosted a Legislative Breakfast. Due to the pandemic, PVRTA partnered with PVPC and the Massachusetts Public Health Association to conduct this briefing. Information on how the Governor's H2 budget proposal will affect PVRTA services and how the contractual obligations, inflation and workforce development are shaping the FY23 operating budget.

On Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, PVRTA participated in the Pioneer Valley Advancing Transit Roundtable hosted by Senator Chandler and Representative Blais and sponsored by the Regional Transit Authorities Advocates Coalition (RTAAC). The purpose of the roundtable was to mobilize Coalition members to support the RTA Advancement Bill. The Bill sponsored by Chandler and Blais will ensure stable funding for the RTAs; dedicate a portion of the TNC revenue to the RTAs; empower the RTA Council; Enhance support for capital projects; support electrification of the fleet and stops rating the RTAs on farebox recovery ratio.

At the Ways and Means hearing held on Friday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, MassDOT continued to state the budget proposed by the Governor for the RTAs is a level funded budget and that allocating \$3.5M of that for discretionary grants is important. MassDOT continues to imply that RTAs have lots of money from the federal relief funds and the infrastructure bill. It is imperative that our legislative delegation understands that once PVRTA and all the RTAs have exhausted all the federal COVID-19 aid it received, PVRTA will be faced with a budget gap of over \$4M. These relief funds have been programmed and presented to MassDOT, these are recovery funds, not funds in lieu of operating assistance.

PVTA is currently taking delivery of 13 replacement transit buses. These are 35' and 40' diesel transit buses from New Flyer. An order has been placed for eight additional electric buses. These buses will be delivered at the end of the year.

**11. NEW BUSINESS**

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

**12. OLD BUSINESS**

Vice Chairman Slaughter reported that there is no old business to discuss.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

Vice Chairman Slaughter asked for a motion to adjourn.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (O'Leary/Caballero-Roca) to adjourn.

Vice Chairman Slaughter asked for a roll call vote.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam			
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown	Brian O'Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley	David Moskin		
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke	Gloria Caballero-Roca		
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton			
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham			
South Hadley			
Springfield	Tim Sheehan		
Sunderland			
Ware	John Carroll		
West Springfield			
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham			
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 38.77.

The meeting of the Advisory Board adjourned at 1:07 P.M.

**A TRUE RECORD**

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

Documents filed with Board Meeting packet:

- Roll Call Votes
- Regular Advisory Board Minutes of 1-19-22
- Job Corps Service Options

**Minutes Approved: May 18, 2022**