
**MINUTES OF PVTA'S
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
May 18, 2022**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Advisory Board Meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Wednesday, May 18, 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 (40.75 votes)</u>	<u>Not Present (21.25 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		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 12:07 PM; majority vote of 40.75 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 March 23, 2022 Regular Advisory Board Meeting.

Motion: Moved and seconded (O’Leary/Gold) to approve the meeting minutes from the March 23, 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		Brian O’Leary	
Chicopee		Steve Huntley	
East Longmeadow		Erin Koebler	
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden		Becky Moriarty	
Holyoke		Gloria Caballero-Roca	
Leverett			
Longmeadow		Mark Gold	
Ludlow			
Northampton			
Palmer		Benjamin Hood	
Pelham			
South Hadley			
Springfield		Tim Sheehan	
Sunderland			
Ware			
West Springfield			
Westfield		Peter Miller	
Wilbraham		Paula Dubord	
Williamsburg			
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 40.75.

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

Brandy Pelletier, PVTA Clerk to the Board: J.M. Sorrell put forth interest in the Vice Chairperson position.

Chairman Slaughter: Are there any other nominations from the Board for the Vice Chair position. Hearing none, Chairman Slaughter closed the nominations.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Slaughter/O’Leary) to appoint J.M. Sorrell as Vice Chair of the PVTA Advisory Board to fill an unexpired term thru June 30, 2023.

Chairman Slaughter asked if the Board had any discussion. Hearing none; asked for a roll call vote to approve J.M. Sorrell as Vice 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		Brian O’Leary	
Chicopee		Steve Huntley	
East Longmeadow		Erin Koebler	
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden		Becky Moriarty	
Holyoke		Gloria Caballero-Roca	
Leverett			
Longmeadow		Mark Gold	
Ludlow			
Northampton			
Palmer		Benjamin Hood	
Pelham			
South Hadley			
Springfield		Tim Sheehan	
Sunderland			
Ware			
West Springfield			
Westfield		Peter Miller	
Wilbraham		Paula Dubord	
Williamsburg			
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 40.75.

5. REPORT OF FINANCE & AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE

Doug Slaughter, Chairman of the Finance & Audit Committee, reported that the Finance & Audit Committee met remotely on Monday, May 16, 2022. The Committee voted to approve the minutes from March 31, 2022. The Committee received a report on PVTA's budget to actuals as well as an update on PVTA's FY23 Budget.

The FY23 Budget is presented with yearly projections based on figures for the period ending March 31, 2022, as well as taking into consideration the final audited figures of FY21. This budget considers the ridership predictions calculated by Planning and Operations at 80% as the transit system recovers from the pandemic.

This FY23 Budget does not assume any changes to the Revenues from what was presented in the Draft Budget to the Board at the March 23, 2022 meeting.

Expenses: An additional savings of \$140,372 in the expenses is presented in this final FY23 Budget. The CFO and CIO worked with the vendor for a better estimate of the bandwidth required to support our transportation system. Claims payments for Paratransit was removed due to the Paratransit contractor assuming claims. An additional savings is shown in Legal, Bond Financing and Miscellaneous after analysis based on the March financials and on the expected expenses.

Doug Slaughter: The Finance & Audit Sub-Committee voted to recommend to the Board approving and adopting PVTA's FY23 Budget.

Chairman Slaughter asked if the Board had any questions for the Finance & Audit Sub-Committee.

Mike Squindo: How are we figuring \$6M in farebox revenue for FY23.

Sandra Sheehan: PVTA is projecting 80% of the ridership will return from pre-pandemic level, as calculated by the Planning and Operations departments.

Mike Squindo: What is the current ridership percentage that has returned.

Paul Burns: Thru March, approximately 68% of 2019 ridership has returned.

Chairman Slaughter asked if the Board had any additional questions on PVTA's FY23 Budget or any questions for the Finance & Audit Sub-Committee. Hearing none. Chairman Slaughter for a motion from the Advisory Board to accept the Report of the Finance & Audit Sub-Committee.

Motion: Moved and seconded (O'Leary/Huntley) to accept the Report of the Finance & Audit Sub-Committee.

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	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton			
Granby			

Hadley	
Hampden	Becky Moriarty
Holyoke	Gloria Caballero-Roca
Leverett	
Longmeadow	Mark Gold
Ludlow	
Northampton	
Palmer	Benjamin Hood
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South Hadley	
Springfield	Tim Sheehan
Sunderland	
Ware	
West Springfield	
Westfield	Peter Miller
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord
Williamsburg	
ADA Representative	
Rider Representative	

Motion passed by a vote of 40.75.

6. APPROVAL OF PVTA’S FY23 BUDGET

Chairman Slaughter stated that PVTA’s FY23 Budget is included in your Board Packet. We have a recommendation from the Finance & Audit Sub-Committee recommending approving and adopting PVTA’s FY23 Budget by the full Board.

Chairman Slaughter asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to approve and adopt PVTA’s FY23 Budget.

Motion: Moved and seconded (O’Leary/Huntley) to approve and adopt PVTA’s FY23 Budget.

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	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke	Gloria Caballero-Roca		

Leverett	
Longmeadow	Mark Gold
Ludlow	
Northampton	
Palmer	Benjamin Hood
Pelham	
South Hadley	
Springfield	Tim Sheehan
Sunderland	
Ware	
West Springfield	
Westfield	Peter Miller
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord
Williamsburg	
ADA Representative	
Rider Representative	

Motion passed by a vote of 39.14 in favor with one Present vote.

7. PVTA SUB-COMMITTEE SIGN-UPS FOR FY23

PVTA’s Clerk to the Advisory Board, Brandy Pelletier, stated that included in the Board Packet is a list of PVTA’s Advisory Board Sub-Committees and a description of each committee. If you would like to join or remain on a committee, please fill out the form included in your Board Packet and return it by Friday, May 27th. Appointments will be made at the June (Annual) Board meeting.

8. DIRECTOR OF TRANSIT OPERATIONS REPORT

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

Fixed Route Ridership: March saw the highest ridership since October 2021. Ridership fell short of October’s due in part to reduced service over spring break and service cuts related to the ongoing driver shortage.

UMass ridership was at 85% of pre-pandemic levels, which is the highest of any operator since the beginning of the pandemic. VATCo ridership increased steadily each month since January but is still below fall ridership levels. Similarly, SATCo ridership has increased steadily since January although ridership is still below the September 2021 levels. For March, SATCo and VATCo were at 58% and 67% of pre-pandemic ridership respectively.

Paratransit ridership continues to increase steadily when compared to the previous year. March ridership is 45.61% higher than one year ago and is the highest since the pandemic began with 67.6% of average 2019 ridership.

April ridership, while not projected to be quite as high, is still on track to be the second highest monthly ridership since the pandemic began.

The expanded Dial-A-Ride pilot, approved by the Board in March, appears to be going well. No operational issues have been reported and all Dial-A-Ride trip requests for April and May have been

accommodated. Saturday Dial-A-Ride trips accounted for 8% of all Saturday trips provided by MV since the pilot began. For May, Saturday Dial-A-Ride trips are averaging more than 15% of all Saturday trips.

Service Updates:

R10: Updated routing, which eliminated service on East Mountain Road, went into effect on March 20, 2022. We communicate regularly with Western Mass Hospital regarding the potential need for some type of service there in the future, however staff at the hospital are not aware of any current need.

G73E exceeded 6,500 passengers in March, just below its record high-ridership months of September and October.

B79 had 205 riders in February, the third-best month on record, and the second-best for full-fare months. Quaboag continues to struggle with hiring and is currently working with one driver. To meet scheduled service during the school year, Quaboag has had to use smaller vehicles with non-CDL drivers the last few weekends.

Staffing continues to be a problem for many transit systems, and PVTA is no exception. Each of PVTA's operators is experiencing labor shortages to some degree. PVTA has launched a broad-based media campaign to support hiring efforts for each operator, including radio, social media, email, and other advertising media to raise awareness of our staffing needs.

VATCo returned to normal operating schedules on May 15th.

SATCo continues to struggle with staffing. While they have hired more than 60 drivers since 2021, due to retirements, employees leaving the area and other causes, they have a net gain of only two drivers and still struggle with staffing. SATCo service reductions will continue through June, and we will reevaluate at that time.

Quaboag is experiencing significant staffing challenges as well and is currently operating the B79 on a reduced service schedule during the summer break with suspended weekend service to ensure service consistency while we continue recruitment efforts.

UMASS, while initially it was reported that UMass expected to be reasonably well staffed for the summer, the situation has changed. While they have been able to maintain service, there are daily challenges. At this point there are no plans for service reductions, however, that is subject to change. The fall semester still looks challenging.

Hulmes continues to have some issues with staffing although they are currently able to maintain service with the staff they have in place.

MV is reasonably close to fully staffed, however they continue to hire in anticipation of turnover and increasing ridership.

9. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator, Sandra Sheehan, reported the following:

Even though there were more than 65 Representatives sponsoring the House Amendment to the RTA funding and funding distribution, the funding amendments were not included in the consolidated

amendment thus the House language in the budget remains the same, level funding of the RTAs at FY22 levels of \$94M without performance grants or Section 23 changes.

The Senate budget was issued on May 10th, and it lists the RTAs at \$96.5M with \$94M to be distributed using the formula and \$2.5M to be used for pilot programs for low-income fares. The Senate is preparing a budget amendment increasing the budget to \$101M with \$97.5 to be distributed to the RTAs through the formula and the \$3.5M for service and workforce retention, training and recruitment. We will be reaching out to the Western Mass Senate delegation to ask for co-sponsorships of this amendment.

During April 25 – April 27th, PVTA staff participated in the virtual site visit conducted by FTA and its contractor as part of the Triennial Review of PVTA. Before the virtual site visit, the reviewers completed the review of the documents submitted, worked with the staff to obtain additional information and to clarify documents and responses submitted. During the site visit, PVTA staff answered follow-up questions and discussed the issues brought up during the review. The exit conference has been postponed as FTA decided to conduct an enhanced review of the ECHO drawdowns for all the expenses associated with the CARES and ARPA funding grants. PVTA had a total of 33 drawdowns with the last one being completed at the end of April.

The Auditor of the Commonwealth is conducting a performance audit of PVTA. This audit is also performed every three years. This audit is designed to examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the paratransit program with the goal of implementing improvements. Requested records and information have been provided for the period October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2021. Currently bi-weekly meetings are being held with the audit team to discuss PVTA's operation of the paratransit program. At the end of this audit, a report will be issued.

U.S. Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General (DOT OIG) together with teams from nine other Offices of Inspector General, is conducting audit work on behalf of the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee (PRAC). The PRAC is tasked with supporting and coordinating independent oversight of pandemic relief spending. To do so, in November 2021 the PRAC initiated a project to review the sources, intended purpose, and impacts of Federal pandemic response funds provided to six select geographic areas—one of which is Springfield, Massachusetts. The objective of this audit is to determine the extent to which recipients/subrecipients: (1) Spent pandemic response funds in alignment with program goals and objectives; and (2) Believe that federal funding impacted (positively or negatively) their ability to respond to the pandemic. Since PVTA is the public transportation provider for the City of Springfield, PVTA has been informed by the DOT OIG that it is being audited for the use of the CARES and ARPA funds it was awarded. PVTA has provided all the documentation associated with the thirty-three ECHO drawdowns performed from those funding sources.

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 (O'Leary/Squindo) 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	Brian O'Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke	Gloria Caballero-Roca		
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Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham			
South Hadley			
Springfield	Tim Sheehan		
Sunderland			
Ware			
West Springfield			
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg			
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 40.75.

The meeting of the Advisory Board adjourned at 12:52 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD

ATTEST: _____
BRANDY PELLETIER

Documents filed with Board Meeting packet:

- Roll Call Votes
- Regular Advisory Board Minutes of 3-23-22
- FY23 Budget

Minutes Approved: June 22, 2022