
**MINUTES OF PVTA'S
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
June 26, 2019**

The Advisory Board Meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Wednesday, June 26, 2019 at the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority Administration Office located at 2808 Main Street in Springfield, MA, at 12:00 P.M.

1. ROLL CALL

	<u>Present (47.14 votes)</u>	<u>Not Present (14.85 votes)</u>
Agawam	Michael Squindo	
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter	
Belchertown	Brian O'Leary	
Chicopee	Steve Huntley	
East Longmeadow		Carolyn Brennan
Easthampton		Brendan Rogers
Granby		Mark Bail
Hadley		David Moskin
Hampden	Becky Moriarty	
Holyoke	Mayor Alex Morse	
Leverett		Peter D'Errico
Longmeadow	Mark Gold	
Ludlow		Brian Mannix
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz	
Palmer		Barbara Barry
Pelham		William Martell
South Hadley	Michael Sullivan	
Springfield	Anthony Wilson	
Sunderland		Sherry Patch
Ware	John Carroll	
West Springfield	Jim Czach	
Westfield		Peter Miller
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord	
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell	
ADA Representative	Jennifer Carbery	
Rider Representative	Patrick Burke	

A quorum of 31.01 majority vote being present, Chairman of the Advisory Board Mayor Narkewicz called the meeting of PVTA's Advisory Board to order at 12:03 PM; majority vote of 47.14 present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz opened the floor for public comments. 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 May 22, 2019 Regular Advisory Board Meeting.

Motion: Moved and seconded (O’Leary/ Squindo) to approve the meeting minutes from the May 22, 2019 Regular Advisory Board Meeting.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked if the Board had any discussion. Hearing none; asked all those in favor to say aye.

Motion passed by a unanimous vote.

4. APPROVAL OF 2020 ADVISORY BOARD MEETINGS DATES

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz noted that the proposed meeting dates will be emailed to the Board and will be on next month’s meeting agenda.

5. ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

Administrator Sheehan reported the following:

Initial Senate language issued on May 7th included an operating transfer of \$90.5M to the regional transit authorities organized under chapter 161B of the General Laws, provided, that in the distribution of performance grants under section 65 of this act, prioritization shall be given to a regional transit authority whose contract assistance under section 23 of chapter 161B is less than 50 percent of the net cost of service of the regional transit authority.

\$4.5M shall be conditioned on the execution of a memorandum of understanding by a regional transit authority and distributed as performance grants to regional transit authorities that best demonstrate compliance with or commitment to the service decisions, quality of service and environmental sustainability recommendations from the report of the task force on regional transit authority performance and funding.

After negotiation, the amendment sponsored by Senator Chandler resulted in the following revisions to the initial language: \$90.5 allocated to the RTAs, with \$4.5M of that to be distributed by MassDOT for performance grants. Therefore, the Senate’s budget base is \$86M but it includes the CPI in statute, as well as, the MOU and, distribution of funding within 45 days of effective date of the Act.

PVTA sent an email to Astrid Glynn, MassDOT’s Administrator of Rail and Transit in response to her request to work with PVTA to make sure PVTA does not have to implement service reductions based on the budget proposed by the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

The letter included the following language: PVTA needs your help to advocate/acknowledge/concur with our SCA base need. If the recommendations of the RTA Task Force are implemented and supported by MassDOT, PVTA would be on a firmer footing and would not have to go through this every year. The core services should not be funded with discretionary or grant funds. Utilizing one-year operating funds is not a reliable source of funding as all it does is provide a fiscal “band aid”.

Ms. Glynn's response to the email suggested PVTA conduct a peer review of its system to address the systemic issues PVTA continues to face.

MARTA suggested language to amend the Senate Language: The language increases the RTAs base to \$88M and is tied to MOUs- leaving the balance of \$2.5M to be distributed as follows:

- a. set aside \$1,2M for RTAs whose local communities' assessments are greater than fifty percent of the net cost of service,
- b. set aside \$700,000 for ridership incentive for RTAs that have more than 10 million riders annually,
- c. set aside \$600,000 for pilot grants to test Saturday and Sunday service, this will be tied to MOUs

The State budget has not been released. The Governor has a filed an appropriation of 1/12th the budget to provide funding through the end of July. This is probably a prudent step to ensure funding is available rather than an indication that the FY 20 conference committee is deadlocked. PVTA continues to be hopeful this budget will include the appropriate resources for PVTA to maintain its current level of service.

Transportation for Massachusetts (T4MA) released a five-point policy initiative for Transportation funding and policies, it includes the following language: Raise the gas tax by \$0.25 per gallon. Progress: Increasing the gas tax by a quarter per gallon would raise approximately \$750 million per year to be invested in our roads, bridges, and transit systems statewide. This money, which is constitutionally protected for transportation, will go to fix potholes, repair bridges, and invest in a transportation system that works for our economy, our communities, and residents from Pittsfield to Provincetown. These resources should be used to increase funding for Chapter 90 aid and the Commonwealth's Complete Streets program. *One penny of this quarter increase should be used to roll-back the July 1st fare hikes on the MBTA, and three pennies should be dedicated to fund Regional Transit Authorities across the state.*

The weekend of June 13th, UMass Transit celebrated its 50th anniversary with a reunion that included a meet and greet luncheon and dinner. PVTA's partnership with UMass Transit started more than 40 years ago. It is a partnership that ensures a cost efficient, environmentally responsible transportation system for the University, the Five College Consortium and the surrounding communities. UMass has evolved from an original fleet of five vehicles and the first no-fare public transit system in the country to what it is today, a system that carries 3.5 million passengers annually, nearly 13% of the entire PVTA ridership with less than 19% of the total fleet and at a lower cost than any similar service provided anywhere else in the Commonwealth.

PVTA has executed the Agreement with MassDEP for the Volkswagen's credits. PVTA will be purchasing eight electric buses from Proterra out of the State of Georgia contract. These are 40' and 35' buses that will replace 2006 Gillig buses that have met their useful life as revenue service vehicles.

In addition, the region has programmed in the FY2020 State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP), 15 replacement transit buses for PVTA. PVTA is determining the feasibility of purchasing eight 40' and seven 35' buses out of the Commonwealth of Virginia's Contract. If it is feasible, PVTA must execute a contract by the end of July for the vehicles to arrive by June 30, 2020.

PVTA has held over 30 outreaches for seniors for Fare Free Tuesdays which will launch on July 2nd.

Fixed route ridership has continued to see a decline as the full impacts of the service reductions and fare increases are felt. There has been a cumulative 6.9% decline in ridership year-to-date.

Paratransit ridership continues to see a 10% decline in ridership compared to the same time period in FY18.

We have had some staffing changes at PVRTA. Chief Financial Officer Patty O'Leary has left. We are conducting a national search to fill the CFO position. HR has been vetting the applications and we expect to start interviewing in July. We have also been interviewing for a Manager of Planning and Analysis to fill Price's position and expect to fill this position within the next three weeks.

Michael Sullivan: Have you considered the future; starting some kind of program like kids (under 18) ride free on Sunday. Amtrak does this.

Sandra Sheehan: We can certainly look into this.

6. NEW BUSINESS

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

7. OLD BUSINESS

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

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Advisory Board adjourned (O'Leary/Sullivan) at 12:30 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD

ATTEST:


BRANDY PELLETIER

Documents filed with Board Meeting packet:

- Regular Advisory Board Minutes of 5-22-19

Minutes Approved on August 21, 2019