
**MINUTES OF PVTA'S
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
August 17, 2022**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Advisory Board Meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Wednesday, August 17, 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.

	<i><u>Present (43.33 votes)</u></i>	<i><u>Not Present (18.67 votes)</u></i>
Agawam	Michael Squindo	
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter	
Belchertown		Brian O'Leary
Chicopee	Steve Huntley	
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler	
Easthampton	Cindy Tarail	
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 12:05 PM; majority vote of 37.61 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.

Holyoke designee jointed Board Meeting at 12:07pm. Quorum present now 42.33.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Slaughter asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to approve the meeting minutes from the June 22, 2022, Regular Advisory Board Meeting.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Huntley/Sorrell) to approve the meeting minutes from the June 22, 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			
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton	Cindy Tarail		
Granby			
Hadley			David Moskin
Hampden			
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			
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative	Jake Hasson		

Motion passed by a vote of 38.27 with 3 abstentions.

4. PVTA TRANSIT ASSET MANAGEMENT (TAM) PLAN APPROVAL

Peter Kuusisto, Transit Planner at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, gave a presentation on PVTA's TAM Plan and stated the following:

The TAM Plan has a certification deadline of October 1st. This deadline is set by the FTA TAM Rule. To reach that deadline, the PVTA Advisory Board should accept the TAM Plan at today's meeting in time to put the document out for public review and review by the MPO and MassDOT at their September 27th meeting. This plan was developed using FTA's "Tamplate" Tool.

PVTA monitors its rolling stock, equipment, and facilities to reach the goal of operating at a state of good repair. To that end, the TAM goals include improving ridership, customer satisfaction, reliability and OTP, productivity and cost savings, safety, and general environmental stewardship.

To achieve these goals, the TAM Plan coordinates between PVTA's mission, goals, and plans. The plan considers the condition of each asset as a part of the entire PVTA inventory, as well as the strategy for maintaining and replacing the assets. This situational awareness helps all levels of employees and contractors at the PVTA carry out their roles. The TAM Plan also brings together concepts from other agency and regional plans including the MPO's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), and PVTA's safety plan (PTASP). All these aspects provide PVTA Management with a valuable strategic decision-making tool.

PVTA's existing assets consist of 339 revenue vehicles including 4 articulated buses, 195 30-40 buses, 135 Paratransit vehicles, and 5 fixed-route vans (cutaways). Overall, these vehicles have an average age of 7.7 years and 55% have reached their useful life. We also show the average and total replacement cost for each type of vehicle. PVTA's equipment includes its non-revenue vehicles, other rubber tire vehicles used for maintenance, hardware such as On-Bus Radios, software programs such as Hastus, Adept and the Ridership Database, and bus stop shelters. Facilities that PVTA has the responsibility to repair and replace are also accounted for. These include PVTA's Administrative Offices, the Paratransit Operations and Maintenance facility on Main Street in Springfield; the new SATCo Operations and Maintenance Facility on Cottage Street; VATCo Operations and Maintenance Garage in Northampton, and UMTS Operations and Maintenance Garage on the UMass Campus. With a large effort of capital investments and improvements, PVTA remains in a state of good repair.

Chairman Slaughter asked if the Board had any comments or questions regarding PVTA's TAM Plan.

Mark Gold: Under IT and other hardware, does that just pertain to buses or does that include PC's and other IT equipment in the offices.

Sandra Sheehan, PVTA Administrator: It includes all IT equipment and software in all facilities and vehicles.

Tim Sheehan: 55% of PVTA's fleet has reached their useful life. How does that compare to other RTAs.

Sandra Sheehan: PVTA receives its own 5307, so we do not have to ask MassDOT to replace vehicles.

PVTA also has the highest number of vehicles in its fleet. This list of vehicles also includes supervisor and support vehicles. Useful life is based on a few factors, including the mileage and condition of the asset. The

replacement schedule is based on funding availability. We are required to evaluate and do inspections and based on the system, that's how we determine what needs to be updated or replaced and work off the list of what needs to be done in the capital plan. Most other RTAs need MassDOT to schedule their replacement vehicles.

Hampden designee jointed Board Meeting at 12:20 pm. Quorum present now 43.33.

Chairman Slaughter asked the Board for a motion to accept and approve PVTA's Transit Asset Management Plan.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Gold/Sorrell) to accept and approve PVTA's Transit Asset Management Plan.

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			
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton	Cindy Tarail		
Granby			
Hadley	David Moskin		
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
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Sunderland			
Ware	John Carroll		
West Springfield			
Westfield			
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative	Jake Hasson		

Motion passed by a vote of 38.61.

5. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICERS REPORT

Chief Financial Officer, Lisa Seymour, reported the following:

Finance has been preparing for the yearly audit. The auditors from Adelson and Company were on sight the week of August 2nd and are due to come back the end of August. The audit will be presented to the Finance Board in September. There is a great deal of information gathering and reporting that is required. The Finance Staff has been working to gather all of the information requested and has done amazing in helping with the Audit.

The RANS sold on July 15, 2022, to Jefferies LLC with a coupon rate of 4%. In 2020, the RANS sold with a coupon rate of 2% with corresponding interest of \$257,833.33. In 2021 the RANS sold with a coupon rate of 1.5% and corresponding interest of \$290,000. The rate is determined by the market and the timing of the sale. The federal reserve currently is raising their rate monthly, so timing of the sale affects the rate. The line item for interest in the budget will be reflective of the new interest rate of \$578,389 since it is twice what was budgeted at \$290,000.

The CFO has been attending monthly state audit meetings along with other department heads.

The Office of the Inspector General, Office of Audits and Evaluations, has completed their audit of the CARES funding for PVTA. Their mission was to determine whether all expenses drawn under the CARES act were eligible expense. Although their Report has not been released yet, in their Notice of Findings and Recommendations, they stated that we used the CARES funding for appropriate and eligible expenses and there were no recommendations.

The Health Insurance has increased by 16%. 11% was budgeted for the insurance increase. This increase is due to PVTA being grandfathered into a Platinum Plan that is no longer offered. The insurance company is raising the rates significantly to encourage PVTA to move to one of their others plans. We are working with the insurance broker to identify a possible plan that may work for PVTA with minimal effect on the staff. PVTA requires input from the staff as well as research on other plans before deciding to move to a different plan with possibly a higher deductible for the employees. PVTA's insurance renewal costs are lower than last year due to the plans finally falling in line to all be issued at the beginning of the fiscal year on July 1st. All coverage has stayed the same as previous years.

The Certified Vehicle Inventories from the contractors has been sent in. This is analyzed and used in the NTD reporting to FTA. This also coincides with the TRAMS report. IT is in the process of certifying their equipment. Once that is done the General Accountant will select a random sample of equipment and vehicles to audit as part of our Finance Procedures.

The Accounting Manual and Grants Manual have been updated to reflect current procedures and processes. They are submitted as part of the Yearly Audit as well.

The new Claims Manager has reached the end of her 90-day probation. In this time, she has closed more than 200 old claims that either the three-year statute has run out or that there is no activity on the claim. She also has started actively recovering for the "hit and runs" and the new camera system on the paratransit buses have been an integral part of this process.

Travelers has begun the audit of Claims for FY22. PVTA provided a loss run report for the past fiscal year and Travelers will select certain claims to review. This will be an on-site audit. This audit is conducted every two years with the last one in FY20 being conducted virtually.

The Claims Manager will be attending quarterly safety and claims meetings with the contractors along with the Operations Manager. We have found that this extra level of communication has

helped increase the pertinent information needed to subrogate a claim as well as decrease many of the incomplete reports to aid in the recovery of funds.

Half of the State Contract Assistance was received on August 8th 2022 of \$12.9 million. This is the first time since pre COVID that the SCA has been received at 50% of the total funds owed in the beginning of the fiscal year.

Fuel was budgeted at 30% more than FY22 for the upcoming year. The Controller for SATCO was able to negotiate the rate of \$2.9024 per gallon for April, May and June.

Currently we have an overage of fuel at our vendor's site. We will be using that excess fuel for July and August. The Controller will continue to watch the market and analyze when the best time to lock in a rate is if it is beneficial to PVTA.

6. DIRECTOR OF TRANSIT OPERATIONS REPORT

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

Ridership: Systemwide June 2022 ridership was at 373K, up 9% from June 2021 with ridership increasing for all operators. Overall, June ridership did decrease when compared to May, but this is typical of pre-covid trends. This decrease only occurred at UMass and VATCo while ridership at SATCo increased to its second highest ridership so far this year. The June systemwide recovery of 70% was the highest since the pandemic.

Paratransit ridership continues to increase steadily when compared to the previous year. June ridership is 22% higher than one year ago, overall paratransit ridership has recovered to 64% of pre-pandemic ridership in June.

Several routes, including the G5, R24, B17 and X90 were adjusted to increase efficiency and improve on time performance. Each change is outlined in detail in your packet.

The G73E exceeded 6,900 passengers in June, just below April's all time high ridership.

The B79 dropped significantly to 128 passengers in May and 67 and 57 in June and July respectively. The drop in June and July is due in part to an expected drop with no classes in session (similarly January saw a reduction to 89 passengers) as well as staffing challenges and a reduced schedule during the summer due to these staffing challenges.

Job Corps service- is scheduled to begin September 6, 2022.

Staffing: We continue to struggle with staffing across our system with few exceptions.

VATCo has lost a full time and part time driver, as a result we will need to reinstate the staffing reductions implemented last November for the Fall bid. These reductions will take effect with the start of service on August 28, 2022

Route Affected	Change
R44, 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 continues to operate under the adjustments instituted last December because these adjustments have been in place in excess of 6 months public hearings, which the Board approved for these routes, will be held on September 29 at 3:00 PM and 7:00 PM virtually.

Route Affected	Change
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

UMASS: Continues to experience a significant driver shortage. They continue to recruit and train drivers; however, they are significantly behind where they need to be in terms of available drivers for the fall semester and will be instituting the labor related staffing adjustments shown below for the fall semester.

Route / Day	Hours Saved	Description of change
30 Weekday	15	25 Min headway @ 6pm, 30 @ 7:30pm, less 1 eve trip.
30 Saturday	2.5	30 min. headway between 11am to 6pm, eve trimmed to align w/weekday end
30 Sunday	9	Reduced to 60-min headway all day, trimmed eve.
31 Weekday	11.75	35-min headway @ 7:30pm, EVE trimmed 1/2 loop ea.
31 Saturday	1.75	40 min. headway between 11am-6pm, EVE trimmed to align w/weekday end
31 Sunday	9.5	Reduced to 75,70-min headway all day, trimmed EVE
34 Weekday	15	Starts 20-min later, Reduced to 44-min headway after 5pm
35 Weekday	7.5	Starts 20-min later, eve trimmed
35 Weekend	1.75	Sat. eve trimmed; Sun eve ends earlier @11:30,
38 Weekday	6.75	Modified eve schedule, less 1 loop
38 Saturday	1	Modified eve schedule, less 1 loop
38 Sunday	1.25	Modified schedule, less 1 loop; starts slightly later, ends slightly earlier
PM Trippers	57.5	To be eliminated anyway.
AM 31 Tripper	14.75	To be eliminated anyway; was already for Spring 2022.
UD and Dispatch adjustments	7	Service ends ~1/2hr earlier M-Sa. Sunday starts ~1/2hr later, ends 1 hr earlier
Total	162	

Quaboag: is experiencing significant staffing challenges as well and is currently operating the B79 on a reduced service schedule during the summer break. We will continue to operate on a reduced schedule through September.

Hulmes and MV are both currently close to fully staffed.

The expanded Dial-A-Ride pilot, approved by the Board in March, continues to do well. No operational issues have been reported, and all Dial, A Ride trip requests, have been accommodated. Saturday Dial-A-Ride trips have increased from an average of 8% of all Saturday trips in April to 24% in July. Weekly Dial-A-Ride trips show consistent increase from April through July, with Dial-A-Ride passengers increasing from 19% in March to a high of 24% in the third week of July.

Air Purification Systems have been installed on all fixed route vehicles in SATCo, VATCo and UMass fleets. These Air purification systems are also being installed in all common areas in all PVRTA facilities. The CASPR (Continuous Air and Surfaces Pathogen Reduction) Transit device is proven to be 99.96% effective against molds, bacteria and viruses and reduces odors and volatile organic compounds.

JM Sorrell: What is being done for staff recruitment.

Sandra Sheehan: PVRTA recently launched a new advertising campaign on gas pump monitors which went live last week. We also have been advertising on iHeart media as well as utilizing PVRTA's social media accounts and our website to promote our hiring campaigns. Staff has attended job fairs and we have raised the starting salaries to entice more applicants. We are also promoting the benefits and pension plan and offering a free CDL training incentive that PVRTA will pay for applicants to get their CDL license.

8. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator, Sandra Sheehan, reported the following:

At the State level, the Governor signed the state budget on July 28th, there were no reductions from what was submitted by the Conference Committee. The budget includes \$94M for distribution to the RTAs of which, PVRTA's share is approximately 28%. \$2.5M for grants for discounted or fare-free pilot programs to be administered by the RTAs and distributed by MassDOT. The RTAs have unofficially proposed the possibility of submitting one grant application for all the RTAs whereby all the regions will implement the same fare free period during the month of December.

The Transportation Bond was also finalized, it includes \$64.9M of capital funding for projects. There is also \$175M to establish or expand alternative fueling stations and electric vehicle charging infrastructure, e-bikes, and public transportation.

No less than \$25M is to be made available to RTAs for costs associated with the creation or expansion of electric vehicle fleet charging stations. These monies are also part of the matching funds for the federal funds appropriated.

At the Federal level, at the end of July, the Senate Committee on Appropriations released its draft Fiscal Year 2023 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) Appropriations bill.

The Senate THUD Appropriations bill appropriates the majority of public transit and passenger rail authorizations of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The THUD Appropriations bill, together with the IIJA's appropriations, an increase of 3% from the FY22.

It also provides \$220 million for Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Grants; \$135 million for Low-No Emission Bus Grants; \$40 million for Passenger Ferry and Rural Ferry Grants; and \$98 million for congressionally directed spending on designated public transit projects.

The FTA Triennial Review exit conference took place yesterday. PVRTA had been made aware that some of the expenditures incurred should have been classified as Capital expenditures not as Operating expenditures. PVRTA has amended the CARES Operating Grant to include a line item for Capital Expenditures. We also have findings on Preventive Maintenance, as PMs are being provided late and the spare ratio at UMass Transit is high. Some findings in Procurement, some missing federal clauses, certification confirmation and cost analysis.

Civil rights,

- PVPC's Title VI meets FHWA requirements but not FTAs
 - DBEs short fall analysis lacked some components
 - ADA, included the birthdate in application documents,
 - identified amenities in minority locations and showed monitoring of transit service, however, it did not show monitoring for amenities.

As to the audit being conducted by Office of the Inspector General COVID-19 Pandemic Impact – City of Springfield Case Study, which purpose is to determine whether PVRTA expenditures reimbursed from the CARES Act Operating Grant and reviewed by DOT OIG aligned with the purpose for which the grant was given. Their initial review did not identify that any payment in the sample was used for a purpose other for which the funds were given.

The State Audit of paratransit service continues with data and reports being provided to the auditors as requested.

PVRTA was one of the agencies selected to participate in the Payment Integrity Information Act audit. This audit looks at service provider invoices or payroll data for improper payment testing. PVRTA submitted all the required document on August 10th.

PVRTA was one of the agency's selected to receive Bus and Bus Facilities as well as Low/No grants. Out of 530 projects, 150 were funded. PVRTA received \$54M. \$11.7 UMass Bus Bay expansion; \$4.5 for electric buses; \$1.9M for Workforce Development and \$35M for Phase I of fully electrifying the Cottage Street facility to support the conversion of the fleet to electric. We are very pleased with this award.

8. NEW BUSINESS

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

9. OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Slaughter reported that David Moskin has expressed interest in joining the Finance & Audit Committee and as of this meeting has been appointed to this committee.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Slaughter asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Squindo/Sorrell) 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			
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Erin Koebler		
Easthampton	Cindy Tarail		
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Springfield	Tim Sheehan		
Sunderland			
Ware	John Carroll		
West Springfield			
Westfield			
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative	Jake Hasson		

Motion passed by a vote of 38.61.

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 6-22-22
- Transit Asset Management Plan Presentation

Minutes Approved: October 4, 2022