
**MINUTES OF PVTA'S
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
August 23, 2023**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Advisory Board Meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Wednesday, August 23, 2023, at 12:00 P.M. remotely in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, supplemental state budget provisions for Fiscal Year 2023, authorizing public bodies to continue to hold entirely remote meetings, or so-called “hybrid” meetings, upon the provision of “adequate, alternative means” of public access, until March 31, 2025.

	<u>Present (40.62 votes)</u>	<u>Not Present (19.77 votes)</u>
Agawam		Michael Squindo
Amherst	Paul Bockelman	
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		Jeff Cyr
Springfield	Brian Connors	
Sunderland		Geoff Kravitz
Ware	Nancy Talbot	
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, Vice Chair of the Advisory Board, J.M. Sorrell, called the remote meeting of PVTA's Advisory Board to order at 12:07 PM; majority vote of 40.62 present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Vice Chair Sorrell asked if any members of the public would like to make a public comment on an Agenda Item.

No public comments were made.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice Chair Sorrell asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to approve the meeting minutes from the June 21, 2023 Advisory Board Meeting.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Gold/Huntley) to approve the meeting minutes from the June 21, 2023 Advisory Board Meeting.

Vice Chair Sorrell 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			
Amherst	Paul Bockelman		
Belchertown	Brian O’Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow			
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden			
Holyoke	Gloria Caballero-Roca		
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra		
Palmer			Benjamin Hood
Pelham			
South Hadley			
Springfield	Brian Connors		
Sunderland			
Ware	Nancy Talbot		
West Springfield			
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham			
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		
ADA Representative			
Rider Representative			

Motion passed by a vote of 39.50 with 1 abstention (Palmer, 1.12 vote).

4. ELECTION OF ADVISORY BOARD OFFICERS FOR 2-YEAR TERM

Vice Chair Sorrell stated that we have received nominations of Doug Slaughter, Chairman. J.M. Sorrell, Vice Chairman, and Mark Gold, Clerk and asked the Board if there were any further nominations before closing the floor for votes.

Hearing no further nominations, Vice Chair Sorrell asked the Board for a motion to approve the following elections for Advisory Board Officers to serve a two-year term:

Chairman: Doug Slaughter

Vice Chair: J.M. Sorrell

Clerk: Mark Gold

Motion: Moved and seconded (Huntley/ Caballero-Roca) to approve the following elections for Advisory Board Officers to serve a two-year term ending June 30, 2025:

PVTA Advisory Board Chairman: Doug Slaughter

PVTA Advisory Board Vice Chair: J.M. Sorrell

PVTA Advisory Board Clerk: Mark Gold

Vice Chair Sorrell 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			
Amherst	Paul Bockelman		
Belchertown	Brian O'Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow			
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden			
Holyoke	Gloria Caballero-Roca		
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton	Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra		
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham			
South Hadley			
Springfield	Brian Connors		
Sunderland			
Ware	Nancy Talbot		
West Springfield			
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham			
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		

Motion passed by a vote of 40.62.

5. **DIRECTOR OF TRANSIT OPERATIONS REPORT**

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

Fixed Route Ridership:

Systemwide June 2023 ridership was at 436K, up 12% from 389K in June 2022.

SATCo and VATCo ridership was at 368K up from 331K in June 2022.

UMass was at 67K up from 57K in June 2022.

Paratransit Ridership:

Paratransit ridership continues to increase steadily when compared to the previous year. June ridership was 14,657 an increase of 4.75% over the previous year.

Systemwide Recovery:

June systemwide ridership was 75.7% ridership in 2019.

UMASS ridership was 86.4% of ridership in June of 2019.

While SATCo and VATCo combined was 74.1% of June 2019.

For the year total fixed route ridership was 6,902,780, 68.2% of 2019's ridership an increase of 825,178 riders (13.5%) over 2022.

Paratransit ridership for FY 23 was 176,976 which is 68% of prepandemic levels, an increase of 26,902 riders (17.92%) over 2022.

Routes:

Changes to the B7, B17 were implemented effective June 25. These changes included moving the Eastern end of the route from Eastfield Mall to Wilbraham Big Y and adding two new stops located near Boston Road / Dudley Street in Wilbraham and at 1857 Boston Road Wilbraham (in front of Friendly's main plant).

The Ware Palmer and Wilbraham Shuttle routes endpoint was also moved to the Wilbraham Big Y. Early ridership numbers indicate that this change has been well received. By early August 54 passengers per day were boarding at Wilbraham Big Y

G73E ridership dropped slightly to 7,686 in June, a substantial improvement over the previous June and the second busiest month in 2023.

B79 ridership dropped to 162 during June, virtually identical to its total for January, and more than double the ridership recorded during the previous June.

Route Recovery:

SATCo: routes except the X90 had higher recovery in June '23 than in June '22. 10 routes are at 75% or more of prepandemic ridership with the R24 and R29 exceeding June '19 ridership by 3% and 12%, respectively.

UMass: All UMass routes except the 46 had higher recovery in June '23 than in June '22 4 of the 6 routes operating in June are at 75% or more of prepandemic ridership with routes 33 and 31 exceeding June 19 ridership by 54% and 3% respectively.

VATCo: All VATCo routes except the B48 had higher recovery in June '23 than in June '22, with the B43 achieving a 109% recovery rate, 9% higher than its ridership in June '19.

Staffing:

Staffing continues to be a problem for many transit systems, and PVTA is no exception. Each of PVTA's operators is experiencing labor challenges 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.

MassDOT BusPlus Mobile Fare Payment Report:

As in previous years the summer shows little increase in use of the app but given the decrease in college/university riders this is to be expected. The spring semester recorded the highest Bytemark ridership out of all previously recorded semesters. With the Summer in full swing, 31 Day Elderly and Disabled passes have exceeded college program passes (2,468). One ride tickets with a transfer attached continue to make gains (2,784), exceeding 31 Day E&D passes. One-ride tickets have dominated the number of activations since January with 22,320. One-Ride tickets remain a little less than 1.5 times the usage of 31-day ticket activations; 14,948. 7-Day and Day Passes have decreased in share (11,669 and 10,610, respectively). The Community Colleges had a good showing with a robust Spring semester. The community colleges and the B79 are seeing residual ridership during the summer.

6. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator, Sandra Sheehan, reported the following:

Governor Healy signed the FY24 budget on August 8th with no changes to the transit budget as presented by the Conference Committee. \$150,000,000 is to be considered operating assistance and distributed to regional transit authorities as follows:

Commonwealth Transportation Fund: For FY24, \$90,500,000 shall be distributed based on FY23 distributions provided, that operating assistance be the same amount received i.e., the old formula; and \$3,500,000 shall be distributed based on the formula: 60% based on total transit ridership as reported on NTD, 30% based on the member community population and 10% based on service coverage area determined by the total square miles of its member communities.

Fair Share Fund: \$56M to be expended by regional transit authorities to support operational enhancements and improvements, including expanded service hours, weekend services and route expansions. *Funds shall be expended to RTAs whose contract assistance is proportionately low in comparison to the net cost of service of the RTA as compared to other RTAs in order to provide more equitable fund distribution;* these funds shall be included in each RTA's baseline funding calculation in future fiscal years and; Funds not allocated under the equity provision are to be expended for operating assistance to RTAs based on the newer formula: 60% ridership, 30% population and, 10% service coverage area.

\$15M for grants for fare free pilot programs to be administered by the RTAs with MassDOT distributing the grants based on the criteria to: prioritize opportunities to increase ridership and increased service accessibility to low-income individuals.

\$15M to be expended for innovation grant programs administered by MassDOT to support electrification; infrastructure; capital investments; new and innovative service delivery models; expanded service hours or weekend service; rural connectivity; and connectivity improvements across regional transit authority service areas; and

\$4M for Community Transit Grant Program grants to transit providers to support expanded mobility options for older adults, people with disabilities and low-income individuals.

Out of the first \$1 billion dedicated from the Fair Share surtax, the RTAs were awarded \$56M. Lawmakers identified more priorities than they had Fair Share dollars to invest. Two-thirds of the line items funded by Fair Share this year were provided with fewer dollars than the amounts sought by the Governor, House, or Senate. \$90M was allocated to Education and Transportation. The big question for the RTAs is are these continuing funds or are these one- time funds?

7. NEW BUSINESS

Vice Chair Sorrell reported that there is no new business to discuss.

8. OLD BUSINESS

Vice Chair Sorrell reported that there is no old business to discuss.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Sorrell asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Moved and seconded (O’Leary/Talbot) to adjourn.

Vice Chair Sorrell asked for a roll call vote.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam			
Amherst	Paul Bockelman		
Belchertown	Brian O’Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow			
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden			
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton			
Palmer	Benjamin Hood		
Pelham			
South Hadley			

Springfield	Brian Connors
Sunderland	
Ware	Nancy Talbot
West Springfield	
Westfield	Peter Miller
Wilbraham	
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell
ADA Representative	
Rider Representative	

Motion passed by a vote of 33.20.

The meeting of the Advisory Board adjourned at 12:40 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD

ATTEST: _____
BRANDY PELLETIER

Documents filed with Board Meeting packet:

- Roll Call Votes
- Advisory Board Minutes of 6-21-23

Minutes Approved: September 20, 2023