

**DRAFT
MINUTES OF PVTA'S
ROUTE COMMITTEE MEETING
May 18, 2021**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Route Sub-Committee of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority Advisory Board met on Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 2:00 PM 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.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Members: Brian O'Leary, Belchertown; Peter Miller, Westfield; J.M. Sorrell, Williamsburg; Benjamin Hood, Palmer;

NOT PRESENT: N/A

A quorum being present, Chairman of the Route Committee, Brian O'Leary called the remote meeting of the Route Committee to order at 2:02 P.M.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were made.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 15, 2021

Chairman O'Leary asked for a motion from the Route Committee to approve the meeting minutes of January 15, 2021.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Miller/Sorrell) to approve the meeting minutes of January 15, 2021.

Chairman O'Leary asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for a roll call vote.

J.M. Sorrell: Yes

Peter Miller: Yes

Benjamin Hood: Yes

Brian O'Leary: Yes

Motion passed, 4-0 vote.

4. APPROVAL OF CHANGES TO WARE-PALMER SHUTTLE & QUABOAG MICROTRANSIT SERVICE

Paul Burns, Director of Transit Operations stated the following:

PVTA will provide circulator service in Palmer. The Quaboag Connector will provide circulator service in Ware. In addition, The Quaboag Connector is proposing the addition of a Belchertown-Ware Shuttle that will provide additional service to the town of Ware.

The proposed changes to the Ware-Palmer Shuttle provide the following:

- Trips to Springfield Union Station change to a morning and a midday trip.
- Increases the number of round trips (from 1 trip to 2 trips) to the Eastfield Mall. A morning and an afternoon trip will be provided. Both trips will connect with the B7 Service.
- Provides 4 trips (instead of 3 trips) to Three Rivers. All 4 trips will start at the Palmer Big Y, follow Park Street to the Dollar General, return via South Main Street and continue to Three Rivers and Bondsville along the current route.
- Adds service to Bondsville. We propose resuming service to Bondsville with 4 trips to Bondsville daily.
- Increases the number of round trips (from 4 trips to 7 trips) between the Palmer Big Y and Ware Walmart.
- Increases the number of round trips (from 4 trips to 9 trips) between the Ware Walmart and Ware Center.
- The proposed Belchertown Spencer Shuttle provides as much service in Ware as the circulator but provides more comprehensive service within the community.
- Still provides 5-daily trips in Ware.
- Provides same-day microtransit service for connections to the fixed route as well as same day service for certain on-demand trips.

Chairman O’Leary asked for a motion from the Route Committee to recommend to the Advisory Board approval of changes to the Ware-Palmer Shuttle & Quaboag Microtransit Service.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Miller/Sorrell) to recommend to the Advisory Board approval of changes to the Ware-Palmer Shuttle & Quaboag Microtransit Service.

Chairman O’Leary asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for a roll call vote.

- J.M. Sorrell: Yes
- Peter Miller: Yes
- Benjamin Hood: Yes
- Brian O’Leary: Yes

Motion passed, 4-0 vote.

5. APPROVAL OF NEW EXPRESS PILOT ROUTE: NORTHAMPTON-HOLYOKE-SPRINGFIELD

Paul Burns, stated the following:

The Northampton–Holyoke–Springfield Express pilot route is funded through a MassDOT Discretionary Grant program.

This proposed pilot route will:

- Improve travel time between PVTA’s northern and southern systems
- Provide faster, more direct service along I-91 to improve accessibility and travel range for riders
- Service between:
 - Northampton and Holyoke will improve from 48 minutes to 20 minutes
 - Northampton and Union Station will improve from 1-hour with transfer to 35-minutes with no transfer
 - Service between the Holyoke Mall and Union Station will remain at 15 minutes, replacing P20E service
- Pilot express service stops at the Northampton Academy of Music, Holyoke Mall and Springfield Union Station
- Operate on weekdays and Saturdays
- Have timed connections to FRTA, Amtrak, CT Rail, and other PVTA routes
- Tentative start date June 27, 2021
- MassDOT FY21 discretionary contract to end June 30, 2022
 - Contract award \$487,000

J.M. Sorrell: The people I have been talking to about this route are thrilled to have more direct service going from Northampton to Springfield.

Peter Miller: Agrees that this is a great connection for the northern and southern routes.

Chairman O’Leary asked for a motion from the Route Committee to recommend to the Advisory Board approval of the new express pilot route: Northampton-Holyoke-Springfield.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Sorrell/Miller) to recommend to the Advisory Board approval of the new express pilot route: Northampton-Holyoke-Springfield.

Chairman O’Leary asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for a roll call vote.

- J.M. Sorrell: Yes
- Peter Miller: Yes
- Benjamin Hood: Yes
- Brian O’Leary: Yes

Motion passed, 4-0 vote.

6. APPROVAL OF PVTA & QUABOAG CONNECTOR’S AMHERST/WORCESTER INTERCITY PILOT ROUTE

Paul Burns stated the following on the Amherst-Worcester Intercity Pilot route:

- Funded by Section 5311(f) Intercity Bus Program: federal funds competitively distributed by MassDOT
- The national objectives for the Intercity Bus Program are to support the connection between rural areas and the larger regional or national system of intercity bus service, helping to meet the intercity travel needs of residents of rural areas
- The Amherst-Worcester (Rt. 9 Local) route was identified as a service gap and recommended in MassDOT’s 2015 Regional Bus Network Assessment and Quaboag Connector Needs

The Grant specifies that the Amherst-Worcester Intercity Route:

- Fill service gaps along Route 9 between Ware and Worcester using an intercity service model
- Provide connections from rural towns to urban centers in Worcester and the Pioneer Valley

- Provides stops in the following communities to connect with urban center, Amherst, Belchertown, Ware, West Brookfield, and Leicester
- Partnership between PVRTA and the Quaboag Connector to operate the pilot service connecting Amherst and Worcester
- Intermediate stops at Amherst Center, Belchertown, Ware, West Brookfield, Brookfield, East Brookfield, Spencer, Leicester

The proposed pilot route:

- 49-mile route segment operating primarily along MA Route 9 corridor
- 1 hour and 45 minutes travel time
- 3-daily round trips on weekdays, Saturday, and Sunday
- Timed connections with MBTA commuter rail trains to/from Boston
- Distance-based fares ranging from \$1.50 within PVRTA’s service area and \$3.50 to \$9.00 outside PVRTA’s service area

Brian O’Leary: Objects to not pulling into the Belchertown Commons and just staying on Route 9.

Paul Burns: Servicing the Belchertown Commons depends on a few factors. If we don’t need to make deviations in Worcester, we should be able to service the Commons.

Brian O’Leary: Would like the Belchertown Commons stop included in the recommendation.

Chairman O’Leary asked for a motion from the Route Committee to recommend to the Advisory Board approval of the PVRTA & Quaboag Connector’s Amherst/Worcester Intercity Pilot Route with the caveat of servicing Belchertown Commons.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Sorrell/Miller) to recommend to the Advisory Board approval of the PVRTA & Quaboag Connector’s Amherst/Worcester Intercity Pilot Route with the caveat of servicing Belchertown Commons.

Chairman O’Leary asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for a roll call vote.

J.M. Sorrell: Yes

Peter Miller: Yes

Benjamin Hood: Yes

Brian O’Leary: Yes

Motion passed, 4-0 vote.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman O’Leary reported that there is no other business to discuss.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman O’Leary asked for a motion from the Route Committee to adjourn.

MOTION: Moved and seconded (Miller/Sorrell) to adjourn.

Chairman O’Leary asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for a roll call vote.

J.M. Sorrell: Yes

Peter Miller: Yes
Benjamin Hood: Yes
Brian O'Leary: Yes

Motion passed, 4-0 vote.

The meeting of the PVTA Route Committee adjourned at 2:36 P.M.

A TRUE RECORD

ATTEST: _____
BRANDY PELLETIER

Documents filed with Route Committee meeting packet:

- January 15, 2021 Route Committee Minutes