

**Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority
550 West Algonquin Road
Arlington Heights, Illinois
Minutes of the Open Session Meeting of the Pace Board of Directors
January 18, 2023**

The Board of Directors of Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority, met in open session on Wednesday, January 18, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. at Pace corporate headquarters, 550 West Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois, pursuant to notice.

Chairman Kwasneski led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Kwasneski called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Roll Call

Directors physically present: Arfa, Canning, Carr, Marcucci, Schielke, Smith, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski.

Directors virtually or telephonically present: Guerin, Hastings, and McLeod.

Directors absent: Noak.

Director Noak joined the meeting virtually at 9:31 a.m.

SBD #23-01 – Resolution approving the open session meeting minutes of December 21, 2022.

Director Schielke moved, and Director Soto seconded a motion to approve the Resolution. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Public Comment

John Coli, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local #727 which represents paratransit drivers at several First Transit locations, spoke about the union's negotiations with Pace contractor First Transit. He pointed out pay discrepancies between First Transit employees working in Chicago and First Transit employees working in DuPage County.

Richard A. Kwasneski, *Chairman*

Rachel Arfa Christopher S. Canning Terrance M. Carr David B. Guerin Kyle R. Hastings Thomas D. Marcucci
William D. McLeod John D. Noak Jeffery D. Schielke Erin Smith Linda Soto Terry R. Wells

Board of Directors

Melinda J. Metzger, *Executive Director*

Chairman's Report

Chairman Kwasneski reported on attending the inauguration of legislators in Springfield last week. He said there is a significant number of new legislators all over the State and that Pace will have to work on forging new relationships. He was pleased that everyone he spoke with in Springfield was complimentary of Pace.

Directors' Reports

Director Arfa reported that she enjoyed Pace's social media post about Rosa Parks and her protest to make transportation more accessible to all people. She said the post allowed her to reflect on how important transportation is to everyone and it was great to celebrate the spirit of that history.

Director Marcucci reported that he met with Melinda Metzger and Doug Sullivan to review Pace's 2023 Marketing Plan being presented to the Board today, saying the plan promotes the overall Pace brand well. Director Marcucci reported on his virtual attendance at a meeting of the DuPage County transportation committee that discussed the Blue-Ribbon Committee, which is a new committee created by the State of Illinois to wholistically assess public transportation in the region. The committee will address the fiscal cliff that transit agencies are headed for and propose potential changes to the structure of financing public transportation throughout Illinois. Former DuPage County Chairman, Dan Cronin, has been appointed Co-Chair of the Blue-Ribbon Committee. Director Marcucci is hopeful the State and Federal governments will get involved in substantive ways, as they have always responded to our lobbying and helped find solutions to our challenges.

Director Schielke commented on the importance of Call-N-Ride service to the growing number of senior citizens in his region, and he hopes the Blue-Ribbon Committee and the CMAP steering committee understand the importance of the service as they seek to make reforms. Director Schielke illustrated the demographic change by discussing the increase in ambulances purchased and senior living units constructed in his region over the last few years.

Chairman Kwasneski said Pace is fortunate to know several people on the committees, including Director Noak on the CMAP committee. Chairman Kwasneski recommends Pace meet with all collar counties to make sure we are communicating funding needs well, but assured everyone at the meeting that the committees are supportive of transit. By September 2023, the report will be presented to the Illinois Legislature, who will then review recommendations and propose bills for new funding governance.

Director Wells commended Melinda and staff for a successful CDL course sign-up event at South Suburban College yesterday. Director Wells observed a line of people out the door and learned 52 students signed up. He reported that South Suburban College staff are elated.

Executive Director's Report

Melinda Metzger presented copies of Pace's 2022 annual report, "Innovation and Transition", to the Board. She urged Directors to use the report for talking points on ways Pace has adapted services to a post-pandemic world. She thanked the Board for their forward thinking and staff who have done an excellent job on 2022 projects.

Melinda reported that Pace celebrated the life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. by providing funding for a program at DuSable Black History Museum. Pace staff also brought a vintage 1949 GMC West Towns bus to the event because it was the same model bus that Rosa Parks protested in. Melinda said it was uplifting to see kids, their families, and people from foreign countries lining up to see the bus. The bus is one of two historic buses that Pace maintenance staff have kept in excellent condition for events; the other is a 1974 GMC Nortran.

Melinda thanked Pace staff who donated to the holiday food drive. Pace donated over 1700 lbs. of food that will feed over 919 families.

Melinda reported that Pace and Metra held a multi-day open house at Harvey Library to solicit input on Harvey Transportation Center reconstruction designs. This is a critical hub serving 2500 people, more than any location in the Pace system. Metro PPMO will review feedback and bring residents' chosen design before the Harvey City Council.

Melinda reported that Pace will continue to aggressively recruit new employees to secure the resources needed to support our system and to implement new service, like Pulse Dempster. Melinda said she was thrilled with the number of people who signed up for a CDL training course at South Suburban College. On Saturday, Pace will hold its first "Hire on the Spot" event at Pace headquarters. Pace ran two full-page ads in the Daily Herald and advertised on CBS News yesterday to promote the event.

Melinda reported that Congress officially passed, and President Biden signed, the FY23 omnibus budget bill that included five earmarks legislators sponsored for Pace. Melinda publicly thanked the congressional sponsors of those grants:

- Rep. Casten for \$1,000,000 in funding for electric paratransit vehicles at River Division
- Rep. Foster for \$1,200,000 in funding for Bolingbrook (Old Chicago) park-n-ride waiting area
- Rep. Garcia for \$840,000 in funding for TSP along Harlem/ Cermak
- Rep. Newman for \$840,000 in funding for TSP along 95th St.
- Rep. Schneider for \$1,920,000 in funding for electric buses at North Division

No other organization in Illinois had as many projects included in the legislation as Pace.

Echoing reports made previously, Melinda explained that CMAP has convened a steering committee to develop a plan of action for regional transit in northeastern Illinois. The committee will identify the system we want and need, and how to pay for it and implement it. The first meeting is taking place today, January 18, at 9:00 a.m. and Melinda is meeting with their consultants this Friday.

Likewise, a separate but similar Blue-Ribbon Commission on Transportation and Infrastructure Funding and Policy was established by state legislation and signed into law in May 2022. This commission was created to seek alternative funding mechanisms for projects and operations throughout the State of Illinois, and research other Illinois transportation challenges.

Melinda provided the Board with a list of all named members of both committees. By 2026 there will not be enough money to run transportation systems, so both committees are critically important. Pace will closely follow the committees and keep legislators informed on Pace services and projects.

Melinda summarized the agenda items and thanked Director Marcucci for his valuable input and time spent on today's 2023 marketing plan presentation.

Melinda reported that the Pace system provided over 18 million riders in 2022, an increase of 11% over 2021. Pace is underbudget for 2022 and will use the surplus funds to carry us into 2026.

Items removed from the Consent Agenda

None.

Approval of Consent Agenda

SBD #23-02 - Ordinance authorizing the filing and execution of 2023 grant applications and agreements with Pace's funding agencies.

Director Schielke moved, and Director Soto seconded a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed with the following roll call vote: Directors Arfa, Canning, Carr, Guerin, Hastings, Marcucci, McLeod, Noak, Schielke, Smith, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski. All directors voted aye.

Action Items

None.

Issues/Discussion/Reports

Ryan Ruehle, Priority Project Management Office, presented a progress report assessing how well the agency is doing in implementing and progressing the initiatives outlined in Pace's strategic vision plan, *Driving Innovation*. The report was also presented to the Joint Meeting of the Planning and Infrastructure Committees on December 14, 2022. Pace was pleased to report that many of the plan's initiatives are exceeding expectations.

Doug Sullivan, Manager of External Relations, presented Pace's 2023 marketing plan. Pace's 2023 campaigns will focus on:

- Recruiting staff
- Regaining ridership
- Reinforcing Pace's affordability, particularly amid rising gas prices and Pace's recent fare drops
- Increasing awareness of the Network Restructuring/ Service Revitalization initiative in order for riders and stakeholders to guide Pace's decision-making (advertising for this major effort is funded in part by an IDOT grant)
- Promoting Project Zero, Pace's zero emissions transition
- Promoting Vanpool's more flexible fare structure with events at corporate office parks
- Promoting the launch of Pulse Dempster with a "purple carpet" movie theme, including shelter ads in the style of movie posters and video ads in the style of movie trailers.

Pace will use the data gathered in the 2022 customer satisfaction survey to inform marketing activities in 2023. Doug said the future financial needs of Pace on both the capital and operating side are looming. Now is the time to get ahead of the story we will share by developing a new brand push that showcases all that Pace has to offer.

Chairman Kwasneski asked about Google's Waze app and using geotargeted ads for I-55 Bus on Shoulder service. A discussion ensued.

Director Soto left the meeting at 10:21 a.m. Director Soto returned to the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Adjournment

Chairman Kwasneski asked for a motion to adjourn into closed session for the purposes of discussing Closed Session Minutes (2-C-21) and Collective Bargaining (2-C-2).

Director Schielke moved, and Director Guerin seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote. All directors voted aye.

The meeting adjourned at 10:28 a.m.

Reconvene

Chairman Kwasneski reconvened the open session of the Pace Board of Directors meeting at 10:41 a.m.

Directors physically present: Arfa, Canning, Carr, Marcucci, Schielke, Smith, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski.

Directors virtually or telephonically present: Guerin, Hastings, McLeod, and Noak.

Directors absent: None.

SBD #23-03 – Resolution approving the closed session meeting minutes of December 21, 2022.

Director Schielke moved, and Director Wells seconded a motion to approve the Resolution.

The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

SBD #23-04 – Ordinance authorizing the Executive Director to execute the successor Collective Bargaining Agreement between Pace River Division and the General Chauffeurs, Salesdrivers and Helpers International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Local #330.

Director Schielke moved, and Director Smith seconded a motion to approve the Ordinance. The motion passed with the following roll call vote: Directors Arfa, Canning, Carr, Guerin, Hastings, Marcucci, McLeod, Noak, Schielke, Soto, Smith, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski. All Directors voted Aye.

SBD #23-05 – Ordinance authorizing the Executive Director to execute the successor Collective Bargaining Agreement between Pace River Division and the General Chauffeurs, Salesdrivers and Helpers International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Local #330 (Part-time employees classified as Big Bus and Dial-A-Ride Drivers).

Director Schielke moved, and Director Soto seconded a motion to approve the Ordinance. The motion passed with the following roll call vote: Directors Arfa, Canning, Carr, Guerin, Hastings, Marcucci, McLeod, Noak, Schielke, Soto, Smith, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski. All Directors voted Aye.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Kwasneski asked for a motion and second to adjourn the Pace Board of Directors meeting.

Director Schielke moved, and Director Marcucci seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed with a unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 10:43 a.m.

The next regular meeting of the Pace Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. at Pace Corporate Headquarters, 550 West Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois.

Elissa Ledvort
Board Secretary, Board of Directors