



**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
March 15, 2023**

The Board of Directors of Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority, met in open session on Wednesday, March 15, 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 9:31 a.m.

Roll Call

Directors physically present: Canning, Carr, Marcucci, McLeod, Schielke, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski.

Directors virtually or telephonically present: Arfa, Guerin, Hastings, Noak, Smith, and Soto.

Directors absent: None.

SBD #23-13 – Resolution approving the open session meeting minutes of February 15, 2023.

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

Public Comment

None.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Kwasneski reported on attending legislative session in Springfield last week and that he, Melinda, and Pace lobbyists have been following the progress of some transportation bills. He thanked Melinda for her testimony before the State of Illinois' Transportation and Public Safety/Infrastructure Appropriations Committee on behalf of Pace.

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 Kwasneski announced that an event celebrating North Division's first electric bus will be held Monday, March 20, 2023. He said Pace has been working with our federal partners to secure funding for electric vehicles and Pace is grateful to Congressman Brad Schneider. He invited all board members to attend the event.

Directors' Reports

Director Marcucci referred to the contract award to SCR for paratransit services in DuPage and Kane Counties and pointed out that staff is not recommending the lowest bidder. It is a difference of \$3 million, so he discussed the recommendation with Melinda Metzger and Sally Williams prior to this meeting. He was happy with their response and requested that they describe how the contract was awarded to the lowest bidder who best met the bid criteria.

Director Noak reported that CMAP's Plan of Action for Regional Transit (PART) Steering Committee, which often meets at the same time as the Pace Board, is holding a meeting this morning. They are discussing the need for more dedicated bus routes in the region. Director Noak encouraged the Pace Board to monitor Steering Committee discussions since they impact Pace directly.

Director Soto thanked Congressman Brad Schneider for his support and for helping Pace secure electric buses. She encouraged Pace board members to attend Monday's event, saying it will be helpful to familiarize themselves with electric vehicles, garages, and operations.

Executive Director's Report

Melinda Metzger reported that Pace is celebrating women's history month by hosting two webinars for employees about women's leadership and mentorship. Melinda thanked the 100 men and women who listened, contributed, and asked questions at the first webinar. She said she was proud to work with world class colleagues who work hard and do a good job. Melinda recognized Pace's three women board members and thanked them for their leadership.

Melinda reported that 23 individuals in different departments across the agency were nominated by their managers for the annual Pacesetter employee of the year awards. Heritage Division received the Team Pacesetter Award for a seamless move of operations to the new garage in Plainfield, the first new fixed route garage in over 30 years, without any interruption in service. A video announcing the award recipients was shown.

Melinda reported that Pace won first place at the 2023 APTA AdWheel Awards for a marketing campaign focusing on soaring gas prices. Director Marcucci pointed out that Pace keeps receiving marketing awards. He credited Doug Sullivan, his team, and Pace's ad agency as one of the reasons why Pace is recovering stronger than the other service boards.

Melinda reported that Pace launched another VanGo location at the Palatine Metra Station. VanGo is an approach to first mile/last mile transportation and has two other locations in Deerfield and Lake Forest. Pace is getting a lot of interest in this program.

Melinda reported that recruitment efforts are going well. Pace hosted a Hire on the Spot event at North Division on February 27 and 28 that resulted in 25 job offers. Pace will host Hire on the Spot events for mechanics at UTI Technical Institute on March 2, and for all positions at Waubensee Community College on March 9, Olive-Harvey College on March 14, Elgin Community College on March 16, and Pace Headquarters on March 25. Pace community relations staff is attending multiple municipal hiring events to spread the word about job openings at Pace. In total, Pace has 90 future employees in various stages of the 8-week training required before an employee can operate a bus. Pace particularly needs to fill vacancies at the Northwest garage to get Pulse Dempster up and running.

Melinda reported that the \$2 fare for the TAP and DuPage Uber Access programs will be reinstated on April 15. This implementation date was pushed back because over 10,000 TAP accounts were added during the pandemic when fares were temporarily waived, and these new users have never loaded money onto their cards. In addition, Pace changed the online platform that allows riders to put money on their TAP card. Pace needs time to distribute information and make sure customers understand the process.

Melinda reported that Pace along with RTA, CTA, Metra, CMAP, Metropolitan Planning Council, Transit Alliance, and other groups were invited to offer testimony to the joint Transportation and Public Safety/Infrastructure Appropriations Subject Matter Committee on the successes and challenges of public transportation in the RTA service area. Melinda believes Pace stood out due to the variety of our service offerings: express bus, On Demand, VanGo, and Dial-A-Ride. The committee was very interested in how Pace incorporates TNCs. CMAP discussed the PART process. In response to Director Noak's report earlier, Melinda said that despite the Pace Board of Directors and PART Steering Committee meeting at the same time, CMAP Executive Director Erin Aleman holds monthly briefings for service board executive directors.

Melinda reported that six public hearings to solicit input on part-time VanPool fares and the expansion of Naperville-Aurora On Demand service will be held at the end of the month. She thanked the board members who volunteered as hearing officers.

Melinda reported that February ridership is up 11% over 2022 ridership at the same time last year, with the system carrying about 1.4 million riders. About 10,000 TNC trips were taken in February, showing TNC program growth. Suburban service budget is favorable by \$6 million while the ADA paratransit budget is favorable by \$2.6 million.

After Melinda's report, Director Schielke encouraged all board members to reach out to members of the Illinois General Assembly ahead of CMAP's PART report about reforming the transit system. He speculates that they want to reorganize the RTA and service boards under one agency with one board. He is proud of our work, believes the system works well as it is now, and

thinks legislators need to be aware of that. Chairman Kwasneski said now is a good time to get the word out about the good things Pace is doing in their areas, since legislators are returning from legislative session soon. Director Schielke asked Pace for a list of talking points and Chairman Kwasneski asked for a link to Pace's annual report. Melinda affirmed that she is also meeting with and bringing materials to legislators.

Items removed from the Consent Agenda

None.

Approval of Consent Agenda

SBD #23-14 – Ordinance authorizing Change Order No. 5 to Contract No. 233878 with WEX, Inc. for third party administration (TPA) of health benefit plans. This change order extends the contract for six months, and increases the contract total from \$920,381.50 to \$997,942.50, an increase of \$77,561.00.

Director McLeod moved, and Director Schielke 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

SBD #23-15 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to River North Transit LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Via Transportation, Inc. for a Transportation Network Company (TNC) pilot project for late-night first mile/last mile rideshare services from Harvey to O'Hare in an amount not to exceed \$1,362,055.00.

Erik Llewellyn presented on the pilot, describing the service gaps in Routes 332 and 352 that the pilot addresses, connections to Pace and CTA, zone boundaries, and hours. Discussion ensued:

- Chairman Kwasneski raised concerns about branding vans with the Pace logo if drivers are allowed to operate the vehicles for personal use. Director Smith agreed.
- Director Marcucci asked staff to start thinking about how Pace could provide west suburban residents opportunity and access to jobs now that Western Access O'Hare project, which was created so the benefits of economic activity at O'Hare could spill out west, will finish next year. Erik said Pace would revisit a study conducted with several Pace partners to identify potential public transit opportunities in the 390 corridor.
- Director Smith reminded everyone that Pace is routinely innovative. She applauded the pilot for filling important service gaps and helping the financial well-being of residents.
- Director Wells said this is something that the Harvey area desperately needs. He asked for clarification on the implementation schedule. Melinda and Erik provided a range between 12-24 weeks but will push for summer at the request of Director Wells.
- Director Arfa raised that maybe people who were not thinking about job opportunities in those areas may be interested in exploring opportunities now that Pace is providing

additional service to the area. She applauded the innovative program, saying it will make a big difference to people who use the service.

- Chairman Kwasneski concluded the discussion encouraging Pace's government relations department to identify other communities with third shift workers who would benefit from this type of service if the pilot were successful.

Director McLeod moved, and Director Wells seconded a motion to approve the Ordinance.

The motion passed with the following roll call vote: Directors Arfa, Carr, Guerin, Hastings, Marcucci, McLeod, Noak, Schielke, Smith, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski.

Director Canning abstained. All other directors voted aye.

SBD #23-16 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to SCR Medical Transportation, LLC for dedicated paratransit services in DuPage and Kane Counties in an amount not to exceed \$87,341,149.76.

Sally Williams presented. Director Marcucci commented on how the RFP bids were evaluated and scored on pricing (60%) and technical ability (40%). He also said it was critically important that the call center be familiar with the service area. Melinda clarified that the regional mobility call center is separate from paratransit contractors and will remain the same.

Director Schielke moved, and Director Guerin 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, Smith, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski.

All directors voted aye.

Issues/Discussion/Reports

Chairman Kwasneski encouraged Directors to review the January 2023 budget reports and financial statements contained in their packets. He asked Melinda how ridership compares to 2019 pre-pandemic numbers. Melinda reported that fixed route ridership is now at 60% of pre-pandemic ridership. ADA has now recovered 100% of the ridership lost during the pandemic, showing that the service is necessary, but is operating with only 70% of the drivers. Melinda explained that taxi and TNC partnerships are necessary right now to meet service demand. Director Schielke commented about the 8 new senior living communities being built in or near Batavia, with approximately 800 units/building, illustrating how demand for services will only increase. He described Kane County's award-winning partnership with Pace transporting seniors to the vaccination hub in the former Sam's Club building during the pandemic. He concluded saying that the CMAP Steering Committee needs to be aware of facts like this.

Adjournment

Chairman Kwasneski asked for a motion to adjourn into closed session for the purposes of discussing Closed Session Minutes (2-C-21) and Pending Litigation (2-C-11).

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Reconvene

Chairman Kwasneski reconvened the open session of the Pace Board of Directors meeting at 10:53 a.m.

Directors physically present: Canning, Carr, Marcucci, McLeod, Schielke, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski.

Directors virtually or telephonically present: Arfa, Guerin, Hastings, Noak, Smith, and Soto.

Directors absent: None.

SBD #23-17 – Resolution approving the closed session meeting minutes of February 15, 2023.

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

SBD #23-18 – Ordinance approving action on Troy Smith vs. Erlesha Lee and Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority, Cook County Case No. 2021 L 4735.

Director McLeod moved, and Director Wells 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, Smith, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski. All directors voted aye.

SBD #23-19 – Ordinance approving action on Michael Riley vs. Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority, Aurora Township, Mobility Systems & Solutions, Inc., and Orbit Medical, Inc., Kane County Case No. 21 L 239.

Director Schielke moved, and Director Carr 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, Smith, Soto, 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 McLeod seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed with a unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 10:57 a.m.

The next regular meeting of the Pace Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, April 19, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. at Pace Corporate Headquarters, 550 West Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois.

Elissa Ledvort
Board Secretary, Board of Directors