



**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
February 17, 2021**

The Board of Directors of Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority, met in public session on Wednesday February 17, 2021 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: Carr, Guerin, Marcucci, Schielke, and Chairman Kwasneski.

Director virtually present: Canning, Claar, Hastings, McLeod, Smith, Soto, and Wells.

Director Arfa was absent.

SBD #21-06 – Resolution approving the minutes of the Open Session meeting of January 20, 2021.

Director Schielke moved, and Director Carr seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the Open Session meeting of January 20, 2021. The motion passed with the following roll call vote: Directors Canning, Carr, Claar, Guerin, Hastings, Marcucci, McLeod, Schielke, Smith, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski. All Directors voted Aye.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Richard A. Kwasneski, *Chairman*

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

Board of Directors

Rocky Donahue, *Executive Director*

Chairman's Report

Chairman Kwasneski stated Pace is practicing all safety protocols for this in-person Board meeting—health screening before entering the building, social distancing, wearing masks when away from the dais and desks, and sanitizing surfaces.

Chairman Kwasneski thanked employees, and especially operators and garage personnel who have been dealing with the recent inclement weather.

Chairman Kwasneski, Director Soto, and Pace staff met virtually with Lake County Board Chair, Sandy Hart and Lake County staff to discuss the future of Lake County transit service. Chairman Kwasneski looks forward to continued conversations.

Chairman Kwasneski reported he and Rocky continue advocating at both the federal and state level for Pace and transit in our region. Rocky updated the Board on the recent RTA plan to allocate recent stimulus funds to the service boards. The RTA Board is meeting tomorrow.

Chairman Kwasneski recognized a good friend of Pace's, Jeff Nelson, the Executive Director of the Rock Island Mass Transit District. Jeff has just become the Chairman of APTA. He stated it is good to have someone from Illinois lead our national industry.

Directors' Reports

Director Canning reported that he met with Directors Soto and Smith as the Planning Committee of the Board. They learned from Charlotte Obodzinski about the Priority Project Management Office which was discussed at the last Board meeting. Ryan Ruehle gave an update on Driving Innovation which is the strategic plan that should rollout in 2021. COVID-19 changed ridership, but staff was able to pivot and create a revised Driving Innovation plan. Eric Llewellyn gave an update on service changes as it related to COVID-19. Staff will begin communications with schools to focus on what their needs might be for next fall in the event they expect more in person learning. Eric also gave an update on the Free Fair Transit for South Cook plan. Director Wells was instrumental in getting that off the ground, it is going well, and we expect it to expand.

Director Marcucci commented on his concern that we made a promise in writing and in statements to our constituents in our six-county area, that when the COVID situation abates, the reduced or cut service will come back. He had conversations with Rocky and Melinda about not knowing what the economy will look like in the future—not knowing what the demand for routes will be, but we will be flexible.

Chairman Kwasneski responded that there are continued conversations with staff and one idea is to put other types of service in those areas—Call-n-Ride, TAP program, or an Uber program, etc. The return of service will be fluid. We are committed to continuing to provide the best services we can for our riders and for the region.

Director Schielke stated that he is the Chairman of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency of Planning's council, and he's on the Executive Board of the of Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus. During those agency's meetings, it's discussed that they don't have answers to where the funding to recover due to COVID-19 is coming from. It was initially feared that city and villages would lose their local government distributing funding, LDGF, which is 12% of the state income tax supposedly coming into the cities on an annual basis. Director Schielke stated that numbers for the 2020 census were supposed to be given to cities at the end of March, but now they won't be distributed until the end of September. This severely impacts cities planning.

Director Schielke thanked staff for all of their hard work in this unprecedented time.

Director Smith commented she appreciates being able to serve on Pace's Planning Committee. She stated she has been impressed by the innovation she sees and the way that staff and the entire organization is managing through the pandemic. She extended her compliments to the Board and the staff. Director Smith followed up on Director Canning's remarks, that as we interview the grade schools and high schools to assess needs, it's important to include the community colleges. It is sometimes lost that McHenry County College, and perhaps other community colleges have significant partnerships with the high schools. A lot of high school students attend the community colleges with their accreditation programs. McHenry County College has continued with the hybrid learning module while other colleges may have gone exclusively to virtual learning. Director Smith stated that McHenry County College enrollment has increased over the years and their demand for service has increased.

Director Soto commented that she recently received a request from the Lake County Board Chair, Sandy Hart, and the head of Lake County D.O.T., Shane Schneider, to meet with Chairman Kwasneski and Pace staff. A virtual meeting was held and the primary topic was that Lake County wants to have a county-wide paratransit program as most of our other counties do. A study took place to look at how paratransit works currently in Lake County. There are between 57 and 61 different organizations; i.e. townships, Catholic charities, etc., that provide paratransit in some way, but it is very limited in scope. The county put together a transit team to explore the findings of the study and PACE did participate in that. Other counties that have paratransit programs came and gave presentations on how each of them operates. In their meeting, it was discussed what a reasonable timeline would be and what it would take from both the county and PACE to accomplish this. A follow up meeting is planned for early March.

Executive Director's Report

Rocky Donahue thanked garage personnel—operators, mechanics, servicers, dispatchers, supervisors, and everyone involved in getting service on the street daily.

Ridership is at about 40% of pre-COVID levels. Prior to the recent inclement weather, we were at about 50% of pre-COVID levels. We are providing approximately 43,000 daily trips across our system.

Rocky, Chairman Kwasneski, and others continue to work with our congressional delegation for additional stimulus funds. The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee just recommended an additional \$30 billion for transit nationally. If this were to pass, it is projected that our region would receive approximately \$1.5 billion.

The Governor provides his State of the State and budget address virtually today at noon. It is reported that he will present a status-quo budget for year 2022. When the budget is released, we will see the impact on transit, but we anticipate receiving funding at the same level as last year.

The Infrastructure Committee is meeting immediately following this meeting. Staff will update the Committee on their initial tasks in getting our Project Management Office up and running.

Rocky presented information on 2020 Year to date suburban and ADA performance. For Suburban Services, we've used only \$9.5 million of CARES funding where we thought we would be using \$83 million. This was largely due to stronger than expected sales tax and strong ridership. Pace also saved \$36.5 million dollars of rolling costs within the city since the pandemic began largely due to the suspension of service, cutting costs at headquarters, and other areas. We do not have a structural deficit.

Rocky thanked all the staff that have worked hard to control costs— we have saved \$36.5 million since this pandemic began.

ADA has a \$14.4 million deficit which is primarily due to ridership being higher than anticipated, providing all trips as a single ride, and not capturing liquidated damages from the carriers. \$14.4 million will be filled with ADA Paratransit reserves.

Pace is not using CARES funding for A.D.A. While funding is a separate cycle of money from suburban service funds. The RTA will be recommending \$20 million of stimulus funding to go to A.D.A.

Pace will present its annual Pacesetter Awards Wednesday, February 24 at 10 a.m. in a virtual event. Rocky encouraged the Board to attend.

Approval of Consent Agenda

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

SBD #21-07 – Ordinance authorizing the filing and execution of 2021 grant applications and agreements with Pace's funding agencies.

SBD #21-08 – Ordinance authorizing a change order to Contract No. 223656 with Hewlett Packard Enterprise Company for computer equipment, software, and services for servers, storage, and peripherals.

Action Items

SBD #21-09 – Ordinance authorizing a change order to Contract No. 217069 with Bloom Companies, LLC for architectural and engineering services for the South Holland division. This action extends the contract term for one (1) year and increases the contract total from \$2,506,775.79 to \$2,676,306.53, an increase of \$169,530.74.

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

SBD #21-10 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to Brasco International, Inc. for thirty (30) Pulse station shelters, in an amount not to exceed \$586,000.00.

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

SBD #21-11– Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to South Water Signs for the manufacture and installation of twenty-nine (29) vertical marker pylons for the Pulse Dempster project, in an amount not to exceed \$1,793,499.89.

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

Issues/Discussions/Reports

Melinda Metzger thanked Director Marcucci for his insights and for helping develop what will be presented today.

Director Marcucci congratulated Doug Sullivan and Melinda Metzger for putting together an excellent program.

Doug Sullivan thanked Director Marcucci, Melinda Metzger, and Gatesman, our marketing and advertising contractor, who helped develop the plan.

Doug first spoke of a few 2020 highlights. With the pandemic, the CDC guidelines called for reduced capacity per vehicle which prevented us from growing ridership. Instead, we focused on customer and stakeholder communications, safety, and launching Pace's new website, and we conducted a customer survey. Marketing supported efforts to bring enhancements to paratransit customers, such as TripCheck.

The 2021 marketing plan doubles as Pace's external communications plan for the agency's re-emergence from the pandemic. Our main goal in 2021 is to grow ridership. Last year's survey showed that Pace is critical to the lives of our riders. Pace will use "welcome back" messaging, aggressively pushing our cleaning procedures ("there's clean, and then there's Pace clean") and data that show riding a bus is just as safe as your other daily activities. Our messaging will evolve over time, as more and more people find themselves ready to ride public transit.

In 2021, Marketing will support several programs, including the new Ventra payment option for paratransit customers, the launch of our vision plan Driving Innovation, and restructuring of bus service in McHenry County. Also, regarding our suspended routes, when the market returns, we'll need a marketing plan to make sure former and future customers know about it. We will continue our recruitment efforts with a variety of tactics. We'll stress the new technology upgrades—TripCheck and Ventra—and once CDC deems it appropriate, educate them on the return to shared-ride paratransit trips.

Adjournment

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

Director Carr moved, and Director McLeod seconded a motion to adjourn the Pace Board of Directors meeting. The motion passed with the following roll call vote: Directors Canning, Carr, Claar, Guerin, Hastings, Marcucci, McLeod, Schielke, Smith, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski. All Directors voted Aye.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

The next regular meeting of the Pace Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, March 17, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. at Pace Corporate Headquarters, 550 West Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois.



Karen Kase
Secretary, Board of Directors