



**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 17, 2021**

The Board of Directors of Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority, met in public session on Wednesday March 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: Arfa, Canning, Carr, Claar, Guerin, Hastings, Marcucci, McLeod, Schielke, Smith, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski.

Directors Arfa, Hastings, Smith, and Soto attended virtually.

Director Smith joined the meeting at 9:34 a.m.

No Directors were absent.

Director Wells left the meeting at 10:37 a.m. and returned at 10:40 a.m.

SBD #21-12 – Resolution approving the minutes of the Open Session meeting of February 17, 2021.

Director Schielke moved, and Director Marcucci seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the Open Session meeting of February 17, 2021. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

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. Chairman thanked staff for all their hard work keeping our essential business running.

Chairman Kwasneski congratulated Pacesetter Award recipients. A virtual ceremony was conducted in February. Pacesetters were acknowledged for going above and beyond in their work efforts over the past year.

Staff met with Director Soto and representatives from Lake County on a paratransit alignment. Director Soto will provide more information in her report.

Chairman Kwasneski stated he and staff continued to work with the federal delegation regarding future stimulus money. The President signed the American Rescue Plan Act that will provide \$30 billion nationally for transit. Chairman Kwasneski thanked the Illinois delegation for their support. We continue to monitor activities in Springfield and the bills that were filed that affect Pace.

Chairman Kwasneski was featured on a Will County radio program on WJOL where he highlighted Pace ridership.

Directors' Reports

Director Arfa reported she, Rocky, Melinda Metzger, and Pace staff had meetings to configure the process of accessibility for ADA paratransit riders' COVID testing in the City of Chicago and focusing on the United Center drop off and pick-up for riders to get vaccinated.

Director Guerin reported the Infrastructure Committee met and discussed capital projects and the new draft of *Driving Innovation* sent to staff and stakeholders last week.

Director Schielke thanked staff for working with Kane County on service to vaccine sites. He stated a new site will open on Friday. He reported that the Chair of the Kane County Board was very impressed.

Director Soto reported on meetings she has had with Pace and Lake County staff about potentially starting a countywide Dial-a-Ride program. She was very happy with a proposal from Pace staff to start a large program early and then expand it to serve the full county. She looks forward to working with other partners in the area, like townships that already offer some similar services, to come up with a solution that works well for everyone.

Director Wells seconded Director Guerin's report on the infrastructure committee meeting, adding that the projects that we are working on now will leave us well-positioned for when the pandemic recedes, and that federal funding will further help us move things forward at that point.

Executive Director's Report

Rocky Donahue thanked Pace's employees, particularly our bus operators and other front-line workers, in recognition of Transit Driver Appreciation Day, which will be observed tomorrow. Rocky also thanked our Pacesetters and the legislators and advocates who stood up for transit and helped to once again secure our industry historic levels of funding last week. Rocky touched upon favorable ridership trends and updated the Board on our budget. Our Suburban Services budget continues to be favorable to expectations; we had to use \$3.8 million in CARES Act funding in January, but this is lower than the \$6.4 million we anticipated needing thanks to favorable expenses. Our ADA budget is down about \$500,000, mainly due to low sales tax receipts, but we are confident we are in a good place with ADA as well.

RTA Report

RTA's Executive Director Leanne Redden and RTA's strategic planner Peter Kersten joined the meeting virtually. They explained the critical needs assessment (CNA) they used to determine the allocation of funds to the service boards in response to COVID-19 recovery planning and the RTA's recovery process. They then answered questions from the Board.

Director Canning commented that definitions of the demographics are too narrow and confusing.

Chairman Kwasneski asked if the Hispanic communities are included in the demographics. Peter explained that all communities are included, but not necessarily singled out for the purposes of this presentation.

Director Marcucci stated concerns that the maps in the presentation do not show ADA ridership in collar counties. Peter explained that the number of ADA registrants was counted in the suburbs. The criteria shown is at above-average densities.

Director Soto commented Lake County is working on a county-wide paratransit program. The County did a study in 2019, and it firmly showed that just over 50% of the county's paratransit riders use the service to get to employment and the next highest percentage use it to get to education. She also expressed concern that the data shown does not include the manufacturing businesses, of which there are many. Peter stated manufacturing is included, but not necessarily singled out for the purposes of this presentation.

Leanne stated that all ADA paratransit trips are funded, and services are provided based on need and demand which was captured in the allocation of the dollars, but it is not necessarily an issue

because no matter what the level of service and demand is, those dollars come off the top from our region and paratransit services are always fully funded.

Peter stated that what powers the data is to plot a point or a “ping”. Every time a transit vehicle makes a scheduled stop, we can aggregate the pings by census tracking. We are using census tracts and analysis. A model is used for funding evaluation. It is very similar for measures of accessibility such as the RTA transit exit measure or the availability index. We are using expenditures as the weight and we are using third quarter 2020 to reference what service looks like currently and what costs operate service currently. If a route were cut in an area that is not identified as a CNA, that would impact the end, the output differently than service that was cut in an CNA.

Peter stated that the recovery for the three service boards is very different. It has been highlighted by suburban representation—Pace and Metra—that to reinstate cut service is to be accommodated. RTA has made several presentations to county board chairs while meeting regularly about the recovery efforts. The RTA has received letters from Lake County and DuPage County and has been corresponding directly with other county board staff as well.

Director Smith stated it is not clear as to how all the factors in the analysis are weighted.

Peter advised that the formula creates consistency across the board in all the demographics identified.

Director Soto commented that she has read and discussed this report with the Lake County Board chair, the head of Lake County D.O.T., and others, and while Lake County is currently served by four Metra lines and various fixed routes and On Demand services provided by Pace, the county invested in a paratransit study. They also did a study on single occupancy vehicles. Both of those reports have demonstrated that many more areas of transit are needed in Lake County. When considering poverty levels, vehicle ownership, and origin and destination locations, it is understandable that we should focus on the essential and front-line workers in the initial stages of the pandemic recovery. To suggest there are few needs in the collar counties based on the report's assumptions, unduly limits the narrative of the essential suburban commute or reverse commute which has proven so popular in Lake County pre-pandemic. Director Soto stated that Lake County and she supports the RTA data-driven approach to take necessary steps that will provide continuity of service, but they disagree with the allocation of funds being based solely on the CNA metric that affects likely users of transit as opposed to actual users. Lake County encourages consideration of actual worker origins and destinations and the definition of CNAs moving forward. I understand the report recommendations are unique to the COVID recovery and will not necessarily set a precedent, although there is concern about that. The region needs to continue to consider mobility recovery including transit for the post-pandemic era. If critical transit recovery efforts are spread throughout the region, we will force more residents into single occupancy vehicles which will increase congestion, emissions, and commute times. One of the biggest challenges in Lake County right now is traffic congestion. We are very excited about the rebuild of Illinois to help us with that. There are those who may not be able to get that vehicle

that they now need to get to work. So, I think the decisions we make today must be made for the region and it will affect us for decades ahead. The critical capital investment decisions need to benefit our entire region.

Director Schielke commented that Kane County is a unique situation in that its neighboring county, Kendall, was successful in receiving \$100 million from the state to assist them in running Metra into their county. In his role as Chairman of the CMAP Council of Mayors, he has learned that one of the regional councils wants to hire an attorney to challenge the constitutionality of the general assembly giving the RTA \$100 million because Kendall County is not in the RTA's region. There is no mention of this in the document presented today. Director Schielke appreciates the RTA's stance that Kendall County needs to come up with some money to pay for their entry into the RTA.

Director Marcucci commented that he very much respects public comments. The number one public comment is that the density heavily favors the City of Chicago, to which Director Marcucci agrees. He wonders if the public who made those comments thought that was a good or bad idea.

Leanne stated she believes the suburban side did not like aspects, and city representatives supported aspects of the critical needs assessment.

Director Marcucci stated that it has always been a scramble and fight for resources on previous existing norms. The Pace Board has stated more than once that going forward, this is going to be the new norm.

Director Marcucci commented on a need to implement strategies and tools which will assure Pace that there will be a return to normal virtually immediately. We have received assurances from the RTA and the State of Illinois in the last decade relative to ADA funding. He is not comforted by those assurances because as just alluded to, we all have responsibilities to our counties and if those assurances are not met, we are legally obligated to provide those trips and that service. Director Marcucci stated that the RTA has consistently met those promises—it is recognized and he thanked the RTA for this.

Director Marcucci's concern is that the calculations presented today are not based on normal. He believes we are being penalized for being frugal with the taxpayer money. Pace recognized and addressed budgetary concerns early on rather than being swamped by them later.

Director Marcucci is concerned that the public comment indicates they see this as setting a precedent going forward, and that they are hopeful it will. Director Marcucci hopes it does not set a precedent. We hear the RTA's assurances that it will not.

Director Marcucci commented that the data shows DuPage County does not have any critical needs. McHenry County is the same. He is concerned about the inconsistency in the densities which flows to an inconsistency in trip generators, particularly jobs, doctor visits, and shopping.

If a bus route is cancelled, people lose their jobs because they cannot get to work. We cannot be responsible for this in any way. This is a critical need.

Chairman Kwasneski stated the goal is to figure out how to make everybody whole in 2021. There is difficulty in balancing what the critical need is. He stated he would like to see the numbers and all the public comments, and to know what some of the agencies had to say about it.

Chairman Kwasneski stated that Leanne has always done an excellent job and up until COVID, there were relatively minimal issues between the agencies. He believes that says a lot for staff and for leadership, and we appreciate that.

Director Canning commented on the Chairman's remarks. He believes our Board has functioned much better under Leanne and Chairman Dillard's leadership.

Approval of Consent Agenda

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

SBD #21-13 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a sole source contract to Trapeze Software Group, Inc., for Trapeze technology enhancements, in an amount not to exceed \$658,026.00.

SBD #21-14 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a sole source contract to Trapeze Software Group, Inc. for Trapeze technology enhancements, in an amount not to exceed \$547,040.00.

Issues/Discussions/Reports

Chairman Kwasneski reported that tomorrow, March 18, 2021, is Transit Driver Appreciation Day. He thanked all Pace operators, mechanics, front line staff, and everyone who works behind the scenes to keep our system running. He encouraged everyone to send a commendation, share a social media post, or say thank you to your bus operators tomorrow.

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

Reconvene

Chairman Kwasneski reconvened the Open Session of the Pace Board of Directors meeting at 11:53 a.m.

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

Directors Arfa, Hastings, Smith, and Soto attended virtually.

Director McLeod was absent.

SBD #21-15 – Resolution approving the minutes of the Closed Session meeting of January 20, 2021.

Director Schielke moved, and Director Soto seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the Closed Session meeting of January 20, 2021. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

SBD #21-16 – Ordinance approving action in the case of Bryan Gorak v. Pace and Aloy Anabaraonye; Case No. 17 L 012370, as discussed in Closed Session.

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

Adjournment

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

Director Soto moved, and Director Schielke seconded a motion to adjourn the Pace Board of Directors meeting. The motion passed with a unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

The next regular meeting of the Pace Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, April 21, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. at Pace Corporate Headquarters, 550 West Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois.



Karen Kase
Secretary, Board of Directors