

**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
August 18, 2021**

The Board of Directors of Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority, met in public session on Wednesday August 18, 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: Canning, Carr, Guerin, Marcucci, McLeod, Schielke, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski.

Directors virtually or telephonically present: Arfa, Claar, Hastings, and Soto.

Directors absent: Smith

SBD #21-48 – Resolution approving the minutes of the open session meeting of July 21, 2021.

Director Schielke moved, and Director Carr seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the open session meeting of July 21, 2021. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Public Comment

Bruce Mainzer, a former transit official for RTA, IDOT, and United Airlines, expressed disappointment that Pace is not testing or setting a timetable for a zero emissions electric fleet. He disapproves of the new CNG Wheeling garage stating funding for fossil fuel CNG buses is diminishing, while funding for electric buses is expanding.

Pamela Tate, a resident of Oak Park, asked Pace to set a date for the transition from diesel and CNG to electric. She finds Pace’s commitment to CNG as a bridge to electric problematic and fiscally irresponsible stating natural gas extraction ultimately produces emissions more dangerous than those caused by diesel fuel.

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*

John Kavalunos, the former chair of Crystal Lake's Sustainability Committee and current member of the task force on electrifying public transit for the Climate Realty Project Chicago Metro Chapter said he shared the concerns of prior public commenters. He asked Pace to reevaluate the *Driving Innovation* plan to expand CNG investments and infrastructure.

Don Viecelli of Arlington Heights thanked Pace for not including diesel bus purchases in the 2021 and 2022 budgets. He urged Pace to work harder to meet Governor Pritzker's carbon free future for Illinois and discourages Pace from investing more capital dollars in CNG garage construction. Don cited greenhouse gas statistics supporting the urgency for zero emissions.

Leah Hartong, a steering committee member of Clean Power Lake County, submitted a comment by email which was read by Elissa Ledvort. Leah is concerned about Pace's use of CNG and fossil fuel buses instead of electric ones, and wants communities disproportionately impacted by pollution, like Waukegan, to be prioritized in the transition to zero emission buses.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Kwasneski thanked employees for their continued efforts during the pandemic. He reported that Pace continues to advocate the congressional delegation to support the federal infrastructure package. Chairman Kwasneski attended an APTA Board Member Committee meeting and announced his appointment to the Emerging Vehicles Technology Committee, where he looks forward to discussing best practices other transit agencies across the country have used to achieve zero emission fleets. Chairman appreciated the public comments and directed all to look for electric vehicle investments in the 2022 budget, debuting next month.

Directors' Reports

As audit liaison, Director Carr highlighted the Internal Audit Department's second quarter report. Completed projects include reviews of: 2020 financial statements, West Division 2020 year-end audit, Cubic/Ventra Premium transfer reimbursements, and Taxi Access Program swipe records.

Director Marcucci reported on a high volume of complaints from DuPage County residents about Dial-A-Ride and ADA Paratransit. He illustrated that ridership for these services has increased exponentially since the height of the pandemic one year ago, but, like many industries, Pace's labor shortage is unable to meet this rising demand. He put out a call for qualified personnel to fill bus operator vacancies. Director Marcucci continues to meet with affected riders, and Pace staff is working hard to fix the problem.

Director McLeod and representatives from RTA and Metra participated in a town hall panel sponsored by Cook County Commissioner, Kevin Morrison, where public comments called for electric buses. Director McLeod believes people understand the infrastructure challenges but ensured that all transit agencies are working hard towards zero emissions.

Director Schielke received feedback from a DuPage and Kane County ADA paratransit rider and would like her written comments to be made part of the next board packet.

Director Soto attended a virtual open house hosted by the Lake County Department of Transportation to solicit feedback on a new county paratransit program. Input will determine hours of operation, fares, and reduced fare qualifications seen in the final program.

Executive Director's Report

Rocky thanked employees for providing essential service during the pandemic and illustrated the need for community access to transportation. Rocky reported that Suburban Services is \$11.5 million positive to budget, while ADA Paratransit is \$6.2 million positive to budget, from January-June. This is the result of Pace's efforts to limit expenses, and favorable sales tax performance. Rocky thanked Directors Canning, Schielke, and Chairman Kwasneski for their work advocating for online sales tax legislation.

Rocky shared statistics from the latest ridership report. While fixed route service ridership has plateaued, other services like Dial-A-Ride, Vanpool, and ADA show strong ridership increases. Systemwide ridership is up 13.4% from last year. Ridership is expected to grow as schools return to in-person learning, and after Pace restores some fixed routes suspended during the pandemic.

Rocky reported that the U.S. Senate passed a \$1 trillion infrastructure package, including \$107 billion for public transit, and now sits in the House for approval. Pace provided a tour of the Plainfield Garage and demonstration of Bus On Shoulder to Congresswoman Marie Newman, a member of the House Transportation Infrastructure Committee. Rocky also noted FTA's extension of the mask mandate on public transportation until January 2022.

Rocky thanked Pace's budget team led by Lorri Newson and Melanie Castle for their work developing the 2022 budget.

Director Hastings left the meeting at 10:19 a.m.

Items removed from the Consent Agenda

None.

Approval of Consent Agenda

SBD #21-49 – Ordinance authorizing change order to contract no. 229854 with Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP for legal representation. This action extends the contract term for two (2) years and increases the contract total from \$300,000.00 to \$600,000.00, an increase of \$300,000.000.

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

Action Items

SBD #21-50 – Ordinance authorizing a third amended 2021 Operating and Capital Budget.

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

All Directors voted Aye.

Kris Skogsbakken explained how new FTA funding, plus the proposed reallocations towards Wheeling Garage construction and CNG Pulse buses, increases the capital budget by \$214,896.

SBD #21-51 – Ordinance amending the November 20, 2019 Intergovernmental Agreement (“IGA”) for the South Halsted Bus Corridor Enhancement NEPA and Advanced Conceptual Design between the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) and Pace Suburban Bus.

Charlotte O’Donnell Obodzinski reported on how the proposed IGA increases CTA contributions to the project for further traffic analysis and public outreach.

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

All Directors voted Aye.

Issues/Discussion/Reports

Chief Operating Officer, Melinda Metzger, provided additional information regarding Pace’s labor shortages. Contract carriers that operate Pace’s ADA service are diligently recruiting and paying prevailing rates, but many workers have not yet reentered the workforce. Some cite childcare concerns, while others are choosing jobs that limit interactions with the public and exposure to the virus.

Rocky noted that the labor shortage is a national phenomenon not unique to the transit industry, though Pace’s urban and rural counterparts are facing similar issues. Rocky echoed Director Marcucci’s call for bus operator, call center, and entry level applicants, and said Pace is temporarily providing riders transit alternatives via Pace’s partners. This includes directing ADA riders to the Taxi Access Program and participating in TNC pilots with Uber and Lyft.

Chairman Kwasneski commended staff for these solutions. He encouraged Pace to communicate with Director Arfa’s office about advertising Pace job opportunities to the ADA community.

Adjournment

Chairman Kwasneski asked for a motion to adjourn into closed session for the purposes of discussing closed session minutes (2-C-21) and employment matters (2-C-1). Director Schielke moved, and Director McLeod seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call: Directors Arfa, Canning, Carr, Claar, Guerin, Marcucci, McLeod, Schielke, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski.

All Directors voted Aye.

The meeting adjourned at 10:26 a.m.

Reconvene

Chairman Kwasneski reconvened the Open Session of the Pace Board of Directors meeting at 10:32 a.m.

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

Directors virtually or telephonically present: Arfa, Claar, and Soto.

Directors absent: Hastings and Smith

SBD #21-52 – Resolution approving the minutes of the Closed Session meeting of June 16, 2021.

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

SBD #21-53 – Resolution approving compensation of Pace's Executive Director. This action increases compensation by 3% effective January 1, 2021.

Director McLeod moved, and Director Marcucci seconded a motion to approve the Resolution. The motion passed with the following roll call vote: Directors Arfa, Canning, Carr, Claar, Guerin, Marcucci, McLeod, Schielke, 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 meeting.

Director McLeod moved, and Director Carr seconded a motion to adjourn the Pace Board of Directors meeting. The motion passed with a unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 10:34 a.m.

The next regular meeting of the Pace Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, September 15, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. at Pace Corporate Headquarters, 550 West Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois.



Elissa Ledvort
Secretary, Board of Directors