

**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 19, 2022**

The Board of Directors of Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority, met in public session on Wednesday, January 19, 2022 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, Claar, Guerin, Marcucci, McLeod, Schielke, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski.

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

Directors absent: None.

SBD #22-01 – Resolution approving the open session meeting minutes of December 15, 2021.

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

Public Comment

None.

Chairman’s Report

No report.

Directors’ Reports

No reports.

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

Melinda J. Metzger, *Interim Executive Director*

Interim Executive Director's Report

Melinda Metzger thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as Interim Executive Director. She described how Pace commemorated Martin Luther King Jr. Day by asking employees with children to create pictures on car cards of what service means to them. Car cards were displayed for the audience's viewing and are now on the website and Pace buses throughout the region.

Melinda voiced her appreciation to all Pace staff for keeping service moving forward safely during the pandemic, saying we are living in unusual times. She thanked administrative staff for being resilient to changes caused by the pandemic, frontline operating staff for providing safe and reliable service to those who depend on Pace, frontline maintenance staff for being the unsung heroes who maintain and disinfect vehicles, and supervisors and management for driving buses (in addition to their regular duties) to help alleviate the bus operator shortage.

Melinda reported on her participation in several key meetings. Melinda attended a legislative roundtable discussion, led by Congressman Bill Foster and Kane County Chairwoman Pierog, where she discussed Pace's projects and how the new infrastructure bill will help Pace build a transit system for the future. Melinda met with Director Soto and Lake Cook TMA to discuss preliminary plans on a new Vanpool option that will make vehicles available at the Metra station for people to commute from the train to businesses along the Lake Cook Road corridor. To start off the new year, Melinda held a virtual meeting on January 3rd with all administrative staff during which the agency's realignment and the establishment of an Interim Chief Administrative Officer position held by Nancy Zimmer were among the many things discussed.

Melinda reported that progress continues on Pace's transition to a zero-emission fleet by 2040. Staff is working with bus manufacturers to fast-track the North Division electric bus order and obtain a place in production lines, as the demand for vehicles currently outweighs the supply. Pace is awaiting results of an application for federal discretionary grant funding to purchase an additional ten electric buses. Melinda and the Chairman also visited the Lyon Electric school bus plant in Channahon to view the facility and test-drive a vehicle. Chairman Kwasneski added that he has a newfound respect for operators after describing his test-drive. Melinda said staff is moving forward with a solicitation for a facilities study, which will investigate how electric bus technology will impact the planning, design, operations, and maintenance of Pace facilities. Staff is also developing a zero-emission bus rollout assessment, which will align the fleet with Pace's run structure and determine how to maximize charging capabilities.

Melinda reported that the driver shortage experienced nationwide remains one of the biggest challenges. Pace's major focus in 2022 will be the recruitment of bus operators and maintenance employees. She described advertising efforts, including a collaboration with community colleges to develop professional bus operator and mechanic programs to feed candidates into Pace.

Melinda highlighted the request for additional Taxi Access Program (TAP) funding on today's agenda. The dollar amount in the original 10-year contract was based on ridership projections made in 2013. The impacts of the pandemic, shortage in drivers, and elimination of TAP fares have encouraged riders to shift to taxis, providing much needed relief to paratransit service but increasing the demand for TAP dramatically. Between 2019 and 2021, average monthly TAP trips have increased from 23,000 to 64,000 trips.

Melinda was excited that Pace's first TNC project was also on today's agenda. She said as we continue to recover from the pandemic, it is important that we focus on the implementation of innovative services to meet the redefined needs of those we serve. Using \$6 million for TNC in the budget, Pace looks forward to implementing similar projects throughout the region.

Melinda reported Suburban Service has a \$49 million positive budget variance through November 2021. Sales tax funding continues to outperform projections and is off-setting under-performing operating revenue. Fuel expenses are unfavorable to budget by roughly \$1.9 million because diesel prices are \$2.10/gallon instead of the budgeted \$1.66/gallon. Melinda presented December 2021 ridership stats, noting overall system growth from one year ago and a 119% increase in the Advantage Vanpool ridership, meaning social service agencies are reopening.

Lastly, Melinda presented a video honoring 2021 Million Miler inductees consisting of 50 One-Million Milers, 2 Two-Million Milers, and 1 Three-Million Miler. Pace has partnered with the National Safety Council to provide recognition to bus operators for driving for a number of years without a preventable accident, achieved by 18% of Pace's drivers. Melinda said she was really proud of the inductees and spotlighted the achievements of William Wolfe, Three-Million Miler.

Director Marcucci praised the Million Milers and the service they provide to Pace customers. Chairman Kwasneski echoed Director Marcucci's comments and thanked Melinda for her diligent work during her first few weeks as Interim Executive Director.

Items removed from the Consent Agenda

None.

Approval of Consent Agenda

SBD #22-02 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to Anagnos Door Company for inspections, maintenance, and emergency repairs of overhead doors, in an amount not to exceed \$810,330.00.

SBD #22-03 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to Sedia, Inc. for the upholstering and installation of vinyl seat inserts in multiple Pace-owned and operated transit vehicles, in an amount not to exceed \$1,138,670.00.

SBD #22-04 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a sole source contract to Oracle America, a subsidiary of Oracle Corporation, for Oracle Market Driven Support, in an amount not to exceed \$150,000.00.

SBD #22-05 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to Snow Systems, Shareef & Sons Landscaping, Kaplan Paving LLC, and HL Landscape, for as-needed snow, ice removal, and salting services at 18 Pace facilities in an amount not to exceed \$1,700,985.00.

Director Marcucci moved, and Director Guerin 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.

Action Items

SBD #22-06 – Ordinance approving an IGA with Cook County for \$500,000 of Invest in Cook grant funding to support the environmental review and advanced conceptual design phase of the Pulse 95th Street Line project.

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, Claar, Guerin, Hastings, Marcucci, McLeod, Schielke, Smith, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski. All Directors voted Aye.

SBD #22-07 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to EIDorado National (California), Inc. for compressed natural gas (CNG) fixed route buses, in an amount not to exceed \$75,896,625.00.

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, Hastings, Marcucci, McLeod, Schielke, Smith, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski. All Directors voted Aye.

SBD #22-08 – Ordinance authorizing a change order for additional funds for the reimbursement of Taxi Access (TAP) and Mobility Direct (MD) program trips. This action increases the contract total from \$43,996,494.60 to \$78,996,494.60, an increase of \$35,000,000.00.

Director Schielke moved, and Director Marcucci seconded a motion to approve the Ordinance. 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 #22-09 – Ordinance approving a one-year Transportation Network Companies (TNC) Pilot Project with Uber Technologies, Inc for the reimbursement of trips in DuPage County, in an amount not to exceed \$1,100,000.

Director Marcucci 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, McLeod, Schielke, Smith, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski. All Directors voted Aye.

Issues/Discussion/Reports

Ryan Ruehle presented on the IGA with Cook County for the Pulse 95th Street implementation. Director Canning noted the price difference between Pulse buses and fixed route buses outlined in the next agenda item, and Melinda and Director Marcucci confirmed Pulse buses are more expensive due to the Pulse branding, including the exterior wrap and internal information screens. Chairman Kwasneski thanked President Preckwinkle and the Cook County Board for working with Pace to provide additional services to residents. Director Canning mentioned last week's Planning Committee meeting where Ryan presented metrics to assess Pace's progress on meeting Driving Innovation goals.

Melinda presented on a contract with Eldorado to purchase CNG Pulse and non-Pulse buses. Chairman Kwasneski said the CNG buses will replace aging diesel ones currently on the road, and reminded all that Pace is transitioning to zero emissions over time. He explained challenges in getting electric vehicles on the road quickly, including delivery delays reported by multiple manufacturers and a requirement that buses purchased with federal money must be in service for 12 years. He said Pace staff is working through challenges and is committed to a greener future.

Sally Williams presented on the need for increased TAP funding and benefits of the program for both riders and staff, including that the average operating cost for TAP is \$25/trip while paratransit is \$73/trip. Chairman Kwasneski praised TAP for offering ADA riders more flexibility in their lives, as TAP rides do not need to be scheduled a day in advance like paratransit. Director Canning praised the TAP program and asked Sally how the nature of her work has changed since the pandemic. Sally acknowledged it's been challenging, and the focus right now is to increase capacity to accommodate the demand. TAP is more convenient for riders, guarantees single trips, and plays a huge part in increasing Pace's capacity to serve more riders.

Melinda said the driver shortage has affected the availability of taxi drivers to operate TAP, which has been another challenge. Pace has had to balance their recommendations to riders based on changing vehicle capacities during the pandemic. Chairman Kwasneski advocated for TAP expansion. Director Arfa said she was glad to see an increased investment in TAP and that it's important to maintain all paratransit options available. She hopes the work continues and thanked staff for their work behind the scenes to make the service as efficient as possible.

Sally Williams presented on a one-year TNC pilot project in DuPage County with Uber. The pilot will operate as a user-side subsidy program, meaning the customer will access service directly through Uber and Pace will subsidize the cost of the trip, much in the same way TAP operates for the City of Chicago. The pilot applies to existing Ride DuPage and ADA paratransit programs and will expand their service areas. Sally reviewed how Ride DuPage and ADA paratransit will determine Uber eligibility, fares, subsidy amounts, and trip booking, as well as Uber's partnerships with other agencies. Pace will mail a letter informing eligible DuPage riders they can use the new Uber option beginning January 31, 2022.

In response to questions by Directors Claar and Arfa, Melinda clarified the existing ADA service area in DuPage County. Pace is federally required to provide ADA service within three quarters of a mile of a fixed route. The rest of the area has no coverage. Under the new TNC pilot, riders get service in all of DuPage County with an Uber ride subsidized by Ride DuPage or paratransit.

Director Marcucci offered comments on the pilot. Uber cannot replace public transit because it's not cost-effective for commuting to work, but Uber is useful when buses have stopped running. The pilot will also help improve issues related to hiring and retaining employees. Some may not be familiar with the app technology but hopefully the word will get out and people will feel more comfortable with it eventually. In response to Director Marcucci's question about the use of Uber by those in mobile assistive devices, Sally clarified that riders with mobility devices that need a certain vehicle can use paratransit service. In response to Director Canning's question as to whether the Uber vehicles in the pilot program will be dedicated vehicles, Melinda said the

TNC pilot will not have dedicated vehicles. A rider could check the Uber app or call Uber's call center subcontractor, GoGo Grandparent, to know what vehicle to look for.

Chairman Kwasneski said the TNC pilot is by no means a replacement for existing Pace service, it's an enhancement and a good opportunity. We will move forward and see how things go.

Chairman Kwasneski encouraged Directors to review the November 2021 budget reports and financial statements contained in their packets, and to reach out to staff with questions.

Adjournment

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

Director Claar moved, and Director McLeod seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed with a unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 10:36 a.m.

The next regular meeting of the Pace Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, February 16, 2022 at 9:30 a.m. at Pace Corporate Headquarters, 550 West Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois.



Elissa Ledvort
Secretary, Board of Directors