

**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 16, 2022**

The Board of Directors of Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority, met in public session on Wednesday, February 16, 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, Guerin, Marcucci, McLeod, Schielke, Smith, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski.

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

Directors absent: Claar.

**SBD #22-10 – Resolution** approving the open session meeting minutes of January 19, 2022.

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

### **Public Comment**

Elissa Ledvort read a comment submitted by Marjorie Logman, a resident of Aurora, thanking the Board for efforts to improve senior and ADA transportation in DuPage and Kane counties.

### **Chairman's Report**

Chairman Kwasneski reported on the virtual executive meeting of the APTA board where the infrastructure bill and FTA rules regarding zero emissions bus grants were extensively discussed. Yesterday, Chairman and Melinda Metzger attended APTA's zero emissions bus webinar where different agencies shared their successes, trials, and tribulations in implementing electric buses.

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*

Chairman Kwasneski praised the opportunity to exchange information and said Pace should prepare to modify our zero-emission bus plan perhaps as much as annually based on other agencies' experiences with rapidly changing technology. Chairman Kwasneski and Melinda met with lobbyists to review bills of interest to Pace and will continue to monitor state news.

### **Directors' Reports**

Director McLeod thanked Melinda Metzger for meeting with the Partners For Our Communities NFP to improve bus service for residents of Hanover Park and Palatine.

Director Soto reported that Lake County employers who used to utilize the Pace shuttle bus service are bringing some employees back to the office. Pace is negotiating with Lake County TMA on how Pace and Metra might play a role in that.

### **Interim Executive Director's Report**

In response to Chairman Kwasneski's comments on electric vehicles, Melinda Metzger reported that Pace hired a consultant to analyze all Pace routes to determine if electric buses need to be recharged in the middle of a route, and if an electric bus is the proper option on longer routes.

Melinda presented Pace's 2021 annual report, which will be a helpful tool to communicate last year's progress and future initiatives to constituents and legislators. Melinda thanked Pace operating personnel for taking on additional duties in light of a labor shortage affecting Pace's snowplowing contractors. Pace also provided warming buses to the Waukegan, Cicero, and Bartlett fire departments this month for first responders fighting structural fires.

On January 27<sup>th</sup>, Melinda participated in a bipartisan briefing for state senators hosted by Senate Transportation Chairman Villivalam. Agency executives discussed Covid, DBE contracting goals, workforce demographics, and long-term financial outlooks. There, Pace reported we exceeded our 2021 DBE goal and have an over 70% minority workforce. To celebrate Black History Month and honor the historical contributions of African Americans, Melinda reported that tomorrow, Pace will host a virtual talk with social media historian Shermann Dilla Thomas, a front-line ComEd worker known for his TikTok videos on history.

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, Melinda attended CMAP's Mobility Recovery Steering Committee Meeting with Director Schielke and Chief Planning Officer Erik Llewellyn to discuss the regional transportation network in a post-Covid world. The modeling results indicate that transit is likely to carry fewer work trips to and from the Chicago Business District during peak hours as telecommuting becomes the norm. However, there is potential for midday and localized bus service. Pace is offering new, innovative service options, including the DuPage Access Program, which has already operated 66 trips since its January 31<sup>st</sup> launch. Pace is also working on pilot projects at O'Hare and in Harvey, the expansion of On Demand service in Naperville, and a TNC project for ADA riders in North and South Cook County.

Pace and the RTA recently completed the I-294 Tri-State Market & Facilities Study evaluating express bus service between Harvey and Schaumburg. Pace is now seeking public input on the

study. New flex lanes being constructed along I-294 allow Pace to expand the successful Bus on Shoulder program, connecting to Harvey's future multimodal transportation center.

To address operator shortages, Melinda announced that Pace will partner with Olive-Harvey College on a customized two-week course to prepare for obtaining a CDL permit. Olive-Harvey feels they can get students enrolled if Pace will remove financial barriers by funding the cost of the course. Once students receive their permits, qualified candidates will be fully trained by Pace. The first class is on March 14<sup>th</sup>. Pace will also host a virtual job fair on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, which municipal partners are helping to promote. Melinda thanked Director McLeod for his assistance.

Melinda concluded by reporting on Pace's unaudited December 2021 budget results, which will be finalized in the next two months. Suburban service remains strong with a \$56 million positive budget variance; sales tax funding continues to offset the underbudget operating revenue from fares. A discussion ensued between Melinda and Director Canning comparing the increase in January ridership to the underbudget December operating revenue. Overall, systemwide ridership in January 2022 has increased 8.6% compared to January 2021. ADA service has a \$7.3 million positive budget variance and ADA ridership is at 75% of pre-pandemic actuals, exceeding the year-to-date budget.

#### **Items removed from the Consent Agenda**

None.

#### **Approval of Consent Agenda**

**SBD #22-11 – Ordinance** authorizing a change order to Contract No. 224837 with ADP, LLC for payroll processing services. This action extends the contract for nine months and increases the contract total from \$1,050,265.82 to \$1,265,620.09, an increase of \$215,354.27.

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

#### **Action Items**

**SBD #22-12 – Ordinance** approving an IGA for Pace to acquire two parcels of real property necessary for its Pulse Dempster Line from the Trustees of Schools on behalf of the Maine Township High School District.

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

#### **Issues/Discussion/Reports**

Director Schielke said he was proud to be on the Board because staff puts forth creative and innovative services that serve as a model for agencies around the country. CMAP's Council of

Mayors is getting inquiries, particularly at their conference for Atlanta metro leaders, about how Pace implemented Call-n-Ride and connected senior citizens to vaccine hubs.

Director Hastings commended the Olive-Harvey CDL program and inquired about its expansion. Melinda said Pace is very open to working with other community colleges if the program is successful. Director Hastings asked about Pace's involvement in instruction. Melinda clarified the course only trains people to get the CDL permit. Federal laws require Pace's certified instructors then lead the 8-week operator training.

Director Marcucci expressed concerns about funding the cost of the CDL permit course if new employees do not stay with Pace. Melinda agreed, but clarified once operators pass their Pace training, Pace notifies the Secretary of State, and the operator is certified for a CDL license only provided they work at Pace for six months. Pace will pay \$730/person to subsidize the cost of the Olive-Harvey CDL course. Chairman Kwasneski said there is a cost to the class, but also to our marketing efforts or using a hiring firm. He commended the CDL partnership with community colleges for offsetting Pace's overall cost by providing a network of potential applicants.

Frank Dufkis, Senior Staff Attorney, presented on the IGA with the Maine Township High School, which is donating two parcels of land for the Pulse Dempster Line to benefit students.

Doug Sullivan, Manager of External Relations, presented on Pace's marketing program. Melinda and Doug thanked Director Marcucci, Chairman Kwasneski, Linda Swedlund, and Gatesman Ad Agency for their contributions to the presentation. Doug began by reviewing campaigns used in 2021 to welcome back riders in appropriate and effective ways as the pandemic severity changed throughout the year. During lockdowns, Pace reminded essential workers that buses were clean and safe. The "We're Ready" and "Win While Riding Pace" campaigns focused on getting people back into the community during periods when Covid improved. Pace will continue to deploy these campaigns as appropriate in 2022.

Guided by the goals of *Driving Innovation*, Pace's 2022 marketing plan aims to increase ridership, promote new technologies like electric vehicles, support core services, and promote new ones such as the launch of Pulse Dempster, TNC partnerships, and the opening of new facilities, thus laying the foundation for a systemwide restructuring set for 2023. Pace will ensure that stakeholders and elected officials know Pace spends funds in ways that benefits constituents. Finally, Pace will continue marketing campaigns that were successful in 2021, such as the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bus on Shoulder song "Rocking the Shoulder" that generated 4000 clicks/likes/shares on social media.

Pace spent marketing resources on educating paratransit riders in 2021, and riders are now clearly seeing the value of self-service options, which reduce the burden on Pace's call center. Ventra use for ADA trips is up 282%, SMS-based information requests are up 88%, and email requests are up 272%. In 2022, Pace will continue encouraging the use of TripCheck to get ride info, promoting the Chicago TAP and DuPage Access programs, encouraging fixed route ridership, and partnering with Bridget Brown on presentations for students with disabilities.

Pace will build upon the 2020-21 “Heroes Moving Heroes” social campaign by reminding riders that their operators keep them safe and are part of the fabric of our community. The goal is to turn frustrations with service issues and manpower shortages into appreciation for the efforts Pace’s frontline workers make every day. Pace will market the Million Miler program so riders know how safe and skilled their operators are. The campaign aligns with Pace’s recruitment efforts by promoting operator careers. Pace will also support critical recruitment efforts with paid advertising, which is especially needed for service expansions in the future. In 2021, Pace saw tangible results: 217 applications from Facebook and Instagram, and 571 applications from Indeed. Doug concluded his report reviewing the 2022 marketing budget.

A discussion ensued about recruitment. Director Soto asked what we are doing at the community college level to encourage mechanic applicants, because high schools are reintroducing those programs. Melinda said Pace has lowered the minimum age for applicants seeking to work as a Pace mechanic from 21, which is the minimum age to obtain a CDL, to 18, to encourage high school or college student applicants. While this allows Pace to hire on mechanics at 18, they cannot do road calls or any duties that require driving buses on roads until they are 21. The federal government currently mandates the minimum CDL age and is considering lowering it because of the driver shortage. Melinda said we want younger people involved in the business, and we want them to love buses and stay with us. Director Wells suggested the Truck and Diesel Navistar program for District 205 high school students as a reference for Pace. Director Marcucci asked if all Pace drivers require a CDL, and Melinda said only if the vehicle carries over 15 passengers.

### **Adjournment**

Chairman Kwasneski asked for a motion to adjourn into closed session for the purposes of discussing Closed Session Minutes (2-C-21) and Collective Bargaining (2-C-2). Director Schielke moved, and Director Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed with the following roll call vote: Arfa, Canning, Carr, Guerin, Hastings, Marcucci, McLeod, Schielke, Smith, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski. All Directors voted Aye.

The meeting adjourned at 10:24 a.m.

### **Reconvene**

Chairman Kwasneski reconvened the open session of the Pace Board of Directors meeting at 10:34 a.m.

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

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

Directors absent: Claar.

**SBD #22-13 – Resolution** approving the closed session meeting minutes of December 15, 2021.

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

**SBD #22-14 – Ordinance** authorizing the Interim Executive Director to execute the Collective Bargaining Agreement as discussed in closed session.

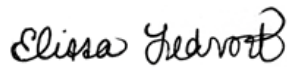
Director Schielke moved, and Director Smith seconded a motion to approve the Ordinance. The motion passed with the following roll call vote: Directors Canning, Carr, Guerin, Hastings, Marcucci, McLeod, Schielke, Smith, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski. All Directors voted Aye.

### **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 Wells 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, March 16, 2022 at 9:30 a.m. at Pace Corporate Headquarters, 550 West Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois.



---

Elissa Ledvort  
Secretary, Board of Directors