

**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
May 18, 2022**

The Board of Directors of Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority, met in public session on Wednesday, May 18, 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, Schielke, Soto, and Chairman Kwasneski.

Directors virtually or telephonically present: Hastings, McLeod, and Wells.

Directors absent: Arfa and Smith.

SBD #22-35 – Resolution approving the open session meeting minutes of April 20, 2022.

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

Public Comment

None.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Kwasneski reported on Pace's busy week of events. On May 3, Pace updated the Cook County Transportation Committee, as well as county commissioners, on the Fair Transit Program Pace participated in with Metra. The next day, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, Governor J.B. Pritzker, and Congressman Bill Foster attended a ribbon-cutting for Pace's new multimodal transit facility at the Joliet Gateway Center. Pace received good press. Secretary

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, *Executive Director*

Buttigieg was amazed by Pace services like VanGo and Bus on Shoulder. The Chairman also attended the launch of Ride Lake County on May 6 and invited all to attend the launch celebration of the Olive-Harvey CDL training program on May 24. Chairman Kwasneski appreciated staff's diligence putting together so many events in a short time.

Directors' Reports

Director Canning reported that the Cook County Fair Transit hearing was well-received and showed Pace was making a meaningful impact. He said the Joliet event was great press for Pace and commended staff and the Chairman. Director Canning thinks Pace does not get as much media attention as Metra, CTA, and RTA, but was pleased to hear Melinda interviewed on WBBM about these events. Lastly, Director Canning commended Charlotte's report that the STV task orders approved at the last Pace board meeting were since executed. He said this shows Pace is on target to complete Rebuild Illinois projects and the Board will continue to work on that with staff.

Director Claar praised staff for the Joliet facility and ribbon cutting event. He looks forward to debuting the Bolingbrook facility in the future. He complimented staff for Pace's lack of crime, stoppages, and other problems that generate negative stories that often dominate the media.

Director Guerin thanked Melinda for attending the West Central Conference. He reported that she is a good representative of Pace and did a wonderful job on her presentation and answering questions.

Director McLeod reported that the Fair Transit presentation to the Cook Co. DOT went well.

Director Schielke reported on Congressman Foster's reelection campaign and working with staff from the Environment Committee of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus to prepare local fire departments for the multiple types of fires that could occur on electric vehicles. Director Schielke is using his expertise in fire safety to help coordinate training efforts across the state.

Director Soto reported on Ride Lake County, the new countywide paratransit program, and described the efforts that led to its launch. Lake County was peppered with small circles of service that never connected. At one point 55 different organizations provided paratransit, all with their own age requirements, operating hours, and costs. Kathleen O'Connor, Township Supervisor of Libertyville, coordinated a study to better organize information on available services and to gather data to support the need for a larger program. Now, an astounding number of people are already signed up for Ride Lake County, and the goal now is to spread the word.

Executive Director's Report

Melinda reported that the ribbon-cutting at Joliet was the first time in the agency's history that a U.S. Secretary of Transportation, the Governor, and a Congressman were at one of Pace's facilities together. She said it was a great opportunity to showcase a state-of-the-art facility that is easy for customers to use and is simply money well spent. Before the event started, the

Chairman and Melinda participated in a roundtable discussion at Joliet Junior College with Secretary Buttigieg and Congressman Foster about workforce development and electrification. Melinda reported on the Ride Lake County Launch event where Pace delivered a new vehicle and presented Lake County with a check to support and enhance service. Melinda also attended the RTA April Board meeting to report on Pace's fleet and facility transition plan. The plan will be finalized this summer, and from a capital and operating standpoint, is critical in establishing the strategy for how Pace will effectively achieve its zero emission fleet by 2040 goal. Melinda emphasized to RTA that the plan is a living document in a state of flux because zero emissions technology is constantly changing with advancements in electric buses and hydrogen fuel cells.

Melinda reported that Pace officially entered the era of electrification on May 9th with the delivery of the first electric bus by Gillip Corp. This allows staff to gain operational experience with electric technology. Gillig provided three days of training on operation, maintenance, and charging. The Pace electric vehicle wrap chosen by the Marketing Committee comprised of Director Marcucci, Director Soto, and the Chairman was displayed. Melinda clarified that Pace does provide training materials for fire departments every time a new type of vehicle is acquired and will continue to do that for electric additions to the fleet. She reported that Pace installed our first electric charging station in the northwest corner of the HQ parking lot.

Melinda thanked the board members who will participate in the public hearings taking place in May regarding the continuation of the 7-day and 30-day CTA/Pace passes at reduced rates and the discontinuation of the Pace PlusBus Pass, which will be replaced by the Metra Link-Up pass.

Melinda announced an event on May 24th celebrating the successful partnership Pace established with Olive-Harvey College and recognizing the individuals who benefited from the CDL course. This program will address labor shortages and foster the next generation of future operators as Pace continues to revitalize our system.

Melinda reported that Pace continues to use available resources to provide new, flexible service alternatives post-Covid. Due to the labor shortage in DuPage, Pace implemented the DuPage Uber Access Program, a user subsidy service. Pace is pleased the program has continued to grow with around 300 trips provided in February, 1500 trips in March, and 3000 trips in April. Melinda and Director Marcucci met with DuPage County Board Member Chavez to discuss additional transportation options.

Melinda reported that staff is putting a lot of thought and effort into how Pace can effectively provide service with existing personnel. As part of the Naperville-Aurora On Demand Expansion Pilot being presented today, Pace's River Division will assume responsibility for the Naperville-Aurora On Demand and expanded service area, so the contractor that had operated the service can concentrate exclusively on the ADA component of service. Melinda said she was excited about Pace's new VanGo program which will be the first service of its kind in the country.

Chairman Kwasneski added that Secretary Buttigieg was in awe of how the VanGo program addresses first and last mile connections and he wants to hear the results of the pilot. Chairman Kwasneski encouraged Pace to provide the Secretary with data to potentially expand the program

with federal support and to provide a positive spotlight on Pace services. Chairman Kwasneski pointed out that Covid resulted in less people utilizing the Vanpool program, giving Pace the opportunity to re-utilize empty vans for VanGo. He applauded staff for their creativity.

Melinda congratulated Pace's budget staff under the direction of Lorri Newson, CFO, and Melanie Castle, Department Manager, for being awarded the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association for the current fiscal year period. Melinda thanked Pace staff Lindsey Hahn, Celine Kochman, Cristina Pucillo, Kris Skogsbakken, Katie Kopecky, and Jola Irzyk.

Director Marcucci asked if Pace's staffing numbers have increased. Melinda said across the board for fixed route and paratransit, Pace employs 70% of the drivers it needs. Older drivers are retiring and Covid has shifted people's desire to work jobs that require interaction with the public. Director Marcucci said he receives pushback in the community that Pace is about 20 drivers short in DuPage County, but he acknowledged how difficult it is to recruit and retain employees. He said overall, DuPage appreciates Pace's efforts and he applauded Pace's creative workarounds that are addressing an ongoing problem.

Director Claar asked if Pace can put a time limit on vehicles plugged into charging units that will be installed at Pace parking lots. Melinda said the charging units will be part of a public network that people can use. If vehicles are parked there all day, Pace will find a way to monitor that. A discussion ensued about ways to place the charging unit to maximize parking spaces around it.

Melinda reported on the year-to-date budget performance through March. Suburban service is \$13 million favorable to budget. This includes a budget adjustment to account for sales tax growth and an increase in fuel expenses. ADA service is \$7.8 million favorable to budget. In April, systemwide ridership was up 17.9% over April 2021.

Items removed from the Consent Agenda

None.

Approval of Consent Agenda

SBD #22-36 – Ordinance amending the 2022 Operating and Capital Program Budget (Amendment #2).

Director Schielke moved, and Director Soto 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, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski. All directors voted aye.

Action Items

SBD #22-37 – Ordinance authorizing Pace's Executive Director to execute an Intergovernmental Agreement with Calumet City for the design and construction of a Pace ADA transfer facility on

city owned property in an amount not to exceed \$2,000,000.

Mark Youngquist presented. Director Schielke said it was important that the transfer facility accept cash payments because a senior citizens center is located nearby. Melinda clarified that cash is accepted on paratransit and Pace can work with the senior center on tickets.

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, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski. All directors voted aye.

SBD #22-38 – Ordinance authorizing Pace’s Executive Director to execute a First Amendment to the Fourth Supplement of an agreement with Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) and Cubic Transportation Systems (Cubic) to allow Pace to continue to be a partner in the Ventra regional fare system through January 16, 2029 for an amount not to exceed \$10,434,885.

James Garner presented. Chairman Kwasneski confirmed that all service boards use the Ventra app, but a Ventra card is only accepted by Pace and CTA. He requested that updated Ventra information be sent to elected officials so app and card usage is clarified.

Director Soto moved, and Director Canning 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, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski. All directors voted aye.

SBD #22-39 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to Genfare, a division of SPX Corporation, for replacement of Pace’s farebox system, in an amount not to exceed \$16,547,099.73.

Kevin Salmi discussed how the replacement of Pace’s 30 year-old farebox system for cash payments will improve security and provide more reliable data for planning and accounting.

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

Issues/Discussion/Reports

Erik Llewellyn reported that on June 6, Pace will launch the Naperville-Aurora On Demand Expansion Pilot that will double the size of the existing On Demand zone. Pace will use multiple vehicles to operate service in the expanded zone, which is a first for this type of service. The expansion pilot will allow Pace to serve a larger portion of the Naperville area. Erik discussed how the pilot will allow passengers to make multiple first/last mile connections to Metra, replacing the Metra feeder routes that were cut during Covid.

Chairman Kwasneski applauded the pilot for replacing Metra shuttles and filling in service gaps. Director Schielke asked for clarification about service boundaries. He noted that Aurora's condo expansion on former Fox Valley Mall property and the addition of a new accelerator and 2,000 Fermilab employees may increase the base of potential ridership nearby. He said because Aurora lies in four counties, a conversation should be had about county lines and On Demand boundaries to make sure service is provided to areas with significant activity.

Next, Randy Comstock presented on the VanGo vanpool program option launching in June. Prior to the presentation, Chairman Kwasneski reminded the Board that this pilot marks the beginning of the program, and that he anticipates successes and learning opportunities prior to future launches elsewhere in the region. Randy shared the details of the program, which would provide flexible first/last mile connections for commuters who work at businesses along the Lake Cook Corridor. Participants who meet safety requirements can get to work and back using Pace-owned vans parked at Metra stations accessed through a code on their smartphones.

Directors discussed this program in detail. Chairman Kwasneski asked about limits to the service area and duration of use; Pace will be notified if a van leaves the designated area, and the vans can be used all day between 6:00am and 9:00pm. The Chairman discussed the potential for abuse of the program; Melinda discussed the ways Pace will monitor use of the vans.

Director Canning and Chairman Kwasneski discussed the physical, drug test, and online training program required for drivers, which are similar to what is required for the Vanpool program.

Director Soto discussed the history of Lake County commuter service, which was previously interrupted by Covid and will now be served by the new VanGo service. Too few workers have returned to area offices to justify the return of fixed route service; VanGo will ensure the workers who have returned have options. Director Soto believes the program's biggest selling point is flexibility for riders who now have irregular or hybrid office schedules.

Director Wells asked how much notice is required to reserve a van. Randy clarified that same-day reservations would be possible depending on availability; it takes about a minute to make a reservation. Director Soto stressed how important this flexibility would be to attracting riders.

Director Marcucci inquired about the cost of the program to Pace, especially compared to Pace's traditional Vanpool. He also asked for further detail on how Pace will monitor for abuse, such as taking a vehicle out of the service area. Melinda discussed how the \$5 fee is meant as an introductory rate; regular users will migrate to traditional Vanpools or shuttles for groups. Director Soto clarified the program is offered by Lake County employers. Chairman Kwasneski reminded the Board that, as a pilot program, he expects Pace will need to make adjustments.

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 Carr seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed with a unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 11:34 a.m.

The next regular meeting of the Pace Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, June 15, 2022 at 9:30 a.m. at Pace Corporate Headquarters, 550 West Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois.



Elissa Ledvort
Secretary, Board of Directors