



**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 15, 2025**

The Board of Directors of Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority (“Pace”), met in open session on Wednesday, January 15, 2025 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, Guerin, Marcucci, McLeod, Noak, Schielke, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski.

Director Noak moved, and Director Guerin seconded a motion to allow Director Hastings and Director Smith to attend via Zoom. The motion passed with a unanimous vote. Director Hastings and Director Smith joined the meeting via phone immediately following the vote.

Directors absent: None.

SBD #25-01 – Resolution approving the open session meeting minutes of December 11, 2024.

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

Public Comment

None.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Kwasneski reported on attending inauguration receptions in Springfield for newly elected state representatives and senators, where he had brief conversations about public transit and consolidation of the service boards. He reported that Pace has a lot of good relationships with legislators. Doug Sullivan, Pace Manager of External Relations, has continued to meet with 3-4 legislators every week since the summer.

Chairman Kwasneski reported that Kirk Dillard, Chairman of the RTA Board of Directors, is presenting at the City Club of Chicago today to unveil the RTA's proposed restructuring plan. Several Pace board members will attend the presentation. Pace, Metra, and CTA provided proposed cost savings to help the RTA develop this plan; Chairman Kwasneski applauded Melinda for the detailed information that Pace put together, which will be provided to the Pace board. The plan provides an alternative to service board consolidation – showing what a stronger, enhanced RTA would look like, with more control over funding allocation and project coordination.

Chairman Kwasneski reported on a Resolution honoring IDOT Secretary Omer Osman that is on today's agenda. He applauded Secretary Osman for being supportive of public transit and responsive to municipalities, dedicating 35 years of engineering expertise to the public sector.

Chairman Kwasneski wished CTA President Dorval Carter well upon leaving the CTA to accept a new job. He praised President Carter for his involvement with APTA and relationships with federal transit officials that helped secure funding for the RTA region. He said that the CMAP PART study found that the RTA was one of the most efficient transit agencies in the country.

Chairman Kwasneski reported that the Metropolitan Mobility Authority Act (IL-SB0005) that was introduced by Senator Ram Villivalam on January 13, 2025 proposes the consolidation of the service boards and is very similar to the Metropolitan Mobility Authority Act (HB 5823/SB 3937) introduced in April 2024. This new bill will likely get modified and adjusted as legislators discuss it. Pace is working with our lobbyists and watching it closely.

Directors' Reports

Director Arfa reported that she looks forward to all the work that will happen in 2025.

Director Canning wished Pace's bus operators, maintenance crews, and riders the best of luck during the challenging weather coming up next week.

Director McLeod reported on attending the inaugurations in Springfield, speaking with a lot of legislators, and advocating for Pace. He also reported that the Northwest Municipal Conference will meet with CMAP to discuss the new Metropolitan Mobility Authority Act legislation.

Director Noak reported that he is looking forward to Chairman Dillard's RTA presentation.

Director Schielke reported that the Chicago office of the U.S. Weather Bureau gave an insightful presentation at a CMAP Council of Mayors meeting about significant changes in the region's weather. They reported that with the advancement of technology, they are able to detect more than ever before. Chicago is experiencing more tornadoes and funnel clouds. Heavy rainfall (i.e. several inches over a span of several hours) is expected to become more common. Director Schielke suggested inviting the U.S. Weather Bureau to present to the Pace board.

Director Smith reported on her outreach efforts to McHenry County mayors and the McHenry County Council of Governments about Pace's ReVision initiative. Director Smith thanked McHenry County, its Board Chair, and McHenry County College for providing detailed feedback and for taking the time to read the report. McHenry County is in a unique position in terms of weighing in on ReVision and what public transportation should look like in the county.

Executive Director's Report

Melinda Metzger reported that 2025 holds considerable promise as we build on the progress made in 2024, positioning Pace as a leader in the future of transit. However, the new year also brings challenges. The looming fiscal cliff is front of mind. Together we will secure the funding we need to deliver on our mission to provide safe, reliable, and accessible public transportation. Pace will continue to work with our legislators as we aggressively pursue funding to support our system and reimagine our service as we finalize our ReVision plan.

Melinda Metzger recognized Dorval Carter's departure from the CTA, saying she has known him for 40 years during his time working for the CTA and the FTA. She praised him for bringing a lot of federal money into the region. She thanked him for his steadfast commitment to advocating for transit.

Melinda highlighted a Resolution on today's agenda honoring 22 employees retiring from Pace with over 20 years of service. She thanked them for their combined 740 years of service, and for giving their years of talent and expertise to provide essential services to the region.

Melinda highlighted another Resolution on today's agenda honoring IDOT Secretary Omer Osman and his contributions to the State. She thanked him for his many collaborations with Pace.

Melinda reported on Pace's annual Million Miler awards, which recognized operators for driving one million miles (essentially 12.5 years) without a preventable accident, an amazing safety milestone in their careers. Pace has 158 active one-million milers, 19 active two-million milers, and 2 active three-million milers in the system. She praised the Million Milers for not only prioritizing safety, but also for mentoring new operators on how to take care of customers.

Melinda reported that 2024 systemwide ridership increased 20% over 2023. The Vanpool program continues to rebound with over 400 Vanpools currently on the street. The Pace team has

worked to improve the passenger experience, resulting in a 19% decrease in fixed route complaints and a 22% decrease in ADA paratransit complaints in 2024 over 2023. We need to continue to add back more service and get more drivers into the system to improve service further.

Melinda reported that the Rideshare Access Program (“RAP”) allowed Pace to expand capacity for the growing demand for ADA paratransit service and was quickly adopted by riders who valued the added convenience and the lower price. When the program launched in March, we carried 5,000 riders per month, which has grown to 100,000 trips per month. Over 640,000 total riders were served in 2024, which shows how successful and well received this program has been. For 2024, the similar TAP subsidy program in Chicago served over 1 million riders.

Melinda reported on several customer satisfaction surveys taking place this year for On Demand, fixed route, Vanpool, and ADA paratransit. These surveys will help Pace provide better service.

Melinda reported on pilot service enhancements that Pace will implement this March. Services will be added on a pilot basis, which gives Pace the opportunity to review service performance before making a permanent service investment. Pace has been adding back service in the highest demand markets and on routes in key regional corridors as we make progress on our network restructuring initiative ReVision (we are not waiting for the ReVision study to be complete to implement service improvements). Pace recognizes that the fiscal cliff is approaching fast, and if funding solutions are not identified, we will be looking at service cuts across the region. However, Pace can continue to move forward with bringing back service where there is demand. Pace provides an essential service that our riders throughout the six county region rely on.

Melinda reported that Pace is working with legislators to advocate for transit funding to allow Pace to continue to deliver essential services. Melinda reported that Pace just had a meeting with lobbyists about outreach to legislators and that Pace staff will be meeting with several legislators as well to gather their input and get them to move forward on funding transit.

Melinda reported that Pace is helping sponsor DuSable black history museum’s Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. event, where Pace will have a recruitment table to promote career opportunities.

Melinda reported that 1.7 million rides were provided in December 2024, which is 71.3% of December 2019 ridership. Even with the holidays midweek, which impacted two weeks of ridership, monthly estimates show the system above December 2023 levels. Bus on Shoulder service is up 23%. Because we are making strategic investments in our system, like adding 81 trips back on Bus on Shoulder, it is now a more convenient service for our riders and they are coming back to the service. Pulse Milwaukee and Pulse Dempster are up 22.3% and 18.1% over last year.

Items removed from the Consent Agenda

None.

Approval of Consent Agenda

SBD #25-02 – Resolution honoring Pace’s 2024 Retirees with over 20 years of service.

SBD #25-03 – Resolution honoring IDOT Secretary Omer Osman upon his retirement.

SBD #25-04 – Ordinance authorizing the filing and execution of 2025 grant applications and agreements with Pace’s funding agencies. This action authorizes the filing and execution of grant applications.

SBD #25-05 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to Parsons Transportation Group, Inc. for maintenance of Transit Signal Priority corridors in an amount not to exceed \$250,000.00.

SBD #25-06 – Ordinance authorizing Change Order No. 1 to Contract No. 234558 with Motorola Solutions, Inc. for fixed route radio system maintenance and Starcom 21 radio airtime. This change order increases the contract total from \$1,330,545.96 to \$3,698,106.52, an increase of \$2,367,560.56.

SBD #25-07 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to Camber Operating Company, Inc. for electric bus chargers, pantograph, and equipment commissioning services in an amount not to exceed \$298,400.00.

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

Action Items

SBD #25-08 – Ordinance authorizing Change Order No. 12 to Contract No. 223274 with Globetrotters Engineering Corporation for additional architectural and engineering services for the NWTC ADA transfer facility. This change order extends the contract for six months, and increases the contract total from \$798,727.19 to \$1,008,155.92, an increase of \$209,428.73.

Josh Berger, Department Manager of Capital Infrastructure, presented. Director Canning confirmed that the facility will be operating by May 2025. Josh Berger confirmed that Pace now has full building permit approvals; the change order responds to final permit review comments.

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

SBD #25-09 – Ordinance authorizing the Executive Director to execute the Fourth Amendment to Lease Agreement to extend the lease term for Units 401, 403, and 405 of the building located

at 401 Christina Drive, East Dundee, Illinois 60118, and to prepay the rent for lease term extension period of April 1, 2025 through March 31, 2027.

Josh Berger presented. Director Canning asked if Pace should extend the lease beyond 2029 for the benefit of both parties. Melinda and Josh explained that even if the new River Division garage is not complete, we will be far enough along to move vehicles back to the old garage.

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

Issues/Discussion/Reports

Erik Llewellyn, Chief Planning Officer, presented on March 2025 service changes.

Director Marcucci asked for clarification on why Pace is increasing service on Route 381 along 95th Street in preparation for future Pulse service and inquired if Pace did that for other future Pulse routes. Melinda explained that Route 381 needs enhancement regardless of whether Pulse service is coming or not. The ridership levels are already there but we do not have enough service to meet the demand. Erik Llewellyn explained that service adjustments were previously made to future Pulse corridors for Route 322 on Cermak Ave., Route 318 on North Ave., and Route 352 on Halsted Ave. in order to build up the corridor before Pulse goes into effect. Melinda reminded that express Pulse service also has complimentary local service.

Director Marcucci expressed his concerns with ReVision, the idea of withdrawing service, buses, and drivers from existing lines to enhance service in more populated areas close to Chicago, at the expense of cutting service in more rural/suburban areas. Melinda and Erik explained that the March service change is not part of ReVision, rather Route 381 stood out among the other routes as needing additional service when analyzing preliminary data from the ReVision “existing conditions” phase. Pace is able to support that additional service now, as Pace’s 2025 budget includes funding to expand service. There were no service cuts taken to balance out adding service. Pace understands there is a fiscal cliff and conditions may change. Pace can discontinue pilots if there is low ridership, or if Pace does not have the funding to continue service.

Melinda and Director Marcucci discussed the ReVision study. Melinda pointed out that no matter what direction Pace focuses on (ridership or coverage) as a result of ReVision, the money that each collar county puts into the system will stay in that county. Director Marcucci is concerned that Pace is proceeding too fast with service changes before we decide how much we are focusing on ridership versus coverage and before the board finalizes the ReVision plan.

Chairman Kwasneski pointed out that the March service changes are pilots. He said the service boards are often criticized for wait times, and Pace is adding trips to try to improve that. Waiting for a bus every 15 minutes versus waiting for a bus every hour is a huge difference. He agreed

with Director Marcucci that we should be concerned about permanent changes as a result of ReVision and how adjustments are made to ensure that we have coverage. On the other hand, we need to try to build ridership back up on areas where ridership is already there.

Director Soto left the meeting at 10:17 a.m. and returned to the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Kwasneski asked for a motion and second to adjourn the meeting. Director Soto moved, and Director Wells seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote; all Directors voted aye. The meeting adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

The next regular meeting of the Pace Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, February 19, 2025 at 9:30 a.m. at Pace Corporate Headquarters, 550 West Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois.

Elissa Ledvort
Board Secretary, Board of Directors