

**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
April 16, 2025**

The Board of Directors of Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority (“Pace”), met in open session on Wednesday, April 16, 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 9:31 a.m.

Roll Call

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

Director Schielke moved, and Director Guerin seconded, a motion to allow Directors Noak, Smith, Soto, and Wells to attend via Zoom and phone. The motion passed with a unanimous vote. Directors Noak, Smith, and Soto joined the meeting via Zoom and phone immediately following the vote. Director Wells did not join the meeting.

Directors absent: Wells.

SBD #25-25 – Resolution approving the open session meeting minutes of March 19, 2025.

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

Public Comment

None.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Kwasneski reported that he and Melinda continue to make progress working with the Illinois legislature on securing sustainable funding for public transit to resolve the fiscal cliff. There are still a lot of concerns being brought up, which the service boards are working together to address. The legislature is in session for another 45 days, and there will be a lot of activity in May. Pace hopes to advance the "United We Move" bill, also called the Labor Alliance bill, which is more about coordination than consolidation of the service boards.

Chairman Kwasneski thanked Director Marcucci for chairing last month's board meeting on his behalf. He congratulated Pace Board members on their re-election victories: Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke, River Grove Village President Dave Guerin, Phoenix Mayor Terry Wells, Orland Hills Mayor Kyle Hastings, Hoffman Estates Mayor Bill McLeod, and Romeoville Mayor John Noak.

Chairman Kwasneski reported on a groundbreaking event for the electrification of the North Division garage on April 4. Directors Soto and Canning attended. The Chairman reported that it was well-attended by local elected officials, including State Representative Joyce Mason and the House Vice-Chair of the Energy & Environment Committee. The Chairman appreciates how Pace events have so much support from local officials and coordination from local municipalities, which he credits to Pace Board members and their connections as current or former mayors.

Directors' Reports

Director Canning congratulated his colleagues on the Pace Board on their re-elections as mayors.

Director McLeod congratulated all Pace Board members who were re-elected in their roles as mayors. He said it reflects the confidence that residents have in their leadership and that they do an outstanding job on the Pace Board. He also reported on attending the RTA Summit and complimented Melinda on her presentation.

Director Noak congratulated all Pace Board members who were re-elected as mayors.

Director Schielke reported on attending the event celebrating the Community Project Funding grant for electric paratransit vehicles in McHenry County. He praised Director Smith's remarks. He said he was proud to be on the Pace Board and thanked Melinda and staff for embracing the technology of the future and making progress on electric vehicles. He thinks Congressman Foster, who attended the event and whose district was recently reapportioned to include McHenry County, was pleased with the good things Pace is doing in that district.

Director Smith appreciated the people who came to support the Community Project Funding grant for electric paratransit vehicles in McHenry County. She appreciated having the time to speak with Congressman Foster at the event. She complimented Pace's outstanding staff and is proud of the progress Pace is making toward zero emissions.

Director Soto thanked the Chairman and Melinda for hosting the garage electrification groundbreaking ceremony at North Division in Waukegan. She said the event was well-attended and thanked Pace's garage staff for a great event.

Executive Director's Report

Melinda Metzger congratulated the mayors on the Pace Board on their re-elections, saying their service to their communities help them truly understand what Pace passengers need.

For Earth Day, Melinda reported that Pace is mindful of the role that transit plays in creating a sustainable future and is continuing to advance Pace's commitment to Project Zero. Melinda reported that on April 4, Pace reached a major milestone when state and local officials joined her, the Chairman, Director Soto, and Director Canning to break ground at North Division on Phase 1 of Pace's first all-electric facility. Phase 1 will include the installation of twelve chargers and the construction of a covered outdoor charging pantograph. Phase 2 will get the fire suppression in place for electric vehicles and expand the garage. Construction will be completed in 2027. Pace received an Illinois EPA grant for electric buses for this garage and some hybrid buses.

Melinda reported that on March 21, Pace and Congressman Foster celebrated the award of a \$1 million Community Project Funding grant for five electric buses for McHenry County. She thanked McHenry County for being so supportive of Pace efforts and Congressman Foster for speaking with Pace at length about the fiscal cliff and Pace needs in the future.

Melinda reported that Pace received the Mobility on Demand Innovator Award at Trapeze's annual conference. The award celebrates the innovative use of Trapeze Mobility on Demand software and excellence in accessibility and service delivery. Trapeze is Pace's software provider for paratransit and fixed route and for many agencies in the United States. Pace received this award for being a national leader in paratransit technology by implementing TripCheck, which allows ADA riders to see their bus moving toward their pick-up location (similar to TNC apps), to set up phone call or text message notifications for imminent arrival, and to pay their fare with Ventra. TripCheck allows group home managers to group people and trips by location using PASS-web.

Melinda reported that during RTA's March Board meeting, Pace, Metra, and CTA detailed potential service reductions up to 40% across the region if no new sustainable transit funding is secured by the state legislature. She is hopeful the state legislature will find a solution. For Pace, a 40% reduction would mean the elimination of weekend and late-night service on 62 routes, increased headways by 30-60 minutes on the most frequent routes, and a two-thirds reduction in the ADA paratransit service area on the weekend. Pace is federally mandated to provide ADA paratransit service within three-quarters of a mile of all Pace and CTA fixed routes and at the same time fixed route service is available. Any cuts to the fixed route network impact ADA paratransit. This is not what Pace wants, so we are continuing to meet with legislators and local

leaders individually to explain what Pace service does for their constituents and advocate for funding.

Melinda reported on testifying before the Illinois Senate earlier this month on the fiscal cliff and the need for funding to maintain the system. There are 45 days left in the legislative session. Now is the real push to get additional funding.

Melinda reported on RTA's Transforming Transit Summit where attendees heard from the four service boards and leaders of peer agencies in Washington, D.C. and the San Francisco Bay Area that are experiencing similar issues to the RTA region. Melinda thanked Director McLeod for attending.

Melinda reported that Pace provided 1.9 million rides in March, which is a 5.4% increase over the same month last year. Express bus and BRT Pulse ridership continue to increase. I-55 Bus-on-Shoulder service is up 10.9%, Pulse Milwaukee is up 13.9%, and Pulse Dempster is up 2.2%.

Melinda reported that this past month, Pace interviewed 214 prospective candidates and extended 59 offers at Hire-on-the-Spot events. Pace staffing is 8-10% below the number of employees that are needed. Pace will continue to hire in preparation to implement the service expansions in ReVision.

Melinda reported that through February, suburban service is favorable to budget, and ADA paratransit service is \$2.7 million unfavorable to budget. This is a trend that continues from 2024 when ADA paratransit ended the year \$25.5 million overbudget due to a 14% ridership increase from the prior year. Staff continues to analyze the demand for RAP to see if we need to make adjustments. Pace is meeting with the RTA to discuss the ADA paratransit service budget. Pace carries individuals who the RTA certifies for paratransit service.

Chairman Kwasneski pointed out that ADA paratransit is funded from the RTA funding pool first, which affects the other service boards' budgets, and that he believes giving paratransit riders more convenient and affordable options is good for the disability community. He praised the flexibility of TAP and RAP, which allows paratransit riders to book at a moment's notice without needing to call to make a reservation the day before a planned trip. He is glad there is additional growth on paratransit and is proud of the creative ways that Pace is providing access and convenience. More rides are good, and it makes sense that more rides result in more costs to operate the system.

Director Arfa agreed with the Chairman, saying Pace's partners should be made aware that investing in more access for the disability community creates more access for all riders, benefiting everyone. Director Arfa honored Stephen Hiatt-Leonard, an ADA paratransit rider at the meeting, saying he is one of thousands of ADA paratransit riders that rely on Pace daily.

Items removed from the Consent Agenda

None.

Approval of Consent Agenda

SBD #25-26 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to Five Star Kleen, LLC for bus passenger shelter cleaning services in an amount not to exceed \$1,902,540.00.

SBD #25-27 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to The Drala Project, Inc. d/b/a The Redesign Group for server hardware and support in an amount not to exceed \$821,223.46.

SBD #25-28 – Ordinance authorizing Change Order No. 1 to Contract No. 234179 with Giro, Inc. for HASTUS software maintenance and support services. The change order extends the Contract for one year and increases the Contract total from \$344,161.00 to \$527,188.00, an increase of \$183,027.00.

SBD #25-29 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to S&A Systems, Inc. for Fleetwatch fuel management hardware and software maintenance renewal in an amount not to exceed \$937,404.00.

Director McLeod moved, and Director Marcucci 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 #25-30 – Ordinance authorizing Board Member and Corporate Authority travel and business expenses for February and March 2025 pursuant to Public Act 099-0604 Local Government Travel Expense Control Act – Richard Kwasneski, Melinda Metzger, and Doug Sullivan.

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, Guerin, Hastings, Marcucci, McLeod, Noak, Schielke, Smith, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski. Chairman Kwasneski abstained. All the other directors voted aye.

SBD #25-31 – Ordinance authorizing approval of Title VI Policy and Program Update, 2025-2028, which is in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act 1964 and Federal Transit Administration Circular 4702.1(b). Pace, an FTA recipient, must: a. Ensure that the level and quality of public transportation service is provided in a nondiscriminatory manner; b. Promote full and fair participation in public transportation decision-making without regard to race, color, or national origin; c. Ensure meaningful access to transit-related programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency (FTA Circular 4702.1B, Chapter II, Section 1).

Jim Crawley, Pace Ethics/EEO Officer, reported on the Title VI program and the recent Executive Order 14224 designating English as the official language of the United States and

rescinding Executive Order 13166, which required federal agencies and recipients of federal funds to provide meaningful access to service for individuals with limited English proficiency.

Chairman Kwasneski asked if Pace received direction from the FTA on the Title VI program and the new Executive Order. Director McLeod asked if Pace is prohibited from communicating in languages other than English, suggesting that Pace as a service provider wants to communicate with riders any way it can, whether there is an obligation or not. Melinda said that Pace will follow the law. Pace provides and will continue to provide schedules in English, Spanish, and Polish.

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

SBD #25-32 – Ordinance authorizing Pace’s Executive Director to execute the First Amendment to the Intergovernmental Agreement between the Chicago Transit Authority, the Regional Transportation Authority, Metra (the Commuter Rail Division of the Regional Transportation Authority and the Northeast Illinois Regional Commuter Railroad Corporation), and Pace (the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority) for the Regional Day Pass Pilot Program.

Erik Llewellyn, Chief Planning Officer, presented on the universal regional day pass (RDP), which can be used on Pace, CTA, and Metra. Pace and CTA already have a joint one-day pass; the RDP unlocks a further benefit for riders who want to incorporate Metra into their trip too. Discussion ensued:

- The Chairman clarified that the RTA is responsible for promoting the RDP program and explaining it to riders. Melinda thanked the RTA for funding the pilot.
- The Chairman said that the RDP addresses legislator concerns that there is no universal RTA pass for all the service boards but noted the RDP program is confusing. From a rider’s standpoint, it would be beneficial to give examples of situations where the RDP is useful.
- Director Arfa agreed that in conversations on transit, people ask her about creating a universal pass for all service boards. She praised the RDP for being a great example of collaboration between the service boards. She agreed that the RTA should provide examples of riders who would use the pass (e.g., someone taking a Pace bus to get to the Metra station to downtown, or travelers from O’Hare or Midway airports). She suggested starting the pilot over the summer when there are so many festivals that draw visitors to the region to poll how well the program is doing and what needs it is meeting.
- The Chairman said that we should direct the press to mention the RDP pass when covering Chicago events instead of generically suggesting that people use public transit.
- Director Marcucci agreed that the program is complex and hard to follow, but the service boards have spent countless hours working together to make this happen. He finds it ironic that the myth is perpetuated that the service boards do not coordinate with each other, yet as a board member he has witnessed years of collaboration. The service boards

have always been working together to benefit the collective constituency. He pointed out the stumbling block to a universal pass has been Metra's zones and the costs of operating it. He hopes the RTA thoroughly explains the program. He congratulated the service boards on getting the universal pass done.

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

Issues/Discussion/Reports

Chairman Kwasneski encouraged Directors to review the February 2025 budget reports and financial statements contained in their packets and to reach out to staff with questions.

Public Comment

Noticing that more members of the public entered the meeting after the public comment period ended, Chairman Kwasneski opened the floor for public comment again.

Antonio Adams, President of ATU Local 1028, asked that if funds to address the fiscal cliff are not secured, would service cuts happen across the region, and would the estimated 400 employee terminations include management. Melinda said that Pace is working with the legislature and is hopeful that we can secure funds. She thanked Mr. Adams for his advocacy in Springfield and hopes the union is receiving the same comments from the legislators as Pace. She confirmed that service and employee cuts would happen across the region and would include management staff.

Antonio Adams commented on ATU Local 1028 meeting with Representatives Blair-Sherlock, Ryan, and Moylan, and Senator Chesney, who indicated that they have funding and will provide it if the service boards address seven issues throughout the service area. He believes that the goals are achievable and that the service boards will work together to accomplish those goals, which match what the operators have been requesting. The primary concern of operators is safety: passenger assaults on CTA and Pace operators, perpetrators not being prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, and offenders not being banned from using public transit. He said this is important because bus operators are on the frontlines dealing with issues every day. He commended Representative Moylan for advocating for safety and said the labor unions will continue to advocate in Springfield.

Chairman Kwasneski appreciated the labor unions working closely alongside the service boards to advocate for transit funding. Pace hopes that the Labor Alliance bill moves forward because it gives Pace the most flexibility to provide service. If we get the funds, we not only can keep the service we have but also can expand service and hire more employees. We are trying to secure funding with as little negative impact to constituents and riders as possible. He said that the service boards will make sure to communicate with the labor unions directly, so we coordinate and work together.

Alishia Yarbrough, a bus operator, asked if new transit funds for the fiscal cliff will be allocated to replace driver seats, claiming that broken seats are causing pain and injury to bus operators.

Similarly, Aaliyah Alexander, an ADA paratransit rider, reported that several ADA ramps need to be fixed because passengers are getting stuck while boarding.

Chairman Kwasneski and Melinda encouraged operators and riders to report problems with Pace or contractor vehicles when those problems occur so they can be corrected. Any new transit funding will be utilized throughout the system, not only for service improvements but also for vehicle maintenance.

Stephen Hiatt-Leonard, a Pace ADA rider, commented on behalf of himself and the residents that Pace serves, commending the Pace Board and Executive Director Metzger for their hard work with the state legislature to secure funding to support the transit system.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Kwasneski asked for a motion and second to adjourn the meeting. Director Schielke moved, and Director Guerin seconded, the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote; all Directors voted aye. The meeting adjourned at 10:26 a.m.

The next regular meeting of the Pace Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, May 21, 2025 at 9:30 a.m. at Pace corporate headquarters, 550 West Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois.

Elissa Ledvort
Board Secretary, Board of Directors