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**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  
June 18, 2025**

The Board of Directors of Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority (“Pace”), met in open session on Wednesday, June 18, 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, Hastings, Marcucci, Schielke, Smith, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski.

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

Directors absent: Noak.

**SBD #25-39 – Resolution** approving the open session meeting minutes of May 21, 2025.

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

### **Public Comment**

None.

Richard A. Kwasneski, *Chairman*

Rachel Arfa   Christopher S. Canning   Terrance M. Carr   David B. Guerin   Kyle R. Hastings   Thomas D. Marcucci  
William D. McLeod   John D. Noak   Jeffery D. Schielke   Erin Smith   Linda Soto   Terry R. Wells

*Board of Directors*

Melinda J. Metzger, *Executive Director*

**Chairman's Report**

Chairman Kwasneski reported on his trip to Springfield where IL-SB2111 of the 104th General Assembly passed in the Senate but did not pass in the House. There were a lot of concerns about the sources of revenue and other parts of the bill. He reported that Melinda Metzger is meeting with Representative Delgado to discuss next steps. He reported that we are all hearing that the legislation will be addressed during the veto session in the fall. This gives Pace Board members an opportunity to review the bill, learn about the impacts to Pace operations, and get input from their appointing authorities. He thanked Pace for condensing the 800-page bill into 25 pages of bulleted takeaways that are easy to understand and encouraged Pace Board members to use that synopsis as a resource. He reported that we will do everything we can to lessen the impact to our riders for as long as we can; we owe that to them. The good thing is that the legislature is committed to solving the fiscal cliff; it is now just a matter of details and revenue sources. He thanked everyone for their efforts, particularly Melinda and Doug Sullivan who tracked the status of legislation until the very end of the session.

Chairman Kwasneski reported that the RTA is reviewing Pace's Taxi Access Program ("TAP") and the Rideshare Access Program ("RAP") to make changes for cost savings. He cautioned that we need to look long and hard before we make decisions that are going to limit our riders with disabilities being able to have a flexible schedule. Both TAP and RAP are popular programs that positively affect our riders with disabilities. He said that Pace is certainly willing to work alongside the RTA to figure this out but urged everyone to remember our riders in this process.

**Directors' Reports**

Director Arfa thanked Melinda and the Pace team for their exemplary work in Springfield, making themselves available at all hours to answer questions and explain what was happening. She said it is important to present the experiences of riders with disabilities in the services that our region provides. Both TAP and RAP need to remain an important part of our service offerings as the agency moves into the future because so many people benefit from the flexibility of those programs. All parts of the region cannot forget that.

Director Noak joined the meeting at 9:36 a.m.

Director Canning thanked the Chairman, Melinda, and Doug for their work in Springfield and for keeping the Pace Board updated in real time with good information.

As the Pace Board Audit Liaison, Director Carr highlighted the 2024 annual financial audit reports prepared by the firm Crowe, LLP. He reported that Pace received clean opinions on the audit and commended Crowe, LLP on its good work.

Director Marcucci thanked the Chairman, Melinda, and Doug for their long hours out of town in Springfield. He said it is clear that Pace has gotten its message to the legislature despite his initial fears that Pace's aspirations for the services it provides were not going to be heard. He praised the synopsis of the latest bill that Pace provided to Pace Board members.

Director Noak thanked the Pace team for its excellent work and for staying focused, ignoring other influences, and consistently advocating for the reality of what it takes to provide service. What is key is that we are all here to find pathways for transit that give our constituents and riders the best possible service at the best possible price. That is the only thing we should be talking about. He is intrigued to continue the conversation and is happy to talk to Pace Board members one-on-one about legislation.

Director Schielke reported on a positive meeting with Morgan Evans, a senior government affairs associate for Governor Pritzker, about the State of Illinois to help gauge the opinion of elected officials. He discussed the legislation on transit governance and the fiscal cliff with her.

Director Smith thanked the Chairman, Melinda, and Doug for their efforts and long hours in Springfield. It is deeply appreciated by Pace and by all of the citizens that it serves.

Director Soto thanked the Chairman, Melinda, and Pace staff for going above and beyond in Springfield and for the expediency and thoroughness of the information that they provided to the Pace Board. She is astounded at the level of service Pace is still providing and how Pace is still moving projects forward despite all the extra work needed to address the fiscal cliff and respond to the governance debate. She thanked Melinda for staying at the helm steering the agency and for all the hours she has put in.

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

Melinda Metzger reported that the spring legislative session ended without the approval of a bill to fund transit and address the fiscal cliff. Transit legislation will likely be revisited during the veto session on October 14-16 or October 28-30. The delay is disappointing, but Pace remains hopeful that a funding solution will be found as it would be difficult to let the region's public transit fail.

Melinda reported that the RTA 2026 budget development kick-off is happening a month late because the RTA waited to see if additional funding would come through. Since there is no new funding, the RTA is asking the service boards to develop two budget scenarios for 2026: one scenario where there is no new funding identified and a second scenario where a temporary stop gap to support current service levels is found. The RTA requested that both scenarios include a fare increase and that 5% of expenses be reduced. Budget meetings will begin next week. Pace is in a position to use our positive budget variance, comprised of excess sales tax funding and funding that Pace did not spend in previous years, to ensure that our budget is status quo and that our service levels do not go down. However, it remains to be seen how the RTA will direct the budget this year. The next few months are critical to find a sustainable funding solution so that we can continue to provide the essential service that our region's residents rely on. Melinda thanked the Pace Board for its continued commitment and support.

Pace is concerned about the reinstatement of the 50% farebox recovery ratio for the region, which is temporarily waived until December 31, 2025. The 50% recovery ratio is not factored

into Pace's calculation to keep service running in 2026. The latest bill lowers the farebox recovery ratio for the region to 25%, so it would make sense to waive the recovery ratio again.

Melinda reported that the RTA, at its board meeting last week, approved an ADA paratransit action plan, which proposes immediate program changes to the user-side subsidy programs, TAP and RAP. This includes a fare increase from \$2 to \$3.25, making the fares equal to traditional ADA contractor carrier service. When ADA ridership increased but the number of drivers in the system decreased post-Covid, a lower fare for TAP and RAP encouraged riders to move off the traditional ADA paratransit, resulting in an increase in available capacity. The RTA would also like to cap the number of trips that a rider can take from 8 trips per day to 30 trips per month. There are concerns with how those changes will impact accessibility for riders and the effect it may have on Pace's budget. Capping rides at 30 trips per month prohibits riders from using the service to get to and from work each day and will result in riders migrating back to traditional ADA paratransit or not using the service at all. Riders migrating back to traditional ADA paratransit will not result in the cost savings that the RTA is hoping to achieve as traditional ADA paratransit services cost \$70 per trip to operate versus \$25 per trip for TAP and RAP. TAP and RAP provide access to opportunity for the disability community and allow for independence and flexible travel.

Melinda credited Lindsey Umek, Chief Operating Officer, for authoring the synopsis of the latest transit bill praised by several Pace Board members and introduced the Pace Board to Maggie Schilling, Pace's new Chief Financial Officer. Melinda highlighted Maggie's career in public transportation leadership and her experience working at FTA overseeing strategic planning, policy development, and budget analysis and managing a portfolio of over \$155 billion in federal capital and operating grants.

Melinda reported that the Regional Day Pass ("RDP"), a collaboration between Pace, the CTA, Metra, and the RTA to advance fare integration, will be launched this Friday. The RDP costs \$2.50 above a Metra day pass, includes full access to Pace, the CTA, and Metra, and is a more cost-effective and convenient option for those looking to travel the region using all the service boards at a reduced price. The fare revenue difference is being funded by a pilot grant from the RTA. Pace continues collaboration with its sister service boards.

Melinda reported on events that Pace participated in to support the communities we serve. Pace participated in two suburban pride celebrations in Elgin and Aurora. Pace attended Access Living's 45th Anniversary Gala and sponsored a red carpet for the event. Pace participated in the Juneteenth celebration at the DuSable Museum of African American History by showing off Pace's 1949 GMC bus and having a storyteller share stories about the history of civil rights while Pace staff promoted Pace job opportunities. Pace is hosting a lunch-and-learn listening session for staff during which a speaker will discuss what Juneteenth represents.

Melinda highlighted Pace's newest capital program brochure. Past titles in the series included "Pace is efficient" and "Pace is sustainable." The summer edition is titled "Pace performs" and highlights how we are spending Rebuild Illinois money wisely.

Melinda reported on the ongoing public hearings to make pilot service changes to Routes 330, 331, and bus-on-shoulder routes permanent as they are meeting productivity standards. Those improvements were designed with fiscal realities in mind and are included in the 2025 budget. A recommendation on those changes will be brought to the July Pace Board meeting.

Melinda reported on welcoming Pace's fifteen 2025 summer interns who will kickstart or complete projects to which staff cannot devote time. Pace looks forward to encouraging those interns to explore a career in public transit and having them contribute to Pace's service to the public.

Melinda reported on the latest ridership figures and year-to-date budget. In May 2025, Pace provided over 2 million rides, which is a 4.5% increase over May 2024. It was the second highest month of ridership post-pandemic. Suburban service is favorable to budget through April 2025, and ADA paratransit service is \$7 million unfavorable to budget through April 2025.

Melinda reported on 57 job offers made at hire-on-the-spot events at Pace headquarters and South Campus. Pace is 7% below the number of drivers that it needs to operate the service it has today.

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

None.

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

**SBD #25-40 – Ordinance** authorizing the award of a contract to CDW Government LLC for the renewal of Nutanix appliance hardware and software maintenance and support in an amount not to exceed \$687,687.29.

**SBD #25-41 – Ordinance** amending the 2025 Operating and Capital Program Budget (Amendment #2). This amendment increases federal Section 5339 funding for the paratransit vehicles project by \$421,183. This amendment results in an increase of \$421,183 to the 2025 capital budget, from \$114,821,131 to \$115,242,314.

**SBD #25-42 – Ordinance** appointing new members and re-appointing existing members to the Citizens Advisory Board.

**SBD #25-43 – Ordinance** authorizing the award of a contract to Bloom Companies, LLC for architectural and engineering services for bus stop infrastructure in an amount not to exceed \$1,576,758.72.

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

**Action Items**

**SBD #25-44 – Ordinance** authorizing Board Member and Corporate Authority travel and business expenses for April and May 2025 pursuant to Public Act 099-0604 Local Government Travel Expense Control Act – Richard A. Kwasneski, Melinda Metzger, and Doug Sullivan.

Director Noak moved, and Director Smith 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 other directors voted aye.

**SBD #25-45 – Ordinance** authorizing the acceptance of the Annual Year-End Financial Audit Reports for the year ended December 31, 2024.

Christine Torres, partner at Crowe, LLP, presented. Melinda highlighted that this was Crowe, LLP's first audit under the new contract with Pace, and Pace has had no audit findings since 2016. She thanked Director Carr for serving as Pace's Audit Liaison and Laura LaDuke for leading the accounting team that provided auditors good information in an organized fashion.

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

**SBD #25-46 – Ordinance** authorizing the award of a contract to CDM Smith, Inc. for architectural and engineering services for the Pulse Halsted Line construction project in an amount not to exceed \$3,993,893.81.

Josh Berger, Department Manager of Capital Infrastructure, presented.

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

**SBD #25-47 – Ordinance** authorizing the award of a contract to WSP USA, Inc. for architectural and engineering services for the Pulse 95th Street Line construction project in an amount not to exceed \$2,874,344.51.

Josh Berger presented.

Director Noak moved, and Director Schielke 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 #25-48 – Ordinance** authorizing the award of a contract to Crawford, Murphy and Tilly, Inc. for architectural and engineering services for the Burr Ridge Park-n-Ride indoor waiting area and parking lot expansion in an amount not to exceed \$499,615.86.

Josh Berger presented.

Director Noak moved, and Director Schielke 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**

Lindsey Umek provided a status update on the ADA paratransit program and more context to the RTA's ADA paratransit action plan recently approved by the RTA Board. In 2024, ADA paratransit finished the year \$25.5 million unfavorable to budget as a result of increased demand for all ADA services across the system, with the largest growth experienced on traditional contract carrier service. The unfavorable budget condition has continued into 2025. The RTA action plan attempts to reduce costs through proposed program changes to user-side subsidy programs TAP, which allows ADA-certified riders to use taxis in the City of Chicago, and RAP, which allows ADA-certified riders to use transportation network companies (TNCs) throughout the entire six-county region. ADA eligibility to use the services is determined by the RTA. The program changes include a review of the RTA certification process and the accuracy of certifications; a fare increase; a monthly cap on the number of trips; a comparison of peer models and outcomes; and implementation of free fares on fixed route for ADA-certified riders for all service boards by Fall 2025, which Pace has already done since February 2024.

Lindsey provided background about the development of the RAP program. In 2021, Pace partnered with the RTA on an ADA paratransit innovation study to identify potential mobility options that could be integrated into the program to meet the increased demand for the service as the population continues to age. The goal was to use a subsidy program in the suburbs to provide an additional mobility option similar to TAP in the City of Chicago, but the suburbs did not have a taxi network to support this type of program. Pace launched RAP in March 2024.

Lindsey reported that both the TAP and the RAP subsidy programs have provided tremendous access and mobility for people with disabilities, providing riders with a more cost-effective and flexible transportation option that has also freed up capacity on traditional ADA paratransit contract carrier service. Ridership trends across all ADA service offerings have shown that Pace is addressing pent-up demand, and Pace is doing it efficiently. The average overall cost per ride for the entire ADA paratransit program has gone down from \$60.88 in January 2024 to \$46.63 in March 2025 despite increased demand, largely due to the expansion of the user-side subsidy programs in our service offerings, which are cheaper to operate.

Lindsey reported that it is important to understand the impact that program changes can have to riders and what it means for our budget. Of the 5,688 monthly RAP users from March 2025, 72% of those riders either migrated over from traditional ADA paratransit or use a combination of both traditional ADA and RAP. That data indicates that if program changes are implemented that restrict the use of RAP, we could see a migration back over to traditional ADA paratransit where the cost per ride will increase from \$25 on RAP to over \$70 on traditional ADA paratransit, which will result in the opposite budget impact that the RTA is trying to achieve. Capping the number of trips to 30 per month would impact 2,754 people or 26.2% of RAP riders. That means that if ADA riders use the service to get to work every day, the 30 per month cap will not satisfy their travel needs. We could see ADA riders stop using the service altogether.

Director Marcucci left the meeting at 10:40 a.m. and returned to the meeting at 10:42 a.m.

The next steps include taking the proposed fare increase out to public hearings. A summary of the hearings along with a recommendation will be addressed in a future Pace Board meeting, anticipated for August 2025, for the Board's approval.

Chairman Kwasneski said that he is concerned and that we should tread lightly. He would like to see staff investigate the increase in ADA paratransit certifications. Not to say that these are not valid certifications, but if there are more riders in the system, then naturally the number of trips we are providing will increase as well and our overall costs. His biggest concern is the 30 trips per month cap, saying it could have a negative effect on Pace's costs and on the people who use the programs, particularly people using TAP and RAP to get to work every day. Our main priority should be to serve our riders. The overall cost per ride reduces dramatically with the inclusion of the user-side subsidies in our service offerings; therefore, it is not hard to figure out that we need a balance of all of these programs. The RTA should be careful about this decision and really look holistically at the positive and negative effects of the program changes.

Director Arfa thanked Chairman Kwasneski for his comments and commended Pace for doing a great job innovating a program that creates more opportunities for people with disabilities to be independent, provides more flexibility to riders, and is actually cost-effective. She is concerned about the direction this is going. She asked if we could use data to add protections for the 26.2% of RAP riders that the 30 trips per month cap is going to affect. If those riders go back to relying on traditional ADA paratransit at \$70 per trip, that is really going to impact Pace's budget, and it does not have to do so. The TAP and RAP changes will have a detrimental impact on people with disabilities and their ability to access job opportunities and to achieve upward economic mobility. That is something we should continue to monitor.

Chairman Kwasneski left the meeting at 10:48 a.m. and returned to the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

Director Soto asked how the proposed cap of 30 trips per month was calculated – is that figure determined from a budgetary standpoint or is that figure based on the needs of the average rider? Melinda and Lindsey explained that the RTA came up with that figure by examining other regions that have TNC subsidy programs, primarily the Boston metro area. Other areas are doing



different types of programs with TNCs and not offering as many trips, but it is not always a direct comparison to Pace. Pace expressed concern that 30 trips per month was not enough. If the average person commutes to work 21 days per month, that would require 42 rides. The RTA did not agree with Pace's calculation and proceeded with the 30-ride cap.

Director Canning asked when the RTA wants the TAP and RAP changes to go into effect. Lindsey and Melinda explained how the ordinance asked for immediate implementation with no defined start date; however, Pace feels strongly that a fare increase should require public hearings throughout the service area to get feedback from riders. The changes cannot be implemented before we present the results of the hearings at Pace's August Pace Board meeting.

Director Canning pointed out that TAP ridership held steady during the pandemic and usage has only continued growing. The important thing for the RTA to focus on is how vital of a service both the TAP and RAP programs are. While trying to save money is a good goal to have, access for riders is probably a better goal. Efficiencies can be found elsewhere in the system.

### **Adjournment**

Chairman Kwasneski asked for a motion to adjourn into closed session for the purposes of discussing closed session minutes (2-C-21), pending litigation (2-C-11), and collective bargaining (2-C-2). Director Schielke moved, and Director Smith seconded, the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote. All directors voted aye.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:52 a.m.

### **Reconvene**

Chairman Kwasneski reconvened the open session of the Pace Board of Directors meeting at 11:16 a.m.

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

Directors telephonically present: McLeod.

Directors absent: Hastings.

**SBD #25-49 – Resolution** approving the closed session meeting minutes of March 19, 2025.

Director Noak moved, and Director Schielke seconded, a motion to approve the Resolution. The motion passed with a unanimous vote. All directors voted aye.

**SBD #25-50 – Ordinance** approving that the closed session minutes of October 16, 2024, December 11, 2024, and February 19, 2025 are available for public inspection; and that the closed

session minutes of January 14, 2015, February 11, 2015, March 11, 2015, May 13, 2015, June 10, 2015, September 18, 2019, March 16, 2022, October 18, 2023, March 20, 2024, June 26, 2024, September 18, 2024, and November 13, 2024 are not available for public inspection.

Director Noak moved, and Director Schielke 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 #25-51 – Ordinance** that the verbatim records of the closed session minutes for June 21, 2023, August 16, 2023, September 20, 2023, October 18, 2023, and November 8, 2023, which have previously been approved by the Pace Board of Directors and which have been held no less than 18 months after completion of the meeting recorded, be destroyed.

Director Smith moved, and Director Schielke 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 #25-52 – Ordinance** approving a collective bargaining agreement between Pace Fox Valley Division and the Amalgamated Transit Union, Local #1028.

Director Noak moved, and Director Schielke 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.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chairman Kwasneski asked for a motion and second to adjourn the meeting. Director Marcucci moved, and Director Schielke seconded, the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote; all Directors voted aye. The meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

The next regular meeting of the Pace Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, July 16, 2025 at 9:30 a.m. at Pace corporate headquarters, 550 West Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois.

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Elissa Ledvort  
Board Secretary, Board of Directors