

**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 21, 2025**

The Board of Directors of Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority (“Pace”), met in open session on Wednesday, May 21, 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, McLeod, Schielke, Soto and Chairman Kwasneski.

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

Directors absent: Wells.

**SBD #25-33 – Resolution** approving the open session meeting minutes of April 16, 2025.

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

**Public Comment**

None.

**Chairman's Report**

Chairman Kwasneski reported that the past few weeks have been active in Springfield. State legislators continue to work through the fiscal cliff and how to fund transit. A majority of conversations have been focused on governance reform. They are trying to garner votes to support the bill, which is different in the House than in the Senate. What is said today can be different than what happens tomorrow. Doug Sullivan, Manager of External Relations, is in Springfield monitoring legislation on Pace's behalf. The legislature can provide the funding that the service boards are requesting, but Pace's biggest concern is revenue sources, which may not have been previously discussed. The bill calls for a different board structure and appointment process. He suggested that board members could reach out to their legislators to render their opinions. He reports that when talking to legislators one-on-one, many of them support Pace and public transit but do not know what the final bill will look like. There is a small group working on the transit bill and, at some point, it will be unveiled to everyone. Legislators will react to it and negotiate further. We will see what happens and if they have the votes.

Chairman Kwasneski reported on a ribbon-cutting to add more townships into the Access Will County dial-a-ride program, thus expanding access for transit throughout the region. Currently, there are 16 of 24 Will County townships participating, and Pace will continue to work on getting all townships into the program. If that is accomplished, then all collar counties will have county-wide dial-a-ride service. He commended Pace for working diligently with individual townships to secure countywide services for riders. Pace started with a couple countywide programs and demonstrated their success, which helped convince other counties to get on board.

Chairman Kwasneski reported on unions trying to figure out how to work with Uber and UZURV on paratransit rides. Pace wants to give paratransit riders as many travel options as possible and believes anything that would inhibit that is not good for the paratransit community. Adding Uber and UZURV customer-side subsidy programs gives paratransit riders more flexibility to travel on their own schedule. Pace is speaking individually with the unions, Uber, and UZURV. Measures to address this may work its way into transit reform legislation.

Director Wells joined the meeting at 9:33 a.m.

**Directors' Reports**

Director Arfa thanked the Chairman for supporting different transit options for people with disabilities in the region. She said that as the legislation on transit reform and funding becomes final, she hopes that any changes to the system will maintain the incredible gains that Pace has built with paratransit, TAP, and RAP, especially after Pace has developed such a successful model. She reports that many people with disabilities have reached out to her because they are concerned. We must make sure that successful transit options are protected long term.

As the Pace Board's Audit Liaison, Director Carr reported on audit updates for 2025. In March, he met with Christine Torres from Crowe, LLP, Pace's external auditor, to discuss the external

audit in progress. Director Carr reported that Pace Internal Audit issued its first quarter project report. As of now, both the 2025 Risk Assessment results and the 2025 Control Self-Assessment results are nearly finalized. The 2025 Internal Audit Plan is on today's agenda.

Director Marcucci pointed out that the latest systemwide ridership report shows that as of April 2025, Pace has recovered 75% of pre-Covid ridership. That is the second-highest month post-pandemic we have seen so far. Ridership is really coming back, and it is very encouraging.

Director Schielke reported on cyberattacks affecting the Fermilab National Accelerator Laboratory and the City of Batavia, which are being monitored by Homeland Security. He cautioned everyone about a new cyberattack posing as the Illinois Tollway Authority and soliciting your credit card number and/or tollway account number, which has a credit card associated with it. Some people affected by the scam have lost thousands of dollars.

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

Melinda Metzger honored Jeannene Hoppe, a Pace employee since 2008 who recently passed away, and shared details about her work contributions and interests. She was Pace's computer graphics artist and an active member of the deaf community. Melinda thanked coworkers who attended her services to pay respects.

Melinda reported on Pace's efforts to recognize Asian-American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and celebrate Earth Day. Corporate and garage staff volunteered during their lunch breaks to clean up facility grounds for Earth Day. Pace continues sustainably efforts, recently holding a groundbreaking for the first phase of transitioning North Division to a fully electric garage.

Melinda reported that she, the Chairman, and Doug Sullivan have been in Springfield attending various town hall meetings and participating in conversations about sustainable funding solutions for transit. The legislature is expected to drop a new bill today, which will be a combination of the Labor Bill (IL SB1938) and the Metropolitan Mobility Authority Act Bill (IL HB5823). Pace believes a new name will be given to the regional board but does not yet know the composition of the boards. Yesterday, Melinda met with labor and Senator Villivalam regarding the rideshare portion of the Labor Bill. Labor has some concerns and would like to see rideshare unionized or not be given as high a priority as it being given right now. We are trying to work through that and are meeting again this evening to discuss. Lots of conversations are happening, and changes are happening fast. The next week will be very important. We will keep you informed.

Melinda reported on the ribbon-cutting for the Access Will County dial-a-ride expansion, which now serves 16 of 24 townships in Will County. Hopefully, Pace will eventually get the whole county covered, which will make it easier for people to transfer over the county line to places like hospitals and medical centers and improve overall regional connectivity.

Melinda reported on public hearings taking place in June in response to the success of two route expansion pilots implemented in 2024. The first hearing is on June 16 for the proposed

permanent expansion of Route 330, which provides service between Summit and O'Hare, and Route 331, which provides service between LaGrange and the Cumberland CTA Blue Line. The second hearing is on June 25 regarding the 81 trips that Pace added to Bus-on-Shoulder service last August. Pace does not anticipate much participation in the hearings because the permanent expansions are good news. A public comment summary and a recommendation on whether to make changes permanent will be brought before the board at a future meeting.

Melinda reported on the I-290 and I-88 express bus study project in partnership with IDOT as IDOT does shoulder improvement work in those corridors. The study addresses the potential to add Bus-on-Shoulder on I-88 out to the Oak Brook - Cermak Road corridor and on I-290 up to the Schaumburg area. Pace is holding an open house on June 5 in Forest Park to get input on what the public would like to see in service in those areas.

Melinda reported on the Pulse program. Pace hosted an initial kick-off meeting for the environmental review phase of Pulse Cermak and will be working with a corridor advisory group to discuss proposed station locations. Pace will bring architectural and engineering design work contracts to the board for Pulse 95<sup>th</sup> Street and Pulse Halsted this summer.

Melinda reported on fantastic ridership numbers in April 2025. Over 2 million rides performed, a 7% increase over April 2024 and the second highest month of system ridership in the past year.

Melinda reported that since the last meeting, Pace hosted 233 prospective candidates and extended 78 offers. About 60% of candidates attended the Hire-on-the-Spot event in Markham, and 40% of candidates attended the Hire-on-the-Spot event at headquarters.

Melinda reported on the latest budget figures. Suburban service is favorable to budget through March; however, ADA paratransit is \$4 million unfavorable to budget. The RTA board recently approved an ordinance authorizing the use of ADA paratransit reserve funding to cover the \$25.5 million deficit in 2024. The ordinance requires an action plan to address the continued unfavorable budget conditions in 2025. Proposed action items include a review of the RTA certification program, which Pace insisted upon because Pace is required to carry RTA-certified ADA paratransit riders. The RTA also requested an analysis of all ADA programs and operational data to analyze transit usage, a peer comparison of usage programs and costs, and a review of parameters for TAP and RAP subsidy programs to determine if changes are necessary. Pace is concerned about making changes to TAP and RAP because they provide the disability community with tremendous freedom of mobility, and we receive a lot of positive feedback about those programs from the disabled community. Pace will continue to work through this process with the RTA and will keep the board informed as we analyze trends. In 2024, there was growth in ADA ridership across the board; traditional carrier service saw more utilization than TAP and RAP, though TAP and RAP usage is growing. It is good to have solid ridership on both programs. TAP and RAP increase capacity and take some of the pressure off of traditional carrier service, which is required to meet federal regulations and cannot have capacity constraints. Plus, TAP and RAP are more cost-effective for Pace to operate than traditional carrier service.

Chairman Kwasneski asked how many more people the RTA certified this year compared to the previous year. He encouraged members of the disabled community to attend an RTA meeting to let them know how they feel about having multiple transit options. He thinks the RTA needs to hear how important the subsidy programs are to riders before they start making decisions about shifting service away. We are here to serve our riders in the end.

Melinda reported that Pace has once again received the Government Finance Officers Association distinguished budget presentation award for 2025 thanks to the hard work of the budget department, led by Melanie Castle. In order to receive this award, agencies must be efficient and effective in their budget presentation, which should serve as a policy document, a financial plan, an operational guide, and a communication device.

Melinda reviewed the action items on today's agenda: 2025 Internal Audit Plan, making a pilot service enhancement for Route 381 permanent, and the continuation of Transit as the app provider for Pace's Mobility as a Service (MaaS) software for the next five years. Melinda mentioned that the RTA and CTA are also looking at putting together apps that aggregate all public transportation options in one place. Pace will continue using our app until the region chooses an app that works for all the service boards. Pace's app does already include CTA and Metra information. Chairman Kwasneski said it was ironic that the smallest agency created an app that serves everyone, but the lead agency did not take up that project from the beginning, which you would assume would be its responsibility. Melinda explained that once the RTA gets its technology up and running, Pace is happy to move over to the RTA's app, or the RTA can use Pace's app that already works. Pace needs to move forward with this app now because we have implemented so many different services for the suburban region: On Demand, regular fixed route, paratransit, VanGo, which all make connections with the CTA and Metra. Pace's MaaS app gives our customers one easy way to access all their public transit options in one place.

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

None.

### **Approval of Consent Agenda**

**SBD #25-34 – Ordinance** authorizing the award of a contract to Parsons Transportation Group, Inc. for design and deployment of additional transit signal priority (TSP) signal timings and systems in an amount not to exceed \$3,119,667.56.

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 #25-35 – Ordinance** authorizing Board Member and Corporate Authority travel and

business expenses for April 2025 pursuant to Public Act 099-0604 Local Government Travel Expense Control Act – Richard Kwasneski and Doug Sullivan.

Director Soto 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 #25-36 – Ordinance** adopting Pace’s 2025 Internal Audit Plan.

Colette Thomas Gordon, Chief Internal Auditor, presented how the department adds value by recommending enhanced risk management and strong internal controls. She reviewed sections of the plan: the Internal Audit budget, charter, and timeline of audit projects. She pointed out that the log of external audits completed in 2024 had no findings, which is a major accomplishment.

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 #25-37 – Ordinance** authorizing Pace’s Executive Director to make the Route 381 95th Street weekend pilot service expansion changes permanent, effective on or after May 22, 2025.

Erik Llewellyn, Chief Planning Officer, presented how before the pilot, Route 381 did not operate at the desired level to support future Pulse service, especially on weekends. As a result of the pilot, ridership increased by nearly 2000 riders, or 26% over the previous year. Director Canning confirmed that Route 381 would continue as the underlying local service after express Pulse service is implemented along the same corridor. Erik mentioned that further investments are needed in the corridor on the capital side.

Director Guerin moved, and Director Wells 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 #25-38 – Ordinance** authorizing the award of a contract to 9280-0366 Québec Inc. d/b/a Transit for Mobility as a Service (MaaS) software in an amount not to exceed \$2,423,535.77.

Dimitre Guenov, Associate Planner, presented. A discussion ensued:

- Chairman Kwasneski asked how many people are using the app. Dimitre reported over 10,000 daily users of the app, trending upward with an 18% increase every month since last year.
- Chairman Kwasneski asked for details on the marketing plan and if the other service boards can help promote it because the app shows their data. Melinda reported that Pace

has ads on our buses, but we will work with the service boards about advertising on their vehicles and websites.

- Chairman Kwasneski does not see why the RTA would pursue another app if Pace already has one that aggregates trip planning for all the service boards. Melinda explained that the ultimate goal is to have one app to pay fares as well as trip planning. Pace's Transit app does not allow users to pay fares directly on the app but provides links for users to do so. As the RTA develops the ultimate app, Pace's Transit app is a great interim step. That is why this contract has option years, so Pace has the option of ending the contract and moving to the RTA's app.
- Chairman Kwasneski wants to make sure legislators know that the app exists thanks to Pace's work. Director Canning agreed, saying he showed Senator Simmons how to use it.
- Director Canning asked why Transit scored higher on technical evaluation and what sets it apart from the other bidders despite not being the lowest bidder. Dimitre discussed how Transit is on the cutting edge of emerging technology, which ensures that the newest technology becomes available to agency partners with whom Transit works. Transit's ability to stay on the forefront and for working groups to readily respond to feedback from everyday app users sets Transit apart from other bidders. The working groups will be particularly helpful as Pace implements ReVision and electrification projects.
- Director Canning asked how quickly a rider would see route and schedule changes incorporated into the Transit app. Dimitre explained that when Pace updates its feed on the backend, Transit has the new update available on the app the following day. Director Canning reported that some Transit app route and location data appears outdated.
- Director Marcucci loves the app and how it updates the schedules and real-time information for the closest bus routes and train lines from your current location. He thanked Director Canning for his good questions and said the only shortcoming is not getting the word out. A lot of people do not know about the app, though 10,000 daily users is impressive.
- Director Wells pointed out that the contract was not awarded to the lowest bidder, though Transit reduced its price after some negotiations.
- Director Canning stressed that Pace ought to be able to say with relative accuracy when the bus is coming and should strive to get accurate information out to riders, so they can plan accordingly.
- Melinda added that part of this RFP is developing a way for customers to provide immediate feedback about their experience on the bus, but Pace needs to figure out a good way to monitor and respond in real time. Director Canning asked if customers could also submit comments about safety, as safety is an issue that has been repeatedly discussed in legislation and such comments would help our riders and operators. Melinda said it was a great idea.

Director McLeod 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**

Chairman Kwasneski encouraged Directors to review the March 2025 budget reports and financial statements contained in their packets and to reach out to staff with questions. He also invited Directors to attend the 45th Anniversary Gala of Access Living, which is a great advocate agency and has been a helpful advisor to Pace on paratransit decisions.

Melinda Metzger recognized DeCarlo Greer, President of ATU Local #900 of North Division garage in Waukegan, who attended today's meeting. She thanked him for being a great advocate for employees and supporter of Pace. Chairman Kwasneski appreciated his support in Springfield and the importance of securing funding to continue to provide the service that we all do well. He appreciated him and all the operators he represents.

Director Arfa thanked Melinda for her beautiful tribute to Jeannene Hoppe, who was a big presence in the deaf community and a very sad loss for us all. She praised Jeannene for being a bright, optimistic person through her illness and extended her condolences to her and her family. She thanked Jeannene for her contributions to Pace, saying it is a good reminder that we do not always know the contributions that people make every day.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chairman Kwasneski asked for a motion and second to adjourn the meeting. Director Schielke moved, and Director Marcucci seconded, the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote; all Directors voted aye. The meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

The next regular meeting of the Pace Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, June 18, 2025 at 9:30 a.m. at Pace corporate headquarters, 550 West Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois.

---

Elissa Ledvort  
Board Secretary, Board of Directors