

**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
February 15, 2023**

The Board of Directors of Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority, met in open session on Wednesday, February 15, 2023 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: Canning, Carr, Marcucci, Noak, Schielke, Soto, and Chairman Kwasneski.

Directors virtually or telephonically present: Arfa, Guerin, Hastings, McLeod, and Smith.

Directors absent: Wells.

Director Wells arrived at 9:32 a.m.

SBD #23-06 – Resolution approving the open session meeting minutes of January 18, 2023.

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

Public Comment

Vance Rockford, an employee of First Transit Chicago, a Pace contractor, asked for a response regarding the information John Coli, Jr. presented to the Board at the last meeting. Chairman Kwasneski said Pace received the materials and Melinda was reviewing them, but he and Melinda have not had conversations about it yet. Melinda Metzger reported that materials were given to First Transit, the employer.

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*

John Coli, Jr., Treasurer of Teamsters #727 which represents paratransit drivers at First Transit, explained why union negotiations over the compensation of Chicago employees have not progressed. He suggested ways Pace can make a difference during black history month by addressing the pay practices of their contractor towards their almost exclusively black workforce.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Kwasneski thanked Melinda for arranging to have a 1949 GMC Pace predecessor bus at the meeting for everyone to view. Chairman Kwasneski welcomed CMAP's Senior Director of Policy, Laura Wilkison, at today's meeting to present on the legislation passed by the Illinois General Assembly directing CMAP to analyze and make recommendations on the financial viability and the future of public transit in northeastern Illinois. Chairman Kwasneski praised the launch of the joint Pace-CTA passes, saying riders can seamlessly go between the two services and are now better able to move around the region. Finally, Chairman Kwasneski presented Melinda Metzger with a plaque honoring her 45 years of service at Pace. Melinda began her career at Pace predecessor Nortran in 1978.

Melinda Metzger said she started out as a summer intern, was not planning to stay, and now could not imagine a better career. She loves how her career has combined her passion for analysis and public service. She said it was an honor to serve the region and this Board.

Directors' Reports

Director Arfa congratulated Melinda Metzger on an incredible 45 years of public service and sees the impact her career has had on Pace.

Director Canning congratulated Melinda on her milestone and said keep up the good work.

Director Carr congratulated Melinda on an outstanding job and an unheard of 45 years of service.

Director Guerin congratulated Melinda and said it was an honor to serve on the Board with her as Executive Director.

Director Marcucci congratulated Melinda. He said the effectiveness of Pace is based upon the effectiveness of its Executive Director and it is a pleasure to work with her. He complimented the 1949 West Towns bus onsite today, which he recalled seeing often in his youth.

Director McLeod congratulated Melinda on her phenomenal work.

Director Noak congratulated Melinda and said he was impressed with everything she has done.

Director Schielke congratulated Melinda on a career that has really made a difference in the world. He said Pace is blessed to have a leader who truly understands the system.

Director Smith thanked Melinda for her dedication to people who use public transportation. She commended Melinda for “winding up” after 45 years instead of winding down and for her innovative ways of approaching changes in the transportation industry.

Director Soto said Melinda’s 45 years of service have certainly pushed Pace forward in many ways. She complimented Melinda’s ability to handle tough meetings and challenges with professionalism and grace, as well as her ability to drive and repair a bus.

Director Wells congratulated Melinda and said she has been great for the organization.

Executive Director’s Report

Melinda Metzger thanked the Board for their comments. She said Pace staff is terrific and she is thankful for the work they have done implementing big changes post-Covid.

Melinda stated that Pace is proud of the achievements of African Americans and the leaders who fought for fair and accessible transit for all. Melinda urged everyone to view Pace’s 1949 GMC bus, the same model bus that Rosa Parks rode on when she made history, onsite at the meeting to celebrate black history month. Melinda shared fun facts about the bus including that the bus originally cost \$18,000 and was purchased by Pace predecessor West Towns used for \$5,000 and that the bus does not have power steering, so operators must stand to muster enough strength to turn the wheel.

Melinda reported on recruitment progress. Hiring events were held at South Suburban College on January 17, Joliet Junior College on January 25, Olive-Harvey College on February 7, and Elgin Community College on February 9. Pace will host “Hire on the Spot” events at Pace headquarters and at North Division in Waukegan in February. Right now, 75 future bus operators are either enrolled in a CDL course or in Pace training, which is the largest number of new recruits in Pace history.

Melinda reported on fare changes:

- On Monday, February 20 Pace will eliminate transfers between Pace routes and will introduce two new shared passes with CTA (a one-day pass and a three-day pass). The passes will make it more affordable for those who ride both Pace and CTA in order to encourage more usage on both systems. Pace will continue to expand efforts to ensure regional connectivity for riders and to create a more seamless experience.
- Beginning March 15, Pace will reinstate TAP fares that were suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic and instate fares for the DuPage Uber Access pilot program. The fare will be \$2 as opposed to the \$3 in place for TAP before.
- Under the new Part-Time VanPool Fare pilot, Pace will propose a half-price fare for VanPool riders who commute 3 days/week or less to offer more flexibility and more options to the high number of people working from home. The proposal will go to public hearing in March and be brought before the Board in April. So far, the pilot has added 14 part-time VanPools and 7 combination VanPools.

- The Naperville/Aurora On Demand pilot will go to public hearing to make the pilot permanent. The pilot doubled the service offerings in that area and doubled the ridership.

Melinda reported that the paratransit software Trapeze underwent a major update to version 19 in order to assign TNCs through an automated system. Unfortunately, the upgrade had issues. Trapeze has located the coding error and is correcting it. Pace will continue to monitor performance.

Melinda reported that Pace carried 1.4 million riders in January 2023, a 22% increase over January 2022. In January 2023, 5,000 TNC trips were completed via the DuPage Uber Access pilot or UZURV. Pace spent \$12.9 million less than expected for suburban service and \$19.2 million less than expected for ADA service. Surplus monies will enter a reserve fund to be used to support operations during the 2025 fiscal cliff.

CMAP Report

Laura Wilkison, Senior Director of Public Policy at CMAP, provided background on the Plan of Action for Regional Transit (“PART”). Transit agencies in northeastern Illinois are heading toward a fiscal cliff coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic as emergency federal assistance is expiring and ridership remains below pre-pandemic levels. A budget shortfall of \$730 million is expected in 2026. The Illinois legislature thus passed Public Act 102-1028, a bill requiring CMAP to conduct an analysis of transit systems and provide recommendations on reforms to funding distribution mechanisms and governance structures by January 2024, so the General Assembly could address the issue through legislation. The bill is sponsored by State Representative Eva-Dina Delgado and State Senator Ram Villivalam.

Laura Wilkison reviewed the legislative mandate, described the project scope in detail, and identified some avenues of research. PART will assess the 50% recovery ratio in place now (and whether better performance metrics exist), sales tax formula and distributions, regional fare systems, and possible sources of revenue from tolls or income taxes. She noted that cuts to the system cannot solve the fiscal crisis, as cuts decrease ridership which decreases revenue. This is about leveraging the funding we have in a potentially better way to create a more financially secure transit system. Laura Wilkison praised Pace’s collaborations with other agencies, particularly working with roadway agencies on Bus on Shoulder and with CTA on integrated fare products.

Laura Wilkison reviewed the project timeline. The bill requires CMAP to put together a steering committee made up of external stakeholders from business, civic, labor, environmental, and academia sectors to guide the process. CMAP also appointed three board advisors, one of which is Director Noak. The PART report will be approved by the CMAP board and CMAP’s MPO Policy Committee at a joint meeting in October 2023, before submission to the General Assembly in January 2024. CMAP staff will keep in regular contact with the executives and staff of the service boards and RTA throughout the process. CMAP will solicit public feedback and leverage existing information from the strategic plans and customer surveys of the RTA and the service boards.

Laura Wilkison concluded saying we want to have proactive discussions on complex issues and move forward as an entire system that works together. We want to make sure that we bring a lot of voices to the table. Stakeholders should not assume that public transit will always be there. This is a moment in time where they need to speak out that it is important that transit be funded.

Chairman Kwasneski suggested incorporating the feedback of county chairs, as they are the appointing authorities for Pace board members. He noted that in some cases, solutions already exist, such as the innovative services Pace is implementing; in other cases, there may not be a better alternative. He urged Pace and its partners to look at funding sources as well, noting that ADA service is mandated by the federal government yet funding for it comes from Illinois's RTA sales tax. The cost of that service continues to go up and he believes federal sources could help fund operations. Finally, he mentioned that CMAP's advisors tended to be city-centric, and that collar counties and large employers that exist outside Chicago can be part of a solution. He said Pace wants to be part of CMAP's PART project.

Director Schielke commented on other counties' desire to join the RTA. His answer to them has always been to work with the state legislature. He warned CMAP that there was a political side to the PART project.

Director Soto commented that Pace, CTA, and Metra have made great progress collaborating with each other in recent years, as well as with other partners. Director Soto believes the transportation system would be more efficient if the default position was for all transportation agencies, including transit, to work together.

Director Noak said he respected CMAP's efforts, but shared the Chairman's concerns about the lack of suburban or collar county involvement in the PART process; he noted particularly that there were minority communities outside the city whose voices needed to be heard. Laura appreciated his comments and noted CMAP would be working with the Community Alliance for Racial Equity. Chairman Kwasneski wanted to make sure Pace's input is taken into account by the Policy Committee, which may require process changes. Laura replied that CMAP would like to have more discussions.

Items removed from the Consent Agenda

None.

Approval of Consent Agenda

SBD #23-07 - Ordinance authorizing Change Order No. 2 to Contract No. 225969 with Great West Life & Annuity Insurance Company for RTA 401(k) Plan and Trust recordkeeping services. This change order extends the contract for one year and increases the contract total from \$328,100.00 to \$413,200.00, an increase of \$85,100.00.

Director Soto moved, and Director Schielke 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 #23-08 - Ordinance authorizing Board Member travel and business expenses for January 2023 pursuant to Public Act 099-0604 Local Government Travel Expense Control Act – Richard Kwasneski.

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, and Wells. Chairman Kwasneski abstained. All other directors voted aye.

SBD #23-09 - Ordinance authorizing Change Order No. 8 to Contract No. 219823 with DemandTrans Solutions, Inc. for the development of application programming interfaces and integration of Pace On Demand with the trip planning application for Demand Response Transport Call-n-Ride. This change order extends the contract for 15 months and increases the contract amount from \$290,900.00 to \$308,400.00, an increase of \$17,500.00.

Dimitre Guenov, Associate Planner, demonstrated how to find Pace On Demand information on the MaaS app, a feature made possible as a result of this change order.

Chairman Kwasneski left the meeting at 10:36 a.m. He returned to the meeting at 10:38 a.m.

Director Schielke left the meeting at 10:39 a.m. He returned to the meeting at 10:42 a.m.

Chairman Kwasneski asked that staff provide a timetable for each service's integration onto the MaaS app so that Pace can promote it. He encouraged staff to promote the app now and not to wait several years when all services are available on the app. He also said the MaaS app is a great topic of discussion at CMAP's PART meetings to showcase collaboration among the transit agencies.

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

SBD #23-10 - Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to Computer Aid, Inc. for managed services for Pace's application portfolio in an amount not to exceed \$11,932,442.08.

Scott Kinsella, Chief Information Officer, presented.

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

Doug Sullivan, Manager of External Relations, reported on the 2022 Customer Satisfaction Survey. He and Richard Yao, Market Research Analyst, answered questions for the Board.

Chairman Kwasneski commented on the difficulty of collecting customer feedback during the Covid pandemic. He asked about Pace's on-time performance, and Melinda replied by saying that while Pace had good performance for a suburban agency with long headways, the agency could improve performance. She also noted that better technology, such as the MaaS app and signals from buses, would help alleviate problems.

Chairman Kwasneski then discussed bus shelters, which the survey had covered. He stressed the importance of adding more shelters across the region and ensuring that they are clean and well-maintained. He urged Pace to work with local governments to make improvements to Pace's shelter program. Melinda agreed, adding that Pace is working with IDOT and shelter contractors to make improvements. Director Noak also agreed, talking about the need to work with IDOT to focus on other parts of the right-of-way, not simply roadways for cars.

Director Marcucci expressed his satisfaction hearing that Pace is successfully addressing the driver shortage. He asked how close Pace is to completely closing the operator shortage. Melinda said that after recent recruitment efforts, Pace will still be about 25% short, but that at the current rate, the gap could be closed by the end of year. Director Marcucci and Melinda then discussed the need for a recruitment program at College of DuPage. Director Marcucci closed his remarks by echoing the sentiments of Chairman Kwasneski and Director Noak regarding bus shelters.

Director Canning asked about the survey's data quality. Melinda replied that, compared to past surveys, Pace received a similar amount of responses despite fewer riders, meaning the data is reliable. Director Canning commented on demographic differences between the survey's respondents and riders in his part of the region, where ridership skews younger. Senior Market Research Analyst Richard Yao said the survey has been administered consistently and the results are statistically significant; the Board can make decisions confidently based on this data.

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), Collective Bargaining (2-C-2), and Employment Matters (2-C-1). Director Noak moved, and Director Marcucci seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote. All directors voted aye.

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Director Smith left the meeting at 11:20 a.m.

Reconvene

Chairman Kwasneski reconvened the open session of the Pace Board of Directors meeting at 11:36 a.m.

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

Directors virtually or telephonically present: Arfa, Guerin, Hastings, and McLeod.

Directors absent: Smith.

SBD #23-11 – Resolution approving the closed session meeting minutes of January 18, 2023.

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

SBD #23-12 – Ordinance approving action on Sang Ok Kim vs. Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority and Dave Morton, Cook County Case No. 2022 L 6529.

Director Wells 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, 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 Pace Board of Directors meeting.

Director Wells moved, and Director Soto seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed with a unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

The next regular meeting of the Pace Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, March 15, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. at Pace Corporate Headquarters, 550 West Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois.

Elissa Ledvort
Board Secretary, Board of Directors