



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 21, 2024

The Board of Directors of Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority, met in open session on Wednesday, February 21, 2024 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, Noak, Schielke, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski.

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

Directors absent: None.

SBD #24-04 – Resolution approving the open session meeting minutes of January 17, 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 a breakfast hosted by Pace, RTA, Metra, and CTA at the Illinois House of Representatives Stratton Building in Springfield a couple weeks ago. The event was well attended. Service board representatives had conversations with legislators about the

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*

RTA's "Transit is the Answer" strategic plan and recommendations from CMAP's PART study. Chairman Kwasneski reported having good conversations with legislators who were responsive to issues raised about consolidation of the transit agencies. The service boards also met with Democratic leadership, Republican leadership, IL State Representative Eva-Dina Delgado who carried the bill for PART in the House, and IL State Senator Ram Villivalam who carried the bill for PART in the Senate. All reported that 2024 is a year of information gathering. No draft bill on funding or governance will be emerging until January 2025. There will be hearings throughout the region during the summer after legislative session. The service boards stressed the need for informational meetings about the PART measures that the legislature is considering, because input is needed from the collar counties, suburban Cook County, and the City of Chicago.

Chairman Kwasneski reported that the McHenry County Council of Governments was also in Springfield to distribute a Resolution to legislators regarding the PART study and their concerns about consolidation of the transit agencies. Pace appreciates their support and messaging. Chairman Kwasneski encouraged local governments to speak to their legislators about PART because they are the ones who will be directly impacted by changes to transit governance.

Chairman Kwasneski reported that Pace hosted a legislative luncheon for the Will County Governmental League on the mezzanine level of Pace's Plainfield Garage. He praised staff for a great event, attended by over 125 people including Metra's Chair Romayne Brown, Executive Director Jim Derwinski, and Deputy Executive Director Janice Thomas. That same day, the Will County Governmental League passed a Resolution voicing concerns about consolidation of the transit agencies, which was discussed and well-heard by attendees. Pace staff led tours of the facility and discussed Pace's cooperative agreement with the Village of Plainfield to build it.

Finally, Chairman Kwasneski reported that the Kane County's Metro West Council of Government also passed a Resolution regarding the impacts of the PART study and concerns about consolidation of the transit agencies.

Directors' Reports

Director Arfa wished everyone a happy Black History Month.

Director McLeod apologized for not attending today's meeting in-person, as he presented a State of the Village address before the Hoffman Estates Chamber of Commerce.

Director Noak indicated his interest in attending any State of the Village address to support his colleagues on the Pace Board. Director Noak thanked staff for an amazing job on the luncheon for the Will County Governmental League. It was a great showcase for Pace – many different organizations shared photos of the event and praised Pace's new Plainfield facility and services. Director Noak believes more councils of government will pass resolutions on transit funding and governance in response to the PART study. He encouraged Directors to review proposed legislation to change the CMAP bylaws, and to change CMAP governance and funding

allocations from the state, which would significantly impact the region. Both bills are sponsored by the same sponsors as the PART study. One of the proposed changes affects the 4/5ths requirement to pass a measure and how that 4/5ths is determined.

Director Schielke reported on presenting cyber security programs to senior living communities, whose residents offered high praise for Kane County Dial-a-Ride service.

Director Smith reported that the McHenry County Council of Governments passed a Resolution regarding the PART study and their concerns about consolidation of the transit agencies. She complimented them for their consistent work advocating for local government over the years.

Director Soto reported that many municipal officials and residents praised the Round Lake Area On Demand expansion. Residents of Round Lake Heights reported a significant quality of life improvement. One couple considered moving but decided to stay in the area after service implementation. She thanked Pace staff and looks forward to seeing numbers grow. She reported that municipalities are publicizing the service well on their websites and in their newsletters.

Director Wells reported on the graduation ceremony of 17 South Suburban Community College CDL drivers, attended by Melinda and RTA Board Members Elizabeth Gorman and Michael Lewis. They had lunch after the ceremony and learned that most graduates were in their 30s or 40s looking for a career change with a good salary, good benefits, and room for advancement, which they found at Pace. Director Wells complimented Melinda and staff for developing a program to address a significant problem affecting the transit industry. Chairman Kwasneski wants to invite legislators and county officials to participate in future graduation ceremonies. He praised colleges for promoting Pace opportunities, saying the CDL program is good exposure for people to learn about community college services too.

Executive Director's Report

Melinda Metzger reported that Pace celebrated Black History Month, and the activists who fought for fair and accessible transportation, by holding virtual presentations from the DuSable Museum of African American History and the Pullman Porter Museum for employees.

Melinda reported on the CDL graduation ceremony at South Suburban College, saying partnerships with community colleges have helped people establish careers as professional bus operators and have helped Pace gain more employees. She thanked Director Wells for hosting the event as Chairman of the South Suburban College Board and a Pace Director, as well as the RTA and IDOT officials for attending.

Melinda reported that she, Chairman Kwasneski, and the Southwest operations team hosted U.S. Senator Dick Durbin, IL Senator Bill Cunningham, IL Representative Kelly Burke, and RTA Board Member Michael Lewis at the launch of Pace's first battery electric bus on fixed route. It will operate on Route 381 from the 95th Street CTA station to Moraine Valley Community College. The 2024 electric bus was on display alongside a 1949 GMC diesel bus from Pace's legacy fleet. Chairman Kwasneski praised the event for giving Pace good exposure throughout

the region. Numerous TV stations reported on the event, saying Pace is making good strides towards zero emissions.

Melinda reported on her trip to Springfield with the other service boards and Pace staff Doug Sullivan and Lorri Newson. They met with members of the Illinois General Assembly including Senator Villivalam, Senate President Harmon, Senate Republican Leader Curran, House Speaker Welch, Representative Delgado, and House Republican Leader McCombie. It was a good opportunity to show how Pace is a different transit agency than we were before Covid-19 by offering more innovative programs for our riders who are no longer making the daily commute downtown. Melinda will be in Springfield twice in April, for a House Appropriations meeting called by Representative Mayfield and for the Will County Governmental League. Chairman Kwasneski encouraged other Directors to attend.

Melinda reported on the Will County Governmental League luncheon at the Pace Plainfield garage, saying it was instrumental to continue Pace's relationships with local government and legislators. She thanked Chairman Kwasneski and Director Noak. Chairman Kwasneski praised the event for fostering good conversations between legislators, local officials, and attendees. Melinda thanked Pace Directors who worked with their local councils of government to pass Resolutions on PART. She encouraged Directors to continue working with organizations to pass more Resolutions because they will help Pace.

Melinda reported that today's meeting is a significant step towards making public transportation more accessible, convenient, and affordable for ADA riders. Starting February 19, individuals certified for ADA paratransit can now ride Pace fixed route buses for free. Sally Williams, Pace Regional Manager of ADA Paratransit, will present on the Rideshare Access Program ("RAP"), which will operate much like TAP in the City of Chicago but for the entire six-county region ADA service area. Pace has wanted to expand TAP from the City of Chicago out to the suburbs for years, but there has not been enough taxi service to allow that. TNCs now made this possible. Providing additional travel options that increase flexibility remains a top priority when evaluating the services Pace offers.

Melinda thanked the Directors who met with the consultant for ReVision, Pace's systemwide network revitalization initiative. The next step is to hold focus groups and surveys for Pace employees, including bus operators who know the routes better than anyone else. After that, Pace will seek public engagement from local communities and legislators.

Melinda reported on Million Miler Mondays, a social media campaign that recognizes operator employees who have excelled in safe driving. CTA praised the campaign. Melinda thanked Maggie Daly-Skogsbakken and the Communications team for generating positive press.

Melinda reported that since the last board meeting, Pace extended 81 offers to candidates at Hire on the Spot events and has 10 more events planned at community colleges through May.

Melinda reported that the year-to-date budget for Suburban and ADA service is positive. Overall systemwide ridership in January 2024 is up 10.5% over January 2023. When accounting for the extra weekday in 2024, ridership is still up 6.5% despite extreme cold and snow. Chairman Kwasneski said that we stressed to legislators that the service boards have been good stewards of federal Covid relief money compared to other agencies across the country, who will run out of

funding this year. The service boards have been able to stretch their dollars through 2026 by creating innovative services where possible to give the General Assembly more time to figure out how to fund and expand the system going forward. This also allows the service boards and the State of Illinois to learn from transit agencies in other regions who will need to address funding issues sooner than us.

Melinda reported that Pace has its first electric paratransit bus onsite at the board meeting today. Pace will start experimenting with that vehicle out of River Division in Elgin.

Director Marcucci stressed the need to include Pace's social media campaigns in municipal print and online newsletters. He said reporters are always looking for material. He praised the Million Miler Mondays campaign for celebrating employees while also showing how Pace has great benefits and enjoyable jobs.

Items removed from the Consent Agenda

None.

Approval of Consent Agenda

SBD #24-05 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to Galls, LLC for the Off-the-Shelf Uniform Program for Pace divisions in an amount not to exceed \$2,741,321.45.

Director Soto moved, and Director Wells 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 #24-06 – Ordinance restating and amending Ordinance SBD #22-55 authorizing the award of a five-year sole source contract to Trapeze Software Group, Inc., for the purchase, installation, and integration of Sierra Wireless MG90 gateway routers for fixed route service in an amount not to exceed \$644,166.00.

Jane Swider, Chief Procurement Officer, 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

Sally Williams, Regional Manager of ADA Paratransit, presented on the rollout of the Rideshare Access Program ("RAP"), which provides a \$30 subsidy for ADA paratransit customers to use TNC services like Lyft, Uber, and UZURV. The service parameters are much like TAP in the

City of Chicago: \$2 fare, \$30 subsidy, a maximum of 8 trips/day, and services available in the ADA service area. Both TAP and RAP are available to City of Chicago customers, but they must choose one or the other. Sally displayed graphs and stats showing the increase of customer choice programs over time. In 2023, 32% of Chicago ADA trips were performed on TAP and 68% of ADA trips were performed on dedicated ADA vehicles. In 2023, 46% of DuPage ADA trips were performed on TNCs/DuPage Uber Access pilot and 54% of trips were performed on dedicated ADA vehicles.

Melinda explained that access to dedicated ADA paratransit service does not change and will always be available to ADA-registered riders, RAP and TAP gives riders an additional option. ADA service is back to pre-pandemic levels with less drivers in the system, so RAP and TAP takes some people off the system while leaving paratransit more available for those that need it.

Director Arfa thanked paratransit staff for the incredible amount of work launching RAP. You can tell by the numbers that people are embracing customer choice programs. She looks forward to hearing more feedback from riders.

Director Noak commented that it's nice to see encouraging numbers so early in a program.

Chairman Kwasneski asked for more details on the deployment timeline. Current users of the DuPage Uber Access Program need to be moved over to the new platform because their program is ending and transitioning to RAP, starting February 26. On March 11, RAP will be deployed to the entire six-county region. Pace's Marketing team is working hard on notifying registered ADA, TAP, and DuPage Uber Access riders via text and mailers.

Chairman Kwasneski praised RAP and TAP for improving the quality of life for ADA riders by giving them the flexibility to take a trip without a reservation. He wants to make sure RAP is well-publicized to county boards to demonstrate that Pace is serving a need for residents and constituencies in the region. Melinda discussed how RAP opens better opportunities for Pace to provide vouchers to counties for those residents that fall outside the RTA service area. Chairman Kwasneski said RAP could be a great model for smaller transit agencies throughout the State. Some rural areas have less TNC service than others, but if Pace is creating a demand, those companies will gain more drivers in their system.

Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:32 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, Soto, Wells, and Chairman Kwasneski.

Directors telephonically present: Hastings, McLeod, Smith.

Directors absent: None.

SBD #24-07 – Resolution approving the closed session meeting minutes of December 20, 2023.

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

SBD #24-08 – Ordinance approving action on Arturo DeJesus Rocha Carrizalez vs. Nicola M. Capozzi and Pace vs. South Water Signs, LLC. Cook County Case No. 2020 L 3581.

Director Noak moved, and Director Canning 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 Pace Board of Directors meeting. Director Noak moved, and Director Schielke seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. 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, March 20, 2024 at 9:30 a.m. at Pace Corporate Headquarters, 550 West Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois.

Elissa Ledvort
Board Secretary, Board of Directors