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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 26, 2024

The Board of Directors of Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Regional Transportation Authority, met in open session on Wednesday, June 26, 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 9:34 a.m.

Roll Call

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

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

Directors absent: None.

SBD #24-36 – Resolution approving the open session meeting minutes of May 15, 2024.

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

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 Kwasneski reported that he, Melinda Metzger, and Doug Sullivan are having conversations with legislators regarding funding for transit. He appreciates their support on providing better service for the region.

Chairman Kwasneski introduced Representative Rita Mayfield, who presented Pace with HB 816 adopted on May 22, 2024 by the Illinois General Assembly. She said she was honored to be here as a former Pace employee, described her career path, and thanked Pace for investing in and taking a chance on her. She thanked Pace for everything they do to connect people with work, especially for making sure low income workers and suburbanites can get from point A to point B and that young people are able to catch the bus to school or their first jobs.

Directors' Reports

Director Arfa thanked Rep. Mayfield for speaking about her connection to Pace. She praised the "Pace Pioneers" who have worked at Pace all 40 years for their incredible service to the region.

Director Canning thanked Rep. Mayfield for her comments and shared his experience riding Wilbus, a Pace predecessor, to his first job. He said Pace is important to young people and essential workers. He thanked the Pace Pioneers for making the organization what it is today.

Director Carr reported on the year-end audit reports contained in the board packet and highlighted that no material weaknesses were found.

Director Guerin congratulated Pace on 40 years and thanked the Pace Pioneers in the audience.

Director Marcucci expressed his gratitude for the resolution from the state legislature and thanked Rep. Mayfield for her time and her powerful statement about what Pace meant to her and what services mean to other people. He congratulated Rep. Mayfield on her success.

Director McLeod thanked the Pace Pioneers and all Pace employees and board members for their hard work over the last 40 years. He thanked Rep. Mayfield for her powerful personal testimony on the importance of Pace connecting people with jobs and schools.

Director Noak thanked Rep. Mayfield.

Director Schielke congratulated employees on 40 years and thanked Rep. Mayfield. He also reported on tremendous population growth in Kane and McHenry counties, particularly in Batavia, Geneva, St. Charles, Huntley, Hampshire, and Pingree Grove. He reported that 900 new residences will be built in Batavia and 2800 single-family lots have been annexed and zoned in Hampshire, and they sell fast. Many new residents are coming from the City of Chicago. He believes this will impact Pace and there will be a great need for Pace Dial-a-Ride in years ahead.

Director Smith thanked Rep. Mayfield for presenting the resolution and thanked the Pace Pioneers for their meaningful dedication to the work and commitment to our riders.

Director Soto thanked Rep. Mayfield, a Lake County resident. She is grateful as we move into a pivotal time regarding funding and issues of governance and consolidation, that Rep. Mayfield has extensive understanding of how mass transit works. Director Soto thanked the Pace Pioneers, saying not many organizations have this many employees who put in the time that they have.

Director Wells welcomed Rep. Mayfield back to Pace and thanked her for the resolution. He appreciated meeting the Pace Pioneers and congratulated all employees on 40 years.

Executive Director's Report

For Pace's 40th Anniversary, Melinda Metzger shared Pace's history. When the RTA Act formed the suburban bus division called Pace, Pace inherited independent bus companies which each had different operating rules. In 1984, American Transit Enterprises (ATE) operated four companies under a contract with the RTA. That contract transferred over to Pace creating North, West, South, and Southwest Divisions. Pace subsequently took over two mass transit districts, Joliet Mass Transit District and North Suburban Mass Transit District (Nortran), creating Heritage and Northwest Divisions. Pace then acquired two city-operated agencies in Aurora and Elgin, creating Fox Valley and River Divisions. Finally, Pace acquired the Village of Wilmette's bus system, Wilbus, creating North Shore Division. Melinda showed Pace videos from the 1980's, including a safety instruction video led by Joy Callahan, Pace's first female bus operator.

Melinda reported on how Pace's family of services grew and project by project, Pace established its presence throughout the six-county service area:

- In the 1980's, Pace replaced its aging fleet using extensive customer feedback to develop new bus equipment specifications, which are now a national standard.
- In the 1990's, Pace launched Vanpool, built park-n-rides, and opened regional transportation hubs.
- In 2006, Pace became the sole provider of ADA paratransit for the entire region. Pace now has one of the largest Vanpool and ADA paratransit programs in the country. Pace fixed/computerized the manual paper system of ADA trip-planning that we inherited.
- In 2011, Illinois state law gave Pace a competitive advantage over cars on expressways. In partnership with IDOT, Illinois State Police, and RTA, Pace implemented Bus on Shoulder service on I-55 Stevenson and expanded to I-90 Edens in a flex lane. Pace hopes to further expand to I-294 as part of the Illinois Tollway's Tri-State construction.
- In 2019, Pace launched its Pulse bus rapid transit (BRT) program along Milwaukee Ave., utilizing transit signal priority (TSP), which extends green lights and shortens reds to help keep buses on schedule. Since then, Pace launched Pulse Dempster and has more Pulse lines planned for 95th Street, Halstead, and Cermak.
- Pace expanded On Demand, which provides reservation-based service in 10 designated zones throughout the region.
- Pace implemented VanGo, which allows commuters to reserve a Pace-owned van at Metra and CTA stations and use them for a flexible first mile/last mile option.
- Pace incorporated transit network companies (TNCs) like Uber and UZURV to augment paratransit service and allow additional capacity and flexibility for our riders.

- Since March 2020, Pace has used historic levels of capital funding to modernize and upgrade facilities, including the Joliet Transportation Center, the Plainfield Garage, the Northwest Transportation Center, South Campus, and the Harvey Transportation Center.
- In 2021 as part of our strategic vision plan *Driving Innovation*, Pace committed to converting our fleet to zero emission vehicles by 2040. We are well on our way to achieving that goal through our Project Zero initiative. Pace's inaugural electric bus was put into service on Route 381 along 95th Street in January this year. Pace received its first electric paratransit vehicle this spring.
- Pace has leveraged technology to improve service, including the implementation of intelligent bus system (IBS) in the early 2000's, transit signal priority, TripCheck, which allows paratransit riders to check the location of their vehicle, and Ventra-faring.

Melinda concluded by saying that Pace's history is rich with achievements and praised the Pace employees who work quickly and effectively to do the impossible in times of need. She described how Pace provided emergency support to CTA and Metra during the floods in the 1990s and as well as during Hurricane Katrina, below-zero temperatures, and the 2020 pandemic. There has never been a time when Pace has not shown up.

Melinda reported on an event with Congressman Sean Casten to unveil Pace's first electric paratransit bus, secured by Rep. Casten with community project funding.

Melinda reported on how Pace supported the communities we serve at summer events. Pace participated in the Elgin Pride Parade, the Aurora Pride Parade, River Grove's Front Fest with our 1949 GMC bus, Orland Hills Touch a Truck, Evergreen Park's Fourth of July event, the DuSable Museum of African American History's Juneteenth event, and Chicago's Disability Pride Parade. Pace also sponsored the red carpet at Access Living's gala. Pace shared recruitment information at these events. Pace has extended 96 offers to candidates at Hire-on-the-Spot events since the last board meeting.

Melinda reported that the YTD budget performance through April is favorable for both suburban and ADA paratransit service. In May, Pace carried over 2 million riders, which is the highest monthly ridership experienced since the pandemic. Average weekday ridership is 81,000 riders, which is about 81% of pre-Covid levels. Average weekday ridership on ADA paratransit is 5.1% over pre-Covid levels. Pace is carrying more ADA riders with less drivers because we are increasing capacity with TNCs.

Items removed from the Consent Agenda

None.

Approval of Consent Agenda

SBD #24-37 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to Design Developers & Rehub, Inc. for installation of concrete pads for bus stop shelters in an amount not to exceed \$6,808,460.00.

SBD #24-38 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to K Plus Mechanical, TBS

Corporation for underground storage tank containment sump testing services at 10 Pace facilities in an amount not to exceed \$1,048,181.08.

SBD #24-39 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a sole source contract to Parsons Transportation Group, Inc. for software hosting, repair and maintenance of signs and screens, and the provision of media players for bus tracker signs in an amount not to exceed \$1,645,800.00.

Director Schielke moved, and Director Smith 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 #24-40 – Ordinance authorizing Board Member travel and business expenses for May 2024 pursuant to Public Act 099-0604 Local Government Travel Expense Control Act – Richard Kwasneski.

Director Soto 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. Chairman Kwasneski abstained. All other directors voted aye.

SBD #24-41 – Ordinance authorizing acceptance of the Annual Year End Financial Audit Reports for the year ended December 31, 2023.

Sebastian Dabrowski, Senior Audit Supervisor from Baker Tilly, presented. Director Schielke highlighted the part of the presentation that mentioned the dwindling federal ARPA covid relief funds, which will be affecting many government bodies later this year or next year.

Director Wells moved, and Director Soto 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 #24-42 – Ordinance authorizing Pace’s Executive Director to execute 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 (“RDP”).

Erik Llewellyn, Chief Planning Officer, presented. Chairman Kwasneski praised the service

boards' work on a universal fare for customers to seamlessly use the services provided by each agency at a reduced rate. Director Canning asked questions about the price of the RDP for potential travelling scenarios, demonstrating that the RDP is cheaper than driving a car from the suburbs and parking in Chicago. Chairman Kwasneski wants all the service boards to promote the RDP pilot well because it's hard for people to understand Metra's pricing by zone.

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 #24-43 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to DemandTrans Solutions, Inc. for Mobility on Demand Software as a Service (SaaS) for Pace On Demand services in an amount not to exceed \$255,000.00.

Dimitre Guenov, Associate Planner, presented.

Director Schielke moved, and Director Soto 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. Director Canning abstained. All other directors voted aye.

SBD #24-44 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a sole source contract to Econolite Systems, Inc. for Proof of Concept Testing of Centralized Transit Signal Priority (TSP) system in an amount not to exceed \$1,999,350.00.

Lindsey Umek, Chief Operating Officer, presented.

- Director Canning asked if the contract expands the same TSP technology used by Pulse. Lindsey explained that they are different: Pulse TSP requires equipment to be installed on the buses and at the intersection, a direct bus to intersection communication. Under this contract, Pace will integrate with IDOT's TSP system, thus reducing the infrastructure installed at the intersection.
- Director Marcucci and Lindsey clarified that Pace is not controlling IDOT's TSP. Rather, Pace is sending a request to IDOT and IDOT incorporates that request into their traffic signal rotation (bus to IDOT, then IDOT to intersection). A decision is made in seconds.
- Chairman Kwasneski asked if police and fire departments use IDOT's TSP system. Melinda explained that Pace will always have lower priority than first responders and railroads. This contract allows Pace to test IDOT's TSP for delays from bus to IDOT.
- Director Marcucci pointed out that Pace's use of TSP on Pulse requires putting equipment on the bus and at the intersection, hundreds of times down a main thoroughfare. If this pilot works, it will be an easier, cheaper, quicker, and more efficient way to expand TSP throughout our system, without having to install extra equipment.

Director McLeod 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. All directors voted aye.

SBD #24-45 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a sole source contract to Trapeze Software Group, Inc. dba Vontas for TransitMaster Transit Signal Priority (TSP) software customization in an amount not to exceed \$435,113.00.

Lindsey Umek presented.

Director Marcucci 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 #24-46 – Ordinance authorizing Change Order No. 1 to Contract Nos. 227811, 227989, 227813, 227810, 227878, and 227879 with 303, LLC, Blue Ribbon Taxi Association, Inc., Freedom 1st Transportation, LLC, Itasca Services, Inc., DBA Alliance Taxi, Ride X Corp., and SCR Medical Transportation, Inc., respectively, for the continuation of taxicab/livery services for as needed Paratransit service. This change order increases the contract total from \$95,227,756.00 to \$279,720,061.00, an increase of \$184,492,305.00.

Sally Williams, Regional Manager of Paratransit and Vanpool, presented.

- Director Smith pointed out that the change order doubles the contract, but it's a cost effective way to respond to the driver shortage and fulfill responsibilities to our riders. Pace did not anticipate the rapid increase in ridership and the driver shortage related to Covid, thus creating the need for further increasing Pace's capacity with taxis and TNCs.
- Director Canning asked if Pace was happy with vendor performance given the high cost of the contract. Melinda explained that riders appreciate getting an individual trip when a taxi is assigned out. Pace appreciates the flexibility in assigning work; if a vendor is not doing well, Pace will not assign trips to them.
- Director Arfa similarly wants Pace to keep the feedback loop open and monitor issues that may arise to make sure we are meeting rider expectations.
- Chairman Kwasneski clarified that this contract is for contracted taxi service for ADA paratransit, when you call the call center and get assigned a taxi instead of a paratransit bus (riders must consent to getting assigned a taxi). This is separate from contracted TNC service for ADA paratransit, or the user-side subsidy programs TAP and RAP.

Director Marcucci left the meeting at 10:52 a.m. He returned to the meeting at 10.55 a.m.

Director McLeod moved, and Director Soto 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 #24-47 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to Mythics, LLC for Oracle Cloud

Fusion Software as a Service (SaaS) implementation and support in an amount not to exceed \$14,762,561.12.

Scott Kinsella, Chief Information Officer, presented. He explained that the big change is Pace servers, storage, and networks will be provided by the vendor and Pace will subscribe to use it. Pace will have a lower dependence on our ability to maintain and support equipment, which will allow Pace to focus and the most appropriate use of software.

Director Wells 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. Director Smith abstained. All other directors voted aye.

Issues/Discussion/Reports

Erik Llewellyn presented on August 2024 Service Changes and Pilots:

- Route 330 – additional weekday evening service*
- Route 330 – expanded Saturday service
- Route 331 – expanded Saturday service and new Sunday/holiday service
- Routes 755, 850, 851, 855 along I-55 – expanded weekday service

*Does not rise to the level of a major service change, therefore no action needs to be taken by the Board. If the other pilot projects are successful, the Board will vote to make changes permanent.

Chairman Kwasneski discussed I-55 express services and past issues with crowding and standing room only, the unpredictability of peak days due to work from home policies, riders' frustration that services were cut due to driver shortages, and the importance of listening to our riders. He applauded staff for finding a way to bring back service. He asked what Pace is doing to let riders know about the service expansions. Melinda reported that Pace will reach out to riders on these routes personally with transit ambassadors, distribute flyers on buses, send texts and emails to riders who have subscribed to alerts for specific routes, and send letters to mayors and legislators to let them know that Pace is adding back service.

Director Arfa is glad that the I-55 service expansion includes the Illinois Medical District and UIC, saying it's a good opportunity to expand different ways that people can get to that area.

Director Guerin is excited about the expansion of Routes 330 and 331, saying they are major arteries that go through many communities that will be well-used and appreciated by riders.

Director Soto left the meeting at 11:19 a.m. She returned to the meeting at 11:22 a.m.

Director Schielke left the meeting at 11:23 a.m. He returned to the meeting at 11:26 a.m.

Director Smith left the meeting at 11:27 a.m. She returned to the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

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 employment matters (2-C-1). Director Guerin moved and Director Schielke seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote. All directors voted aye.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:31 a.m.

Reconvene

Chairman Kwasneski reconvened the open session of the Pace Board of Directors meeting at 12:17 p.m.

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

Directors telephonically present: Hastings.

Directors absent: Director Noak.

SBD #24-48 – Resolution approving the closed session meeting minutes of April 17, 2024.

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

SBD #24-49 – Ordinance approving that the closed session minutes of May 17, 2023, August 16, 2023, November 8, 2023, and December 20, 2023 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, September 15, 2021, November 10, 2021, March 16, 2022, August 17, 2022, June 21, 2023, and October 18, 2023 are not available for public inspection.

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. Director Noak was not present for the roll call vote. All other directors voted aye.

SBD #24-50 – Ordinance that the verbatim records of the closed sessions for August 17, 2022, September 21, 2022, November 9, 2022, and December 21, 2022 shall be destroyed.

Director Smith 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. Director Noak was not present for the roll call vote. All other directors voted aye.

SBD #24-51 – Ordinance approving action on Franchot Tillison v. Pace; Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission case number 14 WC 028901.

Director Marcucci 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. Director Noak was not present for the roll call vote. All other directors voted aye.

SBD #24-52 – Ordinance approving a merit increase for the Executive Director for the year 2023.

Director Guerin 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. Director Noak was not present for the roll call vote and Director Hastings voted nay. All other directors voted aye.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Kwasneski asked for a motion and second to adjourn the meeting. Director Schielke moved, and Director Soto seconded a motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote; all Directors voted aye. The meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Pace Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, August 21, 2024 at 9:30 a.m. at Pace Corporate Headquarters, 550 West Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois.

Elissa Ledvort
Board Secretary, Board of Directors