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Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Northern Illinois Transit Authority
(f/k/a the Regional Transportation Authority)
550 West Algonquin Road
Arlington Heights, Illinois
Minutes of the Open Session Meeting of the Pace Board of Directors
June 17, 2026

The Board of Directors of Pace, the Suburban Bus Division of the Northern Illinois Transit Authority (f/k/a Regional Transportation Authority) ("Pace"), met in open session on Wednesday, June 17, 2026 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 9:32 a.m.

Roll Call

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

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

Directors absent: Noak and Wells.

Director Noak joined the meeting in person at 9:38 a.m.

SBD #26-41 – **Resolution** approving the open session meeting minutes of May 20, 2026.

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

Chairman Kwasneski reported that he, Executive Director Melinda Metzger, and Manager of External Relations Doug Sullivan were in Springfield during the last week of the legislative session where they had good conversations about the NITA Act. This session, the Illinois General Assembly passed a trailer bill that includes technical corrections to the NITA legislation passed last year.

Chairman Kwasneski reported that Congressman Jesus "Chuy" Garcia visited Pace West Division. Pace is grateful for the Congressman's funding support over the years for TSP projects.

Chairman Kwasneski encouraged the public to watch "NITA Takes Effect: What Comes Next for Regional Transit," a virtual conversation sponsored by the Union League Club of Chicago. The event will be moderated by Chairman Kirk Dillard of the NITA. Panelists include Senator Ram Villivalam, Representative Eva-Dina Delgado, Senator Seth Lewis, and NITA Deputy Director of Planning and Capital Programming Maulik Vaishnav. Chairman Kwasneski reported that Melinda is attending meetings with the Governor's Office and service boards to talk through the NITA transition, which will continue through the summer.

Directors' Reports

Director Carr reported that the NITA Act requires all the service boards to annually prepare financial statements that are audited by an independent certified public accounting firm. As the Pace Board Audit Liaison, Director Carr was interviewed by external auditors Crowe, LLP, who will present the results of the 2025 financial audits that were completed. The audit yielded no negative findings and auditors commented on how easy it was to work with Pace staff.

Director Marcucci reported on speaking with executives from Hamilton Partners real estate developers regarding how they employ driverless cars to connect their employees from the Metra station to their office across the interstate. He also mentioned the Waymo autonomous vehicle service at the Phoenix Airport. He recalled that Pace was investigating autonomous vehicles years ago, and suggested that Pace keep this technology in mind as a cost-effective option in the future.

Chairman Kwasneski confirmed that Pace met with a company several years regarding small autonomous vehicle buses, with a capacity for six people, to test in a closed environment such as junior college campuses. Pace was uncertain that the technology could work at that time. He acknowledged that it is a technology that everyone must consider in the future. There are places where driverless vehicles could complement bus service. He encouraged staff and directors to take advantage of opportunities to learn more at the APTA conference.

Director Noak arrived at the meeting in person at 9:38 a.m.

Director Schielke reported that Geneva, St. Charles, Batavia, Elburn, and Sugar Grove in Kane County are exploding in population and that many senior living communities are being built. New residents report that the Pace Dial-a-Ride service is one of the driving forces attracting people to the area, as well as the good hospitals and strong paramedic, fire, and police services. Successors to the Pace Board must advocate keeping Pace Dial-a-Ride service on the street, because there will be an increasing demand for the service as more seniors move to Kane County.

Executive Director's Report

Melinda reported that Pace participated in pride parades in Elgin and Aurora, reinforcing Pace's commitment to inclusion and connection, and reflecting Pace's efforts to foster an environment where employees and riders feel respected, welcomed, and supported.

Melinda reported that in May, she participated in the Global Accessibility Awareness Day celebration held by Director Arfa and the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, in which companies demonstrated the technology they have available to assist people with disabilities.

Melinda reported that Pace welcomed Congressman Garcia on a tour of the West Division garage. Pace highlighted the agency's service investments and reinforced the impact of federal support on suburban communities. Congressman Garcia has awarded Pace three community project funding grants during his tenure. Congressman Garcia presented Pace a resolution that he shared on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives to honor Pace's decades of service to the region, and Pace's commitment to future innovations, improvements, and expansion of services.

Melinda reported that four separate Pace projects sponsored by Congressman Garcia, Congressman Krishnamoorthi, Congressman Quigley, and Congresswoman Underwood advanced out the House Appropriations Committee and now move forward in the federal budget process. Each of the grants includes a matching funds requirement.

Melinda reported that each Pace division is recognizing the significance of Juneteenth. Furthermore, Pace staff and Pace's historic 1949 GMC bus will be at the DuSable Black History Museum for their Juneteenth celebration on Friday, and at the Obama Presidential Center grand opening on Saturday and Sunday. Pace is coordinating with regional partners on communications and service planning related to the new Obama Presidential Center, as public transportation will be key for Chicago area visitors travelling to Hyde Park. Pace offers multiple connections to Metra and CTA for suburban fixed route customers, including the I-55 bus on shoulder express, which provides a direct link to downtown and allows riders to transfer to CTA.

Melinda reported that on June 23, Pace will hold an event to celebrate the introduction of 23 hybrid buses into Pace's fleet at Heritage Division in Plainfield, sponsored by Director Noak. Pace continues to make progress towards its zero emission goals by using clean energy hybrid vehicles on local routes in Will County.

Melinda reported that on June 25, Pace will host a ribbon cutting to celebrate the new Van Go at the Pingree Road Metra station in Crystal Lake. She discussed how the new Van Go service will improve access to employment and opportunity. The event is sponsored by Director Smith. Van Go supports the goals of NITA and Pace's commitment to strengthening integration with Metra and CTA services.

Melinda reported that in May, the Illinois General Assembly passed a trailer bill that includes technical corrections to the NITA legislation passed last year. The new structure for all four boards will take effect September 1; Pace awaits final appointments to the boards. The Illinois General Assembly also passed its FY27 budget, which includes the traditional appropriations to Pace and the NITA system. The FY27 budget specifically includes $11.5 million to subsidize ADA paratransit operations and $23.1 million to subsidize the region's reduced and free fare offerings. These funds are in addition to new money dedicated to the transit system per the NITA Act.

Melinda reported that Pace welcomed 17 summer interns this year from communities and colleges across the region. Melinda thanked their supervisors for investing in the next generation of transit professionals. Pace looks forward to supporting their growth in public service.

Melinda reported on ridership. In May, the Pace system provided over 2 million rides, which is 70% of pre-pandemic levels. As discussed previously, ridership figures are preliminary estimates due to ongoing issues with Ventra mobile validators and fare evasion. To capture complete ridership data, Pace is replacing mobile validators and has started measuring fare evasion and by asking bus operators to key in when a rider refuses to pay a fare. In April, Pace found that 1.3% of cash fares were not paid. In May, Pace found the number of fares not paid increased to 5.2%. Pace continues to measure the effect that these issues are having on the Pace system.

Melinda reported that for the eight routes in which Pace implemented pilot service improvements since 2025, Pace observed that ridership increased an average of 13.1%. Notably Route 315, which was extended to the CTA Orange Line Midway station with additional hours, saw a 42% increase in weekday ridership, a 75.5% increase on Saturdays, and a 111% increase on Sundays since March 2026 when the service was added. These investments made by Pace in new service are working. Pace will continue to add service with every run pick.

Melinda reported that Pace is working with the NITA to update TAP and RAP accounts for 1,900 riders who requested an increase to their monthly trip cap from 30 to 40 trips. Once a rider requests an increase in their TAP and RAP monthly trip cap, there is typically one-month processing time before a rider will receive the increase in monthly trips. Pace expects to see an increase in TAP and RAP usage.

Melinda reported that Pace hosted 8 Hire-on-the-Spot events at Pace headquarters and South Campus, which drew 242 candidates and resulted in 56 offers. Pace currently has 10% fewer drivers than required to meet its service needs. Pace will continue to hire so it can continue to add more service.

Melinda reported that suburban service is favorable to budget by $20.6 million and ADA paratransit is favorable to budget by $14.2 million. Pace continues to monitor fuel expenses given the volatility of the market. This week diesel is at $3.53 per gallon, compared to $4.72 per gallon in May. Pace is hopeful that the market is stabilizing. Pace anticipates ending the year overbudget on fuel but has funding available to cover the overage.

Approval of Consent Agenda

SBD #26-42 – Ordinance authorizing Change Order No. 4 to Contract No. 233687 with John Burns Construction Company for construction of the Northwest Transportation Center ADA transfer facility. The change order extends the Contract for four months and increases the Contract total from $6,644,011.63 to $6,707,464.44, an increase of $63,452.81.

SBD #26-43 – Ordinance adopting updates to Pace Advertising Guidelines, revised and effective June 17, 2026.

Director Noak 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, and Chairman Kwasneski.
All directors voted aye.

Action Items

SBD #26-44 – Ordinance authorizing Board Member and Corporate Authority travel and business expenses for April and May 2026 pursuant to Public Act 099-0604 Local Government Travel Expense Control Act – Richard Kwasneski, Melinda Metzger, and Douglas Sullivan.

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

SBD #26-45 – Ordinance authorizing the acceptance of the Annual Year End Financial Audit Reports for the year ended December 31, 2025.

Melinda recognized Laura LaDuke, Pace Accounting Manager, for over 25 years of service; Pace has not had an audit finding since 2016. Hollis Hanson-Pollock, partner with Pace's external auditor Crowe, LLP, presented a clean unmodified opinion on the audit of annual financial statements and federal grant expenditures. Crowe, LLP will submit the single audit and annual financial report to the federal government and grant information to the state, aligned with NTD reporting.

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 Chairman Kwasneski.
All directors voted aye.

SBD #26-46 – Ordinance amending the 2026 Suburban Operating Budget (Operating Amendment #1). This amendment adds NITA (successor in interest to the RTA) Discretionary Sales Tax Funding in the amount of $8,500,000 for the installation of upgraded security barriers on fixed route buses and labor and fringe expenses for increased support staff at Pace divisions in preparation for expanded night and weekend service hours.

Melanie Castle, Department Manager of Budget Planning & Analysis, explained that this funding is generated from new funding streams authorized by the NITA Act, and described how the service boards submitted requests for operating funding initiatives that were vetted by NITA staff based on a focus on public safety, alignment with NITA Act priorities, and immediate 2026 need that could not be met at previous funding levels.

Director Canning asked when the new bus security shields will be installed and when additional personnel will be hired. Melinda reported that Pace is meeting with unions as part of the NITA safety committee to determine what kind of security barrier they would like to see used to replace the germ barriers installed during the pandemic. Melinda reported that Pace is discussing distribution of the job postings today to hire additional personnel to allow for late night and weekend service.

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, and Chairman Kwasneski.
All directors voted aye.

SBD #26-47 – Ordinance authorizing the award of a contract to Clever Devices, Ltd. for an upgrade to the CleverInsights cloud-based software platform with a three-year Software as a Service Agreement in an amount not to exceed $582,511.46.00.

Scott Kinsella, Chief Information Officer, reported that Clever Devices is ending support for their on-premises based software and transitioning customers to their cloud-based successor. The software is used to collect automatic passenger counter ("APC") information, which is critical to service planning and budgeting. Next year, Pace staff will develop methodology for using APCs in official ridership reporting, which aligns with CTA's recent adoption of APCs, resulting in more consistent regional reporting. Director Canning and Scott Kinsella discussed how payments are based on performance against milestones to ensure full software functionality.

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, and Chairman Kwasneski.

All directors voted aye.

Issues/Discussion/Reports

Chairman Kwasneski encouraged Directors to review the April 2026 budget reports and financial statements contained in their packets, and to reach out to staff with questions.

Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Reconvene

Chairman Kwasneski reconvened the open session of the Pace Board of Directors meeting at 10:21 a.m.

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

Directors virtually present: Arfa and Hastings.

Directors absent: Wells.

SBD #26-48 – Resolution approving the closed session meeting minutes of May 20, 2026.

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

SBD #26-49 – Ordinance approving that the closed session minutes of March 20, 2024 and September 17, 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, June 26, 2024, September 18, 2024, November 13, 2024, November 12, 2025, December 10, 2025, and February 18, 2026 are not available for public inspection.

Director Marcucci 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, and Chairman Kwasneski.
All directors voted aye.

SBD #26-50 – Ordinance approving that the verbatim records of the closed session minutes for June 26, 2024, September 18, 2024, October 16, 2024, November 13, 2024, and December 11, 2024, 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 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, 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 Soto moved, and Director Noak seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote; all Directors voted aye. The meeting adjourned at 10:24 a.m.

The next regular meeting of the Pace Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, July 15, 2026 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