

PITTSBURGH REGIONAL TRANSIT
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2025

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT) was held on Friday, November 21, 2025, at PRT's Administrative Offices, 345 Sixth Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 15222-2527, pursuant to due public notice given as required by law.

The following Board members were in attendance in person: Jennifer Liptak, Chair, Bobbie Fan, Joseph Totten, Tom Burgunder and Laura Ainsman Sohinki. The following members participated via TEAMS: Emma Shoucair, Dr. Chris Brussalis, Senator Lindsey Williams, Tia McClenney, Rep. Aerion Abney and Stephanie Turman. The Board Solicitor was represented in person by Sandy Garfinkel and Amanda Kraft.

The Chair called the Regular Meeting to order.

A recommendation was made for approval of the minutes of the October 24, 2025 Regular Meeting. A motion was made, seconded, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

The Chair called on Pittsburgh Regional Transit CEO Katharine Kelleman for a report.

Ms. Kelleman requested a moment of silence for the retired employees who have passed away since the end of August: Operators Gary Bruce, Dale Chasky, Ronald Defelice, Robert Ferguson, Howard Kopelic, Paul M. Schuster Jr., and Glenn Troupe; Dispatcher John Finnegan; Automotive Mechanics Robert Aitken, Richard Bagley, Joseph Devlin, Frank Rodriguez and Dwight Wright; Machinist George T. Brown; Heavy Equipment Operator Maintainer Thomas Astle; Instructor Dennis Martin; Seat and Sign Repairperson Charles Jefferson; Assistant Director of Bus and Rail Training Tonya Starz; Garage Attendant Leo Pollack; Sign Painter Ilene Grando; First Line Supervisor Robert F. Wessol. PRT also lost two active employees: Infrastructure Support Technician Jeff Zito and Operator Darren Morris.

Ms. Kelleman continued with an update on the Mount Washington Tunnel. After the delay in opening, she was now comfortable identifying that the opening would occur during late December. She wanted to clarify that once the tunnel repair is complete, PRT will then have to complete inspections and then PRT will be training staff.

Next, Ms. Kelleman announced that Governor Shapiro signed the 2025-26 state budget, which ended the 135-day impasse and noted the conclusion of the budget process brings a lot of relief around the Commonwealth. So, she conveyed that while PRT is very happy for friends in the Commonwealth who have been waiting on this funding security to be able to move forward, the approval of this budget does not end the conversation regarding funding for transit. She identified that although the governor proposed several times over the past two years to increase funding for transit, this did not make it into the budget, and PRT has shared that it is making its budget during the next two years by utilizing over \$100 million in capital funds as operating funds, putting it together with reserves and covering PRT service for the next two years without an increase in transit funding.

She described that the decision not to provide additional funding for transit has consequences, not just for PRT, but for the 1.7 million Pennsylvanians who rely on transit every year. She stated that although transit is essential, but it's not inevitable and it needs reliable long-term funding to exist.

She stated “So, where this leaves us is last year in the face of rising costs and a frozen funding structure, we warned what a lack of investment would look like. Our legislators heard us. They understood the severity and PennDOT authorized a waiver for us for capital to be able to survive the next few years. We are grateful for this flexibility. It's prevented catastrophic cuts and catastrophic fare increases. Unfortunately, in two years, the gap between what our budget is and what it costs to run this agency will be wider than it is today. Without new ongoing investment, we will fall back to the red in just a few years and we are not taking this lightly. We know what's at stake. The people who rely on transit are the people who make this region work. Nurses, students, airport employees, hospital workers, seniors, people with disabilities, tens of thousands more people who need reliable service. So public transit is not just a social service, it is an economic engine. More than one in five residents here in Pittsburgh depend on transit, and in some neighborhoods, that's closer to half. We support all our labor forces, we support development, reducing congestion and connecting employees to talent. And we're the backbone of equitable mobility in Allegheny County.”

Ms. Kelleman clarified that PRT will absolutely continue advocating and using PRT's voice to support every transit agency in the Commonwealth and every county that has transit services while the funding flex takes care of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh for two years. She noted that smaller transit agencies in Washington, Westmoreland, Lackawanna and Erie counties do not have the same ability to flex and all transit agencies are all in the same boat to make sure that these services are covered and that all agencies have the resources they need so transit can connect.

She made it clear however, PRT is not waiting for Harrisburg to fix everything, stating, “We heard clearly from our legislators to improve reliability, improve performance, improve efficiency, continue to change for the better, and change for good. So, we're moving forward with the bus line redesign, which is our opportunity to reshape the network based on today's demand, not 20-30 or 160 years ago. During our first phase, we had nearly 100 community meetings, 48 separate meetings with staff at bus garages alone, and we have been everywhere. We had a lot of really good feedback, and we are optimistic that when we're back out in January and February of next year, folks will see how their comments had been incorporated and changed what that ultimate product will be.”

Ms. Kelleman concluded her remarks by stating that PRT is tightening up, modernizing systems and doing everything in its control to protect the system and deliver better for everyone, but PRT cannot cut itself out of this kind of funding gap - that will require leadership from the legislature.

That concluded the remarks of CEO Katharine Kelleman.

The Chair called on Member Tia McClenney, Chair of the Performance Oversight Committee, for a report.

Committee Chair McClenney reported that the Performance Oversight Committee met the prior week where two (2) proposed resolutions were presented for the Committee's consideration. Committee Chair McClenney stated that the Committee had reviewed three procurement items and determined the bids to be in accordance with PRT's procurement policies and procedures and the prices to be fair and reasonable.

The Performance Oversight Committee recommended authorizing the award of the bids for the work and/or services listed in the resolution to, respectively, Petroleum Traders Corporation, Treeworx LLC, and Envirotrac LTD for the total amount of \$1,625,665.00.

On behalf of the Performance Oversight Committee, Committee Chair McClenney respectfully requested approval of the resolution. It was moved, seconded and unanimously agreed that the resolution be approved as presented.

The next resolution presented was seeking authorization for PRT to enter into an agreement to provide on-call environmental services pursuant to Request for Proposal No. 25-32.

Committee Chair McClenney stated that, as a result of a review of the proposals received, PRT's evaluation committee identified Collective Efforts, LLC as the highest rated proposer to perform the services.

The Performance Oversight Committee recommended entering into an agreement with Collective Efforts, LLC, for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$2,200,000.00, to be allocated on an as-needed basis through task specific work orders, for an initial four-year period, with the option of extending the agreement term up to one additional one-year period at the sole discretion of PRT.

On behalf of the Performance Oversight Committee, Committee Chair McClenney respectfully requested approval of the resolution. It was moved, seconded and unanimously agreed that the resolution be approved as presented.

Committee Chair McClenney continued by reporting that once a year, typically in November, PennDOT representatives provide the Performance Oversight Committee with an overview of the State Safety Oversight Agency's (SSOA) functions and a review of their work during the last year. At this month's meeting, the representatives mentioned that although SSOA's purpose is providing safety oversight of the fixed guideway transit system, the maintenance of a safe system is really a collaborative effort between PennDOT and PRT's Safety and Police Departments as well as PRT's management team for the Operations and Engineering Departments.

That concluded the report of the Performance Oversight Committee.

The Chair called on Member Fan, a member of the Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee, for a report. Member Fan reported that the Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee met November 13, 2025, and had a few items to report.

Member Fan stated that staff presented the FY 2025 Annual Service Report. The report for fiscal year 2025 evaluates performance against Board-adopted service standards, using ridership, crowding, on-time performance and out-of-service information, as well as equity and Title VI analysis. Noteworthy items from the report included:

- Stable ridership levels with growth beginning to occur in the spring
- A decrease in crowded trips
- On-time performance is not yet meeting goals, but an improvement strategy is underway
- A significant reduction in the percentage of time a bus or train was out of service
- A full copy of the FY 2025 report is available on PRT's website

Member Fan further reported that at the meeting, staff presented a quarterly update on the University BRT Project. It was reported that Phase I of construction in Downtown is near completion and Phase II of construction in Uptown and Oakland is approximately twenty percent (20%) complete with early

data showing that buses are running two minutes faster in Uptown and Downtown following completion of the downtown construction work. Member Fan noted that staff conveyed that this is an early data trend and PRT will continue to provide updates on reliability improvements seen by the project.

Finally, Member Fan reported that staff presented to the Committee an update on the Light Rail Station Area Improvement Plans. It was reported that to address PRT's long-range plan recommendations surrounding accessibility, PRT established the Light Rail Accessibility Program in 2024. The Program will begin at the St. Anne and Bethel Village Stations, for which PRT received two Federal Transit Administration grants to assist in funding this Program. The Program was set up to help transit agencies address accessibility for stations built prior to the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990. It was reported that numerous engagement meetings have taken place, and an online presence was established to inform and engage stakeholders. Member Fan noted that these projects will be in development for several years and will remain subject to receipt of funding and completion of all necessary design and construction steps.

That concluded the report of the Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee.

The Chair called on Member Emma Shoucair, Chair of the Finance Committee, for a report. Committee Chair Shoucair reported that the Finance Committee met on Thursday, November 13, 2025, during which the only item of business was to review the October 2025 financial results.

Committee Chair Shoucair reported that Total Operating Income for October was over budget by approximately \$100,000 due to higher Interest Income. Total Expenses for October were below budget by \$3.5 million due to vacant positions and lower Purchased Services and Materials & Supplies. She further reported that through October, total Operating Income was about \$400,000 higher than last fiscal year due to higher Interest Income and Advertising Revenue. Total Expenses through October were \$3.1 million higher than last fiscal year due to higher Employee Benefits, specifically an increase in pension and healthcare expenses.

Total Subsidy through October was \$52 million higher than last fiscal year due to a timing difference related to State Operating Assistance.

Finally, Committee Chair Shoucair reported that PRT ended October with \$304.7 million in operating reserves.

That concluded the report of the Finance Committee.

The Chair called on Member Tom Burgunder, Chair of the Technology Committee, for a report.

Committee Chair Burgunder reported that the Technology Committee met on November 13 and had one resolution for the Board's consideration.

Committee Chair Burgunder reported that the Committee reviewed one bid for PRI and auxiliary telephone services to Verizon Business Services MCI WorldCom under a State Costars contract. The bid was determined to be in accordance with PRT's procurement policies and procedures and the price both fair and reasonable.

The Technology Committee recommended the award of the item as listed in the resolution for the total amount of \$100,386.

On behalf of the Technology Committee, Chair Burgunder respectfully requested approval of the resolution. It was moved, seconded and 10 members agreed that the resolution be approved as presented. [Note: Member McClenney abstained from voting on this item].

Committee Chair Burgunder continued reporting that following the presentation of the proposed resolution, the Committee was presented with the Ready Fare Refresh Communication Plan.

That concluded the report of the Technology Committee.

Chair Liptak moved on to public comment at this time.

The first speaker was Laura Chu Wiens, director of Pittsburghers for Public Transit.

Ms. Wiens started her remarks by stating that the 2025 service report disclosed that PRT ridership has plateaued and declined this year from last, just as it did the year prior such that PRT ridership is now only about 60 percent of pre-COVID levels, what she referred to as “a national anomaly”. Ms. Wiens described that “On average, US transit systems have recovered 85 percent of 2019 ridership and are continuing to climb every year. Some agencies have even surpassed pre-pandemic ridership by making targeted service improvements and/or advancing new fare programs like employer passes or low income and zero fare programs.”

Ms. Wiens noted that most other transit systems have not done network redesigns these last few years and their ridership restoration was not contingent on upending the existing bus network. She also noted that PRT service reliability has also plateaued with a bus on-time performance average of 66 percent. She stated, “We've said many times, and will continue to say, that this is because of unrealistic written schedules and not due to transit worker shortcomings.”

Ms. Wiens described that across the bus network, buses are not showing up as expected 1/3 of the time and that is on top of the fact that time points have been eradicated in recent years, so the evaluation of whether buses are on time is happening at only a handful of stops on any given route. She noted that the lack of time points and PRT's minimal accountability to this metric, making it additionally hard for riders to anticipate arrival times for most bus stops and to time transfers between routes. She described that PRT service reports have failed to register the gravity of our ridership and reliability crisis, excusing them as the result of various one-off issues, construction, worker shortfalls, app counting errors in the case of the 66 percent bus on-time performance average this year and that no reason has been identified and therefore no presumed mechanism for improving it.

Ms. Wiens continued her remarks by stating that last year, the annual service report did register the short turning of the 71 and 61 buses in Oakland as a major contributor to the ridership drop in bus crowding and then proceeded to do nothing about it. She indicated that riders need PRT to put forward goals and a vision for increasing ridership and access to transit, restoring service and for improving service reliability, which requires an assessment of why PRT is doing so poorly compared to peers and a plan for what steps need to be taken to fix them. She said “We want to imagine and then realize a transit system that is so much better.”

Ms. Wiens then named four key concerns about implementing the bus line redesign now, identifying” . (1) a cost neutral bus line redesign will lock in austerity service levels, forcing some neighborhoods to cut service in order to expand to other communities, and the lack of dedicated, expanded and sustainable funding will make it likely that it will be partially implemented, which is what happened with the last redesign, the TDP in 2008, whose implementation was aborted when funding didn't materialize; (2) a concern related to if PRT cannot get current schedules right, then how can riders trust that PRT will be able to build an entirely new map of functional bus schedules; (3) major bus changes, no matter how positive these changes are, it will cause ridership loss at the outset and PRT is already starting at such a ridership deficit; and (4) PRT can and does already make major bus service adjustments such that even in the absence of a network redesign, PRT could change service frequencies, eliminate routes, and reroute buses during the thrice yearly schedule changes. In her opinion, PRT is already overzealous in changing schedules for more than 50 routes in a regular service change, so she concluded by questioning what is preventing PRT from making critical adjustments immediately?

The final speaker was former Board member John Tague. Mr. Tague identified that he wanted to join the call basically to thank staff for the hard work that they put into getting out the service standards.

That concluded public comment.

Under New Business, Chair Liptak reported that pursuant to the PRT bylaws as Board Chair she has made certain appointments to the Board Standing Committees. They include: (1) Board member Bobbie Fan has been appointed to the Technology Committee; (2) Board members Dr. Brussalis and Laura Sohinki have been appointed to the Financial Audit Committee; (3) Member Laura Sohinki has also been appointed to the Performance and Oversight and Monitoring Committee.

Also under New Business, Chair Liptak also made appointments to the Nominating Committee for 2026. As, the election of the Board officers shall take place during the upcoming January Annual meeting in accordance with PRT Board bylaws. Member Stephanie Turman was appointed Chair of the Nominating Committee, and Dr. Chris Brussalis and Tia McClenney were appointed to serve on the Committee.

The Chair thanked all members for their participation and continued support of our committees and our system.

Also under New Business, the Board recognized Sandy Garfinkel, the Board's Solicitor, who will be retiring from the practice of law at the end of the year. Chair Liptak stated that she has been so grateful for his support, his counsel, and his soft suggestions to make sure that things are done properly. She noted that it has been really wonderful to work with someone of his caliber and she has learned a lot from him personally. She also mentioned that the Board appreciates the way he has transitioned services with the incoming solicitor, Amanda Kraft, stating “As Board members, we felt very comfortable allowing for that transition.” She continued stating that “you've done it over a year, and I know you've been involved even before that,” And noted here appreciation for Mr. Garfinkel's thoughtfulness in that capacity.

The Chair announced the next Regular meeting of the Board will be January 30, 2026.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned.