

PITTSBURGH REGIONAL TRANSIT  
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2024

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT) was held on Friday, February 23, 2024, at PRT's Administration 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: Jeff Letwin, Chair, Ann Ogoreuc, Joseph Totten, Lori Mizgorski, John Tague, Stephanie Turman. The following members participated by via TEAMS: Senator James Brewster, Representative Nick Pisciotano, Ali Doyle, Jen Liptak and Michelle Zmijanac. Board Solicitor Sandy Garfinkel attended via TEAMS. Attorney Michael Lamb, from Mr. Garfinkel's law firm, attended in person.

The Chair called the Regular Meeting to order and asked the audience to stand for the pledge of allegiance and asked for a moment of silence for victims of gun violence.

A recommendation was made for approval of the minutes of the January 26, 2024 Annual Meeting and January 26, 2024 Regular Meeting. A motion was made, seconded, and both sets of minutes unanimously passed.

Mr. Letwin called on Pittsburgh Regional Transit CEO Katharine Kelleman for a report.

Ms. Kelleman first asked for a moment of silence for the following retired employees who passed away in January. They were Operators Robert Davenport, John Garry and Richard Robinson; Radio repairperson Stephen Waschak; garage attendant Robert Dukes; Maintenance relief clerk Daniel Frank, body repairperson Robert Moore and Transit police officer John Dorsey.

Next, Ms. Kelleman reported that a few days after the last PRT board meeting, Governor Shapiro unveiled his Fiscal Year 2025 budget proposal that included an additional \$280 million a year in state funding for public transit. Ms. Kelleman added that the proposal out of Harrisburg is welcome news for public transit agencies and advocates across the Commonwealth.

Ms. Kelleman noted that if approved, this is PRT's first increase in funding since 2007. "The governor's proposal acknowledges the importance public transit plays in our region's growth, sustainability and economic recovery, and will afford us the opportunity in the coming weeks to highlight the need for a long term funding solution."

Ms. Kelleman thanked the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and the Legislature for considering this transit funding, and for making transit the priority that it should be.

Next, Ms. Kelleman reported that several individuals who are registered to speak to the Board concerning the lack of information made available to them when they are waiting for a bus. "Internally, we have piloted what's called disruption management, a system that pushes out the alerts on what's going on with buses, which are running late, or buses which aren't there, sometimes referred to as 'ghost buses.' This information comes straight from our dispatchers which takes a burden off our operators." Ms. Kelleman noted that PRT's original intent had been to go live with disruption management also to push out detour information. However, the software is designed for one detour at a time, but often in Pittsburgh there are several detours on a route, so rather than make

riders wait for notifications, in the upcoming month information will be sent about how to get signed up for the disruption management system so PRT can push that information to riders' smartphones.

Next Ms. Kelleman stated that PRT is actively working on reducing a training bottleneck. She thanked PRT's partners, ATU Local 85, and also PRT's entire Training Department. She expects that 300 people will come into the agency this year for training and with historical attrition rates, PRT is anticipating 200 people being able to join the agency's ranks this year. "That will let us cover attrition and retirements, stabilize our schedules and have the buffer we need."

Next, Ms. Kelleman stated that "We all know that that our most valuable asset isn't our 700 buses, 80 railcars, any of our busways, tracks, bridges or tunnels, it is the 2,500 people we employ and the thousands of riders we serve each day. We are privileged to have so many outstanding employees and she has always tried to recognize their contributions and honor their service, especially when they go above and beyond their normal duties. For the last few years, we've recognized these employees with our annual All-Star Awards." Ms. Kelleman then recognized seven "All-Stars."

The first recognized employee Ms. Kelleman recognized was Gregory Bradshaw out of our East Liberty Garage. Operator Bradshaw was driving on a rainy day when he saw a vehicle hit three joggers. Gregory pulled over and helped them onto his bus while they waited for paramedics to transport them to the hospital.

The next All Star employee was Operator James Kenney out of the Collier Garage. Operator Kenney was driving a 17 Shadeland bus when he pulled up to the scene of a crash. He stopped the bus, ran out and pulled somebody out of a burning car.

The next All Star was Lorraine King, one of our three honorees from the West Mifflin Garage. Last February, an eight year old child climbed on board Operator King's bus. She asked the child if she knew where she was going and she replied that she did. But later, Operator King noticed that the child was still on the bus and asked if she needed help and the child admitted she was lost and didn't know her address or her phone number. Operator King immediately pulled over and reported the child, who had already been reported missing by her family. Thanks to Miss King Sharp attention to detail, the child and her parents were reunited.

The next All Star Award recipient was Operator Alan Loskoch, out of the Ross Garage. On a late winter night on East Ohio Street, a group of people flagged down his bus because a man was lying on the sidewalk and not breathing. Operator Loskoch sprang into action, called 911, and performed CPR until the crews arrived.

The next All Star Award went to the second recipient from West Mifflin, Operator Richard Romagna. He spotted a child after hearing a missing child report over the radio. He stopped, helped the child onto his bus and met Police.

Our sixth All Star recipient was from our Ross Division, Operator Cathy Thomas-Taylor. Operator Taylor was driving her regular bus route when she noticed a small child who appeared lost, confused and in need of help at Perrysville Ave and Riverview Park. The Operator waited for assistance from the route foreman and police. She could have just stopped there, but she went ahead and used her own money to get a drink and a snack for the child until help arrived.

The final All Star Award from the West Mifflin Garage was Monique Wynn. While driving her regular route, she saw a car that collided with a motorcycle. Thankfully, Operator Wynn has extensive EMS training. She got off the bus and used the victim's belt as a tourniquet to stop the bleeding from his leg. She even called his wife to let her know what was going on and stayed with him until police arrived on the scene. Paramedics say Miss Wynn saved a life and we thank her for her compassion and heroism.

Before concluding the CEO's remark, Ms. Kelleman announced that she understood that a special guest was in attendance. The guest was the young man who was in the motorcycle accident and was there in thanks and support for Operator Wynn for saving his life.

That concluded the report of the Chief Executive Officer.

Before calling for the next report, the Chair congratulated all the very deserving winners. "You are what exemplifies the greatness of this particular organization. So, thank you so much for all you've done and know it is truly appreciated."

Next, the Chair called on Michelle Zmijanac, Chair of the Performance Oversight Committee, for a report.

Ms. Zmijanac reported that the Performance Oversight Committee met last week and had only one item for the Board's consideration.

At its meeting, the Committee reviewed six procurement items and determined the bids to be in accordance with PRT's procurement policies and procedures and prices to be fair and reasonable. The Performance Oversight Committee recommended the award of bids listed in the resolution for the total amount of \$2,275,739.88.

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

That concluded the report of the Performance Oversight Committee.

The Chair then called on Mr. John Tague, Chair of the Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee, for a report.

Mr. Tague reported that the Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee met last week and had a few items for the Board.

Staff provided the Committee with an overview of service level and operator changes between 2020 and 2024. It was reported that over the past four years, PRT has had to balance ridership with available operators. Between 2020 and 2024 weekly service was decreased by 10.5 percent and available operators decreased by 11.9 percent.

An update on the Operator trends and recruiting efforts was also presented. As we all know, since the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been very challenging to attract, hire, and retain bus and rail operators. As stated in Ms. Kelleman's report, PRT has worked very hard to recruit more operators by increasing

the hourly training pay rate, offering incentives to student operators with a CDL, ending the Covid Vaccine Mandate and hosting a PRT Job Fair on December 15, 2023.

An update on the University Line BRT project was also provided. Staff informed the Committee on the project's construction, which began in September 2023. The downtown construction phase will include five new stations with large glass shelters and upgraded amenities. In coordination with the start of construction, PRT reduced service on four bus routes (61D, 71A, 71C, 71D) in October 2023. Changes were made in October 2023 due to the operator shortage and the congestion that was anticipated from BRT construction downtown. Staff provided an update of the performance of these four routes based on data from October-December 2023. It showed that ridership on those four routes decreased by 25 percent, ridership on the four routes that continue into downtown increased by 35 percent and in total, looking at the eight routes impacted, ridership increased by three percent. The entire bus network saw a four percent increase during the same time.

Next, the Committee received an update on the Committee for Accessible Transportation and Allegheny County Transit Council.

A CAT meeting was held on February 1. Staff provided updates on funding advocacy and bus stop consolidation. PRT staff also provided the Committee with updates on the operator hiring and goals, the Annual Service Report, February service changes and the Homestead to McKeesport project. ACCESS also provided updates on ridership and driver staffing. The next CAT Committee meeting is scheduled for May 2.

ACTC met on February 21. Staff provided the Committee with updates on operator hiring and goals, the fare payment system, the Homestead to McKeesport project, and an update on Herron Station. The Council's next meeting is scheduled for March 20.

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

The Chair called on Ms. Ann Ogoreuc, Chair of the Finance Committee, for a report.

Ms. Ogoreuc reported that the Finance Committee met last week and had four resolutions for the Board's consideration.

The first resolution would authorize PRT to extend and amend an agreement with Maher Duessel for Financial Audit and Pension Plan Services. It was reported at the meeting that PRT entered into a three-year agreement with Maher Duessel in February 2021, and to date, the performance of services has been satisfactory and in compliance with the agreement.

The initial three-year term of the agreement expires on March 25, 2024, and PRT has determined that it is in their best interest to exercise the first option year and increase the total not-to-exceed amount by \$112,500.

The Finance Committee recommended extending the agreement with Maher Duessel for one year, to March 25, 2025, in the total not-to-exceed amount of \$426,000.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Ms. Ogoreuc respectfully requested approval of the resolution. It was moved, seconded and unanimously agreed that the resolution be approved as presented.

The next resolution would authorize PRT to extend and amend Financial Advisory agreements with PFM Financial Advisors, LLC and NW Financial Group, LLC.

It was reported that In February 2021, PRT's Board authorized the award to both firms for an initial term of three years for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$400,000, to be allocated on an as-needed basis through work orders. The agreements also contain two option years to be exercised by PRT in its sole discretion.

The Finance Committee recommended extending the agreements with both firms one additional year to April 30, 2025, with no increase to the total not-to-exceed amount.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Ms. Ogoreuc respectfully requested approval of the resolution. It was moved, seconded and unanimously agreed that the resolution be approved as presented.

The next resolution presented would authorize PRT to enter into an agreement to provide fare model development, fare consulting and related Title VI Fare equity services.

It was reported at the meeting that an RFP was prepared and publicly advertised and four proposals were received. The proposal submitted by NWC Partners, Inc., has been determined to be the highest rated proposal for the performance of the services.

The Finance Committee recommended that PRT enter into an agreement with NWC Partners, Inc., in an amount not-to-exceed \$424,940, for an initial three-year period with the option to extend the term of the agreement up to an additional two years at the sole discretion of PRT.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Ms. Ogoreuc respectfully requested approval of the resolution. It was moved, seconded and unanimously agreed that the resolution be approved as presented.

The final resolution presented would authorize PRT to adopt and implement a debt policy.

It was reported at the meeting that on April 28, 2023, the Board passed a resolution authorizing PRT to accept the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's 2022 Act 44 Performance Review and the 2023 Act 44 Action Plan which contained various recommendations to help PRT meet its performance targets. One of these action items was for PRT to adopt and implement a formal Debt Policy to formalize sound, prudent and appropriate parameters, and to provide guidance governing the issuance, management, continuing evaluation of and reporting on all debt obligations issued or incurred by PRT.

The Finance Committee recommended the Board adopt the Debt Policy attached to the resolution as Exhibit A.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Ms. Ogoreuc respectfully requested approval of the resolution. It was moved, seconded and unanimously agreed that the resolution be approved as presented.

A review of the January financial results was also presented at last week's meeting.

It was reported that Total Operating Income for the month of January was over budget by approximately \$800,000 due to higher Passenger Revenue and ACCESS and Interest Revenue.

Total Expenses for the month of January were below budget by \$1.7 million due to lower Wages and Benefits, Purchased Services and ACCESS expense.

Total Subsidy is \$72.4 million higher than last fiscal year due to higher federal stimulus invoicing and higher Preventative Maintenance.

Finally, it was reported that PRT ended the month of January with approximately \$345.8 million in cash reserves.

That concluded the report of the Finance Committee.

The Chair called on Ms. Liptak, Chair of the Technology Committee for a report.

Ms. Liptak reported that the Technology Committee met on February 15, and had one resolution for the Board's consideration.

The Committee heard a presentation concerning a resolution to purchase new Fare Vending Machines as part of the Fare Systems Refresh project. New fare vending machines will replace the existing units that are already in place in locations around the County along with new units for the BRT line.

The Technology Committee recommended PRT enter into a contract with Parkeon, Inc., doing business as Flowbird, with a total not-to-exceed of \$8,856,475 over five years with two option years.

On behalf of the Technology Committee, Ms. Liptak respectfully requested approval of the resolution. It was moved, seconded and unanimously agreed that the resolution be approved as presented.

That concluded the report of the Technology Committee.

Under New Business, the Chair reported that pursuant to the Resolution of September 27, 2019 regarding the expansion of Board Standing Committees, and specifically Exhibit "A" to that Resolution, the Governance Committee is to consist of the Chairs of all of the other Standing Committees. He wanted to confirm that since Senator Brewster was reappointed as Chair of the Financial Audit Committee, he will also serve as a member of the Governance Committee. The Chair also confirmed that Mr. Joseph Totten will serve on the Finance and Technology Committees.

Before moving on to public comment, Mr. Letwin reminded all our speakers of the three-minute speaking limit.

The first speaker was Mr. Andrew Hussein. Mr. Hussein first wanted to extend his congratulations to the people who received All Star Awards, He then stated that continued cuts to service are less than pleasant, noting for example things like turning the Silver Line into a short shuttle in the evening hours on Saturday nights.

Mr. Hussein continued that while it's nice that PRT has actually done a great job at coordinating the connections between the Silver Line shuttle at night and the Blue and Red lines, it is equally unfortunate that there's some confusion at the end of service day with regards to how late the shuttle actually runs between Washington Junction and Library.

He concluded his remarks by stating that when PRT puts together the digital data for apps to use, there needs to be some quality assurance.

The next speaker, Mr. Paul Zambri, was a former employee of PRT. He said that it is almost 18 years since he left. He continued saying that it wasn't just a job to him he actually wanted to be here. He said one thing he noticed over the years is that a lot of times management does not get the honest word because when somebody is worried about losing their job or paycheck, they're not going to tell the truth about people. Mr. Zambri added that he thought what they did today with the awards is fantastic but that he doesn't think it should be the exception but the norm.

The next speaker, Mr. Armin Samii, a resident of Lawrenceville in Pittsburgh, wanted to speak concerning his own experiences. First, he thanked CEO Kellerman for acknowledging the "ghost buses" at the top of the hour. Mr. Samii shared an ongoing frustration he has with the 28X, which includes a frequency of ghost buses on Sunday nights. He reported that he first contacted PRT about this in 2021 and was told to wait for the new disruption management system. In 2022, he contacted PRT again and was told that it was launched, but not everybody was trained on it. In 2023, he was told although the system was live, it is only during customer service hours and now it's 2024 and Mr. Samii says he was told that PRT will soon expand the customer service hours to be all hours of the day when the buses are running. But still this Sunday, he waited over an hour for a bus. There were about 15 passengers who were waiting when the ghost bus didn't show up and finally when one did show, it was overcrowded and took nearly three hours to get home. He said that it has been a very frustrating four years since he first contacted PRT about this situation.

The next speaker was Nicholas Rizzio, a downtown resident. He said that he actually just moved to Pittsburgh and chose Pittsburgh to live is because of our transit system with the three busways and light rail system. He thought it would be a great place to live without a car. He is hearing about problems with frequency, reliability and speed from people and he is starting to experience it himself. "We're not having the reliability that we're used to any longer and sometimes we're not having the speed that we need."

The issues that he hopes the Board continues to address in the future are the need for more bus operators, adding that we need to work with our municipal partners in the City of Pittsburgh to encourage land use policies that will help grow ridership in the East Liberty area. He added that PRT also needs to look at local revenue options so that it can raise revenue on its own.

Finally, Mr. Rizzio echoed the point that someone else made previously about the having updates in actual time when the bus isn't coming. He finished by saying that he uses the transit app every day. He encouraged the Board to think about maybe purchasing the citywide subscription for the transit apps that are free to the public.

Ms. Ruby Williams was the next speaker who spoke about her challenges with epilepsy and relying on buses for her to get work and her daughter to school each day. She explained that she lives in an apartment complex in Ross Township off of McKnight Road. This area of McKnight Road is extremely dangerous. There are only shoulders to walk on, with no barricades or actual sidewalks.

She said something needs to be done to keep pedestrians safe on McKnight Road and PRT can do their part by reopening stops when construction is finished, and in the meantime potentially set up a shuttle of sorts to get riders to the other stops.

The final speaker, Ms. Deb Goycochea wanted the Board to hear about a recent experience she had catching the bus. The bus stop was eliminated due to construction and there was nothing posted or on the app. She left her home at 11:15 to arrive at the stop which was not being served early and finally arrived at her destination at 1:00. There needs to be a better way of communicating to the public.

The Chair announced the next Regular meeting of the Board will be Friday, March 22, 2024.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Approved