

PITTSBURGH REGIONAL TRANSIT
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING
FRIDAY, MAY 24, 2024

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT) was held on Friday, May 24, 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: Jennifer Liptak, Vice Chair, Joseph Totten, John Tague, Michelle Zmijanac, and Ann Ogoreuc. The following members participated by via TEAMS: Senator James Brewster, Stephanie Turman and Lori Mizgorski. Board Solicitor Sandy Garfinkel attended in person.

In the Chair's absence, the Vice Chair called the Regular Meeting to order and asked the audience to stand for the pledge of allegiance and asked for a moment of reflection.

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

Ms. Liptak called on Pittsburgh Regional Transit CEO Katharine Kelleman for a report.

First Ms. Kelleman asked for a moment of silence for the following retired employees: body repairperson Victor King; shifter George Harmotto; and operators Gary Brock, Mary Carnes, Francis Marasco, Frederick Pent, Richard Schumacher, and Richard Tworek.

Next, Ms. Kelleman acknowledged some recent concerns we have been hearing about our policy on strollers on PRT vehicles that went into effect early 2022. "You may be aware that prior to this policy, if you were boarding a PRT vehicle with a stroller, you had to get your child out of the stroller, fold the stroller, and then board the bus." She remarked that this policy, like certain other policies, was developed not just years ago, but sometimes decades ago. "So, what seemed like an easy fix had the consequence of further congesting priority seating at the front of the vehicle."

Ms. Kelleman acknowledged the issue and stated that she looks forward to working toward determining the best use of space on the bus, even if that means moving some of the seating around that is currently in place.

Next Ms. Kelleman provided an update on disruption management. "We had a committee update this week on what is going on with disruption management. Earlier this year we promised an official process where you could sign up and get updates on what's going on. We are still in the soft launch and have not gone official and we owe you a better explanation than just we haven't gotten to it or that detours are complicated and take a lot of time."

Ms. Kelleman committed that "By the June Board meeting we will have the policies out there, how you sign up and what information you can get. It may not be perfect, but by our June meeting, you will have the official 'here's how you get the information' and we will be taking it forward from there."

Next Ms. Kelleman addressed a percolating story out there on ridership at top 25 transit regions in the US and what's going on in Pittsburgh.

“It looks like we have a data anomaly. Our farebox revenue is up but ridership is not going up. We're looking at a couple of different scenarios on reporting and tracking, and if there is an adjustment to be made, we will be coming back.”

Next Ms. Kelleman reported that this week PRT joined with Allegheny County and the Department of Human Services to announce Allegheny Go, a program which offers half fares to every Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program recipient in the county. “This is a great opportunity that not only gets rid of a barrier for transportation for more than 120,000 Allegheny County residents, but also allows people access to resources and opportunities they need not just to be successful, but to thrive.”

“This is only available on our mobile app, but we plan for this to be available on our next generation smart cards by early next year. Folks without bank accounts will still be able to use cash to add funds to their mobile accounts at our Service Center, most Giant Eagle stores and Goodwill.”

Next Ms. Kelleman announced that PRT's FY 2025 Operating and Capital budgets are on the agenda today for consideration. The proposed operating budget totals \$539.3 million, an increase of less than one percent over last year's budget, reflecting changes in inflation, rising costs in goods, and a labor shortage that is affecting transit agencies across the county. PRT's proposed Capital Budget totals \$162 million and would fund 59 projects to support and advance transit services.

Ms. Kelleman next stated that she was honored to recognize and celebrate the exceptional achievements of some of PRT's finest transit operators. “Their dedication, skill, and commitment to safety have made a lasting impact on our community and have set a high standard for excellence.” Ms. Kelleman recognized Operators Ed Harkins, James Paul, Randy Shaffer, and Mark Colussy for achieving over 20 years without a reportable accident.

Ms. Kelleman concluded her remarks by saying that each of these operators have contributed to the safety and reliability of our transit system. Their achievements are not just personal milestones but are also a reflection of the values and standards we strive to uphold as an organization.

That concluded the report of the Chief Executive Officer.

Ms. Liptak thanked Ms. Kelleman for her report and wanted to congratulate the operators honored here today. She said that she often hears stories specifically from her family members recently expressing how grateful they are when the operators get them safely to their destinations.

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

Ms. Zmijanac reported that the Performance Oversight Committee met last week and she had three resolutions for the Board's consideration.

The Committee first reviewed one procurement resolution with multiple proposed contract awards 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 multi-award contract listed in the resolution for the total amount of \$736,909.88.

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.

Ms. Zmijanac presented the next resolution seeking to extend and amend an agreement for the South Hills Village Parking Garage facility management services.

It was reported at the meeting that that in August 2020, PRT entered into a three-year agreement with Parkway Parking of Pennsylvania, Inc., to provide the parking facility management services for the not-to-exceed amount of \$672,000.

In June 2023, the board authorized PRT to exercise the first of two option years and to increase the authorized not-to-exceed amount to \$792,000.

To date, the services performed by the contractor have been satisfactory and in compliance with the agreement.

The Performance Oversight Committee recommended exercising the second option year, extending the agreement for one additional year through July 31, 2025, and increasing the total not-to-exceed amount by \$125,000.

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.

The final resolution presented was to extend and amend an agreement to provide environmental consulting services.

It was reported at the meeting that PRT entered into a three-year agreement with Hatch Associates Consultants, Inc., to provide these services for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$600,000, with the option to extend the agreement up to two years, at the sole discretion of PRT.

To date, the services performed by the contractor have been satisfactory and in compliance with the agreement.

The Performance Oversight Committee recommended exercising both option years at this time extending the term of the agreement through June 30, 2026, and increasing the total not-to-exceed amount by \$450,000.

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 Vice 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 he had a few items to report.

At the Committee meeting, staff presented the June 2024 Service Changes. The service adjustments which begin June 16, include the establishment of two temporary bus shuttles and a rail shuttle for the upcoming Red Line project closure. That work was announced in March and these routes were built into this service change to accommodate riders affected by the closure.

Adjustments also include routing changes for 11 routes, running time adjustments for almost 50 routes, two variant changes, three span of service changes and other minor adjustments to improve on-time performance.

Next staff presented the Climate Action Plan. It was reported at the Committee meeting that work on the plan began in 2023, to design a comprehensive strategy to track greenhouse gases and reduce emissions consistent with FTA guidelines, following decades of energy efficiency and sustainability initiatives.

The priorities of the plan are to increase ridership, reduce diesel emissions, switch to renewable electricity, reduce building electricity use, reduce light rail electricity use, and reduce non-revenue fleet emissions. The plan builds upon the already in progress fleet transition by hiring a new Director of Sustainability position and convening an agency-wide Sustainability Committee to lead implementation of the plan.

Next, a resolution requesting authorization to adopt the amended art policy was presented to the Committee. This resolution would authorize PRT to amend its existing Art Policy, which was originally approved by this Board in 2021.

The original policy established a transparent and uniform procedure for artwork on PRT property and also authorized designated PRT staff to develop, issue and maintain guidelines for permanent and temporary artwork. The amended policy further clarifies the make-up of the Art Committee and provides PRT a means to seek further community input on proposed art initiatives and solicitations.

On behalf of the Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee, Mr. Tague respectfully requested approval of the resolution. It was moved, seconded and unanimously agreed that the resolution be approved as presented.

Also at the meeting, staff updated the Committee on Disruption Management. The program, which allows riders to receive tailored real-time alerts about out of service routes, detours, and other events both planned and unplanned, is in the process of being implemented. The technology includes a component of the already established vehicle tracking system and can include personalized rider accounts via TrueTime, where riders set individual route and delivery preferences. Alerts will shift from current social media procedure to PRT's TrueTime and third-party apps starting next month. Most disruptions are targeted to be in the system by August.

Part of the implementation also includes the expansion of customer service hours, which is planned to start on July 1.

Finally, Mr. Tague updated the Board on the Allegheny County Transit Council and Citizens for Accessible Transportation Committee.

ACTC met on May 15 and staff provided the Council with an overview of the proposed FY 25 Operating and Capital Budgets. The group also received an update on the Climate Action Plan and an overview of the June services changes. The next scheduled meeting is June 26.

The CAT Committee met on May 2. Ms. Alisa Grishman discussed a PPT policy letter and Ms. Holly Dick spoke about new operator training. Ms. Karen Hoesch of ACCESS provided updates on service, driver recruitment and retention, and text to cancel service. She also discussed a former employee's doctoral dissertation focused on older paratransit drivers using ACCESS data.

Staff provided the Committee with an update on fares, the plans for the upcoming rail and Red Line projects, an overview of the June service changes, and ADA stop announcements. The next scheduled meeting is July 11.

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

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

Ms. Ogoreuc reported that the Finance Committee met on Thursday, May 16, and she had three items, including two resolutions, to report.

The first resolution presented was seeking authorization to enter into the fourth amendment to the funding agreement with the Stadium Authority of the City of Pittsburgh.

It was reported at the meeting that PRT initially entered into an agreement with the Stadium Authority in April 2015 for annually set amounts paid to PRT by the Stadium Authority to fund free fares at the North Side Station. Following subsequent Board approvals, the funding agreement has been amended and extended to date through March 31, 2024.

The proposed fourth amendment would extend the funding agreement one additional year retroactive from April 1, 2024 through March 31, 2025, at a total funding amount of \$265,000 payable in monthly installments.

Staff reported at the meeting that due to the negative impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on the Stadium Authority's ability to fund the station, certain prior amendments to the agreement permitted the suspension of the requirement of monthly payments from the Stadium Authority to PRT. The monthly payment was instead funded to PRT's budget from PRT's federal COVID stimulus funds. The effects of the pandemic continue to negatively impact the Stadium Authority's revenue from its facilities on the North Shore.

The proposed fourth amendment to the agreement provides that the Stadium Authority will not begin paying the monthly reimbursement amount until the parking capacity at its designated North Shore garages and lots reaches 85 percent utilization.

Ms. Ogoreuc noted that PRT will continue to fund the monthly payments from federal stimulus funding.

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 addressed by Ms. Ogoreuc seeks authorization to adopt the Fiscal Year 2025 Operating and Capital Budgets and to execute local match certifications.

Pursuant to the Second Class County Port Authority Act, PRT is required to adopt balanced Operating and Capital Budgets on a fiscal year basis. PRT's proposed FY 2025 Operating Budget totals \$539,266,568. PRT's proposed FY 2025 Capital Budget totals \$161,959,003.

It was reported at the meeting that both budgets balance anticipated revenues and grants with anticipated expenses.

This resolution also authorizes PRT to submit operating and capital assistance local match assurances required by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation in the forms attached to the resolution as Exhibits C and D.

Ms. Ogoreuc noted that at last week's Finance Committee meeting, the total Operating budget was incorrectly reported to be \$535,359,584, but the actual total is \$539,266,568. The budget amount has been corrected within the body of the resolution.

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.

Lastly, Ms. Ogoreuc presented the April financial results presented at last week's meeting.

It was reported that Total Operating Income for the month of April was under budget by \$500,000 due to lower Passenger revenue. Total Expenses for the month of April were below budget by \$800,000 due to lower Wages and Benefits and Purchased Services expense.

Total Operating Income is \$7.2 million higher than last fiscal year through April due to higher Passenger Revenue, Access and Interest Income. Total Expenses through April are \$17.5 million higher than last fiscal year due to higher expenses in every category. Total Subsidy is \$61.5 million higher than last fiscal year due to higher invoicing of federal stimulus and Preventative Maintenance.

As of April 2024, the total remaining federal stimulus balance is \$39 million of CRRSAA funds.

Finally, it was reported that PRT ended the month of April with approximately \$385.5 million in cash reserves.

That concluded the report of the Finance Committee.

Ms. Liptak gave the report of the Technology Committee.

Ms. Liptak reported that the Technology Committee met on May 16, and she had two resolutions for the Board's consideration.

The first resolution, under the awarding of bids portion of the meeting, was for technical support services for Oracle Peoplesoft licenses that support critical PRT finance and human resources functions. A recommendation was made to award this contract under the terms and conditions of the Pennsylvania Education Purchasing Program for Microcomputers (PEPPM) cooperative purchasing

agreement to Mythics, LLC., as an authorized reseller of Oracle America products and support services, in the estimated amount of \$4,948,441.84 for a term of five years. The Committee concluded that these licenses are needed and that the prices are fair and reasonable, and respectfully recommends that the Board vote in favor of the resolution to authorize the award of the bid.

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.

The second resolution presented was for an extension of two existing agreements with Scheidt & Bachmann, USA for Fare System services. These include both the Farebox Warranty and the Non-Farebox Equipment and Software Maintenance Services Agreements. Both Agreements are being recommended for one-year extensions and amendments for increasing the total not to exceed amounts to \$6,478,700 and \$1,978,034, respectively. The Committee concluded that these services are needed and that the prices are fair and reasonable, and respectfully recommends that the Board vote in favor of the resolution to authorize these amendments.

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.

There was no New Business before the Board.

There were six speakers registered to address the Board. The first speaker was Ms. Amy Zaiss, a resident of Beechview. The comments she had prepared were about her frustrations with not having the disruption management services but was pleased to hear in Ms. Kelleman's report that it is coming. She said that she is very much looking forward to it and thanked the staff for finally expanding Customer Service hours as well.

Ms. Zaiss gave the example of her frustrations during the Marathon weekend when she had family and friends visiting. She was on the T when a train full of people were surprised to hear that the bus replacement shuttle between Penn and Gateway weren't operating, because that fact was only listed on the train detour page. "You had a whole page dedicated to marathon detours that did not mention that that bus shuttle wasn't going to be running."

The next speaker, Ms. Deja Baker, is the digital organizer for Pittsburghers for Public Transit, otherwise known as PPT. She said that PPT is a grassroots union of transit riders and workers who organize for a more accessible transit system. Ms. Baker stated that as a PPT staffer and a disabled person with an invisible disability, she is proud of the work she does with the members of our Accessibility Committee.

"Our Accessibility Committee focuses on practices and policies to make our transit system more accessible, especially for people with disabilities. Recently, many members have raised concerns about PRT's new stroller policy. We at PPT commend the agency for taking steps to make transit more accessible for families who use strollers, however, many of our members are concerned that the new policy limits the priority space for buses for disabled riders and their mobility devices, in addition to making transit more unsafe and inaccessible for them."

Ms. Baker next read a portion of a letter from the Pittsburghers for Public Transit Committee for Accessible Transportation.

“In the second-half of 2023, PRT adopted a new stroller policy allowing open strollers on buses. Unlike other large transit agencies such as MTA and SEPTA, who have recently revised their stroller policies, PRT did not obtain community feedback prior to this change and did not issue the new policy in conjunction with changes to bus designs to accommodate strollers outside of the accessible seating area.

As a result, the change was made suddenly and without the engagement that would have alerted PRT to the issues now being seen throughout the bus system. Since the new policy was announced, people who use wheelchairs and scooters have been denied access to buses as a result of open strollers parked in the accessible seating areas.

Drivers have passed them at bus stops when open strollers are already present in the accessible seating area, and riders with strollers have refused to move from accessible seats when requested by drivers. People with disabilities are already negatively impacted by PR TS in frequent service and now must contend with additional lack of access to buses despite their rights under the American with Disabilities Act or the ADA.

Further, the new stroller policy has not been implemented safely for children in strollers as well as other passengers. Open strollers are not consistently secured to prevent rolling while the bus is moving. Children are not always appropriately strapped into the stroller.

People with disabilities attempting to use access seating often have difficulty maneuvering around a stroller in order to sit or safely park their wheelchair or scooter. Pittsburghers for Public Transit, along with the undersigned organizations and community members, is deeply concerned about the development and implementation of this new policy.

PRT failed to consult with people with disabilities, including the Committee for Accessible Transportation and the City County Task Force on Disabilities before making this change. The new policy has resulted in increased barriers for people who use wheelchairs and scooters and we are troubled by implementation that appears to not comply with the ADA. I have two more sentences.

Also, it has also not been applied in a way that keeps riders, especially young children, safe. We are concerned that the failure to ensure both strollers and children are secure with result and harm to some of PR TS most vulnerable riders.”

She concluded her remarks by stating that “We know that by working together with PRT and Pittsburgh's disabled community, we can build a stroller policy and a transit system that are accessible for all.”

The next speaker, Ms. Alisa Grishman, will continue the letter.

“In light of the above, PRT must take the following steps. They should consistently enforce accessible seating priority being given to people with disabilities as required under the ADA and also for seniors; provide training to drivers on rider on the riders prioritized for use of the accessible seating area and how to navigate conflict over these seats; create designated stroller areas on buses

that allow for open strollers to safely be stored on the bus in an area separate from the accessible seating; require any open stroller to have its brakes engaged and be physically held by the individual controlling it; and finally, obtain committee input on the final version of the stroller policy that supports parents and children without denying people disabilities access to the only seating area available on the bus.”

At this time, the speaker distributed a picture of a child left alone in a stroller on the bus. “Every time someone else got on the bus and needed to get past the stroller, the guy in the wheelchair next to the stroller, not the father, had to push the stroller forward. This is very unsafe and could end horribly if the bus needed to make a quick stop or even worse be in an accident.”

The next speaker, Mr. Brian Hatgelakas, was also a member of PPT and wanted to address the problem of high fees in Pittsburgh and the long waits time for buses. He also feels that if there are service changes and route changes, PRT should be more transparent with people. “And if there's cancellations, you should be transparent also and have the app mirror what is really going on.”

The next speaker Ms. Karen Warman started her remarks by saying that she has noticed numerous things that have been going on at PRT including delays and other things that should actually be looked at. She also urged the Board to change its new stroller policy. “People in wheelchairs may get passed up if there is no room in the designated area. No one should have to, no matter what their disability, no matter what their criteria, be passed up if they need to be on that bus.”

The next speaker, Kalen Luciano, is a resident in the Friendship neighborhood and wanted to express her disappointment to hear about the lack of community engagement on the new stroller policy and the harm this could cause the disabled community, especially considering how infrequent buses come. She thanked the Board and Katharine for revisiting the stroller policy and seeking Community engagement but thinks this is just proof of the importance of engaging with transit riders before putting policies like this in place.

Ms. Luciano also expressed her excitement about the roll out of the Low Income Fare Program and hopes this is a first step toward free fares for low-income folks in the future.

She also experienced the frustrations of service disruptions during the marathon weekend as the first speaker explained. She also had friends in town that weekend and it was really hard to get around since they relied solely on public transit. Her main reason for addressing the Board was service cuts. As a young college grad who recently moved to the area and doesn't own a car, she completely relies on public transit to get to her basic necessities and connect with family and friends and she is deeply disappointed and concerned about the ongoing service cuts that she witnessed last year since moving here and then heard that there's another round of service cuts in June.

The final speaker, Ms. Joy Dore, had technology issues and could not connect. The Vice Chair asked staff to contact Ms. Dore and to put her on the list to speak first at the upcoming June meeting.

That ended the public comment period of the meeting.

The Chair announced the next Regular meeting of the Board will be Friday, June 28, 2024.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned.