

PITTSBURGH REGIONAL TRANSIT
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING
FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2025

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT) was held on Friday, January 31, 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, Stephanie Turman, Senator Jim Brewster, Tia McClenney, Bobbie Fan and Joseph Totten. The following members participated via TEAMS: Ali Doyle, Emma Shoucair, Lori Mizgorski and Tom Burgunder. Board Solicitor Sandy Garfinkel attended in person.

The Chair called the Regular Meeting to order.

A recommendation was made for approval of the minutes of the November 22, 2024 Regular Meeting. A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously passed.

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

CEO Kelleman asked for a moment of silence for the following retired employees who passed away since the Board last met: Operators Francis Bezak, Matthew Clifford, James Debold, Lawrence Harms, Andrew Kristof, Joseph Phillips, Richard Schilling, and Chester Zygowski; assistance manager of bus and LRT electronics Jason Haid; Dispatcher Lloyd Neal; service assistance Arthur Ellis, car house shifter Walter Groll; and sign painter Henry Watson.

CEO Kelleman first discussed the bus line redesign plan. "When we do our jobs in transit, we focus on the folks who are most likely to use transit, and we know empirically that is our lower income folks, our folks living in denser neighborhoods, our folks who have people under 16 or over 65 and their families. It is our job to provide the best access to all the really amazing things going on in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County for everyone who could use it. So, when we come out and we come to meetings, we focus on our friends who we know already use us and that looks like what we would have called equity a couple of weeks ago. That's us doing our job."

CEO Kelleman added that she has been extremely proud of the work our Planning team has done. "We have been out to over 80 meetings in various neighborhoods in this round since we kicked off the project a year and a half ago. We've had a lot of conversations and received over 9,000 comments. We take this as a good thing. We have received a lot of comments where people said, thank goodness you moved it and we've received a lot of comments where people said, what the heck are you doing to my bus route. And that's what we need to hear. This is a lot of change to talk about at one time and we want everyone's feedback so we can hear from you what makes sense to where you are trying to go and then we can phase it in. We are wrapping up our first phase of comment on our first draft and receiving comments through February 15."

Next CEO Kelleman talked about funding. She reported that "We will be coming forward this year with a budget that reflects the funding realities we have. With a Commonwealth adoption of Act 89, we had 10 years, and at the end of that we would come back and talk again about what we need for operating funds."

“During the pandemic we had bigger things for our legislators to focus on than what looks like transit funding's future, especially when we had federal assistance. But federal assistance has been drawn down. We greatly appreciate the effort from our friends in the legislature last year. To introduce additional funding for us, Governor Shapiro's budget had a proposal of an additional 1.75 percent that would come over from the sales tax would have generated about \$40 million a year for Pittsburgh Regional Transit. Excellent start. The number that will cover status quo service for this agency not in addition, but the service you see today is \$117 million raising the base from the state.”

“We are an economic engine. Every dollar that comes into this agency is \$2.00 to \$3.00 in the local economy, we get nearly 150,000 people a day around on trains, on buses and on our critically important access, and the incline.”

“It's time for us to talk about what sustainable funding can be in Allegheny County so we can lock in the status quo and if we want to have conversations after that, which I think are long overdue, but where do we grow?”

“You will hear a lot from us this year and this legislative session. But the minimum expectation of what transit should look like in Allegheny County is a well-funded and supported workforce and community partners who can give the excellent service this county deserves. We'll be back with you this year on what that looks like. We will be back for public comment and public hearing window so your voices can be heard locally, and we can be heard in Harrisburg. “

That concluded the report of the Chief Executive Officer.

The next item of business was the report of the Performance and Oversight Committee.

Member Tia McClenney reported that the Performance Oversight Committee met last week and she had nine resolutions to present for the Board's consideration.

The Committee first 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 bids listed in the resolution for the total amount of \$2,459,010.10.

On behalf of the Performance Oversight Committee, Member 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 settlement of a public liability claim after an accident with a PRT bus and a pedestrian on November 22, 2022, in the Borough of Swissvale.

It was the recommendation of the Performance Oversight Committee to authorize a settlement payment in the total not-to-exceed amount of \$125,000, with no admission of guilt or liability by PRT, to the claimant for injuries sustained in the accident.

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

Member McClenney continued reporting that pursuant to the FTA Safety Plan Rule, PRT must review its Public Transportation Agency Plan, or PTASP, on an annual basis to determine if further changes and/or updates should be made, and all changes and updates must be approved by the Board of PRT and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's State Safety Oversight Agency.

The Performance Oversight recommended that the Board adopt the Updated 2024 PTASP presented to the Committee.

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

Next it was reported that PRT requires a pool of firms to provide temporary technical and clerical support on an as needed basis. A request for proposals was publicly advertised and PRT received 15 proposals for the clerical support services and 14 proposals for the technical support services.

The Performance Oversight Committee recommended that the five highest rated proposals listed in the resolution be awarded contracts to perform the services in both categories.

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

The next five resolutions presented were seeking authorization to award construction contracts for various projects.

The first resolution was seeking authorization to extend and amend contracts for general ancillary construction services for upgrades and improvements to property and facilities owned and/or operated by PRT.

At its January 2022 meeting, PRT's Board authorized an award of contracts to provide services on a work order basis in the fields of general highway construction, general building construction, plumbing construction, electrical construction, HVAC and Railroad Construction.

The Performance Oversight Committee recommended extending the contracts with Tedesco Excavating and Paving, Inc. for the plumbing contract; T.S.B., Inc. d/b/a/ Schultheis Electric for the electrical contract, SSM Industries, Inc., for the HVAC contract and Railworks Track Services, Inc. for the Railroad Construction contract one additional year with no increase in the total authorized not-to-exceed amounts for each contract.

The Performance Oversight Committee also recommended extending the General Highway contract with Michael Facchiano Contracting, Inc., for one additional year and increasing the total authorized not-to-exceed amount an additional \$4,703,900 and extending the General Building Construction contract with Arcon Contracting, Inc., one additional year and increasing the total authorized not-to-exceed amount an additional \$3,852,958.

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

The next resolution was seeking authorization to award construction contracts for the Harmar Garage Roofing, Mechanical and Interior Improvements project.

After review of the bids received, the Performance Oversight Committee recommended entering into four contracts with various specializations.

It was recommended that the General Construction Contract be awarded to Allegheny Construction Group, Inc., in the amount of \$4,968,000.00; the Mechanical Construction Contract be awarded to Scalise Industries Corporation, in the amount of \$2,261,500.00; the Plumbing Construction Contract be awarded to Newman Plumbing, Inc., in the amount of \$1,373,000.00; and the Electrical Construction Contract be awarded to Merit Electrical Group, Inc., in the amount of \$1,276,000.00; subject to contractors completing the pre-award requirements.

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

The next resolution was seeking authorization to award construction contracts for the South Hills Village Rail Center and South Hills Junction Improvements project. After review of the bids received, the Performance Oversight Committee recommended entering into four contracts with various specializations.

It was recommended that the General Construction Contract be awarded to Waller Corporation, in the amount of \$4,229,300.00; the Mechanical Construction Contract be awarded to Quality Mechanical Services LLC, in the amount of \$571,000.00; the Plumbing Construction Contract be awarded to Wheels Mechanical Contracting & Supplier, Inc., in the amount of \$780,000.00; and the Electrical Construction contract be awarded to Sargent Electric Company in the amount of \$422,238.00; subject to the contractors completing the pre-award requirements.

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

The next resolution was seeking authorization to award construction contracts for the Facilities HVAC project.

After review of the bids received, the Performance Oversight Committee recommended entering into three contracts with various specializations.

It was recommended that the General Construction Contract be awarded to Mosites Construction Company in the amount of \$1,998,000.00; the Mechanical Construction Contract be awarded to Scalise Industries Corporation in the amount of \$4,980,000.00; and the Electrical Construction Contract be awarded to Allegheny City Electric, Inc. in the amount of \$1,297,000.00 subject to the contractors completing the pre-award requirements.

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

The final resolution was seeking authorization to award a construction contract for the generator replacement project at various PRT facilities.

After review of the bids received, the Performance Oversight Committee recommended awarding a contract to Merit Electrical Group, Inc, in the amount of \$2,644,000, subject to the successful completion of all pre-award requirements.

On behalf of the Performance Oversight Committee, Member McClenney 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 next order of business was a report of the Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee.

Member Stephanie Turman reported that the Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee met last week and she had a few items for the Board.

First, staff presented updates on the Bus Line Redesign project. It was reported that the project, which began in 2023, is currently in Phase III with staff continuing public engagement through February on the initial draft plan. Following that engagement period, which has been extended by six weeks and nearly doubled the initial engagement events, a second proposal will be drafted, with another round of public engagement starting in the spring.

The goal of the project is to improve service quality and reliability, prioritize equitable investment, and expand connections with a network that supports higher frequency and more accessibility.

Next at the meeting, staff presented the planned February 2025 service changes. These changes, which are effective February 23, 2025, include all three rail and several bus routes affected by the Mount Washington Transit Tunnel closure, which will be detoured through October due to the project. The Red and Blue lines will travel through Allentown on the weekdays, with the Silver line operating between Library and Washington Junction, and all three lines will serve Allentown on the weekends. There will be an added temporary light-rail stop on Warrington Avenue at Allen Street in both directions and the Subway Local route will be the only route to serve Station Square Station.

Several bus routes will also be detoured, generally using the Allentown streets inbound and the Wabash Tunnel outbound, though there are some exceptions.

Also included in the normal changes are new routing in East Liberty for two routes, new routing in Greenfield for one route, run time adjustments, frequency changes, span of service changes, and others. Further details regarding the February service changes have been posted on PRT's website.

Next Member Turman reported on the Allegheny County Transit Council and The Committee for Accessible Transportation. ACTC met in January and staff provided an update on the Fare System

Refresh project and the February service changes. Their next scheduled meeting is February 26. The CAT Committee also met in January. Staff provided an update on the fare system refresh project, the February service changes, and an update on ACCESS services and programs. Their next regularly scheduled meeting is March 6.

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

The next order of business was a report of the Finance Committee.

Committee Chair Ali Doyle reported that the Finance Committee met on Thursday, January 23, where four resolutions and the November and December 2024 financial results were presented.

The first resolution was seeking authorization to temporarily extend the Rail Free Zone. It was explained at the meeting that due to the unique nature of the ongoing Washington Tunnel project, the inconvenience it will cause the affected PRT patrons, and to ensure PRT riders do not have to pay an additional fare for transferring between vehicles, the Finance Committee recommends expanding the rail free zone to the Station Square Rail Station during the project.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Committee Chair Doyle 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 an agreement with First Data Merchant Services, LLC, to provide merchant bank card services. These services include, but are not limited to, debit and or credit card processing services. Following three extensions to the agreement, the Finance Committee recommends extending the agreement with First Data Merchant Services, LLC for the final two option years to January 30, 2027, and to increase the previously authorized not-to-exceed amount by \$986,433.36.

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

Chair Doyle continued reporting that since the adoption of the FY 2025 Operating budget, there have been changes in the actual income and expenses realized. PRT has realized increases in State Operating Assistance and local county match, interest income related to deferred State Operating Assistance as well as unplanned remaining COVID-19 stimulus fund balances.

The expense budget was also adjusted to account for additional costs outlined in the resolution.

As a result of the foregoing factors, the Finance Committee recommended adoption of an amended FY 2025 Operating Budget totaling \$542,360,621.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Committee Chair Doyle 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 seeking authorization for PRT to apply for and enter into agreements for Calendar Year 2025 Operating and Capital Grant Funds. It was explained at the

meeting that in many instances, the time-period for developing and submitting applications for a grant and/or entering into the grant agreement for funds awarded is limited, requiring PRT to move promptly to timely submit the application for available funds.

This resolution will allow PRT to submit applications in a timely fashion for grants that become available in Calendar Year 2025.

It was noted at the meeting that the Finance Department will provide regular reports to PRT's Board concerning grants applied for and awarded during calendar year 2025 as part of the Finance Division's monthly report to the Board.

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

The November and December financial results were presented next.

It was reported that Total Operating Income for November was above budget by about \$135,000 due to interest income exceeding budget. Total operating income for December was below budget by about \$318,000 due to lower Passenger Revenue. Total Expenses for the months of November and December were below budget by \$4.5 million and \$2.7 million respectively due to lower expenses in almost every category compared to budget.

Total Operating Income is about \$800,000 higher than last fiscal year through December due to higher Passenger revenue and Access Shared Ride Revenue. Total Expenses through December were \$2.3 million lower than last fiscal year due to lower employee benefits due to a one-year reduction in Pension Expense.

Total Subsidy through December is \$49.4 million lower than last fiscal year due to the completion of Federal Stimulus invoicing, and lower Preventative Maintenance invoicing.

Finally, it was reported that PRT ended December with \$420.7 million in operating reserves.

That concluded the report of the Finance Committee.

The next order of business was public comment. To see the below summarized testimony in full, please visit PRT's website at www.rideprt.org.

The first speaker, Laura Wiens, is the executive director of Pittsburghers for Public Transit. Laura wanted to address the PRT Board directly by stating that the Board has a very important responsibility with the bus line redesign. "You will ultimately decide whether to approve a plan that radically reshapes our transit system, and you are accountable to the consequences of that decision. Whether the bus line redesign makes the system better or worse, whether it grows ridership or craters it. Neither is a foregone conclusion." She suggested that "This is not a decision to be taken lightly, so ask questions. Be critical if it is complicated for you to understand. Don't create additional hardship by adding transfers where riders have direct trips, change route names if they are substantively similar, or eliminate popular lines."

Laura concluded by urging the Board to implement PPT's recommendations so that we can collectively celebrate a second draft.

The next speaker, Kelda Boorman, wanted to address the bus line redesign and its impact on low income and disabled individuals. Kelda lives in low income and accessible housing in Oakland along with 37 other families. The most important destination for the residents is the South Side where they buy groceries, in the Fifth and Forbes Oakland Corridor, where most seek healthcare, and the bus line redesign proposal would eliminate. She also spoke to the fact that many of her friends and people in the communities don't even know that this is happening or have been able to give their feedback because of lack of accessibility with the maps. Better communication is needed.

The next speaker, Amy Zaiss, commented that she is sure PRT is aware, but many people were sent the wrong meeting link earlier, and she urged PRT to consider live streaming these meetings on another app. Amy was really interested in hearing Katharine Kelleman's opening comments but completely missed them because she had no way of getting into the meeting. "If you want a more transparent meeting, you need to live stream it on YouTube or on a webpage."

Her main comment today was that she wanted to say that she knows herself, as well as other transit nerds in the area, that are looking forward to the annual service report that is usually out by now. "I and others were very alarmed to see the ridership drop last year which was then explained it was a data anomaly and this report should speak to that."

Amy's next issue is communications in regard to the rail construction. Most people riding on the trains were completely unaware that they've been stopping downtown and not running through. "I was aware of it because I read all the news and I watch the local news, but I just find it baffling that like an average rider could look up directions on Google Maps or transit, even on your own apps and not know that the train are not running through."

Amy ended her remarks by saying that after signing up to address the Board a PRT staff member proactively reached out who was very kind and professional.

The next speaker, Ivette Mongalo-Winston is a planning consultant, but just speaking as a resident. Ivette has been working with the greater Hazelwood Community collaborative and trying to respond and understand the PRT bus line redesign project. She realizes that PRT is trying to make the best changes possible for all residents and weighing the pros and cons. "But we have a handful of Greater Hazelwood organizations having done an analysis of the impacts of the current proposal and urged the Board to read our letter that was sent over to the PRT bus line redesign team on January 30."

Andrew Hussein was the next speaker with a few items to address. He stated that he agrees with an earlier speaker that it is concerning that Annual Service Report is probably now more delayed than it's ever been getting to the public. He hopes that PRT is planning on releasing that report soon.

Next Andrew addressed the bus redesign project. "It's clear that there's still people that haven't been reached." He is currently in an area that tends to be harshly impacted by the redesign. "In spite of the fact that the redesign proposes a hub out here in North Versailles, you want to eliminate like half of the routes and reroute several of the routes away from different parts of North Versailles and neighboring communities. so help make it make sense."

The next speaker, Fred Mergner, is a bus rider and retired Port Authority Program Manager of Service Planning and Schedules. He said that there is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic had a serious impact on public transportation, and commute and ridership patterns seem to have been forever changed as a result. "This is the right time to review the transit network and propose some changes that would offer a service appropriate to today's needs. But that is not to say that the entire network should be deconstructed and rebuilt in a way that is unrecognizable to its users."

"The Pittsburgh system is a legacy system, having been in service well over a century and 1/2. Yes, it is old. But Pittsburgh, old as well, has been built around it. Its radio layout is based on Pittsburgh's street network, which cannot be changed. People that use the system understand it and know it. Many live and work where they do because of the existing bus routes."

"The system certainly is not obsolete and given its hub and spoke nature is not so complicated. It's designed as typical of transportation networks when properly funded and operated, this transit system can offer a fantastic and competitive service. Why eliminate long standing routes, connections, bus stops, route numbers and names? Why require more transfers when riders hate transfers, not just in downtown, but anywhere? There is no need. Doing so would only result in chaos, decreasing ridership and disrupting the lives of the system's loyal riders who use and depend upon it daily to prosper. Our transit system needs only the following to be properly funded to be well managed to be updated and expanded where needed."

Fred urged the PRT Board to recognize the value of this asset and to put the brakes on this disruptive and unnecessary bus line redesign project using the current network as its base. "Let's develop a plan that preserves viable connections, identifies new ones for implementation, considers changes where ridership numbers have dropped, and developed sufficient, workable and useful schedules. This approach would be best for riders."

City Council member Barb Warwick addressed the Board speaking on behalf of herself and some community groups throughout her district. "We would first like to thank the PRT bus line redesign team for all their outreach across Pittsburgh's District 5 neighborhoods. We would also like to thank Curt Conrad for his close collaboration with the District 5 City Council team to make sure that we gather as much information as possible from our residents."

"Redesigning the Allegheny County bus network is a monumental task. The results of which will impact the lives of 10s of thousands of transit riders for many years to come. This is why the District 5 office has come together with community organizations and residents to submit feedback on how the initial draft will impact transit riders across our district as a whole."

"We have grave concerns about cuts to existing service and the loss of one seat connections to critical destinations for residents in Hazelwood Glen, Hazel Greenfield and the 31st Ward. We also would like to see additional one seat connections between our neighborhoods so that our communities and local businesses can more easily interact with each other and grow. As a collective, our key takeaways are that the PRT bus line redesign, one must not eliminate existing service or replace one seat service with transfers to critical destinations, including work and healthcare hubs, schools, social services, community centers, and recreational amenities."

"You must provide one seat connections to assigned neighborhood schools for Pittsburgh public school students and account for the upcoming PPS reorg to ensure that every District 5 PPS, middle

and high school student has a one seat connection within reasonable walking distance of their school.”

“And also, you must prioritize one seat connections between neighboring communities so that all District 5 neighborhoods can easily access each other's business districts and neighborhood amenities.”

The councilwoman submitted a written letter into the record. “Attached to this letter is a list of key bus stops in all District 5 neighborhoods with corresponding critical destinations which residents should be able to reach on a one seat ride. Many of these connections are already possible in the existing network and losing them would be devastating to residents who have come to rely on them.”

“In addition to providing feedback on the proposed bus line redesign, we implore Governor Shapiro and our state representatives to allocate sufficient dedicated long term transit funding in Pennsylvania to provide Pittsburgh and Allegheny County residents with the world class public transit service they deserve.”

The councilwoman concluded her remarks by saying that she knows how hard it is with government organizations. “We are always focused on our own thing, but as she mentioned, with the Pittsburgh Public School reorganization, which was just done yesterday, this is the first time ever in the city's history that we have done such a comprehensive plan, and this is a critical opportunity for PRT to work together with the City of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County and our municipalities to figure out how our bus line fits into what residents are asking for and what we're going to find out through this plan so the councilwoman appreciates the collaboration.”

The next speaker, Julie Daw, was also there to talk about the bus line redesign plan. She uses PRT almost every day to go to work, to go to the doctor for shopping and errands and for fun and chose to live in Bloomfield in large part because it is a transit rich neighborhood for Pittsburgh. She works downtown and takes the bus almost every day. “Public transit in this county has faced year over year reductions in service.” Ms. Daw is very disappointed, but not surprised that the redesign as it is currently proposed amounts to overall cuts to the system.

The next speaker, John Tague, was there today to discuss DEI. John stated that he was there to support our DEI Program because it's slightly different than what it is at other companies and organizations because it also includes accessibility. His concern is that since we're a governmental entity and receive federal funds that there might be some pressure from the Department of Transportation or the FTA for us to eliminate that program. “Now what we call it is another story, but I think we need to stay strong and keep up the work on we make sure that we do include folks not just of race but of any ethnic or minority group.”

The next speaker, Chaz Williams, shared his concerns with the Board regarding the behavior of management who feel that they can threaten a life and safety of others and the cavalier way in which it's possibly being addressed at PRT. Mr. Williams discussed an alleged confrontation with a PRT employee that happened during non-working hours and offsite from PRT's property.

The next speaker, Nicole Gallagher, is a community organizer with Pittsburghers for Public Transit. She has spent the last few months in one-on-one conversations with current and former PRT operators, asking them to review the proposed bus line redesign. Many of those transit workers have been surprised at the proposed changes and seriously concerned about the ways these changes in

routes will affect their working conditions as well as the ways the route changes will impact the vulnerable riders that they built relationships with and for whom they provide an essential service every day.

“The passenger data being used for the bus line redesign is an average of the number of riders on each route across time, across seasons. This hides important information like how a route might carry a lot of passengers along a certain segment but not in another portion of the route. Or that it's very useful in the fall for high school or college students, but the route declines in ridership over the summer. The bus line redesign will change the lives of 10s of thousands of people in Allegheny County, for better or for worse. And when we say that the bus line redesign draft 2.0 should work for all, we mean your workers too.”

The next speaker, Fonda Duse, addressed the board with her concerns with how FMLA has been mishandled at PRT. She urged Local 85 to survey its members, or former members, to see if they were adversely affected by FMLA.

The next speaker, Vincent Brandon is a former PRT operator. He was there to advocate on behalf of the operators and maintenance personnel who's physical and mental health are always impacted by redesigns, construction, rerouting and route renaming. “We are the frontline, and we are the first to feel the impacts of it.”

The next speaker, Maria Cohen, was also there to address the Board on the bus redesign plans, “The results of which will impact the lives of thousands of transit riders for many years to come. The Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition joins our District 5 office and our neighboring communities in expressing our concerns regarding the proposed changes that will impact transit riders across our district. As a collective, we have serious concerns about cuts to existing services and the loss of one seat connections to critical destinations for our residents in Hazelwood Glen, Hazel Greenfield and the 31st Ward. Our group would like to see additional one seat connections between our neighborhoods so that our communities and local businesses can more easily interact with each other and grow as a collective. Our key takeaways are that the PRT bus line redesign must not eliminate existing services.”

The next speaker, Tiara Collins, was also there to discuss the current bus line redesign for Greenfield, Hazelwood Glen and Hazel Greenfield. She spoke of the negative impact the proposed changes would have on her family.

The next speaker, Connor Chapman, lives in Pittsburgh's Polish Hill neighborhood and is a member of Pittsburghers for public transit. Connor said that this is his first time testifying before this board and speaking up now because “the bus line redesign will fundamentally impact every transit rider and worker in our county, which is a tremendous responsibility. I want to see a plan that strengthens our transit system and our communities, one that increases ridership and minimizes disruption to current riders and transit workers.” Connor urged PRT leadership to join transit riders and transit workers in our fight for a bus line redesign that works for all by helping us advocate for a dedicated funding solution on the state level. “It's essential that every effort is taken to expand transit service through this redesign, not remain cost neutral.”

The next speaker, Christina Hansen, was also there to talk about the bus redesign project. She said that she is about to hit her 13-year anniversary living in the Pittsburgh region. “I moved to this area from a place that did not have public transportation, and when she moved here, she had the goal of

becoming comfortable and confident navigating a city without a car.” She is very proud to live in a metropolitan area with public transportation where she can go to work and play reliably. She now lives in Uptown or the Lower Hill and concerned about the proposed changes.

The next speaker, Verna Johnson, lives in East Liberty. Verna is also very concerned and confused with the proposed changes with the bus redesign. “The public depends on you to keep us going where we need to go, where we have to go, where we want to go.”

The next speaker, John McConnell, is from the Elliott Weston area and wanted to address the cascading effects on the quality of life for people who don't use public transportation such as getting our healthcare workers. “Think of the gridlock, especially in Pittsburgh, where we don't have wide roads, and think about pollution.”

The next speaker, Joan Monroe, was there to discuss the redesign plan and how it will affect Trafford. According to the redesign plan, the bus will no longer terminate in Trafford and will end at Haymaker Village. Residents take the bus to and from educational institutions like Pitt, Carnegie Mellon, and Duquesne University. The bus stops at Forbes Hospital, which has been a relatively recent addition. The bus also stops at Haymaker Village Shopping Center, which has the closest grocery store, pharmacy and dollar store.

Bernadette Mosey next addressed the Board regarding mobility devices. She is qualified to ride ACCESS but it is too expensive but says that most mobility devices these days are made larger and people are having trouble using bus ramps and fitting their vehicles on the buses. She did mention that the newer larger blue buses work a lot better.

The next speaker, Mayor Nicole Nesby, is a board member for Pittsburghers for Public Transit and a longtime resident of the City of Duquesne, where she served the community. During her tenure as mayor, many of her constituents either lost jobs or had to quit their jobs due to the lack of transportation from the City of Pittsburgh back into the Mon Valley. “If you're going to say that the goals of PRT are to improve quality, service and reliability by streamlining routes, making routes more direct and improving on time performance, you should most start with the reliable riders, riders who are low-income, elderly, riders with disabilities and our youth.”

The next speaker, Gaia Parrish, addressed the Board regarding the negative impacts the bus redesign plan will have on the residents of Polish Hill.

The next speaker, Chief Pomaj, is Chief of Medicine, land management and land stewardship with the Iroquois Confederacy of Nations and works with a lot of nonprofit organizations that are really focused on helping to create a transit that is just and equitable for all. The chief feels that this is a great time and opportunity to continue in the process of open forum discussions with the those who will be affected by these changes.

The next speaker, Thomas Quinn, address the Board regarding the hardships the bus line redesign will have in Ambridge.

Marlene Unverdorben addressed the Board regarding the problems riding the buses from the Bellevue area of town and the impacts she has already been experiencing on her commute. She that PRT really look at maybe redesigning this somehow that people get the opportunity to work and contribute to society.

The next speaker, Lynda Vanburen, addressed the Board on how the bus redesign plan will negatively impact the West End/Elliott neighborhoods.

The next speaker, Linda Warman, addressed the negative impact the bus redesign plan will have on residents at the Hilltop, Parkview Manor Apartments complex in Duquesne where they desperately need their bus back. There are a lot of senior and disabled residents living there.

The next speaker, Doctor Abhishek Vishwanathan, is a data science professor at Chatham University, as well as an active member of the Pittsburghers for Public Transit. He is on the research subcommittee as well. He is deeply invested in ensuring that this bus line redesign is something that works for all transit riders and by all he means “every single person who depends on public transit, whether you're catching the first bus out of Hazelwood or commuting late at night to the South Side. A bus line redesign that truly works for all must definitely do three things; it needs to increase ridership while minimizing disruption to current riders; it needs to make essential destinations like food, healthcare, schools and jobs more accessible through faster and more reliable transit; and it needs to prioritize service to low-income communities, older adults, people with disabilities, youth and black and brown riders.”

The next speaker, Cheryl Stevens, is the community organizing manager for Pittsburghers for Public Transit. When the bus line redesigned was first announced, she would say she was cautiously optimistic. She heard from some of her friends in Philadelphia about communication issues between riders and SEPTA around public engagement. In order for riders to really try to understand what the changes are, she urged the Board to make use of that extra time to be creative and proactive in reaching out to riders, especially low-income riders who don't have access to the Internet, who don't know where to go for the websites, who are not used to looking at maps like these ones and to use that time to really reach out and to listen to them because this is their system too.

The final speaker, Tom Conroy, is a retired PRT bus operator. He is also a long-time member of Pittsburghers for Public Transit and a retired union member of Local 85. He has reviewed bus line redesign proposals and have spent weeks speaking with current and retired operators about it. He was surprised and disappointed at the sheer magnitude of these changes and shocked at how many currently employed operators have no idea what's in this proposal and the ones who have an inkling are worried about what it will mean for them and the riders they have gotten to know over years of driving these routes. The bus line redesign will not work without funding and people will not rally and stand up for a system that doesn't work for them. There is much at stake for public transit in the upcoming state budget. PRT needs to learn to listen to its workforce and ridership. If we're going to have a fighting chance of winning dedicated, sustainable transit funding together.

The Chair announced the next Regular meeting of the Board will be February 28, 2025.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned.