

## **College Council on Community Policy**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**April 3, 2015**

**Members Present:** Beth Bone, Ibtissam Bouachrine, Margaret Bruzelius, Carla Cooke, Scott Graham, Michael Ireland, Jesse Kline, Sam Masinter, Christen Mucher, Halley Ofner, Danielle Ramdath, Gina Louise Sciarra, Barbara Williams

**Guests Present:** Mary MacInnes, Administrator of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority  
Neal Abraham, Executive Director of Five Colleges, Inc.

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The meeting began at 12:00. Margaret Bruzelius and Danielle Ramdath introduced the two guest speakers for the meeting: Mary MacInnes, Administrator of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) and Neal Abraham, Executive Director of the Five Colleges, Inc.

Mary MacInnes presented information on the current state of the PVTA and goals for the future. She described this as a "very exciting time" for the PVTA with increased support from the state legislature 1.5 years ago in an effort to provide more equitable (increased) funding for the western part of Massachusetts. With the anticipation of this increase, the PVTA did a comprehensive study called the Comprehensive Service Analysis in order to identify the best place to direct additional funds. The Analysis included a number of public meetings in an effort to collect feedback from the community. The PVTA is now in the process of implementing the vision which was established during the Analysis. Please see the attached PVTA handout for additional details of what Mary MacInnes covered in her presentation.

Neal Abraham spoke about the important role that Five Colleges, Inc. has in the public transportation system in the Pioneer Valley. He briefly described the "Five-College bus" system which covers specific routes in the Valley, paid for by Five-Colleges, Inc. with funds from the area colleges. The buses and system is managed by the PVTA.

System-wide estimates suggest that students make up 30% of the overall ridership.

The meeting ended at 1:00

Next meeting May 1, 2015

Minutes respectfully submitted by Michael Ireland

# Pioneer Valley Regional Transit Authority (PVTA)

www.pvta.com



PVTA provides service to the communities of Agawam, Amherst, Belchertown, Chicopee, East Longmeadow, Ludlow, Northampton, Palmer, Pelham, South Hadley, Springfield, Sunderland, Ware, West Springfield, Westfield, Wilbraham and Williamsburg.

## SERVICE SNAPSHOT

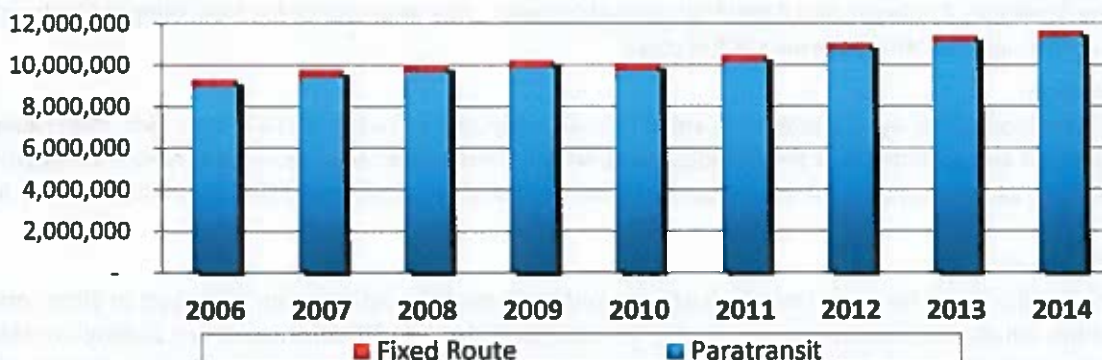
PVTA oversees the operation of 174 buses and 136 vans providing ADA and Senior service throughout the 24 PVTA Communities. PVTA Fixed Route and ADA Service is operated 7 days a week, with reduced service on Saturday and Sunday. Senior service is available 8AM to 4:30PM on weekdays only. ADA and senior service must be scheduled a day in advance and senior service is provided on a space available basis. Fares have remained stable since 2008, the fixed route fare is \$1.25 and the base paratransit fare is \$2.50. PVTA will be introducing our Smartcard this Spring.

PVTA completed its Fixed Route Comprehensive service Analysis at the beginning of 2014 and implemented almost all of the service improvements recommendations in the fall of 2014. The remaining improvements will be implemented in the Fall. The improvements consisted of new routes, better frequencies, expanded weekend service, and more hours of service.

PVTA completed its Paratransit Comprehensive Service Analysis at the end of 2014. PVTA is currently implementing those recommendations. They included implementation of measures that would improve communication with riders, efficiency of operations, and responsiveness to rider concerns.

## RIDERSHIP TRENDS

Ridership has increased 8% since the new service was added. PVTA is predicting 12 Million riders for this year. Ridership Trend Chart is shown below



## FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

The Transportation Reform legislation Produced several positive Financial impacts for PVTA. PVTA State Contract assistance increased by 22%, which funded the new service Borrowing decreased by 60%, the deficit was eliminated and RTA CAP increased from \$1.1 Million to \$5.9 Million

## MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS/IMPROVEMENTS

PVTA is In the process of building a new Operations And Maintenance Facility to replace the existing facility which is a 100 year old Trolley barn. PVTA has purchased a preferred site, removed building asbestos and completed demolition of the building on site. PVTA is in the process of completing schematic design and will be ready for construction July 2016 to December 2017. PVTA has also started the process to construct a transit passenger center in Downtown Westfield, which is the start of the redevelopment of the city's gaslight district. PVTA is about to purchase the site and anticipate construction from April 2016 to December 2016.



## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

PVTA tracks 5 categories of Performance measures. MASS DOT asked the RTA's to set goals that would be challenging. The latest Performance data shows that PVTA is within range of achieving the FY15 goals in all categories except maintenance. This is due to recall of Cummins Engines which are in all PVTA's Gillig busses. PVTA is most proud of the Fixed Route and SCA cost per passenger which decreased in FY14.

	FY13	FY14
Fixed Route Cost per Passenger	\$ 2.61	\$ 2.59
Demand Response Cost per Passenger	\$ 24.64	\$ 26.61
State Contract Assistance per Passenger	\$ 1.67	\$ 1.60

## UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Over the next few years there will be many opportunities in the city of Springfield. The new Union Station will be opening which will produce many new riders, and also require PVTA to provide a new kind of service which is feeder service to Connecticut Commuter Rail. The new MGM Casino will also be opening and producing more PVTA riders. PVTA will be providing a downtown circulator for MGM. The most pressing challenge is the ability to construct facilities and purchase new buses under the restraints of one year state contracts.

## INITIATIVES

### •Bus Rapid Transit

Our fixed route Comprehensive Service Analysis recommended that the State Street corridor would be a candidate for BRT. PVTA, MASS DOT and the City of Springfield are currently working on a study to determine the feasibility of BRT Service.

### •Travel Training

PVTA has developed a Travel Training Program which trains people with mobility impairment to use PVTA's Fixed route system rather than Paratransit service.

### •College Service Contract

PVTA provides service to 7 colleges and 2 city High school systems. Any new service for five colleges (Amherst) is charged at full cost and the others are also at full cost.

### •RTA Coordination

PVTA led the development of open check book and RTA's with relevant software. PVTA researched, interviewed, procured, managed and provided first tier helpdesk support for Transit Asset Management software deployment. Fourteen RTA's are participating. PVTA managed the procurement of Paratransit vehicles and mini-buses for all 15 RTA's.

### •Customer Outreach

PVTA has initiated Bus Rider forums. The administrator and staff meet the riders at our terminals to elicit comments on service. PVTA has initiated a mystery rider program. On a quarterly basis PVPC contractors are assigned to ride fixed route and paratransit service to evaluate a series of factors, cleanliness of vehicle, safety, etc. The program will be expanded to include PVTA Facilities this year.

### • Intelligent Transportation System

- ❖PVTA is the only transit authority in Massachusetts to have fully integrated ITS systems installed on the entire Fixed Route and Paratransit fleets. Fixed route transit audio and video is also deployed throughout the fleet.
- ❖PVTA Bus tracker on PVTA.com provides real time bus location by stop and gives passengers the ability to set up an account to receive email and text messages. Real time signage is also displayed at terminals.
- ❖PVTA also provides Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) for paratransit which is automatic night before reminders and vehicle arrival calls.