



Special Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 7, 2025

9:30 a.m.

**269 Melrose Street, Providence
Transportation Board Room**

Members Present: Director Peter Alviti, Board Chair; James Lombardi, Board Vice Chair; James Leach, Board Treasurer; Patrick Crowley, Board Secretary; Normand Benoit; Vincent Masino; Heather Schey; and Bernard Georges.

Absent Members: Marcy Reyes.

Also Present: Christopher Durand, CEO; Christopher Fragomeni, Esq., Board Counsel; Roy Rivers, Executive Paralegal; members of RIPTA's staff; and members of the public.

Call to Order: Director Alviti calls the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m., indicating that quorum was present.

Director Alviti calls for a motion to table Agenda Item #3 – Service Changes – for a future meeting. Mr. Crowley makes said motion. Mr. Lombardi seconds, and the motion passes with favorable votes by Director Alviti, Mr. Leach, Mr. Benoit, Ms. Schey, and Mr. Masino. Mr. Georges was absent for the vote.

Director Alviti calls for a motion to change the Order of the Agenda. Mr. Crowley makes said motion. Mr. Masino seconds, and the motion passes with favorable votes by Director Alviti, Mr. Leach, Mr. Benoit, Ms. Schey, and Mr. Lombardi. Mr. Georges was absent for the vote.

Director Alviti asks that a letter from the Governor, received just prior to the meeting, be read into the record. Attorney Fragomeni reads Governor Daniel McKee's letter, dated August 7, 2025, into the record.

Agenda Item 2: Efficiency Study Presentation

Eric Offenbergs and Wes Edwards from WSP present the findings from the Operational Efficiency Study. An overview of the scope, revenue and recommendations are provided.

Board discussion and questions ensue.

No vote is taken.

Bernard Georges enters the meeting at 9:56 a.m.

Agenda Item 3: **Service Changes**

Christopher Durand recognizes the RIPTA team for their efforts regarding the service change hearings and the Federal Transit Association – Triennial Review.

Board discussion and questions ensue.

No vote is taken.

Agenda Item 1: **Public Comment**

Daria Phoebe Brashear – States that State leadership has not listened. States that the Governor did not read the same Efficiency Study results.

Daniel Blanchette – States he is a Route 76 rider and cuts would prevent him from getting to his job. Asks Board to talk to the City of Pawtucket and the Mayor’s Office to help avoid cuts.

Dylan Giles – Is grateful for the Board’s decision to table the vote regarding service changes. States that proposed service cuts would not right size the agency. States that the Governor’s letter shows he has no interest in public transit. Thanks RIPTA staff and Christopher Durand for listening to each rider at the hearings.

Robyn Barradas – Thanks Christopher Durand for helping turn RIPTA around. Comments on the Governor’s letter. States that cuts will cause people to lose homes. States that people who are taking the bus are already struggling and RIPTA is a lifeline.

Randall Rose – States that cuts are very serious. Disappointed that the proposed cuts and service hikes are still on the table. States that decision makers are not fully engaged and decisions are being made by the Governor and Speaker of the House. States that fare hikes will result in less revenue. Comments that suggestions from the Governor and Speaker are not realistic.

Teresa Tanzi, State Representative – States that service cuts will be devastating for many as they remove social enhancing ties. States that in order to build something strong, you must grow it. States that no comparable state agency is short of funding. Says the efficiency study should be a public discussion and rightsizing means destroying which is a waste of time and money.

Walter Melillo, President ATU 618 – States that service cuts and layoffs hit home. Concerned for members and their families. States that RIPTA is a lifeline and lost service may never be returned. Says that the State, RIPTA and the Union must work together.

John Flaherty – States that he attended several hearings and saw the anger, frustration and desperation. RIPTA’s current state has been forecasted and was called out in 2002. States that RIPTA is efficient and the study was not necessary. States RIPTA is not mismanaged, it is a public good and public utility. States that RI’s per capita funding is far below other states and a commitment to develop a long-term funding mechanism is needed.

Alan Lemay – Thanks Board for delaying the vote and implores them to not approve cuts. States many people have no option but the bus. Says the State has issues with congestion, cost of living and housing. An investment in keeping RI mobile is needed.

Brian Rice – Signed up but was not present to speak.

Vinh Pham – States that public transit helps people to explore the state. Many students don't have the means for a vehicle. RIPTA is a lifeline for him. States that bus riding helps to build skills and without public transit why would anyone want to remain in Rhode Island.

Jason Victoria O'Conaill – States that cuts to transit will result in less jobs and the economy will be impacted. States that traffic congestion and pollution will rise. States that reduced service will equate a loss of money.

Liza Burkin – Thanks the Board for delaying the vote on service changes. States the Board must change the Governor's mind. States this is not a new beginning for RIPTA, and cuts will devastate RI. Says that RIPTA has a legal responsibility to provide free fare for certain riders and public transit is popular and the narrative needs to be changed.

Elisabeth Hubbard, Governor's Commission on Disabilities – States she is surprised she is the only agency head who has called for RIPTA to be funded. States asking private industry for handouts is not a solution. The impact on social services must be considered. States that RIPTA has invested in building, why undo that now. Says that all state agencies should be supporting RIPTA and no other agency has undergone an efficiency study to this level.

John Welsh – States RIPTA is his primary transportation mode, and he wants to see the R-Line extended. He made additional reference to the letter he submitted to the Board.

Cedric Ye – Thanks Board for delaying the vote. States that cuts will result in an increase in cost per hour. RIPTA was leading in efficiency. RIPTA's funding model isn't indexed for inflation. States that service cuts are not an opportunity for funding.

Ray Gagne – Thanks the Board for postponing votes on cuts. States that there should not be cuts. States that he works with the elderly and for them, RIPTA is a lifeline. Says that RIPTA is an economic development strategy and public transit is a public good.

Paul Le Bon – States a complaint he had regarding service. Makes suggestions for RIPTA, including charging for service to Bally's Casino, charging for parking in RIDOT's Wickford Garage, and cutting Flex Service partnering with Uber and Lyft. States that RIPTA was a lifeline when he was in college.

Crystal Vargas – States that she moved here for college and RIPTA was a lifeline when she needed it.

Laurent Martinez – States she does not have a car, and public transit is very important. Says that the 25% decline is due to the previous cuts and wonders how much more of a decline will come with future cuts. States that riders and taxpayers are one and the same.

Ilca Almeida – States that RIPTA ushered her through childhood where she helped raise her family while her mother worked. She also discussed some issues with bus drivers.

Samantha Cote – Happy cuts were delayed. States that RIPTA serves 60 thousand people per day. States that if we have funding for bridges and infrastructure, we should for RIPTA as it moves more people.

Tiara Mack, State Senator- States that she used RIPTA when she was a student at Brown. States that the State funds schools and libraries because they are a public good; and RIPTA is also a public good, when funded. She references advertising at the RI Football Stadium. States that cuts have an impact on all aspects of life.

Pat Ford – Speaks about Route R1636 and states that RIPTA should not cut service for lack of funds while giving away free service.

Alex Taylor – Thanks Board for delaying vote. States that RIPTA is a public good and cuts have a ripple effect for the entire community.

Samantha Maar – States that previous cuts already make it difficult and proposed ones will be worse. States that cuts will negatively affect future education. States that there are human costs that don't show in the efficiency study.

Grant Dulgarian – States that there should be no budget cuts and to let the General Assembly figure it out. States that RIPTA should direct mail schedules to households within a certain parameter of a route. States that RIPTA should encourage tax exempt entities to provide bus passes.

Agenda Item 4: **Adjournment – 12:19 p.m.**

Mr. Crowley makes a motion to adjourn. Mr. Masino seconds, and the motion passes with favorable votes by Director Alviti, Mr. Lombardi, Mr. Leach, Mr. Benoit, Ms. Schey, and Mr. Georges.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Crowley, Secretary