SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
REGULAR AND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BOARD

February 25, 2021
3:04 P.M.

VERITEXT LEGAL SOLUTIONS, LLC
MID-ATLANTIC REGION
1801 Market Street - Suite 1800
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103
BOARD PRESENT IN THE BOARD ROOM:

Pasquale T. Deon, Sr., Chairman
Honorable Kenneth Lawrence, Jr., Vice Chairman
Thomas Jay Ellis, Esquire

BOARD PRESENT ON THE WEBEX:

Thomas E. Babcock
Joseph E. Brion, Esquire
John F. Cordisco, Esquire
Mark H. Dambly
Robert D. Fox, Esquire
Kenneth L. Johnson, P.E.
William J. Leonard, Esquire
Deborah Mahler
Esteban Vera, Jr.
Honorable Martina White

STAFF PRESENT IN THE BOARD ROOM:

Leslie S. Richards, General Manager
Richard G. Burnfield, Deputy General Manager
Robert L. Lund, P.E., Deputy General Manager
Gino Benedetti, Esquire, General Counsel
Carol R. Looby, Secretary
Stephanie Deiger, AGM, Employee Development
Relations
Jody Holton, AGM, Government & Public Affairs
Francis E. Kelly, AGM, Government & Public Affairs
William Webster, AGM, Communications
CHAIRMAN DEON: The Regular and Annual Meeting of the Board will now come to order. The special meeting which was noticed for today has been canceled.

I'll start off with the attendance.

Vice Chairman Lawrence?

VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: Here.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Tom Babcock?

MR. BABCOCK: Here.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Skip Brion?

NO RESPONSE.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Skip?

MR. BRION: Here.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Mike Carroll?

NO RESPONSE

CHAIRMAN DEON: Mike?

NO RESPONSE

CHAIRMAN DEON: We'll come back.

John Cordisco?

MR. CORDISCO: Here.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Mark Dambly?

MR. DAMBLY: Here.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Tom Ellis?
Mr. Ellis: Here.

Chairman Deon: Robb Fox?

Mr. Fox: Here.

Chairman Deon: Kevin Johnson?

No response

Chairman Deon: Kevin?

No response

Chairman Deon: Obra is bringing his baby home. Congratulations to Obra Kernodle. He had a baby, what, two days ago? So he called saying he is bringing the baby home now.

Bill Leonard?

No response

Chairman Deon: Bill?

No response

Chairman Deon: Debbie Mahler.

No response

Chairman Deon: Debbie?

Ms. Mahler: Here.

Chairman Deon: Esteban Vera?

Mr. Vera: Present, here.

Chairman Deon: Representative White?
CHAIRMAN DEON: We'll start off with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CHAIRMAN DEON: Thank you everybody. Before we get started, I'm happy to say we're back to a full complement of board members, so I'd like to welcome our newest board members, Esteban Vera, thank you. You have a very good representation. Looking forward to working with you on the board.

MR. VERA: Thank you so much.

CHAIRMAN DEON: We have Tom Ellis who is a retread, so we're all good. And Representative White, who is sort of new, but welcome everybody. We have a great board here, and proud to work with everybody.

To start off, if there are speakers who wish to address items on today's agenda, you will be called on before the Board votes. Please limit your remarks to two minutes. Speakers
who wish to address items not on today's agenda, will be called on at a later date.

The first item of the agenda is election of officers. The office chairman is open. I will now turn the chair over to the Vice Chairman to entertain nominees for that office.

VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: Are there any nominations for the office of chairman?

MR. CORDISCO: Mr. Vice Chairman, I'd like to nominate Pat Deon as the Chairman of the SEPTA Board. I have had the pleasure of knowing Pat for several years, and he have always tried to work in bipartisan fashion on behalf of the region. Under his stewardship SEPTA has operated with balanced budgets for over two decades. This authority has remained on steady ground, and experienced significant growth despite numerous obstacles. I believe Pat's experienced leadership will be very
valuable as we face the unprecedented challenges of these times. It's my honor at this point to nominate, once again, Pat Deon.

VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: Thank you, Mr. Cordisco.

Is there a second?

MR. VERA: Second, Esteban Vera.

VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: All right. It has been moved and seconded that Pat Deon is nominated for chairman. Are there any other nominations?

NO RESPONSE

VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: Okay. All those in favor of closing the nominations say, "aye."

ALL: Aye.

VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: Opposed?

NO RESPONSE

VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: The nominations are now closed. All in favor of Pat Deon for Chairman say, "aye."
ALL: Aye.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Any opposed?

NO RESPONSE.

CHAIRMAN DEON: All right. I now declare Pat Deon Chairman of the SEPTA Board.

CHAIRMAN DEON: After the last year, I'm not sure, but I would say I must thank you for your support, and all your help, but it really is a job of an entire Board, and I'm so happy and proud of this Board, especially our new members coming on board. We have new challenges as Leslie... I think we have great staff here, and I think we have a great board, and I hope this year is better than last, so thank you everybody.

And we're going to move on to, the nomination for Vice Chairman is opened. I'll entertain a nomination for that office.

MR. FOX: Yes, Chairman Deon, this is Robb Fox. I'd like to nominate Ken Lawrence. I've known Ken as my
Montgomery Commissioner and my colleague on this Board for the entire time that I have been on the Board, and I'm also happy to say that he has become my friend.

Ken is someone who cares deeply about the issues. This is a rarity, but he does the right thing. He is very thoughtful. He gets things done quietly, efficiently, and those are all the hallmarks of a leader, and so I wholeheartedly nominate him to be Vice Chairman of the Board.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Okay. Thank you, Robb.

Is there a second?

MR. LEONARD: Bill Leonard.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Thank you, Bill. All those in favor of closing the nomination say, "aye."

ALL: Aye.

CHAIRMAN DEON: All those in favor for Kenneth Lawrence as vice chairman say, "aye."
ALL: Aye.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Ken Lawrence is elected.

I'll say it's been great working with Ken, and glad you're back. Thanks.

APPLAUSE

VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Robb, for that nomination, your kind words. It's been a tough year. It's been a tough year. Leslie's first year, but truly enjoy the partnership with you, Pat and Leslie, definitely want to be here to support you. I want to thank you for what you and staff have done for this tough year. Hopefully we will start turning the corner and getting better, so thank you.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Thank you, Ken.

As you know, this last year has been one of the most unprecedented challenges for SEPTA and our region. While we're seeing positive signs in the fight against COVID-19, we know there are
many difficult issues for us to work through moving forward.

   It is comforting to know that we can continue to rely on SEPTA's dedicated workforce. They have kept us and this region moving during the pandemic, ensuring residents stay connected to essential jobs and services. That gives us great confidence that the system will be ready to support the recovery efforts.

   We also have the right leadership in place. General Manager, Leslie Richards, has been great during the whole process. Your team has been essential, and with all that, we saw what happened, especially Jim Fox, what they do with COVID and vaccination, so I want to thank you for the outstanding job through this crisis. They put the Authority in the best possible position to emerge stronger than we ever have before.

Before we move on, I would like to take a moment to honor our friend and
colleague, Stewart Greenleaf. He passed away earlier this month. He was a life-long resident of Montgomery County and he served the public in multiple roles over a career that spanned nearly 50 years. He actually ran for president. I remember, if I recall.

Stewart was a great friend, great ally both in the senate and on this Board. He was a tireless advocate for his constituents and this region. We were fortunate to have him representing SEPTA's interests in Harrisburg for the last four decades.

Senator Greenleaf and I were appointed to the Board just months apart, so we shared a special bond. He served with distinction for nearly 25 years, and helped guide the Authority through an era of stability and growth.

Stewart was a true public servant, and will truly be missed.

I would like to turn it over to Tom Ellis, who will introduce a
resolution honoring Senator Greenleaf.

MR. ELLIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the honor of reading this resolution, especially since I'm succeeding Stewart in his seat. I knew Stewart since I was a teenager, when he first came to the house, when he was going to run from the House to the Senate, and Stewart would always go door to door, through every election he went door to door, whether it was 30 degrees or 90 degrees. That's the kind of elected official he was. He liked to talk to people, even when he was running for Congress, it was unsuccessful because he wanted to go door to door and see everybody, and in the congressional district, that just doesn't work.

Stewart had a good heart, he was a real mentor, and he always kind of reminded me of being like Jimmy Stewart, so I want to read this into the record:

"WHEREAS, Stewart J. Greenleaf, Sr., a longtime Republican from
Montgomery County, was elected to the Pennsylvania State Senate in 1978 representing the Commonwealth's 12th District, and served therein for well over 40 years until his retirement in 2019; and

WHEREAS, Senator Greenleaf was a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, where in fact he played basketball and earned his law degree at the University of Toledo School of Law; and

WHEREAS, prior to his career in the State Senate, Senator Greenleaf briefly served in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, and before that was a commissioner in Upper Moreland Township, and a prosecutor in the Montgomery County D.A.'s office; and

WHEREAS, for the majority of his time in Harrisburg, Senator Greenleaf was Chairman of the State's Judiciary Committee, and passed significant legislations ranging from Megan's Law
registration to the Puppy Lemon Law, and
was one of the leaders of the
tough-on-crime push during the 1990's;
and

WHEREAS, Senator Greenleaf was
widely recognized, both in Pennsylvania
and nationally, for courageously
championing significant legislative
initiatives, including antismoking in
public areas; expanding educational
funding; criminal justice reform;
enhanced transparency in judicial and
legislative ethics; public
transportation; infrastructure renewal;
and increasing the minimum wage; and

WHEREAS, over Senator
Greenleaf's distinguished career in
public service, he was well known for his
great faith and integrity, possessing
character and leadership; universally
admired by colleagues and constituents
across the political spectrum, caring
about justice over partisanship; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, Senator
Greenleaf was appointed to the SEPTA Board as the Senate Majority Representative, and has served thereon for nearly 25 years with dedication and distinction as an advocate for his constituents and the region's priorities, including public transportation, helping the Authority through an era of stability and growth; and

WHEREAS, Senator Greenleaf died on February 9th, 2021, leaving a legacy and impact on the people of Pennsylvania, which shall live on forever; and

WHEREAS, the board wishes to recognize the devoted service which Senator Greenleaf gave to the citizens of Southeastern Pennsylvania in his many efforts, and, in particular, the many hours he dedicated to the improvement of public transit as a member of the Board.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby commemorates Stewart J. Greenleaf, Sr., and gratefully acknowledges the faithful and dedicated
service which he gave to SEPTA, its member counties of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania."

And anyone who wishes to donate in his memory can donate to the SEPTA Disaster Relief Memorial Fund, or the Philadelphia Foundation, which we will notify Stewart's Family, and that was the most important thing to Stewart was his family.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Well said.

Thank you, Tom.

Move on to -- the next item on the Agenda is approval of the board meeting of January 28. These minutes have been circulated. I'll entertain a motion to approve the minutes.

VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: So moved.

CHAIRMAN DEON: A second?

MR. LEONARD: Second.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Tom?

MR. LEONARD: Leonard, second.
CHAIRMAN DEON: Bill, thank you.
Any comments or corrections?
NO RESPONSE

CHAIRMAN DEON: Hearing none,
I'll call the question. All in favor
say, "aye."

ALL: Aye.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Thank you. Move
on to the Financial Report, next item is,
Okay. You're usually to my left.

MR. BURNFIELD: Thank you, Mr.
Chairman.

Revenue for the month of January
was $26.3 million below budget. Transit
ridership continues at 35 percent of
pre-COVID levels and regional rail at 15
percent of pre-COVID levels. After the
first seven months of Fiscal Year 2021,
revenue is $205.5 million below budget.

Operating expenses continue to
be very carefully monitored, and
year-to-date we are $74.4 million below
budget.
Federal CARES relief money has provided operating assistance to offset the revenue shortfalls, to sustain the cost, and support operations, and to address the additional operations resulting from the pandemic.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my report.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Thank you, Rich. I'll entertain a motion that the Financial Report be received and filed.

MR. ELLIS: So moved.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Second?

VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: Second.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Moved and second.

All in favor say, "aye."

ALL: Aye.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Opposed?

NO RESPONSE

CHAIRMAN DEON: Hearing none, this resolution is adopted.

We have a few speakers. We'll start off with Mr. Benjamin She.
MR. SHE: Hello, can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN DEON: We can hear you.

MR. SHE: Good afternoon, Chairman Deon and the Board. I'm here to call on the Board to vote no on the proposed FY21 Capital Budget Amendment, which will be $40 million of Federal CARES funding to indirectly pay for engineering work for King of Prussia Rail.

Although SEPTA management has claimed no CARES money is going directly towards KOP rail and instead towards Amtrak lease payments, it's undeniable that the only reason why, quote, funding program in SEPTA's Capital Budget is now available to relocate to the project, is because CARES is now filling that capital hole. Although KOP Rail is a project of regional significance and certainly a crucial project, we believe SEPTA needs to reorder its priorities and devote current efforts and spending towards
getting riders back on transit in this slow and vulnerable recovery period.

Although KOP Rail has the potential to attract new riders when it opens, that day is at least several years away after approval, full funding, and construction, in the medium-to-long term future. But looking at the short term. Ridership across the system has all but collapsed this past year, and every day is a tentative waiting game to see if both employers and riders will want to utilize transit again, or in the worst case, stick to driving.

CARES Act funding was chiefly meant to fill a massive budget hole for transit agencies, and for SEPTA, this is doubly so as we head into a state funding cliff with the sunset of Act 44 Turnpike payments. But with its intended for operating, CARES funding can also be used to regain riders and employers' trust. With $40 million, thousands of more masks can be bought, more cleaning can be done
in still filthy vehicles and stations,
and most importantly, peak-hour service
can easily be increased on the city's 20
busiest and most overcrowded bus and
trolley routes until the end of the year.

Money spent now on service
frequency and public health will directly
help KOP Rail's case by showing the FTA
that the SEPTA and the region's riders
are committed to getting back on transit
as soon as possible. But the fact that
this CARES money we're dealing with also
makes it an ethical issue.

As advocates, I and my
colleagues devoted our time to petition
and call Congress to help bail out
transit agencies, multiple times,
assuming we were going to see dangerous
public health conditions and painful
service cutbacks improved, but instead,
this is what we're spending it on? I
urge the Board to vote no on the Capital
Budget Amendment and put all its money
where its mouth is, towards direct
recovery, including cleaner cars and increase frequency.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Great. Thank you. I know we have a couple people who want to speak on this item today. I'm going to turn it over to Jody after your comments are done and she will respond to it.

We will go to Mr. Daniel Trubman.

MR. TRUBMAN: Hi, can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN DEON: We can. You're on.

MR. TRUBMAN: Hello, my name is Daniel Trubman, and as a transit rider and 5th Square member, I'm calling for this board to table the proposed Capital Budget Amendment to indirectly spend tens of millions of dollars of COVID relief for fund for unrelated purposes.

Transit riders throughout the Philadelphia region, and indeed the
country, spent time writing letters, sending e-mails, and calling their congress members and senators demanding the federal government support transit with emergency funding during the pandemic. It was important to ensure essential employees were able to safely commute to their jobs during this crisis; not so SEPTA can extend engineering design work contracts.

At a time when some bus routes and trolleys are still so crowded that riders still have no choice but to stand and sit practically on top of each other, why is this Board prioritizing unrelated capital projects over improving bus frequency?

Nearly a year into this pandemic, SEPTA's efforts to ensure all riders have access to masks is nearly invisible outside of occasional volunteer efforts for a few hours at a handful of stations. For a miniscule fraction of the amount of COVID relief funding, this
board proposes to spend on an unrelated
capital project that's still years from
even potentially breaking ground, SEPTA
could ensure that every vehicle had free
masks to distribute to riders.

This afternoon's Financial
Report serve to remind us of how dire
SEPTA's fiscal position remains. Indeed,
General Manager, Leslie Richards, has
frequently publicly noted that the
financial support SEPTA received from the
CARES Act will run out before passengers
and fare revenue rebound. Shouldn't this
Board vigorously reserve dollars that may
be used for operations in the face of
such uncertainty?

If in the near future this Board
feels the need to implement service cuts
for lack of funds, spending $40 million
in anticipation of being able to advance
the KOP Rail Project several years from
now will not seem like a prudent decision
in hindsight.

At the very least, this Board
should postpone voting on this decision
to indirectly use CARES Act funds for
non-COVID related purposes until the
details of any additional federal relief
is known.

It would be even more prudent,
and a demonstration of this Board of a
commitment to transparency and good
governance, if the decision to spend
CARES Act relief funds on an unrelated
capital project was done as part of the
regular Capital Budget process, which
will begin in only a few weeks. That way
a much broader series of stakeholders
will have the opportunity to weigh in,
and this spending proposal can be
considered in the fuller context, with
additional information provided to the
public.

In the meanwhile, SEPTA and this
Board should dedicate their focus and
resources to addressing the present
emergency.

Thank you.
CHAIRMAN DEON: Great. Thank you.

Mason Carter?

MR. CARTER: Yes, my name is Mason Carter. I'm the chair of the SEPTA Citizen's Advisory Committee. Although today I'm speaking as an individual rider, so I call on at least postponing this Amendment or voting no on the Amendment, and I think just really, it really just boils down to the fact that having $40 million in the back pocket may be something that's very useful down the line, and we don't know how long this recovery is going to take, even when COVID is, you know, over, so to speak, there is still a lot of unknowns that we're facing, and so, and the other thing we're facing is that -- is that given the situation, sorry, I had something in my throat. So given the situation, I think that there is a lot of issues with stations right now, keeping them clean, keeping vehicles clean, SEPTA has already
had to spend a lot, and I have admired how much they invested into safety and cleanliness, but there is still a lot of work to do, and so I personally like to see that $40 million invested in something like that, or really whatever is needed. Like I said before, just having something to keep in your back pocket rather than a project that had the -- the paradigm is shifted now, and so I think that it's prudent to just be careful with this money and to invest in the people that have been riding the system throughout the pandemic.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Okay. Thank you. Michael Bente?

NO RESPONSE

CHAIRMAN DEON: Michael?

MR. BENTE: Yes, can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN DEON: We can. You're on.

MR. BENTE: Right before the
holidays, the Inquirer published the article on the SEPTA budget crisis and the possibility of layoffs, service cuts and fare increases. When I asked why SEPTA wasn't specific on what that states to you, Ms. Richards, said it's because the Authority can't say for sure. Our entire transit... is still up in the air, but yet the Board, today, is voting to move $40 million to fund a new project as if the money just appeared out of thin air? As if this project is more important than the safety, health and wellbeing of your workers and the riding public?

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, and the SEPTA Board, my name is Michael Bente, and I'm Broad Street Line cashier and Local 234 member.

Most of you are aware of the incredible sacrifices we made throughout the pandemic to keep the city moving. Some would agree that as a SEPTA frontline employee, working during 2020
was like going to war in a battlefield. During the start of the pandemic, the Authority was exposed for their ill-preparedness and a lack of a pandemic plan to keep workers safe. To add insult to injury, the Authority refused to learn from their mistake, by resorting to short-cut techniques to deal with COVID-19 at our workplace. Some examples includes non-antibacterial hand soap, non-N95 masks, and failure to invest in new cleaning technology. These are just some examples of how SEPTA continue to save money on the backs of the heroes who make tremendous sacrifice, yet we get treated like second-class citizens. The same citizens who made it possible for the Authority to receive $1 billion in federal funds. Federal funds that can be used on operating expense, such as no more labor cost, and any additional expense that may have resulted in increased sanitation efforts. Forty million dollars can go a long way. Forty
million dollars could save countless of lives, if you do the right thing with it, such a regular cleaning of all work locations and public spaces, including periodic cleaning of all buses, trains, employee break room, cashier's booths, fares, kiosk turn style and restrooms, to conduct inspections or air ventilations of all work space, take steps, if needed, to align with proper standard recommendations by the CDC.

Number (3) with the expiration of the Family First Coronavirus Leave Act, the Authority must adopt a coronavirus leave policy for the year 2021, leave shall help members take time off as it relates to COVID-19 matters, including childcare. This policy shall be developed and made available to members as soon as possible. No one should be using their sick time for a worldwide pandemic, and we also need to increase the bus and train frequency to make six feet of social distancing
possible. With schools starting soon and people resuming work, it is unfathomable that any reduction of service occur, and the other thing we didn't talk about is the UV light -- I brought the suggestion up back in November -- we need to make investment in UV lighting. I haven't heard nothing back from you guys in regards to that.

And lastly, we have to pay the workers hazard pay for the sacrifices they made. Initially, the company reported, we were unable to receive hazard pay because of the lack of money available. Now we know that's simply false. We can take $5 million, right, if we take $5 million it's a thousand dollars, right, just to be in good grace with your workers. A thousand dollars to every single Local 234 member, that would only come up to about 3.5 million. We can do it. I encourage you guys to actually think about this vote before you take the decision, and I suggest you
choose safety over capital project at this time.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Thank you.

Michael McGettigan?

NO RESPONSE

CHAIRMAN DEON: Not on?

INAUDIBLE

CHAIRMAN DEON: All right.

Jody, you're on.

MS. HOLTON: All right. Good afternoon. My name is Jody Holton, I'm assistant general of planning at SEPTA. I'm going to try to respond to some of the comments and provide more context.

SEPTA is grateful for the CARES funding that we have received. This allows us to cover cost like the Amtrak lease payments, and the preventative maintenance that are in this action, as well as payroll, extensive cleaning services, and masks that are essential for us to operate, and maintain the service levels that we're providing
today. We have been able to maintain about 85 to 90 percent of normal service on buses, trolleys, and our subway system, and an appropriate level of service on our regional rail network. We have been supporting over 300,000 trips per day while allowing for social distancing on the system, and that's about a third, as Rich earlier stated, of normal ridership. We have investigated all crowding complaints that we have seen, and we put traffic checkers out on the system, and we found some instances where crowding have occurred and we can make a change in our schedule and add additional service where it's warranted, but many of the instances of crowding tend to occur based on a missed-trip or traffic or something that's unpredictable to us.

While capital funding for SEPTA is at risk, it is still imperative to move forward with the King of Prussia Rail Project. In this year's Capital
Budget we have funded up to 15 percent design, and intending to include up to 30 percent design in the next budget, but we were fortunate, working closely with FTA and our partners in our counties, SEPTA was able to achieve the 15 percent design and a record of decisions four months ahead of schedule. It's really a testament to working together with the federal government. This amount will allow us to move seamlessly and cost effectively now into the next phase.

While capital budgeting as I mentioned is at risk, we still need to move projects like this forward that advance our economy and equitable transit options in the region.

At this point in the project, we are ready to advance the 30 percent design, so that at the conclusion of this phase we can apply for competitive federal grants. This project again is a way to reduce congestion and provide access to jobs between the three largest
employment centers in the region.
Currently our riders face long delays on
bus routes to King of Prussia.
Investment is needed and transportation
projects to connect people with
opportunity and keep pace with changing
needs and growth, and jobs, creating jobs
in the region.

COVID has caused an increased
rate of unemployment across our region,
and the KOP project is even a more
important source than now, providing
increased employment opportunities for
generations to come.

That's all I have. I'd be happy
to talk with any of the folks that had
commented earlier, at a later date.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Jody, thank you,
and I'm sure you will be in contact and
get back together with them.

All right. Next item on the
agenda is the Consent Calendar, which is:
"Amendment to the Capital Budget
for Fiscal Year 2021 and the Twelve-Year
Capital Program and Comprehensive Plan;"

"Termination of Basis Swap Agreement of Bank of America, N.A.;"

"Adoption of the Five Year Strategic Plan for Calendar Years 2021 to 2026;

"Renewal of Excess Railroad Liability Insurance from Lloyd's of London;"

"Authorization to Award Contracts for Procurements;"

"Award of Contracts for Sole Source Procurements;" and

"Authorize to Execute Change Orders and Amendments."

Please note that Item III.A. "Correction of Resolution that the Board Adopted on November 19, 2020, pertaining to a Lease With the City of Philadelphia for Office Space in 1234 Market Street" was withdrawn from the Agenda. The remaining items on the Consent Calendar have been reviewed by the appropriate Board Committees in public session.
I'll entertain a motion to adopt these resolutions.

VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: So moved.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Tom?

MR. ELLIS: Second.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Any questions or comments?

MR. JOHNSON: Yes. Mr. Chairman, this is Kevin Johnson. I have to recuse myself from Resolution #III, Item #I.A.

CHAIRMAN DEON: So noted. Any other abstentions?

MR. ELLIS: Yes. Mr. Chairman, I'm abstaining from III.D.3.

CHAIRMAN DEON: So noted. Anybody else?

NO RESPONSE

CHAIRMAN DEON: Great. I'll call the question. All in favor say, "Aye."

ALL: Aye.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Opposed?
NO RESPONSE

CHAIRMAN DEON: Hearing none, the Resolutions are adopted.

Let's move on to the report of the General Manager. Leslie?

GENERAL MANAGER RICHARDS: Thank you, Chairman.

First of all, I want to congratulate Chairman Deon as well as Vice Chairman Lawrence on being re-elected to their respective roles. I agree with both of you, this has been some year. None of us could imagine the challenges that was coming this way, and I want to thank you, as well as the Board, of the support that you've given me and my staff through some really rough time. We are looking forward to continuing our work together, and definitely looking forward to some better times. And I will say with the vaccine distribution out and positivity rates going down, we can almost believe they are coming, and again, we sure do hope
so.

I just want to echo the Board's comments about Senator Greenleaf. It was a pleasure and honor to serve on the SEPTA Board with him, and I was always grateful for his guidance. His well-earned reputation for fairness and problem solving served both SEPTA and the Commonwealth.

I'm very excited about the adoption today about our Strategic Plan. SEPTA achieves incredible things every day, but times have changed, and we have to adapt. The Strategic Plan is the blueprint for how we help drive our region and it's recovery forward. The plan is people focus, and will help us meet the changing needs of our customers. It's SEPTA's clear vision and mission where SEPTA moves the Philadelphia region forward by providing safe, reliable and accessible mobility choices for everyone. It shows how we support equity, and enhanced quality of life, by connecting
people with opportunities, catalyzing the
economy, and sustaining our environment.
And it puts us on a course to act with
urgency, to ensure a resilient,
prosperous and equitable community for
everyone. The future of South Eastern
Pennsylvania, and SEPTA's future depend
up on it, and I look forward to working
with everybody to make sure that its
goals are achieved.

After a very inclusive,
thoughtful and thorough process, I'm
proud to report that 16 employees have
been selected to lead SEPTA's very first
counsel on diversity, equity and
belonging from a pool of more than 100
applicants. Members include employees
from 14 management centers, and three
collective bargaining units. Each
council member truly represent our
diversity at SEPTA. I want to
congratulate our new members, and I also
want to thank them for volunteering their
time to work on such initiative. That
will make working at SEPTA better, and
make sure that it feels welcoming to
everybody. We are on our way to building
an equitable SEPTA together.

This week closes Black History
Month. Cudos to our SEPTA team for
creating a series of truly inspiring
events. You may have read in the papers
or seen on the news, the fantastic
coverage of our special tribute to Rosa
Parks. We honored Mrs. Parks for her
pivotal role in the Civil Rights
Movement, refusing to give up her bus
seat to a white man. Her brave actions
began the end of segregation on public
transportation. To commemorate this
historic even, SEPTA dedicated a seat on
our Route 16 bus on Transit Equity Day,
also, what would have been Ms. Parks'
108th birthday.

I'm happy to share that more
than 2,000 of our employees have
registered for the COVID vaccine to date,
and over 1,300 employees would have
gotten their vaccine through SEPTA by the end of the month. We are making sure our employees stay safe and healthy from COVID, and that is our very number one priority right now. And as FEMA and the city gear up to open the mass vaccination site at the Pennsylvania Convention Center next week, I want to remind everyone that it is easily and conveniently accessible by both SEPTA's subway line, trolleys, and regional rails, and bus, and as always, seniors with Keycards can ride our systems for free.

Lastly, I want to give a shout out to all of our SEPTA employees who were tested and worked tirelessly in the cold, snow and ice this month. February definitely gave us additional challenges, and you were able to keep SEPTA running, and get our riders to where they needed to be.

Thank you, so much. Here is hoping for a milder March. And with
that, Chairman Deon, I conclude my report.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Okay. Thank you, General Manager.

We will go ahead with the speakers.

Benjamin A.

MR. AITOUMEZIANE: Can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN DEON: We can hear you. You're on.

MR. AITOUMEZIANE: Hi. My name is Benjamin Aitoumeziane, and I'm an executive member at large with the SEPTA Youth Advisory Counsel.

The YAC is a coalition member of Transit Forward Philadelphia. As the Board prepares to reveal its Fiscal Year 2022 Capital Budget to the public in just a few short weeks, the YAC hopes that you will make critical investment to the customer experience in attracting new ridership. Illuminating the region as a possibility... by SEPTA's frequent
service network. As you all know, ridership is down precipitously due to the pandemic, yet SEPTA remains as a crucial... as they ensure that our most vital workers continues to get to work and fulfill our needs for healthcare, food service, fulfillment, and other industries unable to work from home. We must continue to support these workers with a robust SEPTA system, that means creating a system that attracts additional riders and is financially sustainable following the pandemic.

When I moved from Rogers, Arkansas to study econ at Temple University, just four years ago, many of my friends had grown to the intuitive user experience of using Uber and Lyft, yet Temple was surrounded with some of the highest quality infrastructure in the U. S., and students simply couldn't figure out how to ride it, often because we have fallen short in our ability to communicate SEPTA's network.
Let's attract new riders, like young Arkansans like me who move to the region, by introducing a new intuitive customer experience.

Let's move funding a new way of finding on the rail transit network on the upcoming Capital Budget. Funding this project will cost a small fraction of the $40 million for KOP rail voted on today, and it will generate a quick return on investment help the region recover from COVID-19.

Thank you for your time and consideration. The YAC and TFP look forward to working with all of you to ensure better customer communications are in the budget.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Thank you. I think we're working on a couple of things.

Fran, you want to get back to him, so he knows the way SEPTA's coming? Also, we have Dominique Adkins.

NO RESPONSE
CHAIRMAN DEON: Not on?

NO RESPONSE

CHAIRMAN DEON: Dr. Walter Tsou?

Doctor?


First, congratulations to SEPTA for the visionary plan to remodel transit for the region. Part of your plan is to improve access for those with disability and to help even the playing field for low-income riders, and you rightfully see more frequent trains and buses with dedicated bus lanes as a way of prioritizing public transit and encouraging people to give up their cars. We couldn't agree more.

Here are some four things I would like to advance. To move toward your goal:

First, please use your capital
funds to prioritize wheelchair accessibility, which will send the right message to those with disability that they are welcome and encouraged to ride SEPTA. Anticipating the next decade as we get... the region, the number of disabled will continue to grow. For trains, this would include elevators, ramps, or lifts towards level platforms and train sides with the traps or locks to secure wheelchairs in place.

Second, make train fares level with bus fares along with a... so riders can freely choose whether the next vehicle is either a train or a bus. The pandemic has demonstrated the role of essential workers, and we need to make sure public transit reaches our web site and SEPTA's... budget.

Finally, SEPTA can have clean frequent transit, but you can't get back to normal unless people feel safe riding transit. You need to continue mask requirement and limited seating, and you
can also encourage and prioritize and
those air filtering cleaning to encourage
the public to ride SEPTA. You should
also partner with local public health by
advertising when it’s your turn, please
get vaccinated because the sooner we
reach herd immunity, the sooner we will
feel safe riding the subways and trains.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Doctor, thank
you for your comments.

Move on to John Flaherty.

NO RESPONSE.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Flaherty not on?

NO RESPONSE

CHAIRMAN DEON: Okay. Lor Song.

MR. SONG: Hello, good
afternoon. Chairman Deon and the Board,
I'm Lor Song. The transportation
community organizer of the Bicycle
Coalition of Greater Philadelphia.

This started in 1972, the
Bicycle Coalition partners with many
communities, governmental, and public and
private...

(Whereupon the transmission became incomprehensible.)

CHAIRMAN DEON: We are having trouble catching you on this side. There is a disconnect. I don't know if it's our side. We can't -- every other word is dropping out. You want to try calling back in or reconnecting and then we will catch you at the end or you want to put written comments in?

NO RESPONSE

CHAIRMAN DEON: Did we lose him?

Yes. Okay. While we're figuring that out, let's go to Sara Tabakha.

MS. TABAKHA: Good afternoon. My name is Sara Tabakha, and I work with the Pennsylvania Public Interest Research Group, representing members from across the Philadelphia region. We're also members of the Transit Forward Philadelphia coalition.

PennPIRG is an advocate for the public's interest. We speak out for a
healthier, safer world in which we're freer to pursue our own individual wellbeing and the common good. The problems we address aren't progressive or for those who are conservative, they're just problems that no one should tolerate in an age of great abundance and technological progress. We believe that public transportation should be accessible to everyone and fit into cities' larger goals for environmental sustainability.

TFP and PennPIRG would like to congratulate you on the adoption of the SEPTA Strategic Plan SEPTA Forward. The plan recognizes that transit is at the core of a sustainable, economic-inclusive region, and sets an ambitious framework that will propel SEPTA, our communities, and our region forward.

The plan challenges SEPTA to recognize the imperative of being proactive and a responsive organization, making the most effective use of public
resources. SEPTA will track their progress using Key Performance Indicators, including operating expense per passenger mile, pounds of CO2 per passenger mile, percent of projects on schedule, and economic impact, setting bold benchmarks for each.

PennPIRG and TFP see the Strategic Plan as responsive to our call to build healthier, safer, cleaner communities centered around transit, and we are grateful for the SEPTA Board, and the Strategic Planning Innovation groups for their listening to our calls.

We are counting on you to follow through on your commitments and include the public in updates and opportunities to engage throughout the process.

Thanks.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Thank you. And last but not least, Yasha Z.

MR. ZARRINKELK: Thank you, Chairman Deon, I appreciate the time to let me chat today with you all.
As many of you know, my name is Yasha Zarrinkelk, I am the coalition organizer of Transit Forward Philadelphia. I want to thank you for listening to the testimonies of a few of the two dozen coalition members of Transit Forward Philadelphia, including PennPIRG, advisor for the Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, 5th Square, and the Physicians for Social Responsibility.

We are hopeful that SEPTA will be utilizing most of the CARES Act funding to provide transit service and prevent service cuts, allowing riders to socially distance on vehicles, and help essential workers to get to work safely. The CARES funding should primarily fill the budget shortfall in the fare revenue, but without swift action, the COVID-19 pandemic will further weaken SEPTA's transit network and make an inequity and pollution of our car centric region even worst.

SEPTA faces a fiscal crisis that
threatens to devastate a network that served over a million people in the region prior to COVID, and continue to serve riders who have the privilege of working from home.

The Board must move quickly on strong footing so that SEPTA can propel Philadelphia toward a just, sustainable, economic recovery. To meet this moment the Authority's priorities must be overhauled to deliver better transit. If SEPTA forward strategic plans, important step forward, to set the agenda for a strong equitable recovery. We must align our investments in the next capital and operating budgets to implement it. In the coming months, as the region recovers from the pandemic, TFP and SEPTA shares similar goals for ways to encourage ridership back to the system. This means investing in better communications and transparency, as Benjamin of the SEPTA YAC mentioned, ensuring communities know how to use the transit we operate;
It means enabling riders to bypass traffic congestions by implementing bus only lanes on major routes, as would have been proposed by Lor of the Bicycle Coalition, had his comments came through; and

It means expediting station elevators and other features to make the existing transit infrastructure universally acceptable.

TFP looks forward to working with you to deliver on these critical goals, and I want to thank you all so much for the time to speak today.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Okay. Thank you. I think we have Mr. Song back on. Did we get him?

MR. SONG: Yes, I am. Can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN DEON: We can hear you now.

MR. SONG: All right. Thank you so much, I appreciate it, Mr. Deon.

Let me start from the top again.
I'm Lor Song, the transportation community organizer here at the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia.

It's founded -- it was founded in 1972 and a lot of our work involve partnering with community, governmental, public and private actors in order to make streets safer, and advocate for a...

Earlier this week after a month of holding committee meetings we released two proposals regarding the future of MLK. As many of you might know, MLK which runs along the west bank of the Schuylkill River... March 2020 as a response to pandemic and social distance needs for people looking to get outside. Since that time, the road has become the most used trail for people in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Bicycle Coalition proposes two ideas for the future of MLK:

The first one involves leaving it as it is for the people of Philadelphia.
The second is involves closing the drive to motor vehicles, and allowing half of it to be used by buses.

MLK... right of way makes it wide enough for two bus lanes going each direction, and two bicycle lanes, and pedestrian lanes... between us. We believe right now is the key time to study and plan a shared road like this one. With the Comprehensive Bus Network Redesign on the horizon, it's essential that we look at all of our options. We're getting people back on the buses and make a viable, a viable option for commuters and folks trying to get around the city for any reason. Service reliability for SEPTA bus routes are now at 65 percent that access the Schuylkill Expressway, that's well below SEPTA's system-wide goal of 85 percent. In fact, because our... traffic vary so much from day to day, the routes also, route timing varies hour by hour. We understand this idea is a deviation from the normal
Philadelphia streets, it would indeed be
the first street of its kind that we are
aware of in the United States. It would
also require holding off repaving MLK in
2021, as SEPTA and the city studies the
effects of turning MLK into a path of
people, and expressway for commuters.

Additionally, we would have to
visit the CBRN campaign to better serve
communities that will utilize the route,
including folks from Parkside,
Wynnewfield, Mantua, Roxborough and the
Philadelphia... stronger.

The coalition ask SEPTA to
seriously consider our proposal, which is
available at the network. We want to
work with SEPTA and the communities
surrounding MLK Drive to understand the
best future for MLK Drive.

The coalition also believes...
and that's all I have.

Thank you for your time and
consideration.

CHAIRMAN DEON: Mr. Song, you're
dropping out again. We heard most of
your it. Can you send your comments in
writing to us so we can get it on the
minutes for this meeting, and thank you
for calling in.

    MR. SONG: Thank you.

    Appreciate it.

    CHAIRMAN DEON: That's it.

    We're done. Okay. Good.

    Is there any other comments or
questions?

    NO RESPONSE

    CHAIRMAN DEON: I'll entertain a
motion for this meeting to be adjourned.

    VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE: So
moved.

    CHAIRMAN DEON: Tom, second?

    MR. ELLIS: Second.

    CHAIRMAN DEON: All right.

    We're adjourned. Thank you, guys.

    -- --

    (Deposition concluded at 3:59 p.m.)
CERTIFICATE

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA:
COUNTY OF PHILADELPHIA:

I do hereby certify that I am a Notary Public in good standing, that the aforesaid meeting was stenographically recorded by me in machine shorthand by me and thereafter transcribed under my supervision with computer-aided transcription.

WITNESS my hand and official seal this 8th day of March, 2021.

_________________________
Paulette Cox, Court Reporter
Notary Public