

Surface Transportation Board
Passenger Rail Advisory Committee (PRAC) Meeting
February 11, 2025

Meeting Minutes

STB Members:

- Chairman: Patrick Fuchs
- Vice Chair: Michelle Schultz
- Board Member: Karen Hedlund
- Board Member: Robert Primus

Designated Federal Official: Elizabeth McGrath (on behalf of Brian O’Boyle)

PRAC Members in Attendance:

<i>(Member)</i>	<i>(Organization)</i>
- Husein Cumber	Florida East Coast
- Robert Padgette	Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority
- Joe Black	WSP
- Christopher Perry	Amtrak
- Jim Blair	Amtrak
- Andy Daly	CSX
- Gregg Baxter	Herzog Enterprises
- Patty Long	Railway Supply Institute
- Jim Derwinski <i>(Co-Chair)</i>	METRA
- John Robert Smith	Transportation 4 America
- Carl Warren	North Carolina Railroad Co.
- Jonathan Lamb	Lake Superior Warehousing Co.
- Lori Winfree	North County Transit District
- David Lehlbach	Norfolk Southern
<i>(in place of Mike McClellan)</i>	
- Jim Mathews	Rail Passengers Association
- Henry Posner <i>(Co-Chair)</i>	Iowa Interstate Railroad
- Aaron Edelman	Mooney, Green, Saindon, Murphy & Welch
- Maux Sullivan	Colorado DOT
<i>(in place of Shoshana Lew)</i>	
- Greg Regan	AFL-CIO, Transportation Trade Dept.
- Paul Nissenbaum	Federal Railroad Administration
<i>(ex officio)</i>	

Not Present:

(Member)
- Liliana Pereira

(Organization)
Steer

9:00 a.m.

The DFO (Elizabeth McGrath on behalf of Brian O’Boyle) called the meeting to order.

9:05 a.m.

Opening Remarks by Chairman Fuchs and Board Member Hedlund.

- Chairman Fuchs welcomed PRAC members.
- Board Member Hedlund reviewed the duties of PRAC under its Charter and reminded PRAC members that matters pending before the Board cannot be discussed.

9:20 a.m.

Organizational Remarks by Co-Chairs and Introductory Briefing.

- Discussion among the committee on whether PRAC should focus on what the Board *can* influence or also consider what the Board *could* influence if its mandate were to change? Board Member Hedlund suggested that the latter is perfectly appropriate.
- The committee suggested that there could be two buckets for topics – one which has achievable goals and one which has aspirational goals. Chairman Fuchs suggested the use of the Board’s direct authorities, but also the use of the Board’s informal avenues, such as mediation through the Board’s Rail Customer and Public Assistance Program.
- It was noted by Co-Chair Posner that the agenda for February 11, 2025 had inadvertently not included the adoption of the minutes of the October 16, 2024 meeting. Adoption was deferred to the May 6, 2025 meeting so that the item can be properly agendaized.

9:30 a.m.

Re-introduction of PRAC Members.

- Each member re-introduced themselves and identified their organization.

9:40 a.m.

Discussion of Draft By-Laws Led by Co-Chairs

- Two issues were discussed: first, whether meetings should be conducted in-person and, second, whether to allow members to send proxies to meetings.
 - o The preference among the committee members remains for in-person meetings.
 - o On the issue of proxies, the following points were made:
 - Does the committee want to encourage attendance and participation of those with specific expertise selected by the Board?
 - Does the committee not want to lose the voice/vote of a particular group if that representative is unable to attend?
 - Board Member Fuchs noted that the bylaws do require a separate attendance requirement, which protects against members not attending.
 - Co-Chair Posner noted that there was a consensus that PRAC members should have the ability to propose alternates to the Chair of the Board for approval to make sure designated voices are heard. Presumably the

alternate would have the same attendance requirement as the original member.

- MOTION: The committee voted that it should be a principle that committee members wishing to designate alternates for PRAC meetings must obtain approval from the Chair of the Board.
- MOTION WAS APPROVED.
- Ms. Winfree raised additional concerns with the bylaws, specifically, whether meeting minutes should be officially recorded by the DFO or the Secretary. The committee members agreed that the minutes should be recorded by the Secretary.
- Ms. Winfree also asked whether reference in the bylaws to “two weeks” meant fourteen calendar days or ten business days. The committee members agreed that the timelines in the bylaws should be written as “ten Federal business days”
- The committee members discussed whether references in the bylaws to “he/she” should be replaced with “they” or “Member.”
 - MOTION: The committee voted on:
 - Minutes being recorded by the Secretary with review by the DFO;
 - Timelines in the by-laws should be written as “Federal business days”; and
 - To replace references to “he/she” with “Member.”
 - MOTION WAS APPROVED.

10:10 a.m.

Election of Secretary.

- Three members expressed interest in the Secretary position:
 - Christopher Perry (Amtrak)
 - Joe Black (WSP, Inc.)
 - Lori Winfree (North County Transit District)

Lori Winfree was elected as Secretary of PRAC by written vote of the members.

10:25 a.m.

Selection and Prioritization of Top 5 Initial Topics.

- By written preference, the committee members ranked their top three topics from the list generated at the previous meeting.
- Top 5 issues, by descending priority, were:
 1. Liability
 2. On-Time Performance
 3. Passenger Rail vs. Freight Rail
 4. Amtrak
 5. Technology
- Board Member Primus suggested forming standing subcommittees first, then assigning the topics to the appropriate subcommittee(s) as they evolve.
- From the list of issues discussed at the October 2024 PRAC meeting (organized by topic by Co-Chair Derwinski), the committee members agreed to the formation of four subcommittees by vote. The subcommittees were formed with the following members:

- Joint Operations
 - Husein Cumber
 - Michael McClellan (David Lehlbach)
 - Jim Mathews
 - Christopher Perry
 - Andy Daly
 - Aaron Edelman
 - Carl Warren
 - Robert Padgette - CHAIR
 - Joseph Black
- Expansion of Service
 - Husein Cumber
 - Michael McClellan (David Lehlbach)
 - Jonathan Lamb
 - Jim Mathews
 - Patricia Long
 - James Blair
 - Gregg Baxter
 - Greg Regan
 - Aaron Edelman - CHAIR
 - John Robert Smith
 - Shoshana Lew (Maux Sullivan)
- Current State
 - Joseph Black
 - Patricia Long
 - Christopher Perry
 - John Robert Smith
 - Gregg Baxter
 - Carl Warren
 - Andy Daly
 - Robert Padgette
 - Greg Regan - CHAIR
- Liability
 - Henry Posner III
 - Lori Winfree
 - Robert Padgette
 - James Blair
 - John Robert Smith
 - Shoshana Lew (Maux Sullivan)
 - Gregg Baxter - CHAIR
 - Jim Mathews

1:00 p.m.

Closing Issues

- Co-Chair Derwinski stated that he and Co-Chair Posner would organize a meeting with the subcommittee chairs and the DFO to make sure that they are acting in accordance with FACA requirements.
- Co-Chair Derwinski inquired whether the PRAC members would be interested in participating in an inspection trip on METRA in Chicago as the committee's first field trip. Co-Chair Posner added that the trip could also potentially include visits to CSX, Iowa Interstate, and Amtrak facilities. Board Member Hedlund stated that a trip of this nature would be enormously helpful.
- Mr. Nissenbaum asked how the schedules of the subcommittees would be published. The committee members agreed that schedules would be sent to all PRAC Members.
- Secretary Winfree noted that clarification about the process for committee members to send alternates to meetings was still needed. The committee members agreed that PRAC members could submit a letter to the Board to nominate an alternate, though noted that PRAC members are not required to send an alternate. It was agreed that the DFO would facilitate incorporation of this process into the proposed bylaws.

1:30 p.m.

Closing Remarks by the Board Members.

- Board Member Hedlund appreciates the level of engagement of the PRAC members and is very hopeful about what the committee will bring to the Board by way of recommendations and insights.
- Chairman Fuchs thanked everyone for their attendance and participation.

1:35 p.m.

Meeting adjourned.

Due to inclement weather, the Board's headquarters closed at 2:00 p.m. and the meeting was concluded earlier than planned, but with the committee having completed the day's agenda.