



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## *Virginia Passenger Rail Authority*

DJ Stadtler  
Executive Director

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Mariia Zimmerman  
Chairperson

### **MINUTES**

#### **Meeting of the Board of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority**

Thursday, January 22, 2026 · 10:30 am

919 East Main Street, Richmond, VA 23219

The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Board held a regular, in person meeting (with certain members participating remotely) on January 22, 2026 at 919 East Main Street, Richmond, VA 23219.

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON**

Mariia Zimmerman (Chairperson), Sandy Bushue, Katie Choe, Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Darien Flowers, Cynthia Lawrence, Beth Rhinehart, John Watkins, and Benny Zhang.

Susan Spears joined at 12:30 pm

John Watkins left at 1:06 pm

#### **MEMBERS PARTICIPATING ELECTRONICALLY**

Jennifer Mitchell, Susan Spears

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Patricia Doersch, D.J. Jordan, Charles Payne

#### **VIRGINIA PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY STAFF**

DJ Stadtler, Michael McLaughlin, Joan Verbonitz, Michael Westermann, Laura Farmer, Charles Nelson, Erica Sayre, Cosmin Udrea, Selma Nuhanovic, Adam Sharpe, Lamar Bates, John Kostyniuk, Shirlene Cleveland, Geoff Pelletier, Rob Pinckney, Matt Jett, Jeremy Latimer, Jonathan Capek, and Mary Estelle Douglas.

#### **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Chairperson Zimmerman presided and called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. Mary Estelle Douglas called the Roll and confirmed a quorum was present.

## **BOARD CHAIR WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

*Presented by: Mariia Zimmerman, Board Chairperson*

Mariia Zimmerman welcomed everyone to the January 22, 2026, Board meeting. Mariia Zimmerman introduced the new board members, Katie Choe and Benny Zhang.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was one written public comment that was shared with the Board in hard copy.

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## **MOTION TO APPROVE PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**

A motion was made by Darien Flowers and seconded by John Delandro to approve the Board meeting minutes from December 16, 2025. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Sandy Bushue, Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Darien Flowers, Cynthia Lawrence, Beth Rhinehart, John Watkins, and Benny Zhang.

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## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

*Presented by: DJ Stadtler, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority*

The Executive Director's Report provided updates regarding the Long Bridge Project work windows, Long Bridge Construction Phase Project Addendum, a FY26 Budget Adjustment for third party projects, and an update on the 2026 General Assembly Session.

John Watkins asked about the status of negotiations with NCDOT for the Richmond to Raleigh project. Mike McLaughlin responded.

Sandy Bushue asked about the siding projects, if they were new or being replaced, and Mike McLaughlin responded.

A motion was made by John Watkins and seconded by John Delandro to ratify authorization of the Long Bridge Project addendum (construction phase) with CSX. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Sandy Bushue, Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Darien Flowers, Cynthia Lawrence, Beth Rhinehart, John Watkins, and Benny Zhang.

A motion was made by John Delandro and seconded by Beth Rhinehart to authorize FY26 budget adjustment for third party projects. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Sandy Bushue, Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Darien Flowers, Cynthia Lawrence, Beth Rhinehart, John Watkins, and Benny Zhang.

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## **PROJECT PARTNERSHIP AND FINANCING AGREEMENT (I-66, LONG BRIDGE)**

*Presented by: Michael Westermann, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority*

Michael Westermann reviewed the toll backed USDOT loan and project partnership and financing agreement between VDOT and VPRA.

Sandy Bushue asked if Commonwealth Transportation Board was the collector of the revenue. Michael Westermann responded.

Darien Flowers asked what type of loan this was, and Michael Westermann responded.

A motion was made by Darien Flowers and seconded by Beth Rhinehart to authorize VPRA to execute I-66 financing PPFA with VDOT. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Sandy Bushue, Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Darien Flowers, Cynthia Lawrence, Beth Rhinehart, John Watkins, and Benny Zhang.

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## **CONSTRUCTION UPDATES REPORT**

*Presented by: Michael McLaughlin, Shirlene Cleveland, Geoff Pelletier, and Rob Pinckney, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority*

Updates on all VPRA projects under construction were provided.

Sandy Bushue asked about funding for the ped bike bridge at Long Bridge, and Shirlene Cleveland responded.

Mariia Zimmerman asked about the size of the New River Valley station site. Rob Pinckney, DJ Stadtler, and Mike McLaughlin responded.

John Watkins asked how the UP-NS merger will impact VPRA and DJ Stadtler responded.

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## **FY27 BUDGET**

*Presented by: Laura Farmer and Selma Nuhanovic, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority*

Capital budget changes and updated Management Reserve information was reviewed.

A motion was made by Darien Flowers and seconded by John Delandro to authorize VPRA to submit the recommended FY27 Capital Budget to CTB. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Sandy Bushue, Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Darien Flowers, Cynthia Lawrence, Beth Rhinehart, Susan Spears, John Watkins, and Benny Zhang.

A motion was made by Darien Flowers and seconded by Benny Zhang to approve Management Reserve balance. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Sandy Bushue, Neal

Crawford, John Delandro, Darien Flowers, Cynthia Lawrence, Beth Rhinehart, Susan Spears, John Watkins, and Benny Zhang.

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### **SERVICE PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

*Presented by: Jeremy Latimer, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority*

Service performance updates were provided, including Long Bridge work window data.

Mariia Zimmerman asked how the impact of bus service on on-time performance will be captured. Jeremy Latimer responded.

Darien Flowers asked how on-time performance correlated with delays at WAS, and if we have predictable delays, how do we handle them? Jeremy Latimer responded.

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### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mariia Zimmerman, Chairperson, adjourned the meeting at 1:45 p.m.

All presentations to the Board and meeting videos can be found at <http://vp.ra.virginia.gov/about/Board-meetings> and on the VPRA YouTube site.

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