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, August 27, 2026 · 10:30 am

919 East Main Street, Richmond, VA

The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Board held a regular, in-person meeting (with certain members participating remotely) on August 27, 2026, at 919 East Main Street, Richmond, VA 23219.

MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON

Mariia Zimmerman (Chair), Katie Choe, Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Patricia Doersch, Darien Flowers, Cynthia Lawrence, Jennifer Mitchell, Amanda Prattar, Beth Rhinehart, Prescott Sherrod, Susan Spears, and John Watkins.

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING ELECTRONICALLY

D.J. Jordan and Beth Rhinehart

Beth Rhinehart joined at 2:00 pm.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Sandy Bushue

VIRGINIA PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY STAFF

DJ Stadtler, Michael McLaughlin, Joan Verbonitz, Michael Westermann, Laura Farmer, John Kostyniuk, Benjamin Jarvela, JessiKa Eglin, John Kearney, Selma Nuhanovic, Geoff Pelletier, Colin Burch, Matt Jett, Ashwini Tamhane, Andrew Olssen, Jeremy Latimer, Jonathan Capek, and Mary Estelle Douglas

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chair 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

Presented by: Mariia Zimmerman, Board Chair

Mariia Zimmerman welcomed everyone to the August 27, 2026, Board meeting. Mariia Zimmerman thanked departing board members and welcomed new board members.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

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MOTION TO APPROVE PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Darien Flowers and seconded by Neal Crawford to approve the Board meeting minutes from May 21, 2026. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Patricia Doersch, Darien Flowers, D.J. Jordan, Cynthia Lawrence, Beth Rhinehart, Susan Spears, and John Watkins. Amanda Prattar and Prescott Sherrod abstained.

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ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS

Presented by Michael Westermann, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority

Michael Westermann presented the slate of proposed committee assignments for the Finance and Audit Committee and Personnel and Compensation Committee:

A motion was made by Darien Flowers and seconded by John Delandro to approve the VPRA Committee Assignments. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Patricia Doersch, Darien Flowers, D.J. Jordan, Cynthia Lawrence, Amanda Prattar, Prescott Sherrod, Susan Spears, and John Watkins.

Michael Westermann presented the proposed slate of officers for VPRA.

A motion was made by John Delandro and seconded by John Watkins to approve the VPRA Officers. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Patricia Doersch, Darien Flowers, D.J. Jordan, Cynthia Lawrence, Amanda Prattar, Prescott Sherrod, Susan Spears, and John Watkins.

REMOTE PARTICIPATION AND ALL VIRTUAL MEETING POLICY

A motion was made by Susan Spears and seconded by Darien Flowers to approve the VPRA Remote Participation and All Virtual Meeting Policy. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Patricia Doersch, Darien Flowers, D.J. Jordan, Cynthia Lawrence, Amanda Prattar, Prescott Sherrod, Susan Spears, and John Watkins.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Presented by: DJ Stadtler, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority

The Executive Director's Report provided updates on the federal grants received by VPRA, FY26 completed organizational goals, and FY27 organizational goals review. Also reviewed were current financial data and a high-level overview of project updates.

John Delandro asked whether there were budget concerns about ridership numbers going up and down, and DJ Stadtler responded.

Dairen Flowers asked about reducing LGIP assets, and Laura Farmer responded.

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FY27 BUDGET AMENDMENT AND MANAGEMENT RESERVE

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

The FY27 Financial plan was reviewed with proposed budget change needs.

A motion was made by Patricia Doersch and seconded by John Delandro to approve the FY27 Budget Amendment and Management Reserve balance. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Patricia Doersch, Darien Flowers, D.J. Jordan, Cynthia Lawrence, Amanda Prattar, Prescott Sherrod, Susan Spears, and John Watkins.

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AMTRAK 209 OPERATING AGREEMENT

Presented by: Ashwini Tamhane, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority

Jennifer Mitchell provided an update on Amtrak restructuring. Ashwini Tamhane gave a review of the Amtrak 209 agreement and its purpose.

A motion was made by John Watkins and seconded by Susan Spears to authorize VPRA to execute the FY27 State Supported Agreement between VPRA and Amtrak. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Patricia Doersch, Darien Flowers, D.J. Jordan, Cynthia Lawrence, Amanda Prattar, Prescott Sherrod, Susan Spears, and John Watkins.

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FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Presented by: JessiKa Eglin and Benjamin Jarvela, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority

An overview of the 2027 General Assembly session was provided.

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PROJECT AND CONSTRUCTION UPDATES

Presented by: Michael Westermann, John Kearney, Geoff Pelletier, and Colin Burch, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority

Updates on all VPRA projects under construction were provided.

Prescott Sherrod asked about the condemnation process and its triggers. Michael Westermann responded.

John Delandro asked about the process flow for utility relocation and its impact on VPRA schedules. John Kearney responded.

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SERVICE PERFORMANCE UPDATES

Presented by: Jeremy Latimer, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority

Current service performance data was reviewed, and updates were provided on key delay areas and initiatives.

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MOTION FOR CLOSED SESSION

Executive Director Annual Performance Review

Neal Crawford made the following motion:

I move that the Board convene in a Closed Session:

- *"I move that the Board convene in a Closed Session pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1) of the Code of Virginia for the purpose of discussing the job performance of specific public officers or employees of VPRA, and that the VPRA chief administrative officer and general counsel attend the Closed Session because their presence is deemed necessary and will aid the committee in its consideration of these matters.*

The motion was seconded by Patricia Doersch to move into a closed session. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Patricia Doersch, Darien Flowers, D.J. Jordan, Cynthia Lawrence, Amanda Prattar, Prescott Sherrod, Susan Spears, and John Watkins.

RECONVENE IN AN OPEN SESSION

The chairperson reconvened the open session meeting. Upon reconvening the meeting, Mariia Zimmerman made the following statement:

"We are now going to take a roll call vote, and I ask that each member indicate their agreement with the following: To the best of my knowledge, during the Closed Meeting, the only matters heard, discussed, or considered were those matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and only those public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened."

The roll was then called, with all members indicating their agreement with the statement. The members indicating agreement were Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Patricia Doersch, Darien Flowers, D.J. Jordan, Cynthia Lawrence, Amanda Prattar, Prescott Sherrod, Susan Spears, and John Watkins.

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ACTION REGARDING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A motion was made by John Delandro and seconded by Patricia Doersch to approve Performance Year 2026 Executive Director Evaluation and salary adjustment. The motion was carried, with the vote in favor cast by Neal Crawford, John Delandro, Patricia Doersch, Darien Flowers, D.J. Jordan, Cynthia Lawrence, Amanda Prattar, Prescott Sherrod, Susan Spears, and John Watkins.

ADJOURNMENT

Mariia Zimmerman, Chairperson, adjourned the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

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

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